

TWILIGHT OF THE RAJ : A CASE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF COOCH BEHAR UNDER ITS LAST THREE RULERS

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PREFACE

I was born and grew up in the District of Cooch Behar and therefore, it was natural for me to get interested in the past history of my native place. Again in course of my investigation as Junior Research Fellow under the UGC sponsored project entitled History of kingdom of Kamata-Cooch Behar at North Bengal University, I was first initiated into the enchanting history of the erstwhile native State of Cooch Behar. My long association with the place as the son of the soil proved to be of great advantage during the period of my intense investigation. I feel proud and fortunate enough to work under my respected teacher Dr. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya, formerly Jadunath Sarkar Professor of History, North Bengal University, and Dr. Shyamal Chandra Guha Roy, Associated Professor of History, Siliguri College. I wish to express my gratitude to both of them for the careful guidance and constant encouragement, advice and help throughout the course of my prolonged research work. This study could not have taken its present shape without their untiring efforts to make it so.

I am thankful to the authorities of the UGC, Eastern Regional Office, Kolkata for granting me the award of teacher fellowship for completing Ph. D. under the Faculty Improvement Programme. I am indebted to the Authorities of Sreegopal Banerjee College, Hooghly for relieving me of my teaching load to pursue my research work. I would like to put on my gratitude to the colleagues of my department who were helpful to me during the period of my research work.

I am deeply obliged to the respected teachers of the Department of History, North Bengal University for their valuable suggestions from time to time. I also express my gratefulness to a large number of scholars for their kind co-operation and help in connection with my research activities. Among them special mention may be made Professor Amalendu De, Formerly Guru Nanak Professor, Jadavpur University, Dr. Shekhar Sircar, Principal, Cooch Behar College, Dr. Nripendra Nath Paul, Mr. Biswanath Das, Mr. Dharma Narayan Barma, Cooch Behar, and Dr. Pabitra Kumar Debnath, and lastly, special mention may also be made to late Nirmal Chandra Choudhury, Jalpaiguri for providing me with various facts and information related to my research work.

I acknowledge my debt to the authorities and staff of Cooch Behar State Library, Cooch Behar District Record Room, Cooch Behar Collectorate Office, North Bengal University Library, West Bengal State Archives, Bengal Seretariat Library, Directorate of Census Operations (West Bengal), National Library, Calcutta, and National Archives, New Delhi and others for rendering valuable help and co-operation in connection with my research work.

I pay my deepest regards to my parents who had constantly inspired me during the period of my study. But I feel very sad at the sudden passing away of my mother who could not see the completion of my work. I dedicate this study to her loving memory. I must mention the name of Mrs. Rubi Bhattacharyya for her encouragement to complete this work and also record my deep gratitude to my wife Mrs. Reshma Khatun for her untiring zeal and active help without which it would have been impossible on my part to complete this work.

Lastly, sincere thanks are also due to Sri Kiran Kumar Dey and Sri Goutam Das of Graphitec, Kalitala, Tribeni, Hooghly, who not only typed out my work but also did the job of composing and printing.

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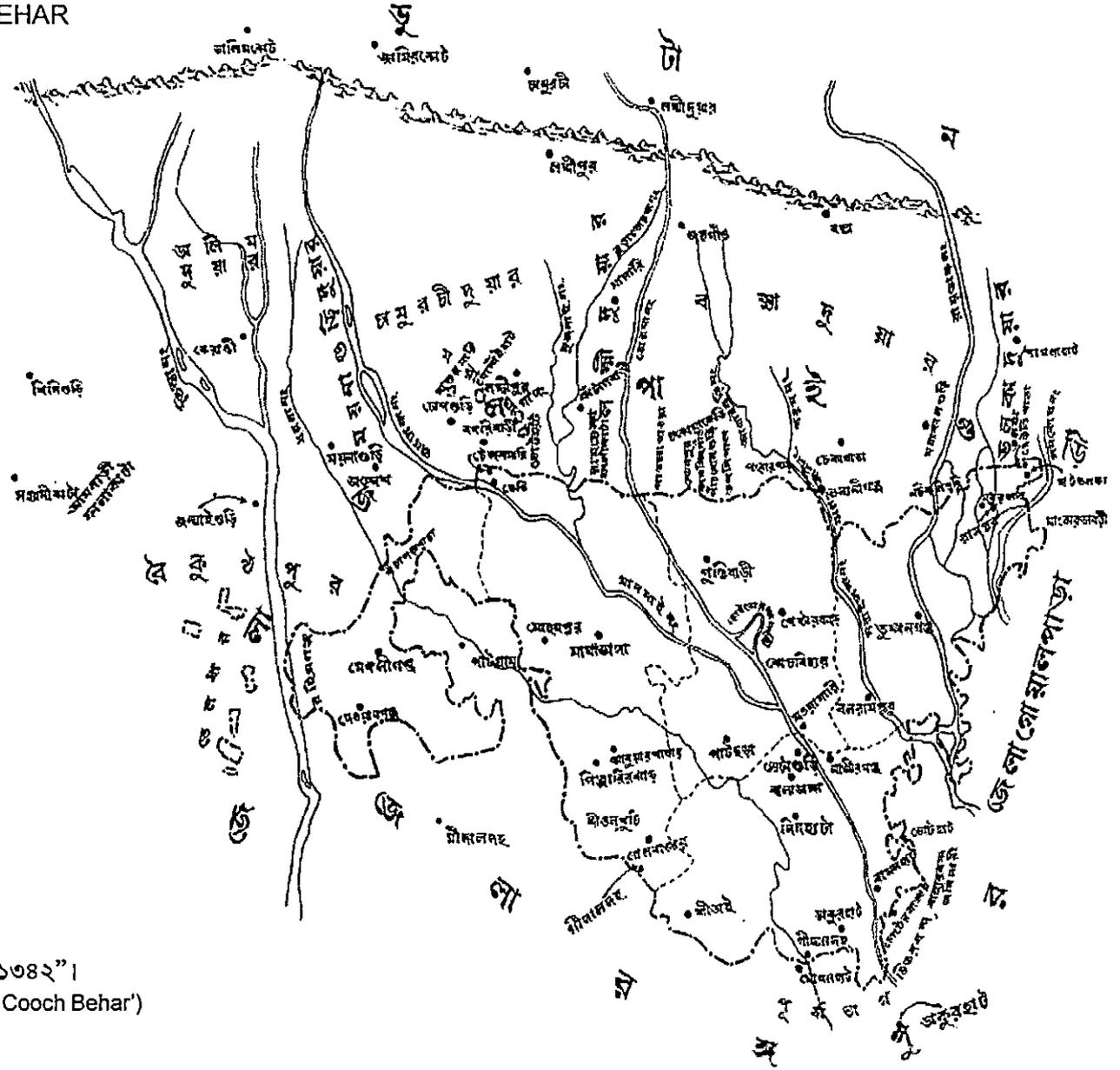
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ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.R.C.B.S.	: Annual Administrative Report of the Cooch Behar State.
A.I.S.P.C.	: All India States People's Conference.
C.B.G.	: Cooch Behar Gazette.
C. B.G. E.	: Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary.
C.B.D.R.R.	: Cooch Behar District Record Room.
C.B.S.P.	: Cooch Behar State Press.
C.B.S.R.	: Cooch Behar Selected Records.
C.I.D.	: Criminal Investigation Department.
C.O.I.	: Census of India.
C.P.I.	: Communist Party of India.
D.C.O.	: District Collectorate Office, Cooch Behar.
D.O.C.O	: Directorate Office of Census Operations, Kolkata.
G.O.B.	: Government of Bengal.
G.O.I.	: Government of India.
H.H.	: His Highness / Her Highness.
H.E.	: His Excellency.
H.M.	: His Majesty.
I.B.	: Intelligence Bureau.
J.A.S.B.	: Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
J.N.S.I.	: Journal of Numismatic Society of India.
N.A.I.	: National Archives of India, New Delhi.
N.B.U.	: North Bengal University, Darjeeling
N.B.S.L.	: North Bengal State Library, Cooch Behar.
N.L.	: National Library, Kolkata.
P.R.C.	: Proceedings of the Regency Council, Cooch Behar.
P.S.C.	: Proceedings of the State Council, Cooch Behar.
P.G.B.	: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal.
R.C.	: Regency Council, Cooch Behar.
S.C.	: The State Council, Cooch Behar.
S.L.	: Secretariat Library, Kolkata.
S.P.C.	: Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945-50, edited by Durga Das, Ahmedabad, 1971-74.
W.B.S.A.	: West Bengal States Archives, Kolkata

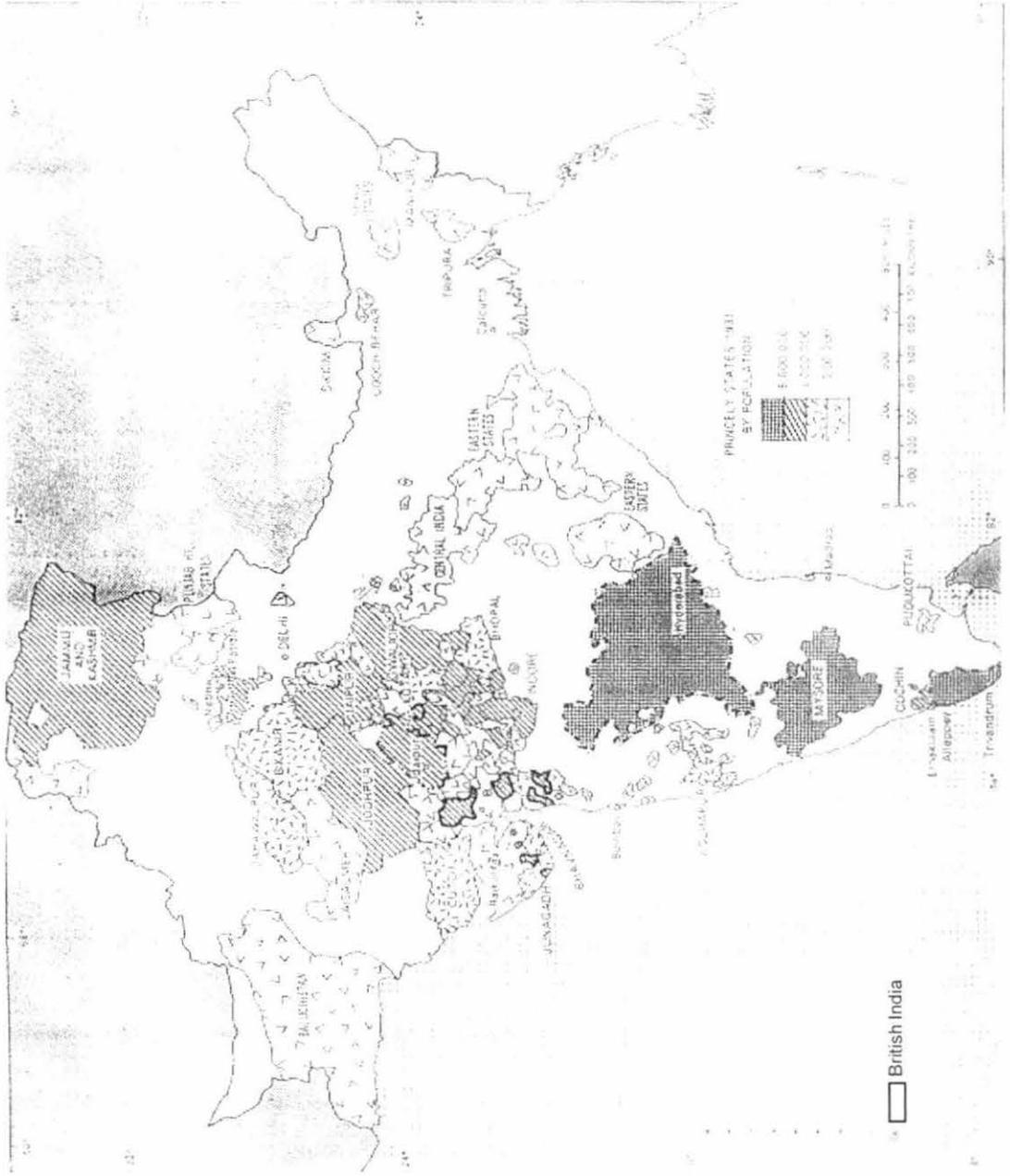
MAP 1 : STATE OF COOCH BEHAR



SKETCH MAP
 ১৭৭৩ খৃষ্টাব্দের পরবর্তী কোচবিহার
 (Post- 1773 A.D. Cooch Behar)
 স্কেল ১ ইঞ্চি = ৮ মাইল
 (Scale 1" = 8 miles)
 কোচ বিহারের ইতিহাসের জন্য অঙ্কিত "১৩৪২"।
 (Sketched in 1342 B.S. for 'History of Cooch Behar')

Source : Ahmed, Khan Chowdhuri Amatullah : Koch Behars Itihas (In Bengali), First Volume, Cooch Behar, 1342 B.S.

MAP 3 : PRINCELY STATES AND BRITISH INDIA IN 1931



INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem :

K.M. Panikkar's comment made in 1977 that "any account of the last days of princely rule will sound incredible today" is still very much relevant. Politically the British had divided India into two parts-the British India consisting of directly British administered Provinces and the Princely India consisting of numerous Indian States. Subsection (i) of section 311 of the Government of India Act, 1935 as originally enacted, defined an "Indian State" as including "any territory, whether described as a state, an estate, a Jagir or otherwise, belonging to or under the suzerainty of a ruler who is under the suzerainty of His Majesty and not being a part of British India." In fact, the number of the princely states was 562, according to the Butler Committee and the Simon Commission and they covered an area of 715,964 square miles, which constituted about 45 percent of the total territories of pre-partition India, The total population of the states, according to the census figures of 1941, was 93.2 millions, constituting about 24 percent of the total population of pre-partition India.¹

The Indian Princes' anachronistic situation dated from Britain's haphazard conquest of India when these rulers were allowed to remain on their thrones provided they acknowledged Britain as the paramount power. The system was formalized in a series of treaties between the individual rulers and the British Crown. The princes had recognized the 'paramountcy' of the King Emperor as represented in New Delhi by the Viceroy and ceded to him control of their foreign affairs and defence. They received in return Britain's guarantee of their continuing autonomy inside their states.² These Princes had been for almost two centuries the surest pillar of British rule in India.' It was in their relations with the states that the British had applied most effectively "Divide and Rule" doctrine with which they were accused of governing India. According to Collins and Lappierre, "The inevitable result was a series of grateful and generally reactionary princely enclaves studded like anchors against a revolutionary wind throughout those parts of India ruled directly by the British."³

S. R. Ashton has rightly pointed out that 'during the 19th century the British had deprived the Indian princes of the power to conduct external relations with each other or with foreign powers. Internally the Princes were theoretically autonomous but their sovereignty in this respect was restricted by the paramountcy of the imperial power'.⁴ The British maintained the Princes as an administrative convenience and as a potential source of military and political support. By the opening of the 20th century, however, the British came to regard the Princes as indispensable political allies against the growth of nationalism in India. At the beginning the Princes hardly noticed the rising demands by Indian nationalist leaders for a greater share in formulating and executing governmental policies in British India. The agitation over the partition of Bengal in 1905, revealed the 'political sophistication' of these leaders and of their ability to mobilize various groups to support their programmes. During the subsequent decades Indian nationalist leaders

began programmes that impinged more directly on the future of the Princes and their States.⁵

The outbreak of the World War I allowed the Princes to reaffirm their value as military allies during an imperial crisis. It also sounded the death knell to the longstanding British policy of isolating the Princes from each other and from the outside world. The Chamber of Princes, a deliberative assembly which was formed in 1921, possessed limited powers and demonstrated the lack of administrative and legislative skills among the Princes. It has been argued that the Princes were at the peak of their power at the end of the First World War (1914-1918). As time went by the Princes came more and more to dominate London's strategic thinking about India, 'which culminated in attempts in 1930s to rope them to all-Indian federation as a counterpoint to the electoral power of the National Congress'. Ian Copland has argued that as allies and clients of the British, the ruling Princes were the significant players in that frantic contest between the old world of the States and the new nationalist world of the provinces⁷, which many historians have called the endgame of empire.

As debates between the British and Indian leaders over constitutional reform came to the forefront, the Princes were anxious to seek constitutional guarantees of their authority and position. As a client group the princes might express displeasure but would not openly seek the extinction of British authority. Rather, the Princes continued to demonstrate their usefulness as imperial clients in order to win bargaining points in future constitutional negotiations. Their persistent support for British policies during the 1920s and the Civil Disobedience Movement in the 1930s as well as their resistance to constitutional and political changes within their own States, alienated Indian political leaders both within and outside their States. Consequently, their allies within the all-India arena were narrowing to groups within their own religious communities and conservatives who felt threatened by any political, economic or social change.⁸

The Princes' initial responses to the call for the creation of a federation between British India and the Princely States was affirmative, because they saw federation as a means by which they might escape from the scrutiny of their British overlord and also as a mechanism by which they might achieve a more - defined status protected by legal provisions. But when 'the possibility of an all-Indian federation evaporated because of princely intransigence, British ambivalence, Congress opposition, and the advent of the World War II, the princes had never again been key parties in later constitutional deliberations'. Only the British, the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League were the protagonists in the devolution of imperial power.⁹ It is interesting to note that in 1946 the British Cabinet Mission seemed hardly aware of the existence of the Princes, and the last British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, had little time to consider the Princes. He rather relied more upon the advice and views of Jawaharlal Nehru about them than on that of Sir Conrad Corfield, his Political Adviser on the Princes.¹⁰

However, 'the ultimate solution to the problem of freedom with unity', as said R. J. Moore, 'involved the partition of British India between two Dominions, and the accession of the Princely States to one or other of them. Thus the unity that the Raj had achieved about a century earlier was dissolved in the transfer of power.'¹¹ H. V. Hodson has opined in 'The Great Divide' that "the demise of the princely states seems bound to have followed the withdrawal of the imperial hand which had sheltered and supported them amid all hostile trends and ideals of the age."¹² Within a short span of about two and a half years following 1947 all princely states, geographically contiguous to India, were submerged in the body - politic of the Indian Union. Viewing the gigantic problem of the princely states which threatened the unity of the post-partition India, the integration of these States have been called by some Indian scholars as 'great revolution'.¹³ No doubt the princely states and their demise form an important and fascinating study that has not, so far, received its due from the scholars who have concentrated on the areas of direct British rule and largely overlooked the States ruled by semi-independent Princes.

Cooch Behar State lies between 25°58' and 26°33' north latitude, and between 88°48' and 89°55' east longitude. Cooch Behar, being a native state till 1949 A.D., was situated on the north - eastern part of India bounded on the south by Rangpur district of Bengal, on the north by the Jalpaiguri district of Bengal, on the east by the Goalpara district of Assam and the Rangpur district and on the west by the districts of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. Geographically it was within the territories of the Bengal Province. Since the conclusion of the treaty of subsidiary alliance with the English Company in 1773, Cooch Behar turned into a tributary state of the British giving them a fixed annual tribute of Rs. 67,700. It had an area of 1,321 square miles with a population of about 6,41,000 and a revenue of about Rs. 10 millions.¹⁴ Out of 562 states of India, only 284 states including Cooch Behar were important enough to qualify for privy purses from the Government of India after integration. Only 83 States received military salutes from the British Government. Cooch Behar was one such State which was entitled to 13 gun salutes.¹⁵ Only Cooch Behar, Gwalior and Patiala were accorded the honour of riding as honorary ADCs beside the royal carriage of Edward VII at his coronation.¹⁶ Apart from this, Cooch Behar was one of 108 States which were members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right. Therefore, it may be said that despite being rather a small State in size, Cooch Behar's political and strategic importance gave it a distinctive status among the array of the Indian States.

The present work proposes to investigate the different aspects of political, socio-economic and cultural history of Cooch Behar State from the time of the death of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan (1911 A.D.) to the merger of the state with the Indian Dominion (1949 A.D.). The year 1911 A.D. is a memorable in the history of Cooch Behar State not only because of the death of Nripendra Narayan whose reign witnessed the full height of Anglo-Cooch Behar relationship as well as colonial modernisation of the state administration, but the years following 1911 A.D. saw also the rise of national upsurge in the country against the foreign domination. Its repercussions were also strongly felt in the native states like Cooch Behar. In spite of the anti-nationalist stand taken by the state administration, there

gradually emerged a strong mass movement in Cooch Behar in favour of independence and democracy as well as the merger with the Indian Dominion and later with the Province of West Bengal under the umbrella of the Praja Mondal Samiti led by both nationalist and leftist groups. Although the Hitasadhani Sabha, another political organisation, led by local Muslim and Rajbanshi elites and also patronized by the state administration, was vehemently opposed to the merger of Cooch Behar with the Province of West Bengal.¹⁷ Apart from this, the period under study also witnessed some significant developments in the domains of socio-economic, cultural and religious affairs of the present State. But no systematic work has, so far, been attempted for the study of the crucial period with which we are concerned.

A brief overview of earlier works :

A large number of scholars contributed much to the studies of the different aspects of the history of Cooch Behar State from the time of its emergence as a kingdom in the early part of the sixteenth century. Though the works of the scholars are not directly connected with the period with which we are concerned, they supply us important information about the context of our work. Among the array of earlier works which are general in nature, a few names may be cited here : W. W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, (London, 1876) ; Bhagabatcharan Bandyopadhyaya, A History of Cooch Behar (In Bengali, Cooch Behar, 1884) ; A Claude Campbell, Glimpses of Bengal, Vol. I, (London, 1907) and Khan Chowdhuri Amanatullah Ahmed, A History of Cooch Behar, Part-I (in Bengali, Cooch Behar, 1936) and its English rendering by Sarat Chandra Ghoshal in 1942, which comes to an end with the coronation of Maharaja Harendra Narayan.

Among some earlier works which deal with either with a particular aspect or a particular period of the history of Cooch Behar, mention may, however, be made of : D. Nath, History of Koch Kingdom, 1515-1615, (Delhi, 1984) delineates the history of the first hundred years of Koch Kingdom from its beginning to the reign of Maharaja Laksmi Narayan ; S. C. Guha Roy, Study of Some Aspects of the History of Kamata - Koch Kingdom, (Ph. D. Dissertation, North Bengal University abbreviated as NBU, 1985), analyses the different aspects of the early history of Cooch Behar; Ratna Roy Sanyal, The Raj and the Princely State of Cooch Behar : A Study of Anglo-Koch Relations during 1772-1839 (Calcutta, 2004), delineates the different dimensions of Anglo-Cooch Behar relation of the above period; Partha Kumar Sen, Some Aspects of the History of Kamata-Koch Behar Since 1772 to the Accession of Sivendra Narayan, (Ph. D. Dissertation, NBU, 1989) analyses the political and other aspects of the history of Cooch Behar of the said period; K. C. Das, The Modernisation of A Princely State : Cooch Behar under Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, (Ph. D. Dissertation, NBU, 1989); evaluates the different dimensions of the colonial modernisation of Cooch Behar State between 1863 and 1911; Shekhar Sircar, Land Settlement, Revenue Administration and Taxation under the Maharajas of Cooch Behar State, (Ph. D. Dissertation, NBU, 1990) reviews the different aspects of the economic history of Cooch Behar; P. K. Debnath, Religion and Religious Establishments of Kamata-Koch Kingdom, (Ph. D.

Dissertation, NBU, 1993) narrates the rise and development of religion and religious establishment in Cooch Behar State; and Biman Chakraborty, Political History of Merger of the Princely States : A Study of Cooch Behar, (Ph. D. Dissertation, NBU, 2001); assesses the history of merger issue and its related problems of the princely states with special reference to Cooch Behar. Rup Kumar Barman, From Tribalism to State : Reflections on the Emergence of Koch Kingdom, (Delhi, 2007) elaborated some important causative factors such as warfare, centralization of political power, peasantisation of the tribes, moneytization of economy, exploitation of surplus, legitimization of power by 'adopted culture' that paved the way for the emergence of the Koch State in the Tista-Brahmaputra valley in the early sixteen century.

In view of this review of earlier works it can now safely be said that no systematic attempt has so far been made in delineating the different aspects of the history of Cooch Behar during the period under our study and its related problems. Hence we felt it necessary to make a thorough probe into the penultimate stage of the Koch Raj and the enchanting drama associated with it with the help of latest known documents from the different archives in India.

Research Questions or Hypotheses :

Since the emergence as a kingdom in the early part of the 16th century, Cooch Behar continued to exist for several centuries through the vicissitudes of fortunes and through the Anglo-Koch treaty of 1773 down to its merger with the Indian Union in 1949. In view of this extraordinary phenomenon, certain questions may reasonably be raised. First, how does Cooch Behar continue to exist as a separate state for a long period since the conclusion of the Anglo-Koch treaty of 1773 to the merger of the state in 1949 ? Secondly, why does the princely rule in the state come to an end along with the British rule in India ? Thirdly, what is the nature of relationship between the British Government and Cooch Behar State ? Robin Jeffrey has rightly pointed out that Indian nationalism spread from British India to the princely states and gradually created an environment for launching the national struggle there.¹⁶ But this state of affairs, however, poses certain problems in respect of the State of Cooch Behar : First, what is the nature of penetration of ideals for which Indian national struggle stood? Secondly, what are the responses of the rulers of Cooch Behar towards this national struggle? Thirdly, how far was the prevailing administration in the state conducive to the growth of political ideals with which Indian national struggle connected? Fourthly, whether there was any noticeable change in the attitude of the communists of the State in their anti-monarchy campaign following the Soviet Union's involvement in the World War II turning the imperialist war into the people's war also requires to be investigated. Lastly, to what extent did the state administration as well as the other political groups exert themselves for ultimate merger of the State with the Indian Dominion?

It is a fact that a religious reform movement popularly known as Rajbanshi Kshatriya movement tremendously

led to the awakening of the stature of the long neglected Rajbanshi people of North Bengal in the early decades of the 20th century. The role of the leaders like Panchanan Barman in this respect requires to be investigated properly. Ian Copland has pointed out that there was greater communal amity in the Princely States than in British India.¹⁹ Cooch Behar was also no exception in this respect. The factors behind the communal amity between the two dominant religious groups in the State and the role of the rulers also require to be investigated. In view of the socio-economic backwardness in the State, impact of the extension of railways and the contact with the colonial power has also to be evaluated. The proposed work intends to be a study with the object of finding out the answers to the questions raised above.

Coverage / Paradigm :

After the fall of the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa by the end of the 12th century, many new kingdoms emerged from their tribal bases in the north-eastern India during the 13th-16th centuries. Amalendu Guha has opined that these kingdoms represented not only dynastic changes but also new state formation. The transition from tribalism to statehood along with Hinduisation occurred when these kingdoms attained a sufficiently large production base through the introduction of advanced agrarian system and or through extension of territories by conquering the neighbouring countries. The Ahoms, Dimasa (Kachari), Jaintia and Koch kingdoms were such formations.²⁰ The Koches, a section of the Indo-Mongoloids, rose to a political power on the ruins of the Khen kingdom in the early part of the 16th century under the leadership of their chieftain Visvasimha and maintained its identity through the vicissitudes of fortunes.

The Bhutanese invasion of the Koch Kingdom compelled the contemporary Koch ruler to sign a subsidiary treaty of 1773, according to which, it became a feudatory state of the British. The question arose in the subsequent decades whether Cooch Behar should pass into a zamindari of Bengal more than once, but it was due to the credit of its rulers that it continued to exist as a separate State. During the 19th century the British laid the foundation of the process of colonial modernisation in Cooch Behar. K. C. Das has argued that the reign of Nripendranarayan was particularly remarkable, for his interaction with the British as well as with the socio-religious movement like the Brahmo Samaj and the influence of the Bengali intellectuals contributed a lot in building the modernity and Cooch Behar became the model State among the contemporary Princely States of India.²¹

Nripendranarayan was succeeded by his eldest son Raj Rajendranarayan who evinced a dynamic attitude towards administration of the State, though his reign lasted for two years only (1911-1913) on account of his premature death. Soon after the accession of Jitendranarayan, the next ruler, to the throne, the First World War (1914-1918) broke out. The king provided the British Indian Government with military as well as financial assistance. During his reign the Non

Co-operation movement launched by Gandhiji spread into Cooch Behar and created a great commotion among the people.²² The revolutionary activities had made headway into the State as well. The king, however, turned a stern attitude to these developments and introduced repressive measures to suppress them. It is during the time of Jitendranarayan that Cooch Behar had admitted into the Chamber of Princes as a member state and thereby identified itself with an all-India Princes' organisation which largely shaped the politics of Indian princely states in the following decades.

Jitendranarayan was not blessed with a long life and succeeded by his eldest son Jagaddipendra Narayan during whose minority period (1923-1936) a Regency Council was established under the Queen Dowager Indira Devi, a daughter of Sayaji Rao Gaikwar of Baroda State, to administer the State. The Regency Council was embarrassed by the revolutionary movement as well as all-India Civil Disobedience movement which had penetrated into the State. The world-wide economic depression of early 1930's made its impact felt in Cooch Behar. The Regency Council had to tackle with this problem of great magnitude by introducing a new land revenue policy. Besides, The constitutional and political development in India such as the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission in March, 1927 to make recommendation regarding further constitutional progress of India; appointment of the Indian States Enquiries Committee to report on the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States; formation of All-India States People's Conference in December, 1927, Round Table Conferences which were held in London between 1930 and 1932 and the Government of India Act of 1935 which provided for an all-India federation to be consisted of British India and the Indian States (though this federal scheme had not come into being) played a vital role in shaping the destinies of both the British India and the Indian States.

The Regency period was followed by the coronation of Jagaddipendranarayan whose rule (1936-1949) was full of historic events and marked a new era in the history of Cooch Behar. Within three years following the assumption of full royal authority by Jagaddipendranarayan, the Second World War (1939-1945) started. The king actively co-operated with the British Indian Government by offering them military and financial assistance. He vehemently opposed the Quit India movement which succeeded in arousing a great response among the people of Cooch Behar.²³ The early years of 1940s witnessed the infiltration of the Communists into the State who gradually undertook the task for launching the movements directed against the monarchy as well as the British. The Tebhaga Peasant Movement also penetrated into Cooch Behar and eventually gave rise to a peasant movement there. Besides, the Prajamandal Samiti (a branch of All-India States Peoples Conference) was formed in the State in full co-operation with the Communists with a view to launching mass movements in favour of independence and democracy in the post World War II period. In order to countercheck the activities of both the Communists and the Prajamandal Samity, the Hitasadani Sabha, the only legal political organisation in the State, was founded in collusion with the king. The Hitasadhani Sabha endeavoured to divert the attention of the people from anti-monarchy movement to Coochbehari Non-Coochbehari

conflict.²⁴

The Indian Independence Act, 1947, released the States from all their obligations to the Crown and made them technically independent entities. It posed the threat of further balkanisation of the post-partition India. However, with the assistance and co-operation of the rulers and the helpful efforts of Lord Mountbatten, all the States, barring Kashmir, Hyderabad and Junagarh, geographically contiguous to India, had acceded to the Indian Dominion on the three subjects such as defence, foreign relations and communications by the 15th August, 1947.²⁵

For a period of two years following the attainment of India's independence, Cooch Behar Raj Durbar pursued a policy of masterly inactivity concerning the issue of integration of the State. Meanwhile, it is believed that the Hitasadhani Sabha, with the tacit support of the Maharaja, became active and tried either to keep Cooch Behar as a separate independent entity or to get it merged with Pakistan. However, under the pressure of strong public opinion created by the Prajamandal Samiti and other political groups, the king eventually agreed to sign the Merger Agreement with the Indian Dominion on 28th August, 1949. According to the provisions of the agreement, the administration of the State was taken over by a Chief Commissioner on behalf of the Indian Government on 12th September, 1949. Then a heated controversy arose in Cooch Behar over the question whether the State should either be merged in West Bengal or in Assam. The issue became a bone of contention between the Governments of West Bengal and Assam.²⁶ After careful consideration of all factors the Government of India decided to merge Cooch Behar in the Province of West Bengal. This was done with effect from the 1st January, 1950 by means of an Order under Section 290 A of the Government of India Act.²⁷

Administrative set up of Cooch Behar State as laid down by Nripendranarayan was followed by the next two kings. In dealing with the affairs of the State, the king was assisted by two nominated bodies i.e. the State Executive Council and the State Legislative Council. The reign of the last king, however, witnessed some overhauling changes in the formation and functioning of the Executive Council as well as the Legislative Council as a result of which a form of dyarchic government was established in the State.²⁸ Apart from political and constitutional aspect, changes were also brought about in revenue, judicial and local administration.

Cooch Behar was purely an agricultural kingdom and its agriculture was carried on in traditional method. In industries, the State was backward as well. According to the census figures of 1931, industry supports only 2.6% of the total population of Cooch Behar.²⁹ Indigenous industries and trade could not prosper owing to the gradual penetration of colonial economy into the State. In spite of the establishment of the railway lines connected the capital of Cooch Behar with outside centres of British India, the system of communications in the interior of the State remained in bad shape.³⁰ The State owned 78 miles metalled and 1021 miles non-metalled roads and a metre gauge railway about 35

miles long connected with the Bengal Assam Railway system.³¹ The economic condition of the people was backward and their standard of living was low. Despite the welfare activities initiated by the kings, the pitiable conditions of the people remained practically unchanged in the existing (feudal) structure of society and this resulted in increasing unrest among the poor peasantry in the State. That is why, the Tebhaga Peasant Movement penetrated into Cooch Behar and eventually gave rise to a peasant movement there.³²

Since the birth of the Koch Kingdom, the kings and their followers embraced Hinduism and thereby the process of Hinduisation started onwards. The Hindus were in general divided into three sects, i.e., The Saivas, Saktas and Vaishnavas. The Brahmo religion, which later penetrated into the state, however, made little headway. In the Hindu caste hierarchy the Brahmanas, Kayasthas, Vaidyas etc. occupied the highest position while the Rajbanshis, a Hinduised tribe, who constituted about 60 percent of the total population and 87 percent of the Hindu population, according to the census figures of 1891, thereby forming the largest community in the kingdom, occupied the lowest position.³³ Hence a religious reform movement was launched by Thakur Panchanan Barman for upgrading the Rajbanshis into the status of kshatriyas and this movement for kshatriyaisation, it is believed, made a tremendous contribution to the awakening of the Rajbanshis in respect of their social and political life.³⁴ It is also the fact that in spite of such efforts for Sanskritisation, the major portion of the Hindu population of the State was not deeply attached to the classical form of Hinduism. Their belief was rather deeply embedded in the indigenous religions and folk deities.³⁵

The Muslims constituted about 38 percent of the total population, according to the census figures of 1941, thereby forming the second largest community in Cooch Behar. They were mainly divided into four sects, i.e., the Sayyads, Mughals, Pathans and Sheikhs. In the social hierarchy of the Muslims, the first three sects who constituted the Ashraf community, a fringe of the Muslim population, possessed the highest rank and the fourth group, i.e., the rural Sheikhs and other Muslims were placed in the lowest rank.³⁶ These lower classes of the Muslims who formed Ajlaf or Atraf Community descended from the lower classes of Hinduism and other indigenous population and belonged to the same stock as the Rajbanshis. They were not affected by dogmatic theology of Islam. The Muslims of Cooch Behar were predominantly of Sunni Barelvīs and hence the influence of Pirism was all pervading in their socio-religious life. The belief in Pirism was not only shared by local Muslims but also shared by local Hindus and other communities.³⁷ Hence there existed communal amity between the Hindus and Muslims in rural society. This amity between the two principal communities had further been strengthened by the liberal policy pursued by the kings in matter of religion.

According to the 1941 Census, Cooch Behar State with an area of 1318 square miles, had the population of 640,842 in number, of which 26,821 were urban persons and 6,14,021 were rural persons. The density of of the state's population was 486 per square mile.³⁸ The number of towns and villages in the State was 6 and 1400 respectively. The total number of occupied houses in the state, was 125,353, of which 5,180 were in towns while 120,173 were in

villages.³⁹

The State's population, which was 566,974 in 1901, has increased to 671,158 in 1951. there was little spectacular increase in any decade between 1872 and 1951. It has rather been noticed that several decades in the past have registered decreases, notably the decades 1881-91, 1891-1901 and 1921-31. Even in the decade 1911-1921 there was a small reduction in the population. There has been no industrial development in the state in the last 100 years and agriculture has remained pretty much on the same level throughout. Consequently, there has not been any large increase by immigration, except by way of bands of agriculturists migrating into Cooch Behar from Mymensing, Rangpur and Pabna (now in Bangladesh).⁴⁰ The following statement shows the growth of population in Cooch Behar state between 1872 and 1951.⁴¹

Population of Cooch Behar State with variations from 1872-1951.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Population	Variation	Population	Variation	Population	Variation
1951	1941-51	1941	1931-41	1931	1921-31
6,71,158	+30,316	6,40,842	+49,956	5,90,886	-1,603
7	8	9	10	11	12
Population	Variation	Population	Variation	Population	Variation
1921	1911-21	1911	1901-11	1901	1891-01
5,92,489	-463	5,92,952	+25,978	5,66,974	-11,894
13	14	15	16	17	
Population	Variation	Population	Variation	Population	
1891	1881-91	1881	1872-81	1872	
5,78,868	-23,756	6,02,624	+70,059	5,32,565	

The following statement shows percentage variation in population of Cooch Behar State, 1872-1951.⁴²

Percentage Variation

1901-51	1921-51	1872-1921	1941-51	1931-41	1921-31	1911-21	1901-11	1891-1901	1881-91	1872-81
+18.4	+13.3	+11.3	+4.7	+8.5	-0.3	-0.1	+4.6	-2.1	-3.9	+13.2

The last but certainly not the least is the following statement that shows the growth of population of Cooch Behar State in comparison to those of the neighbouring districts of Jalpaiguri and Rangpur from 1872 to 1941.⁴³

	<u>Cooch Behar</u>	<u>Jalpaiguri</u>	<u>Rangpur</u>
1872-81	+13.2	+39.0	-2.6
1881-91	-3.9	+17.3	-1.5
1891-1901	-2.1	+15.7	+4.3
1901-11	+4.6	+14.8	+10.7
1911-21	-0.1	+3.7	+5.1
1921-31	-0.3	+5.0	+3.7
1931-41	+8.5	+10.7	+10.9
<hr/>			
1872-1941	+20.3	+161.8	+33.9
1881-1941	+6.3	+122.8	+36.5

The above mentioned table shows clearly that the Jalpaiguri district occupied the highest place in respect of the growth of population with 161.8 per cent from 1872 to 1941, while the Rangpur district occupied the second place with 33.9 percent and the Cooch Behar State, the third place with 20.3 per cent.

Methodology :

We, thus, propose to make a thorough study of an interesting and difficult phase of the history of Cooch Behar. Books so far published for the period under study are mostly pamphlets and uncritical writings. Hence we have to build up thesis mainly with the help of archival materials lying scattered in the different archives of India, most important of which are West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, National Archives, New Delhi and abroad (India Office Library, Bowring Album Section of India Office Library, London). But informations that have been forthcoming from Cooch Behar Annual Administrative Reports, English Correspondence of Council's office, English Correspondence of Governor's Report, Cooch Behar State Gazetteers, Sardar Patel's Correspondences are no less important for further understanding the important phase of history of Cooch Behar State. In addition, Memoirs like Autobiography by Suniti Devi, Sabitri Debi, Nirupama Devi and Gayatri Devi, biographies like Jitendranarayan Bhup Bahadur by S. Sanyal and Thakur Panchanan Barman by Upendra Nath Barman and personal diaries of politicians and revolutionaries of Cooch Behar undoubtedly formed important source materials for our study. Some of the periodicals published from Cooch Behar State during our period like 'Cooch Behar Darpan' also reflect prevailing socio-economic and political situation in the State. In some cases, interviews of the eminent personalities of erstwhile Cooch Behar State fill up the lacunae in our understanding of the history of the state, otherwise unknown.

Besides, my efforts at collecting information included the perusal of scholarly and interesting accounts or books by both British and Indian writers. I have so far carried out my field work to National Archives of India, New Delhi, West Bengal States Archives, Kolkata, National library, Kolkata, Directorate of Census Operations, Kolkata, North Bengal State Library, Cooch Behar and Cooch Behar Record Room and collected such archival materials which have enriched me in understanding the difficult and fascinating phase of the history of Cooch Behar. The proposed work has used all available sources to give a critical and comprehensive account of the different aspects of the history of Cooch Behar State during one of the most crucial periods in modern Indian history.

With all source materials at our disposal we feel inclined to discuss the present work in the following chapters: **In Chapter I** an endeavour has been made to present the historical background of the Cooch Behar State prior to the accession of Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan (1911 A.D.) with special reference to the nature of the Anglo-Cooch Behar relationship. **Chapter II** has dealt with the political history of Cooch Behar since the accession of Raj Rajendranarayan (1911) to the end of the rule of the Regency Council (1936 A.D.). The reigns of the two Maharajas, i.e., Raj Rajendranarayan (1911-1913) and Jitendranarayan (1913-1922) along with the rule of Maharani Indira Devi as the Regent and President of the Regency Council (1923-1936) during the minority period of Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan have formed the theme of this chapter. **Chapter III** has dealt with the political history of Cooch Behar since the assumption of ruling power by Jagaddipendranarayan (1936 A.D.) to the accession of the State with the Indian Union (12th

August, 1947). Chapter IV has dealt with the penultimate phase of the Cooch Behar Raj and Cooch Behar as the Chief Commissioner's Province and its problem of merger (12th August, 1947-31st December, 1949). The constitutional and administrative system of Cooch Behar State has been analyzed in Chapter V. Chapter VI has highlighted the economic condition of the State. The last chapter is an observation in the form of summary and conclusion derived from the analysis of the previous chapters. In addition to this, the chapters appended in the appendices have thrown light on the trends of the political and constitutional developments in India, particularly in Princely India, which eventually led to the abolition of the princely system and also analysed some significant aspects in the arena of social, cultural and religious affairs of the Cooch Behar State. Lastly, an adequate care has been given to the bibliography, and finally some maps at the beginning and some rare historical documents and few relevant illustrations at the end have also been appended and these, we believe, will be helpful for the proper understanding of the problem with which we are concerned.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE COOCH BEHAR STATE PRIOR TO THE ACCESSION OF MAHARAJA RAJ RAJENDRANARAYAN (1911 A.D.)

The origin of the Kingdom of Kamata-Koch can be traced since the days of Visvasimha, the founder of the dynasty during the early part of the sixteen century A.D. This kingdom survived as an independent State till 1772, but it went through certain stages of socio-political development viz. 'from clan village to chiefdom' and 'from chiefdom to kingdom'.¹ However, the Kingdom of Kamata-Koch Bihar became a native, tributary State under the British in 1773 A.D. in accordance with the provisions of Anglo-Koch treaty. Thereafter, Cooch Behar was not reduced into a Zamindari of Bengal but retained its status of a native state till 1949 A.D. when it was integrated with the Indian Dominion. It has been rightly said that "excepting some of the more important states in Rajputana, there are few states in India which can boast of a more remote antiquity than that of Cooch Behar"²

Although the territory of the Kamata-Koch Bihar originally formed part of the ancient kingdom of Kamarupa,³ its early history is shrouded in obscurity. The territory of ancient Assam was known as Pragjyotisha in Mahabharata and Kamarupa in the Puranas and the Tantras. Most of the authorities suggest that the Karatoya is the western boundary of Kamarupa.⁴ The river Karatoya unified in its beds 'the streams which now go to form the Tista, the Kosi and Mahanadi'.⁵ Hiuen Tsung (7th century A.D.) in his account mentioned that he arrived in Kamarupa going east from Pundravardhana (now in Bogura district of Bangladesh) after crossing the river Karatoya (Ka-lo-tu).⁶ The Yogini Tantra, a later work, tells us that the territory of ancient Kamarupa was bounded on the north by the mountain of Kanjagiri, on the east by the stream Dikshu, on the west by the Karatoya river, and on the south by the confluence of the Brahmaputra and Laksha river.⁷ The area included among others the Brahmaputra Valley, Bhutan, Rangpur, Cooch Behar, north-east of Mymensing and possibly, Garo Hills.⁸ The Yogini Tantra mentions that ancient Kamarupa was divided into four piths or portion, viz., Kamapith (extending from Karatoya to the Sankosh), Ratnapith, Subarnapith and Soumarapith.⁹ The territory of present Cooch Behar formed the part of Kamapith and bordered on Ratnapith.¹⁰ Some scholars opine that 'from the point of view of geography and culture the territory of Cooch-Bihar better known as Kamta-Cooch Behar continued to remain a part of the greater Kamarupa'.¹¹

The earliest recorded kings of Kamrupa belonged to Danava and Asura dynasties.¹² The appellations Danava and Asura suggest that they were non-Aryans.¹³ Later on we find that the Varman line of kings ruled Kamarupa. Bhaskarvarman was the greatest monarch of this line and made alliance with Harshavardhan of Thanesar.¹⁴ He was present at the disputation of Kanauj, and attended the sixth 'Field of happiness' at Prayaga. He professed the Hindu religion and during his reign the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited Kamarupa in 639 A.D.¹⁵ The territory of Kamarupa

under the rule of Bhaskarvarman was about 166 miles in circuit (10,000 li). It must have included the whole valley of the Brahmaputra river, or modern Assam together with Cooch Behar and Bhutan. The capital was at Kamatapura.¹⁶ With the death of Bhaskaravarman, the rule of Varman line came to an end and its place was taken by a new line of kings headed by Salastambha. Salastambha was described as a great chief of the Mlechchhas "The copper plate inscriptions of Ratan Pala furnish the only clue as to the period when the kings of this family ruled. It is said that they ruled between C.664 A.D. and 1000 A.D. and twenty kings intervened between Salastambha and Brahma Pala.¹⁷ Brahma Pala was the first king of the next Pala line in Kamarupa and only called Maharajadhiraja. He was succeeded by his son Ratna Pala and two copper plates throw light on the reign of the latter. Ratna Pala was a strong and war-like ruler and described as "the mighty crusher of the enemies" in the land grant of his grand son Indra Pala.¹⁸ His capital was built on the bank of the Brahmaputra river. He was followed in succession by Purandar Pal, "Indra Pala, Gopala, Harsha Pala and Dharma Pala."¹⁹

With the fall of the Pala line of Kings towards the middle of the twelfth century A.D. the kingdom of Kamarupa disintegrated.²⁰ According to the official geneology of the Pala rulers of Kamarupa, Dharamapala was the last king²¹ who had left us three copper plates grants. Dharpala pushed the boundary of his kingdom to the west of Karatoya and shifted his capital from Pragiyotishpura to Kamrupanagara towards the end of his reign. The Pushpabhadra Copper plate of Dharamapala mentions Kamarupanagara as the seat of the King.²² Kamarupanagara has been differently located by different scholars. While K.L. Baruah and Gait locate it in north Gauhati, others hold the different opinion that it was most probably the same as Kamta or Kamatapura, whose ruins lie in the present district of Cooch Bihar at Gosanimari.²³ K.L. Baruah however argues that " it is extremely probable that north Gauhati continued to be the capital from the time of Dharma Pala till about 1260 A.D. when the seat of Government was transferred to Kamatapura."²⁴

After the death of the last Pala king the eastern part of Kamarupa witnessed the emergency of a number of independent principalities of the feudatory rulers and Mongoloid chiefs. The western part of Kamarupa, later known as Kamata extending as far as the river Karatoya in the west, is said to have been ruled by a powerful ruler²⁵ at about the middle of the Thirteenth century A.D., after which the Bhuyans gradually rose to power.²⁶ Assam Burunji²⁷ and 'Guru Charitas'²⁸ mention one Durlabhanarayana (c. 1330-1350 A.D) who ascended the throne of Kamata and came into clash with Dharmanarayana, a king ruling over a region bordering the river Mahanada in North West Bengal.²⁹ At last a peace treaty was concluded according to which the Kamata kingdom was divided between them- Durlabhanarayana taking the northern and eastern portion along with Kamatapura and Dharmanarayana retaining the territories³⁰ to the south including Rangpur and Mymensing. It appears that after the division of the kingdom Durlabhanarayan became the Kamateswara and Dharmanarayan styled himself as 'Gaudeswara',³¹ probably due to his occupation of certain portion of Guada.³² But Durlabhanarayana was the only king of Kamata who was acknowledged as the sovereign ruler

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of all Bhuyans of the eastern part of the kingdom. He drove the mountain tribes of Bhutan away from his kingdom, who made several raids in the north-eastern part of the kingdom. ³³

Durlabhanarayana was succeeded by his son Indranarayana in 1350 A.D.³⁴ R.D. Banerjee³⁵ and S.N. Bhattacharya³⁶ contended on the basis of a silver coin ³⁷ bearing the name of Sikandar Shah, the Bengal Sultan, dated 1759 A.H. (A.D. 1357-58) minted at 'Chawalistan' alias Kamru that he attacked in 1357 A.D. As regards the successor of Indranarayana, we are in darkness. ³⁸

The history of Kamata, after the middle of the fourteenth century is most uncertain.³⁹ The part of Kamarupa west of the Brahmaputra probably remained in a state of anarchy for some time and was overrun by several tribes of Koch, Mech, Garó, Kachari and Bhote. The period of disturbance and disintegration was most favourable for the rise of upstarts. ⁴⁰

In the first half of the fifteenth century A.D.⁴¹ the Khen Kings came to power in Kamata and we are in possession of a connected history of these kings.⁴² Kamrupur Burunji states that after the line of Arimatta there emerged a new dynasty consisting of three kings, Niladhvaja, Chakradhvaja and Nilamvara who ruled over the tract extending from Singimari upto the bank of the Brahmaputra with their capital at Kamatapura ⁴³. As to the race of the Khens, it is possible that they were branch of the Indo-Mongoloids.⁴⁴ During this period the kingdom of Kamarupa upto Karatoya seems still to have formed a single kingdom but the name had been changed from Kamarupa to Kamata.⁴⁵

Niladhvaja (c. 1440-60 A.D.), the founder of the Khen dynasty and of the Kamata kingdom, was a person of humble birth. Having acquired power he proclaimed himself king of Kamarupa. ⁴⁶ He on ascending the throne brought many Brahmanas from Mithila and did much to re-establish the worship of the Vedic gods. He belonged to the Khen tribe and was raised to the dignity of pure Hindus for this meritorious act.⁴⁷ He built his capital at Kamatapura on the west bank of the river Dharla, about 14 miles south-west of modern Cooch Bihar, surrounded it on three sides with a gigantic rampart with an inner and an outer ditch, while the Dharla protected the east. ⁴⁸ According to Gait, Niladhvaja did not exercise control over more than a very small part of the old kingdom of Kamarupa. Buchanan Hamilton who visited the ruins of Kamatapur, estimated its circumference at nineteen miles, ⁴⁹ The palace, as in the case of Burmese and Chinese towns, stood in the centre.⁵⁰ In 1908 Claude Campbell mentions that "the remains of the city are visited and admired even now"⁵¹ The general titles of honour of this line of kings was 'Kantesvara' or 'Kamatesvara', the lord of Kamata.

Niladhvaja was succeeded by his son Chakradhvaja who ascended the throne of Kamata in c. 1460 A.D. A remarkable event during his reign was the attack of the Bengal Sultan Ruknuddin Barbak Shah ⁵² of Kamata. But the Sultan did not achieve any tangible gain in the campaign against the ruler of Kamata.⁵³ The reign of Chakradhvaja is

also said to have been associated with the discovery and establishment of the shrine of Gosani or Kameswari, the presiding deity of the dynasty.⁵⁴ The temple of Gosanimari or Kameswari is situated within Kamatapura, the capital of Kamata.

Chakradhvaja was succeeded by his son Nilamvara in circa 1480 A.D. who attained great power and extended his rule, eastwards to the Baranadi and westwards as far as Karatoya. He also included within his dominion the north eastern part of the tract which had formerly belonged to the Muslim ruler of Guada.⁵⁵ The dominion of Nilamvara is said to have included the greater part of Goalpara and Kamarupa, the whole of Rangpur and Cooch Bihar and portions of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur.⁵⁶

During the reign of Nilamvara, the Kamata kingdom was invaded by a large army under Alauddin Hussain Shah (1493-1519), the Sultan of Gauda. The Sultan captured Kamatapur and its date is generally assigned to the year 1498 A.D.⁵⁷ It appears that after sacking Kamatapur, he reduced the kingdom as far east as the Baranadi and left his son Daniel at Hajo as governor of the conquered territory with the object to follow conquest further to the east or Assam. He celebrated his success by the erection of a Madrasah at Malda, the inscription of which bears a date corresponding to A.D. 1501-1502.⁵⁸ In addition, he issued coins in which he assumed the title as the conqueror of Kamata, Kamru, Jajnagar and Orissa.⁵⁹ Hence the defeat of last Khen king by Hussain Shah is a historic fact.

But the rule of the Muslim was short-lived. The war with the Ahoms led to the destruction of the Mohammedan army.⁶⁰ This encouraged the local Bhuiyans to make a united attack on Daniel's garrison as a result of which Daniel and his men were killed. The Muslim government introduced in Kamata was thus overthrown.⁶¹ There arose a number of petty principalities under local chiefs, commonly known as Baro Bhuiyans who gradually asserted their independence.⁶²

The state of anarchy in the Kamata kingdom following the overthrow of the Mohammedan rule could not continue for a long time. Ultimately a leader appeared and raised his head above all the other petty chiefs and gradually subjected all. This was Bishu, the son of Hariya Mandal, who subsequently became king and assumed the name Bisva Simha.⁶³ Bisva Simha was the founder of the Kamata-Koch kingdom which had played an important role in the north-eastern politics of the sixteenth century.⁶⁴

Bisva Simha's father belonged to the Mech tribe while his mother to the Koch tribe. Hence both were non-Aryan and No-Hinduised.⁶⁵ The story of divine origin ascribed by the Brahmanas to the founder of the Koch dynasty evinces a fictitious connection of the Koches with some mythological figures while they were Hinduised. Such a device, however, gave them an opportunity of their superiority and helped them to have allegiance from subject population.⁶⁶

Bisva Simha's father Hariya Mandal, a resident of Chikangram, a village in the Kuntaghat parganas of the Goalpara district, was recognised head of twelve's leading families of Meches (or Koches) living in that region.⁶⁷ With the election of Hariya Mech as the 'Chief' (Mandal), the tribal villages of Chikna Hill located in Lower Assam were transformed into a chiefdom. This chiefdom, a small tract bounded by the Manas river in the east and Sankosh river in the west and from Dhabalgiri in the north to the Brahmaputra in the south, became an autonomous entity under the leadership of Hariya Mandal. He succeeded in bringing the Koches and Meches in a common platform and transforming them as a resistant and aggressive force, which could be developed as a state under his son Bisva Simha.⁶⁷⁺

With this hereditary background Bisva Simha organized under his banner the different tribes of the region, launched a career and conquest⁶⁸ and extended his rule from the river karatoya in the west and to the Badnadi in the east defeating the Bhuiyans one after another.⁶⁹ He made a treaty with the king of Bhutan and brought southern Bhutan under his control.⁷⁰ He invaded the Ahom country but ultimately he had to retreat.⁷¹ He is also said to have attacked Guada and succeeded in occupying some portions of that country. By means of 'aggressive warfare' Bisva Simha transformed the small chiefdom to a Koch State.⁷²

Bisva Simha transferred his capital from Chikna to Kamatapur and took the title Kamateswara or lord of Kamata.⁷³ Some scholars have suggested that Bisva Simha may have struck coins⁷⁴ but others opine that this seems very unlikely as none of them have survived.⁷⁵ For his military and administrative talents, Bisva Simha has been compared with his contemporary Babar, the founder of the Mughal Empire.⁷⁶

Naranarayana, the son and successor of Bisva Simha, was the most powerful ruler of the Koch dynasty. During his reign Koch kingdom reached its zenith⁷⁷ and was comprised of almost the whole Northern Bengal, Bhutan and Assam, as well as the modern states of Kachar, Jaintia, Manipur and Tipperah and extended upto the coast of the Bay of Bengal.⁷⁸ On coins Naranarayana is given the title of 'Bhupalasya' or 'Master of the world', a very appropriate title for coins struck during and after the campaigns of 1562-1563.⁷⁹ Naranarayana appointed his brother Sukladvaja his commander-in-chief who was so skilled and swift in military operations that he was nick named Chilaray or the kite king.⁸⁰ It appears that the territory under Naranarayana direct administration was much smaller than the one noted above (the conquered one).⁸¹ It is probably due to that fact that Naranarayana allowed the defeated rulers to enjoy their autonomy by paying annual tribute.⁸²

It was during the times of Naranarayan that Koches played an important role in the contemporary Indian political scene. Naranarayana had friendly relations with the Mughal Emperor Akbar.⁸³ He himself did not wait upon Akbar. It was only his wakil who came. Many rarities of Koch kingdom along with fifty-four noted elephants were presented to Akbar. It is believed that the Mughal - Koch understanding was essentially a defensive one for both the

powers.⁸⁴ Naranarayana was called ' Vikramaditya ' of Kamrupa in recognition of his contribution in the arena of culture.⁸⁵ In the year 1581 Naranarayana gave the portion of his empire to the east of the Sankosh to his nephew Raghudeva, who agreed to pay tribute. The western portion was retained by Naranarayana and his successors.⁸⁶

After the death of Naranarayana, the Koch kingdom lost its pre-eminence and gradually declined under the rule of its successive kings. The internecine struggle within the Koch royal family facilitated the Mughal intrusion into the kingdom, which became a target of intermittent Mughal attacks during the subsequent period.⁸⁷ Lakshminarayan, the son and successor of Naranarayan, is said to be a weak king⁸⁸ and Raghudeva refused to acknowledge the supremacy of Lakshminarayan. Thus the partition of the empire in 1581 gave rise to conflict between eastern and western Koch kingdom and war started between Lakshminarayan and Raghudeva.⁸⁹ Raghudeva made alliance with Isa Khan, the Afghan chief of Eastern Bengal.⁹⁰ While Lakshminarayan sought the protection by declaring himself a vassal of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the year 1596, he also fostered friendship with Man Singh, the Mughal Subadar of Bengal, by giving his sister in marriage to him.⁹¹

On the death of Raghudev, his son and successor Parikshit also followed his father's policy⁹² as a result of which the conflict between the two rival Koch houses continued un-abated. In order to meet Parikshit's attack, Lakshminarayan sought help from Islam Khan, the Mughal Subadar of Benagal and accepted formally the imperial vassalage agreeing to pay tribute.⁹³ With the Subadar's military help the Maharaja campaigned against Parikshit and defeated him.⁹⁴ However, the new Subadar of Bengal Kashem Khan called Lakshminarayan to Dacca and practically made him a captive.⁹⁵ During the reign of Emperor Jahangir Kashem Khan was replaced by Ibrahim Khan as Subadar of Bengal and Lakshinarayan was set free.⁹⁶ But the Maharaja had to stay in Hajo and engage on the Emperor's behalf upto 1626 A.D.⁹⁷ The Mughals occupied the western Assam Valley in 1612 upto the Barnadi, or Koch Hajo with the help of the Koch armies. The Koch ruler became a Mughal vassal.⁹⁸

In 1657 when the old Mughal Emperor Shahjahan lay ill,⁹⁹ there appeared a sort of anarchy in the Mughal Empire owing to fratricidal war for the throne for more than two years.¹⁰⁰ The Koch raja Prannarayan, the grandson of Lakshminarayan, seized the opportunity, openly bade defiance to the Mughals, stopped payment of tribute and set himself as an independent ruler.¹⁰¹ He even grabbed the greater portion of Kamarupa which belonged to the Mughal Empire. He is also said to have attacked Ghoraghat.¹⁰²

Aurangzeb was seated on the imperial throne after the end of the fratricidal war.¹⁰³ Mirjumla who had been appointed Subadar of Bengal by Aurangzeb, wanted to make his mark by bringing Cooch Behar and entire Assam under Mughal rule.¹⁰⁴ Mirjumla, directed by the Emperor, invaded Cooch Behar which had repudiated Mughal suzerainty(13th Dec, 1661 A.D).¹⁰⁵ Hearing the news of Mirjumla's advent, Prannarayan fled and sought refuge in

Bhutan hills. Cooch Behar was annexed to the Mughal Empire without resistance.¹⁰⁶ Coins were struck in Aurangzeb's name and the name of capital city was changed to Alamgirnagar.¹⁰⁷ Mirjumla, after conquering Cooch Behar, settled its revenue at 10 lakhs of Narayan rupees.¹⁰⁸ Having left an army under the command of Isfunder Beg, he next proceeded to conquer Assam.¹⁰⁹

During Mirjumla's absence, the peasants of Cooch Behar rose in revolt in 1662 against the Mughal revenue system introduced by Mirjumla. The reason behind the revolt was the new rules and regulations imposed by the Mughal officers for the collection of revenue.¹¹⁰ The Mughal revenue administration also demanded revenue in cash from the paik allotments in lieu of the traditional military service to the state.¹¹¹ The demand of revenue in cash might have antagonised the peasants of Cooch Behar against the Mughal rule. Moreover, there was some sort of slackness prevailing in the collection of revenue under the weak Koch rule. As a result, the peasants joined hands with the dethroned ruler Prannarayan when he came down the plains and with their help the Koch raja succeeded in recovering the throne of Cooch Behar.¹¹²

Following Mirjumla's death in 1663, Shaista Khan was appointed Subadar (Governor) of Bengal. Shaista Khan modified Mirjumla's forward policy.¹¹³ When he reached Rajmahal in March 1664, the Koch raja Prannarayan submitted to him.¹¹⁴ He patched up an agreement with the Koch ruler. The raja reaffirmed his submission to the Mughal Emperor, and agreed to pay an indemnity of five and half lakhs of rupees.¹¹⁵ The tribute of the Koch raja reached the imperial court on the 6th Dec, 1665, and thus Cooch Behar became once again a vassal kingdom.¹¹⁶

During the reign of the minor Maharaja Mahindranarayan, great grandson of Prannarayan,¹¹⁷ there appeared a sort of anarchy in the Koch kingdom due to the ambitions of the sons of Nazir Deo Mahinarayan.¹¹⁸ The young Maharaja practically became helpless. Officers of the distant territories of the kingdom assumed independence. The Mughals, commanded by Ibadat Khan invaded the kingdom from Ghoraghat and the districts one after another fell into their hands.¹¹⁹ Chhatra Nazir Yajnanarayan opposed the Mughals but in vain. The Mughals occupied the central chaklas of Fatepur, Kazirhat and Kakina. The officers in charge of Tapa, Monthona, Jhori and some other parganas became traitors and paid tributes to the Mughal Subadar of Bengal, and became Zamindars by obtaining sanads in their own names. Panga and Baikunthapur also changed their allegiance to the Mughals and paid tribute to them.¹²⁰ However, the attempt of the Mohammedans to occupy the chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purvabhag was not successful.¹²¹ It should be mentioned here that with the death of Mahindranarayan the main line of kings had become extinct, and the next Maharaja Rupnarayan became the founder of the next line of kings, who were descended from the first Nazir Mahinnarayan's family.¹²²

The Koch kingdom regained its independence during the time of Maharaja Rupnarayan¹²³ After a long and

intense struggle with the Mughals centering the chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purvabhag, a treaty was concluded between the Maharaja and the Mughals in 1711 A.D. By this treaty these chaklas were nominally ceded to the Mohommedans. Bu these were taken in ijara (farm) in the name of Nazir Shantanarayan on behalf of the Maharaja as it was thought to be derogatory for an independent king to be a vassal of the Mughals.¹²⁴ These chaklas are called ' Moglan', for these were in the possession of the Mughals.¹²⁵

Henceforth, friendly relations was established between Cooch Behar and the Nawab of Bengal. The Koch Raja sent an Ukil(ambassador) to the Durbar of Nawab Murshiid Kuli Khan ' with Nuzzir and Peish kush'. Possibly Rupnarayan held three chaklas, i.e. Boda , Patgram and Putvabhag as a Zamindar under the Mughals, hence a Nuzzir and peshkush were presented to the Nawab.¹²⁶ Rupnarayan was the last king of the Koch kingdom who held sway over western Kamarupa. After his reign the extent of this kingdom was confined practically to the boundaries of the modern Cooch Behar State.¹²⁷

During the reign of Upendranaraan, the son and sucessor of Rupnarayan,¹²⁸ the Mughal Fouzdar of Rangpur invaded Cooch Behar at the instigation of the Maharaja's adopted son Dinararaan . A battle was ensued between the Mughals and the Maharaja's army, in which the latter was defeated. Cooch Behar fell to the Mughal fouzdar who installed Dinarayan in the throne in 1736.¹²⁹ Upendranarayan went underground and sought the military help of the Devraja of Bhutan to regain his kingdom. He succeeded in doing this two years later in 1738, with a combined force of Bhutanese and Koch armies by defeating the Mughals¹³⁰ who fled towards Rangpur. Dinarayan died in exile. The Bhutanese assistance in the war with the Mughals strengthened their connection with, and enhanced their influence in the Koch kingdom.¹³¹

As has been noticed in the 17th century, the Koch kingdom became weak due to the successive Mughal intrusions. The highest authorities in the kingdom were the king, the Nazir and the Dewan Deo. The rivalry between the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo in the 18th century, internal disorder, incapacity and weakness of the ruler to maintain his position, all these contributed towards weakening the royal authority and let loose the forces of disruption in the kingdom.¹³² During this period of turmoil some ambitious personalities wanted to put forward their respective claim as the actual ruler of Cooch Behar, and with this aim in view they also issued coins in their respective names. Even Raikats of Baikunthapur became virtually independent and even tried to capture power in Cooch Behar.¹³³ Owing to the weakness of the kingdom, the neighbouring State Bhutan was anxious to establish her supremacy over Cooch Behar. Bhutan's sustained interest in the affairs of Cooch Behar centred on ensuring her hold on the western Duars.¹³⁴ we learn from Pemberton that there were total eleven Bhutan Duars on the Bengal Frontier. There were struggles between Cooch Behar and Bhutan¹³⁵ spreading over about three or four hundred years ago for supremacy in the Duars.¹³⁵

Territorial expansion convinced the Bhutanese that their hold over the Duars could not be retained without extending their political hegemony over Cooch Behar. As has been noticed above, the Bhutanese made their political influence supreme in Cooch Behar from the time of Upendranarayan.¹³⁷ A representative of the Dev Raja of Bhutan along with an armed contingent resided at the capital of Cooch Behar. All important decisions of the kingdom had to be taken with the concurrence of the Bhutanese representative.¹³⁸ Bhutanese interference in the internal matters of Cooch Behar became a permanent feature.¹³⁹

It is during the reign of the minor Devendranarayan, the son and successor of Upendranarayan that the Subadar of Bengal lost their authority and the Diwani of Bengal, Behar and Orissa was conferred on the East India Company by Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor of Delhi on the 12th August, 1765 A.D. The revenue for the chaklas, hitherto paid to the Subadar, was henceforth transferred to the Company.¹⁴⁰

Devendranarayan was assassinated in 1765 at the instigation of Ramananda Goswami, the royal priest of Cooch Behar. On hearing this news Dev Raja caused Ramananda Goswami to be seized and dragged him to Punakha, the capital of Bhutan, where he was put to death.¹⁴¹ Penu Toma was appointed as the Bhutanese representative and sent to the Cooch Behar court with a company of soldiers. He began to interfere unnecessarily in the affairs of the kingdom.¹⁴²

Devendranarayan was succeeded by Dhairyendranarayan, a cousin of the deceased king.¹⁴³ But with the support of the Bhutanese, the leading man in the kingdom was the Dewan Deo Ramnarayan. The king and his officers gradually became apprehensive of the Dewan Deo's growing power. The animosity between them reached to such a point that the Dewan Deo was treacherously murdered by the king in 1769.¹⁴⁴ The murder of the Dewan Deo was considered an affront to the authority of Bhutan, who by turn seized Dhairyendranarayan and the new Dewan Deo under a plot¹⁴⁵ during the annual feast at Chechakhata in 1770 and carried them first to Buxa and then to Punakha and kept them in confinement.¹⁴⁶ The Bhutanese raised Dhairyendranarayan's brother Rajendranarayan to the throne, during whose reign Penu Toma became all powerfull in the affairs of Cooch Behar, and the Bhutanese rule was practically introduced in the kingdom.¹⁴⁷ When Rajendranarayan died a premature death in 1772 after a nominal reign of two years, The problem of succession became acute.¹⁴⁸

The Bhutanese made a fresh attempt to put Bijendranarayan, the son of late Dewan Ramnarayan on the throne of Cooch Behar. But Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan installed Dharendranarayan, the son of captive king Dhairjendranarayan, in the throne against the wishes of the Bhutanese authorities.¹⁴⁹ Devraja took the matter as a serious breach of authority by the Nazir Deo¹⁵⁰ and as an immediate measure sent a strong contingent of Bhutanese army under the command of Jimpe to invade Cooch Behar. A battle ensued, in which the Nazir Deo was defeated and

driven out of the country. The Bhutanese captured the entire country, and there was little chance of salvaging the seized kingdom.¹⁵¹

At this stage Nazir Deo in consultation with other dignitaries of the state approached the English East India Company on behalf of the minor king for its help to drive out the Bhutanese forces.¹⁵² The Governor-General Warren Hastings responded promptly and the Company was involved in the affairs of Cooch Behar.¹⁵³ By interfering in the affairs of the kingdom, the Company wanted to secure the northern boundary which was hitherto confined to Rangpur. The disturbance in Cooch Behar posed a great menace to the Company's possession in the north. This consideration compelled Hastings to involve in the affairs of Cooch Behar.¹⁵⁴ Accordingly the Anglo-Koch treaty was concluded on the 5th April, 1773 A.D.¹⁵⁵ By this treaty Cooch Behar acknowledged the suzerainty of the East India Company and agreed to pay the Company one-half of its annual revenues.¹⁵⁶

After the signing of the Anglo-Koch treaty four companies of British army under Captain Jones were sent to Cooch Behar. In the battle that followed Bhutan was defeated and Devraja sought the good office of Teshoo lama of Tibet and through his mediation the war with Bhutan came to an end by the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty which was concluded on the 25th April 1774 AD.¹⁵⁷ By this treaty the Bhutanese agreed to pay the Company an annual tribute of five Tangan horses, to deliver up the captive Raja Dhairyendranarayan, and never to make any incursion into British territory.¹⁵⁸ As a result of the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty of 1774 A.D. The supremacy of Bhutan in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar came to an end.¹⁵⁹

Being situated at the north-eastern part of Bengal Cooch Behar was strategically important as it seemed to perform the role of a buffer state between Bhutan and the Company's administered Bengal.¹⁶⁰ Within a few years after obtaining the Dewani of Bengal in 1765, the Company's interference in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar had some obvious reasons. In the first instance, as mentioned earlier, it was guided by political interest of the British, i.e. the protection of the northern flank of the Company's expanding empire in Bengal.¹⁶¹ The control over the administration and exertion of influence over this little kingdom became one of the objectives of the British Imperialism.¹⁶²

The Political interest was further strengthened with the commercial interest of the Company.¹⁶³ During this period the political turmoil in Nepal forced the Company to open trade routes to Tibet through Bhutan, Assam and Cooch Behar.¹⁶⁴ Naturally the annexation of Cooch Behar by Bhutan would have been hindrance to the commercial interest of the Company. Hence, to obtain free access of trade-routes with Bhutan became necessary.¹⁶⁵ Besides, the East India Company was also embarrassed by the activities of the Sannyasis who were posing a threat to the peace and security of the neighbouring areas of Cooch Behar. The problem to subdue the Sannyasi rebellion became a concern of the British. Thus we notice that when the treaty with Bhutan was concluded in 1774 a condition regarding

the Sannyasis was included.¹⁶⁶

As has been noticed earlier, political relation between Cooch Behar and East India Company began with the conclusion of the Anglo-Koch treaty of 1773¹⁶⁷ and by virtue of this treaty Cooch Behar became a tributary state. W.W. Hunter observed that " It is noteworthy that the half of the revenue to be paid to the English Government, is clearly marked out as a tribute and not as tax,"¹⁶⁸ It was also admitted that although Cooch Behar made a partial surrender of its right, the kingdom maintained its independence unimpaired in its domestic administration.¹⁶⁹ Its ruler was left in possession of the two great marks of sovereignty, the right of coining money and the administration of justice.¹⁷⁰

At the beginning of the Company's relation with Cooch Behar, the third article of the treaty of 1773 which envisaged the complete subjection of Cooch Behar under the Company's domination in India was not properly implemented. Because the Company was entirely engaged at this stage in extending their sphere of influence in other parts of India.¹⁷¹ Apart from this, the ruler of Cooch Behar exhibited loyalty to the Company and fulfilled the conditions of the said treaty, particularly the payment of tribute with which the Company was mainly concerned.¹⁷²

After having seen released in 1774 from confinement Dhairyendranarayan returned to Cooch Behar and in a state of melancholy declined to ascend the throne.¹⁷³ He has bitter with the Nazir Deo on hearing the terms of Anglo-Koch treaty whereby the sovereignty of the kingdom had been suffered. He relinquished the throne in favour of his son Dharendranarayan who had already been on it during his confinement in Bhutan.¹⁷⁴ But sudden a death of Dharendranarayan compelled the reluctant, old Maharaja to assume the royalty for a second term in. 1775 A.D.¹⁷⁵ But he was preoccupied with religion¹⁷⁶ and appeared to be the dejure ruler.¹⁷⁷ The administration of the kingdom ultimately passed into the hands of the Maharani Kamateswari Devi and her agent Sarbananda Goswami, who gradually held the authority in the administration.¹⁷⁸

During the year 1780 the money payment agreed on under the treaty of 1773, was changed to a fixed annual tribute of Rs. 67,700 -15-9 on the strength of the 'Hastabund' of the revenue prepared by Mr. Charles Purling, the collector of Rangur.¹⁷⁹ In the meantime the boundaries of Cooch Behar were fixed by a treaty (1777 A.D.) by which the area of the territory forming the state of modern Cooch Behar was whittled down to 1317 square miles.¹⁸⁰

Dhairyendranarayan died in 1783 leaving his son Harendranarayan still infant, as heir to the royal throne.¹⁸¹ During the period from 1783 to 1789, Cooch Behar fell into prolonged political trouble arising out of the rivalry between two parties one led by the Rajguru Sarbananda Goswami and another by the Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan.¹⁸² The Rajguru conspired to deprive the Nazir Deo of his traditional right to nine anna share to the state revenue which he would enjoy for maintaining an army for the protection of the kingdom.¹⁸³ On the other hand, the Nazir Deo on behalf

of whom the Anglo-Koch treaty was concluded himself wanted to control the state affairs, and tried to oppose the Rajguru from enjoying unlimited powers.¹⁸⁴ He seized the 'royal seal' and proclaimed his son 'Yuvaraj'.¹⁸⁵ At the exigency of the situation, the Collector of Rangpur intervened and finally restored the 'Royal seal' to the Maharaja. But the trouble did not come to an end and the palace conspiracy continued in an unabated manner.¹⁸⁶

As has been mentioned earlier, during this period Cooch Behar and the neighbouring districts witnessed Sannyasi and Fakir rebellion.¹⁸⁷ which, according to some scholars, was the first peasant upsurge of India against the foreign rule. The Sannyasis and Fakirs were none other than the impoverished and exploited peasantry who rose in revolt to save themselves from the oppression of the English East India Company.¹⁸⁸ The general economic distress and political instability drove homeless and uprooted people in large numbers to join Hindu and Muslim groups of religious Mendicants – Sannyasis or Fakirs – who formed large communities and lived from beggary.¹⁸⁹ Atis Dasgupta has shown their (the Sannyasis and the Fakirs) recalcitrance in coming to terms with the new, alien ruling class after the violent social fluxes following the "chhiyattarer Manvantar" were over. The Sannyasis were once distributed widely over the north bank of the lower Gangetic plain as an autonomous force, acting as points of alternative authority in local society.¹⁹⁰ Stephen Fuchs has remarked that 'The Sannyasi rebellion prepared this people of Bengal mentally for the messianic movements which were to arise in near future in Bengal in great numbers.¹⁹¹ It explains also why this movements became so violent in Bengal, and took such a decisive aversion to the British.

The origin of the Sannyasi rebellion can be traced to the introduction of colonial rule in Bengal in 1757 and British acquisition of Diwani Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the East India Company, the introduction of the dual administration in Bengal and the consequent exploitation by the servants of the Company. All these events paved the way for the severe famine that visited Bengal and Bihar in the year 1770.¹⁹² The main thrust of the East India Company, particularly after the assumption of 'Diwani' in 1765, was to increase the land revenue of the province (in fact, between 1765-66 and 1768-69 collections of land revenue increased by 53.8 percent) and to enhance the company's investment in India. Thus the drain of bullion along with one-way export of materials by the Company affected badly the traditional world of trade and manufacture of cotton, silk and other items of commerce in Bengal. Then colonial inroads into the economic base of Bengal, coupled with natural disaster and crop failure, resulted in the devastating famine of 1769-70, which wiped out one third of the population of the province. These desperate events provided a natural base for the insurgency.¹⁹³ N.K. Sinha has mentioned that the famine of 1770 was an appalling spectre on the threshold of British rule in Bengal.¹⁹⁴ A tragic picture of this severe famine was presented by W.W. Hunter in his book 'Annals of Rural Bengal'.¹⁹⁵ Although the British had made responsible for famine of 1770 for the uncommon drought in Bengal and Bihar. But the plunder and exaction by the British were no less responsible for this famine. It may be noted that in spite of the severity of the famine, the collection of revenue had increased during this period.¹⁹⁶ During the

famine when almost 35 percent of the whole population and 50 percent of the cultivators perished, not even 5 percent of the land revenue was remitted, and 10 percent was added to it for the ensuing year(1770-1771).¹⁹⁷

Cooch Behar and few other adjoining areas were not affected by the famine.¹⁹⁸ But like other parts of Bengal, the people of Cooch Behar greatly suffered from the oppression of Devi Singh who employed the sazawals for collection of revenue from Cooch Behar and of the Maharaja who also used to collect revenue for himself from the same peasants. The collecting officers of the Maharaja were skilled in oppressing the ryots.¹⁹⁹ Another class of collectors known as farmers also used to oppress the peasants.²⁰⁰ Large portions of lands had been alienated, a variety of new taxes introduced, and every species of abuse committed in the collection of the revenues.²⁰¹ Besides, money-sending business of sepoy and officers of the company with an exorbitant rate of interest had worsened the economic condition of the peasantry.²⁰²

The peasants of Rangpur and Cooch Behar like other parts of Bengal rose in revolt against the oppressive rule. In 1783 A.D., the rebellious peasants of Kazirhat, Kakina, Tapa, and Fatehpur chaklas proclaimed Nuruddin as their Nawab and Dayasil as his dewan. They appealed to the peasants of Dinajpur and Cooch Behar to rise in revolt and accept Nuruddin as their Nawab.²⁰³ During this period Cooch Behar was raided by the Bhutanese and further was weakened by internal feuds and dissensions in the royal family. Owing to political instability and external intrusions the upsurge of the peasants took a different shape. In Cooch Behar the Sannyasis along with the peasants having taken the side of Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan, attempted to seize the political power of the state. It is to be noted that the Nazir Deo employed the Sannyasis in his struggle against the Maharaja²⁰⁴

Mercenary features of the Sannyasis came into focus during their involvement in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar and Assam. As has been noticed earlier, the murder of Maharaja Devendranarayan in 1765 gave birth to quarrels over the royal succession in Cooch Behar which were aggravated by the conflicts between two hereditary high officials, the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo. Both the parties had initially taken help from the Sannyasis till Khagendra Narayan, the Nazir Deo, sought assistance from the Collector of Rangpur. The Cooch Behar State became a tributary to the Company by a treaty in 1773 and the Sannyasis employed by Khagendra Narayan were dismissed, while those in the pay of the Dewan Deo were defeated by the English. Peace was concluded at the intervention of the Tashu Lama with the Raja of Bhutan who agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar. When the imprisoned Maharaja Dhairyendranarayan was reinstalled, the administration was, in fact, placed in hands of Maharani Kanteswari and Sarbananda, her spiritual guide. The Nazir Deo Khagendra was opposed to them. When minor Harendranarayan succeeded to the throne after the death of old Maharaja, the Nazir Deo seized the opportunity to regain his powers. The Maharani sought the aid from the Collector of Rangpur to set aside the Nazir Deo's claims. The Nazir Deo was temporally driven out with the help of the Company's sepoy.²⁰⁵

At this time Moamaria, a Vaisnava sect of people arose in revolt against the Ahom ruler and the rebellious groups had connection with the Nazir Deo.²⁰⁶ The Nazir Deo also collected some Sannyasi troops under one Ganesh Giri from Rangamati region of Assam.²⁰⁷ Thus Nazir Deo had strengthened his position by maintaining good relations not only with the Sannyasis but also with the rebellious peasants in the garb of Moamaria of the Brahmaputra Valley

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The Nazir Deo however bided his times, and in 1787, broke in out in revolt with support of mercenary Sannyasis who were now led by Ganesh Giri. Sarbananda, spritual guide wrote to Mc Dowell, the Collector of Rangpur, in June, 1787, "How shall I represent the alarms created by Khagendra Narayan?" The Nazir Deo "has procured three thousand rupees in ready money and bullion which has been given to Ganesh Giri Sannyasi . I have learnt that the said Giri has collected between five and seven hundred men at Balarampur with evil intention against my principal (Maharani).²⁰⁹ In the same month the Sannyasis led by Ganesh Giri and the Barkandazes headed by Dangur Deo, the elder brother of Khagendra Narayan, entered Cooch Behar and seized the Raja, the Rani and Maharani in the palace, looted the properties of the palace and then carried the members of the royal family to Balarampur, a place where the Nazir Deo had a permanent residence ²¹⁰ and kept them under the charge of Sannyasis who exacted various terms on the threats of violence.²¹¹ Even the Sajawals were driven out of Tufanganj by the Sannyasis.²¹²

In this crisis the Rajguru Sarbananda Goswami on behalf of the Raja sought the aid of the British Government which responded to this appeal by sending a detachment of troops to Balarampur.²¹³ In July 1787, the Collector of Rangpur requested Lt. Hill, commanding a detachment of sepoy, to proceed immediately to Cooch Behar to ensure safety of royal family.²¹⁴ Duncanson joined the advancing army in August, 1787 and ultimately defeated the Sannyasis at Tufangunj,²¹⁵ and from Rampur Captain Rotton advanced to Cooch Behar and on 27th august , 1787 informed the Collector that he had " got the pocession of the person of the Raja and Rani " In communicating the news to the Governor-General, the Collector of Rangpur wrote, " the Head Sannyasi Ganesh Giri who is taken prisoner ought to be punished in the most exemplary manner as a warning , to the whole drive of Fakirs from whom Nazir Deo derived principal support" .²¹⁶ After the suppression of the Sannyasi and Fakir rebellion, Maharani Kameswari having returned to power confiscated all the lands belonging to the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo.²¹⁷

It should be noted that the special role of the Sannyasis as mercenary soldiers did not diminish easily. They might have suffered setback in Bengal after the defeat in the battles of royal succession in Cooch Behar, but the armed Sannyasis continued to flourish in other provinces of India till the early decades of the 19th century.²¹⁸

The political disturbances in Cooch Behar not only disrupted the state administration but also affected

adversely its revenue collection. "The harassed and oppressed riots were obliged to leave their native country and the revenue fell to a low ebb in consequence of this."²¹⁹ So both the questions of political disturbances and the fall of the revenue in the subsequent years provided the background for the Company's intervention into the affairs of the state. Taking account of the distracted state of Cooch Behar and the claims of both the rival parties.²²⁰ the Government of Lord Cornwallis in a resolution dated the 2nd April 1788 appointed a commission with Messers Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis Chauvet to " report on the pretensions of the rival parties and on various other subjects connected with the state of the country and on the mode in which the British influence should be exercised for its better management in future."²²¹ The commissioners submitted their report on the 10th December, 1788 recommending full sovereignty in favour of the King, setting aside the claims of the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo share in the Raj as well as the claims of the Zamindars of the chaklas but guaranting small concession to them. The Commissioners also recommended for the appointment of a Commissioner or Resident at Cooch Behar for superintending the affairs of the state during the minority of the Maharaja. The English Government accepted the recommendations of the Commissioners and accordingly appointed Henry Douglas as the commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1789.²²² Thus a new chapter began in the history of the Cooch Behar State.

Henry Douglas supplanted the authority of the Rani and her minister Sarbananda Goswami.²²³ and conducted the state affairs in the name of the minor Maharaja.²²⁴ He made efforts chiefly in reforming the land revenue administration of the state. Douglas was succeeded by Mr. Charles Andrew Bruce in 1791, and the latter by Mr. W.T. Smith in 1795, who made over to Mr. Richard Ahmuty in 1797.²²⁵ During the period from 1789 to 1800 under the British Commissioners no remarkable improvement was visible in any sphere other than that of revenue administration in Cooch Behar. Thus the condition of the kingdom remained as it was before the advent of the British Commissioners.²²⁶

Anglo- Koch relations entered a new phase in 1801 when Harendranarayan attained maturity and assumed the reins of Government.²²⁷ Harendranarayan wanted to rule according to customary fashion and with powers as exercised by his ancestors before. Accordingly, he demanded the withdrawal of the Commissioner from the state as it was settled in 1773.²²⁸ Consequently the Commissioner was removed from the state.²²⁹ With the coming of the Governor general Lord Wellesley, the Government pursued an aggressive policy towards Cooch Behar. The Government of Wellesley adopted a new interpretation of the Anglo-Koch treaty and mentioned in 1802 A.D. that " terms of the third article of the treaty concluded between this Government and the late Rajah in the year 1773 would warrant the 'conclusions, that it was the intention of the contracting parties that the country of Cooch Behar should be ceded in complete sovereignty to the Hon'ble Company. It appears, however, that a much more limited interpretation has been annexed to the conditions of the treaty."²³⁰ As a result there arose conflict on several occasions regarding the nature of relation between the Maharaja and the English Government .²³¹

In January 1803, Francis Pierard was appointed a Commissioner in order to make in concert with the Raja the necessary arrangements for the collection of the revenue and the administration of justice and for the adoption of an efficient system of police in the state of Cooch Behar.²³² But it was due to the Raja's strong resentment to the appointment of the said Commissioner, the latter was removed.²³³

The presence of the Commissioner at Cooch Behar had restrained the authority of the Raja. With the withdrawal of the commissioner all checks were removed and the works of the administration had all along been performed by the native officers, as a result of which many of the old abuses crept into the Government of the Kingdom.²³⁴ Due to the chaotic condition prevailing in the Kingdom, the administration became loose and the revenue collection fell to an alarming state.²³⁵

As a remedial measure the English Government made a fresh attempt to intervene in the internal administration of Cooch Behar when they appointed John French as Commissioner in 1805 with a view to introducing tribunals on the British mode. Once again the attempt was unsuccessful due to the opposition of the Maharaja.²³⁶ In the same year the English Government abolished the separate office of a Resident Commissioner in Cooch Behar and the duty of executing British Policy in the native state was vested in the Collector of Rangur.²³⁷ During the period between 1805 and 1813 three successive Collectors of Rangur, Archibald Montgomery, James Morgan and John Digby were ex-officio Commissioners of Cooch Behar who carried on their duties connected with the state from Rangur.²³⁸

As consequence of the criminal charges lodged by the Dewan Deo against the Raja, Mr. Digby, the Collector of Rangur, was sent to Cooch Behar with a view to investigating into the charges and putting an end to the disputes between the contending parties. Digby accompanied by his Dewan Rammohan Roy (later well known as Raja Rammohan Roy) came to meet the Raja in 1812 at the new capital near Bhetaguri. But the Raja did not meet Digby who in turn complained against the former to the higher authority.²³⁹ This incident made the English Government furious. It led the English Government to assert its paramount rights to interfere in the internal administration of Cooch Behar.²⁴⁰

Accordingly the post of the Resident Commissioner was revived and Norman MacLeod was appointed the Commissioner of Cooch Behar in August 1813.²⁴¹ The initial co-operation between Macleod and the Raja did not last long. In 1815 Macleod accused the Raja of having involved in secret conspiracy with the Soubah of Buxa and Chamurchi in Bhutan Duars against the Company.²⁴² But the accusations against the Raja were proved baseless and the Government took the Commissioner to task for allowing himself to be carried away by false reports and rumours.²⁴³ Henceforth the English Government withdrew their policy of interfering in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar and resolved in 1816 " to abstain from all interference except in the form of advice and representation, in the unlimited management

of the affairs of Cooch Behar , and to restrict the power of the commissioner to the exercise of diplomatic functions."²⁴⁴

The British Government felt the need to appoint a new Commissioner in the changed situation following their liberal policy towards Cooch Behar.²⁴⁵ Mac Leod was shortly after recalled and made over charge of his office to David Scott in 1816 , Scott was appointed Agent to the Governor-General , on the North-East Frontier in 1822 and Cooch Behar affairs came under the jurisdiction of his office.²⁴⁶ Since then the post of Resident Commissioner was abolished,²⁴⁷ The Governor-General's Agent had his office at Goalpara and rarely visited Cooch Behar. Scott was succeeded by T.C. Robertson in 1830, who in his turn made over charge to Captain Jenkins in 1834. Jenkins made his first report on Cooch Behar after visiting the state in 1838. His conciliatory approach towards Cooch Behar was so much appreciated by the Raja and his officials that he did much to eradicate the ill-feeling which was existed between the Raja and the Company's Government. ²⁴⁸

The issue over the right of coining of Narayani rupees became a bone of conflict between the Raja and the East India Company. The Company's government decided to stop the coining of Narayani mudra in Cooch Behar²⁴⁹ in order to introduce Sicca and Farukkabad coins which was the chief medium of exchange in the areas directly governed by the Company.²⁵⁰ In stopping the Narayani coin, the Company put forward their argument on the basis of the treaty (1773) in which the right of coinge was not acknowledged.²⁵¹ Though the coining of Narayani mudra continued at intervals under several of the Commissioners appointed during the Raja's minority, but it was discontinued in 1800 by order of the Company's Government, apparently as a temporary measure.²⁵²

On the other hand the Raja was firm in reviving the right of minting the Narayani money. He made two attempts to revive this right first in 1805 and then in 1821. In 1821 he wrote to the Company's authority that "the stopping of Narayani coin would be derogatory to his dignity and injurious to the state's agricultural and commercial interests. At the same time this would lead the trade with Bhutan to a halt, as the coin was the main medium of exchange".²⁵³ But the attempts of the Raja were not only unheeded by the Company, at the same time the Company informed the Collector of Rangpur to ask the Raja not to make further request in this respect. The Collector of Rangpur who had been in charge of Cooch Behar reported that " with regard to the effects of an altered currency upon the inhabitants of Cooch Behar, it would not be injurious to the interests of Cooch Behar." ²⁵⁴

But as long as the Raja was alive, the Company's Government could not make Farukkabad and Company's currencies as legal tenders in Cooch Behar. The Raja also paid the state's tribute to Rangpur in Narayani coins.²⁵⁵ The Company's Government tolerated the insolvent attitude of the Raja in consideration of his age and the request of Colonel Jenkins the Company's Agent in North East Frontier.²⁵⁶ It took some few more years when the Cooch Behar mint was finally stopped in 1845.²⁵⁷ The Company played a more active role over the succession issue which had

developed towards the closing years of Raja Harendranarayan. The Company's intention was to break the internal harmony among the inheritors to the throne. This is revealed from the fact that while Harendranarayan wanted his son Brojendranarayan to inherit throne,²⁵⁸ the Company favoured the claim of Shivendranarayan over the throne of Cooch Behar.²⁵⁹ Thus over the question of succession the Raja's will was thwarted by the intervention of the Company.²⁶⁰

Hence the reign of Raja Harendranarayan was marked by the clash of interests between the authority of the Raja and the paramount power of the British Government. Neither the British Government did give up in exercising the paramount authority over this small state nor the Maharaja did yield to the British Government. The real cause of the Raja's opposition to the interference of the Company in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar in the name of introducing reforms was to keep his independent status before his subjects. This has been clearly expressed in the letter of the Raja to the Governor-General dated the 8th August 1803.²⁶¹ The Raja wrote that "My Lord, when my relation, dependents, servants and subjects shall be amenable to civil and criminal courts established by the company, where will be my dignity and authority?"²⁶²

It was during the reign of Raja Harendranarayan that ' the question whether Cooch Behar should gradually pass into a zamindari of Bengal arose more than once. It was greatly due to the representation of the Raja that it was still a feudatory state, uncontrolled in its internal administration, and having a constitution independent of foreign interference'.²⁶³ The glamour of Anglo-Koch relation ended with the passing away of Raja Harendranarayan in 1839.²⁶⁴ Thereafter Cooch Behar became a friendly state to the British Government. At the same time the kingdom was gradually brought under the complete subjugation of the company during this period.

Shivendranarayan succeeded to the throne and the succession was recognized by the British Government on 28th August, 1839.²⁶⁵ However at the very beginning of his reign, Cooch Behar was plagued with the succession problem. Shivendranarayan's succession was challenged by his younger brothers particularly Brojendranarayan and Yogendranarayan. They took clue from their late father Harendranarayan, who never liked his eldest son to become his successor.²⁶⁶ and wished to supersede him by his third son Brojendranarayan.²⁶⁷ Macleod, Scott, and Jenkins informed the British Government at different times about the unfavourable attitude of Harendranarayan to Shivendranarayan.²⁶⁸ The two princes Brojendranarayan and Yogendranarayan accused Raja Shivendranarayan of being an illegitimate offspring of Harendranarayan and thereby he forfeited any claim to the throne.²⁶⁹ Prince Yogendranarayan raised his claim to the throne with the support of the influential persons of the palace and sent a representation to the Governor-General. But the British Government did not give ear to their allegations and acknowledged Shivendranarayan as the rightful successor to the throne.²⁷⁰

This rivalry over the issue of succession offered a scope to the Company to interfere directly into the affair

of the state and resolve the issue in favour of Shivendranarayan.²⁷¹ For the first time the question of succession over the throne of Cooch Behar had been settled by a foreign Company's Government. The British colonial policy to bring Cooch Behar under complete subordination had been successful on two basic grounds: (i) The Raja had been a nominee of the Company who had proved to be man liked by the Company, (ii) The internal crisis and the discontent among the nobility on the issue of succession helped the Company to interfere into the whole affairs of Cooch Behar under the active patronage of Raja Shivendranarayan who wanted to strengthen his throne with the Company's support.²⁷² Shivendranarayan after assuming the ruling power devoted his attention to the internal administration of the kingdom and established a Dharma Sabha for the discussion of the affairs of the kingdom.²⁷³

Shivendranarayan inherited a deplorable economy from his late father whose extravagance engendered a heavy financial crisis and the state treasury suffered in consequence of it.²⁷⁴ By a careful observance of the conduct of the revenue officers and a regulation of his expenses, he succeeded in clearing off all the arrears of tribute payable to the British and freed himself entirely from the private debts that his father bequeathed him.²⁷⁵ Shivendranarayan introduced innovative reforms in the judiciary by establishing two courts of the Naib Ahilkar and the Sudder Amin for the purpose of deciding criminal and civil cases. In 1840 the Rajshabha the highest court of Justice for the final adjudication of civil, revenue and criminal cases was intitated.²⁷⁶ W.W Hunter has remarked that "the cases were tried in much the same manner as in our provinces, and the Amlas were not inferior in capacity to the same officers like the courts, elsewhere."²⁷⁷ Shivendranarayan's personal interest in the prohibition of 'sati' evoked a favorable response from the British Government which in a letter to Jenkins, the political agent, dated the 15th March, 1841 admitted that '.... It is gratifying to the Government to find the Rajah so well disposed to conform in this respect to the benevolent intention of the British Government for the general abolition of this inhuman rite." As a result the prohibition of sati came into effect in the kingdom in 1849,²⁷⁸ just two years after the Raja's death

The issue of coining Narayani rupees arose once again in Shivendranarayan's reign. But the English Government categorically denied this right to the Raja. In this connection the English Government informed Jenkins, the Political Agent that "the government entirely approves of your having discouraged the desire of the Rajas of Cooch Behar to be allowed to issue any currency of his own, as that is a privilege which the Government cannot concede to him"²⁷⁹ A boundary dispute with Bhutan arose in Shivendranarayan's reign.²⁸⁰ The demarcation of the boundary between Bhutan and the Koch Kingdom settled in 1844. The dispute in Ksheti arose again when the Bhutanese had began to oppress the people of the kingdom.²⁸¹ Mr Campbell, Superintendent of Darjeeling on deputation in the Bhutan frontier, on whom the settlement of the dispute devolved, adjudged the disputed land as belonging to Cooch Behar and made it over to the kingdom in 1845.²⁸²

The Court of Directors of the Company have made the following remark about the reign of Shivendranarayan.

"It is highly probable that (as observed by Major Matthie and by Major Jenkins) the occasional visit of a British officer to Cooch Behar to exercise the customary right of inspecting the proceedings of the courts, and receiving complaints (which are referred to the Rajah) has a beneficial effect upon the administration of this petty principality. Although the Maharaja is said to be personally inattentive to business, 'the great increase of population and extension of cultivation', stated by Major Jenkins "to have taken place of late years in Cooch Behar, are conclusive proofs that there cannot be any considerable mis-government".²⁸³

As Raja Shivendranarayan had no male issue, he adopted with the sanction of the Governor-General Kumar Kabindranarayan, a grandson of late Nazir Khagendranarayan.²⁸⁴ But an untimely death of Kabindranarayan compelled the Raja to adopt Chandranarayan, son of his brother Brojendranarayan, who was renamed as Narendranarayan.²⁸⁵ After the death of Raja Shivendranarayan, Narendranarayan, still a lad, five or six years of age was installed on the throne on 23rd August, 1847.²⁸⁶ He was placed under the tutorship of Mr. Ralph More in accordance with the dying wish of the late Maharaja that his son should be educated in the English language under the care of the English government.²⁸⁷ But the Dewan and the Maharani were averse to the English Education of the young Raja.²⁸⁸ In spite of their opposition, the young Raja was first sent to Krishnanagar in 1853 to receive education in the collegiate school²⁸⁹ and finally sent to the Court of Wards Institution in Calcutta where he received education under the guardianship of Babu (afterwards Raja) Rajendra Lal Mitra, an anglicized intellectual of Calcutta. The Raja studied in Calcutta until he attained his majority at the age of eighteen in 1859.²⁹⁰

During the minority of Narendranarayan his natural father Brajendranarayan was the Sarbarakar of the kingdom and after his death in 1857, the Raja's adoptive mothers Kameswari and Brindeswari managed the affairs of the kingdom as regents.²⁹¹ It is during the minority of Narendranarayan that the Government of India placed the management of Cooch Behar under the jurisdiction of the Bengal Government in 1848.²⁹² The Agent to the Governor-General, North East Frontier, henceforth, came under the authority of the Bengal Government.²⁹³ However, all questions of an important political bearing had been referred to the Supreme Government.²⁹⁴ Narendranarayan after attaining majority in 1859 resumed the reins of the Government in his own hands and set himself in improving the state administration by the principles laid down by the Company.²⁹⁵

The Raja was influenced and guided by the British government to constitute a Sabha (council) known as 'Desh Hitaishini Sabha' to assist him.²⁹⁶ The nature of the composition of the 'sabha' reflects an oligarchic character. The personalities of different traits were nominated as members of the sabha such as landlords, leading aristocrats, intellectuals and businessmen of high standard. But this sabha was ultimately abolished even before the Raja's death.²⁹⁷ The intention of the British government was to streamline the Raja to the British control and supervision both from within and without. The internal control was exercised through loyal aristocrats and the external control was

through the constant vigilance of the British official.²⁹⁸

The boundary dispute with Bhutan flared up again. Bhutanese fresh aggression into the territory of Cooch Behar resulted in another enquiry made by Campbell who confirmed his previous decision in February, 1849.²⁹⁹ Besides a survey of the boundary between Cooch Behar and Bhutan was taken in hand by Captain Mathew under the orders of the government and the Deputy collector Mr. Bedford laid the boundary in 1851, But Bhutan did not respect this settlement of the boundary as before.³⁰⁰ As a result of which a series of Bhutanese incursions into Koch kingdom occurred in the following years.³⁰¹ Owing to the disturbances on the Bhutan frontier, trade and commerce with that country had stopped. When the Bhutanese ceased to commit frontier aggressions and their king Devraja extended friendship to the Koch king, trade and intercourse between the two kingdoms again reopened in 1863.³⁰²

A boundary dispute with Rangpur arose in 1850³⁰³ and the British government finally appointed Mr. Macdonald, Collector of Rangpur as Special Commissioner in July, 1859 to decide the disputed boundary between Cooch Behar and Rangpur, and to determine what lands constitute a portion of the district of Rangpur and what lands belong to Cooch Behar. Raja Narendranarayan was made acquainted with this appointment of a special commissioner.³⁰⁴ The award of Mr. Macdonald deciding the dispute was confirmed by the Government on the 8th May 1861. However, the objections raised by the Raja that his representations were ignored and the boundary was settled arbitrarily by the special commissioner were overruled by the British Government.³⁰⁵

During the reign of Raja Narendranarayana, a topographical survey was made in 1859 under J.G. Pemberton, Revenue Surveyor, whose map is considered as the first regular map of the state.³⁰⁶ In 1861, the Raja established an English school in the town of Cooch Behar, which he named 'Jenkins School' after Colonel Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General, North-East Frontier, who was a great friend to the Raja and a great benefactor of the state.³⁰⁷ It is well-known that the human practice of 'Sati' was prohibited in British India in 1829. But the prohibition of 'Sati' came into effect in Cooch Behar in 1849 by orders of the British Government.³⁰⁸

The reign of Narendranarayan was marked by the Great Revolt of 1857-59 which "was the first great and direct challenge to the British rule in India on an extensive scale"³⁰⁹ After the suppression of this revolt, the control of the Indian government was finally transferred from the Company to the Crown.³¹⁰ Henceforth the Indian states had to recognize the Paramountcy of the British Crown and were to be considered, as parts of a 'single charge'.³¹¹ Raja Narendranarayan had unquestionable allegiance to the British Government and rendered friendly help to the latter by taking stringent measures against the participants of the Great Revolt.³¹² In return for this assistance the British government granted a sanad to the Raja in 1862 "conferring on him and his successors in perpetuity the right of adoption, on failure of natural heirs on the condition of their remaining loyal to the Crown, faithful to their engagement

with the British Government.³¹³ In the same year the Government formally recognized the title of "Maharaja (Bhup) Bahadur" and granted Narendranarayan a sanad conferring upon him that distinction.³¹⁴ It has been said that during the reign of Narendranarayan "the general administration, though marked by occasional abuses, appears, on the whole, a fair specimen of native rule, and the great increase of the ryots are indicative of progress and well-being."³¹⁵

Accession of Nripendranarayan to the throne of Cooch Behar marked the beginning of an era of anglicization of the royal family in a full-fledged manner, which in turn signalled the era of the close collaboration between the Koch kings and the British Government.³¹⁶ Nripendranarayan, the son and successor of Narendranarayan, still a child of only six months,^{316*} was installed in the throne in 1863 by the Maharanis with the support of the chief officers of the state.³¹⁷ The succession was recognised by the British Government³¹⁸ on condition that the title 'Maharaja' would be conferred upon him when he attains majority.³¹⁹

Dissensions in the royal family and the fear of evil result arising therefrom provided an excuse to the British government to assume charge of the state during the minority of the Raja. The Government deputed Col. J.C. Haughton, Governor-General's Agent, North- East Frontier, to Cooch Behar as Commissioner in charge of the administration in 1864.³²⁰ Such a step was considered by the Government as the only means of effectually providing for the education of the young Raja, for the security of the tribute, and for the defense of the Bhutan frontier, for which the Government was responsible.³²¹ The Commissioner was vested with the full authority of the ruler of the state excepting some specified points. He exercised his duties in direct communication with the government and was not subjected to the control of the Governor - General's Agent for the North-East Frontier.³²² The British wanted to bring change in the affairs of the kingdom under the control of the Commissioner.³²³ When the Second Bhutan war broke out Col. Haughton was pre-occupied with this war and a Deputy Commissioner was appointed to assist Col. Haughton on the 14th November, 1864.³²⁴ Officers of both the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner continued till the year 1883 when the Raja resumed the ruling power of the kingdom in his own hands. The names of the successive Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners and their working periods have been given below.³²⁵

The Commissioners

1. Col. Haughton (1864 -73)
2. Sir W. Herschel (1874 -75)
3. F.R. Cockerell (1875 -76)
4. Lord Ulick Browne (1876 -83)

The Deputy Commissioners

1. Mr. H. Beveridge C. S. (1864 -66)
2. Mr. T. Smith (1866 - 75)
3. Captain Lewin (1875 -76)
4. J.G.B.T. Dalton (1876- 83)

The British Government had taken a plan to educate the minor Raja according to modern line of thought. The motive behind this was to project the Raja as the symbol of loyalty and allegiance.³²⁶ This policy had been pursued in relation to other princely states also, which enabled the British to hold over the princes in a single line of control and command.³²⁷ In accordance with the plan the young Raja was removed from Cooch Behar to the Wards of Institute at Benares where he remained till April 1872, when Mr. John Kneller was appointed his Tutor. The Raja afterwards joined the Patna Collegiate School where he prosecuted his studies for six years. Each winter the Raja visited Cooch Behar and associated there with his ministers, thereby gained a glimpse into the working of his state.³²⁸ When Nripendra narayan was sixteen years of age, troubles arose centering his higher education in London.³²⁹ The British Government confronted tremendous opposition from the ladies of the palace due to the fear of social ostracisation by the orthodox Hindus if Nripendra narayan would cross the black water.³³⁰

The British however persuaded the ladies of the palace after making promise that Nripendranarayan should be married before his visit to England.³³¹ Accordingly on the 6th March, 1878 he was married at Cooch Behar to Sunity Devi, the eldest daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen, the celebrated Brahmo reformer and founder of the New Dispensation Church.³³² Some scholars have suggested that the British acted as a catalyst to make Nripendranarayan marry Sunity Devi with the objective that the infusion of Brahma ideas through the mission of Keshab Chandra Sen in the palace of Cooch Behar would make the people of the state grateful to the British culture and loyal to the crown.³³³ and thus ensure the safe continuation of the British influence in the state.³³⁴

Immediately after the marriage Nripendranarayan proceeded to Europe and completed his education in England under the joint guardianship of Sir Benjamin Simpson, and Mr John Kneller.³³⁵ While in England he had the honour of being presented to the British Queen Victoria and the then Prince of Wales. Thus began an acquaintance which through successive visits had depended the loyalty and attachment to the throne of the British monarch.³³⁶ After having returned to Cooch Behar on the 3rd March 1879,³³⁷ the Raja joined the Presidency College as a law student and continued his study there until he attained majority.³³⁸ After the completion of his twenty first year Nripendranarayan was installed in the throne on the 8th November, 1883.³³⁹ The charge of the state was formally made over to the Raja by Sir Rivers Thompson, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.³⁴⁰ The coronation ceremony had its mixed repercussion. The contemporary Indian newspapers while hailing the assumption of ruling power by Nripendranarayan criti-

cized the British policy of appointing Mr. Gordon as the Superintendent of the State, on the plea that they wanted to make the Raja a puppet ruler.³⁴¹)

Nripendranarayan did not make any fundamental changes in the arrangements of administration that were introduced by the British administrators during his minority, though the division of authority and system of control underwent considerable changes.³⁴² Under a Memorandum of Administration framed by the Commissioner and adopted by the Raja on the 9th November, 1883 a Council of State was established. The Council consisted of the Raja as a President and three members namely the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and a Judicial Officers who were to be heads of the three departments of general administration, the administration of revenue and that of civil Justice respectively. In the absence of the Raja the Superintendent would act as Vice-President of the Council.³⁴³

As a result of the adoption of the Memorandum of Administration the position hitherto occupied by the British Government regarding the State was assumed by the Raja. The functions of the Commissioner were delegated to the State Council and those of the Deputy Commissioner divided among three officers, viz, the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and the Civil Judge.³⁴⁴ Henceforth three degrees of authorities were created in the state: first, the Raja the ruler of the state; secondly, the State Council, the main deliberative and controlling body and head of the judiciary and the Executive and thirdly, the Departmental Heads, the actual workers of the administration.³⁴⁵

In 1909, Nripendranarayan founded the State Legislative Council, ³⁴⁶ the members of which were nominated to represent different social, professional and business interests. It continued for nearly three decades to perform in defining a body of statute law adopted 'mutatis mutandis' from British Indian law.³⁴⁷ Absence of the populist style of functioning in the administration was the feature of the princely states at that time. Cooch Behar was also no exception. Although the State Council and the Legislative Council had been established during Nripendranarayan's reign, they lacked popular participatory character.³⁴⁸

As a loyal native chief, Nripendranarayan was ever ready to render military service to the British Government. When disturbances arose at Jalalabad Black Mountain or Chitral on the North Western Frontier, the Raja was the first to offer his personal services. Not only did he do this on the occasion of threatened outbreak of war with Russia in 1885, but also he expressed his desire to place one thousand troops at the disposal of the Government for garrisoning the Buxa Duars on the Bhutan Frontier.³⁴⁹ In acknowledging his offers Rivers Thompson, then Lt. Governor of Bengal wrote, "I am sure there is no native chief in the whole country upon whose loyal devotion to the British Government we could more certainly rely than yourself."³⁵⁰

Nripendranarayan took part in the Tirah campaign in 1897. In recognition of his services rendered in this expedition the Queen Victoria was pleased to create for the Raja a Companion of Bath.³⁵¹ Lord Elgin, the then Viceroy

also wrote "I express, on behalf of the Government of India, our appreciation of Your Highness' zeal and loyalty in these troubled times."³⁵² In 1899 the Raja again offered for military service in the Boer war but for political reasons the offer was not accepted.³⁵³ Though it was much appreciated.³⁵⁴ During Nripendranarayan's minority the state rendered considerable assistance in the Bhutan war of 1863 – 65, for which two guns were presented to the Raja by the British government.³⁵⁵

It is during the reign of Nripendranarayan that the Queen Victoria assumed the title of "Empress of India" with effect from the 1st January 1877 by the Act, 1876.³⁵⁶ This Act made the sovereign of England as the sovereign of Indian states as well. This brought the Indian states within the British empire and the rulers of the states were henceforth to be classed as vassals of the British sovereign.³⁵⁷ During the course of his study Nripendranarayan under the guidance of Lord Browne went to the Imperial Assemblage in Delhi 1877 on the occasion of the proclamation of the queen Victoria as Empress of India. On this occasion he was presented with a flag and medal.³⁵⁸ The Viceroy Lord Lytton whom Nripendranarayan met there also presented him a precious sword.³⁵⁹

As has been noticed earlier, the Rulers of Cooch Behar have borne the title of 'Maharaja (Bhup) Bahadur' and this was recognized as hereditary by the British Government in 1883.³⁶⁰ Nripendranarayan was appointed Honorary Major in the British army in 1883 and was attached to the 6th Bengal Cavalry.³⁶¹ In 1887 the Raja visited England on the occasion of the Jubilee of the reign of the Empress Victoria, with the Maharani and children. He was invested with the Insignia of the Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire by the British Queen herself in 1888. When conferring this honour the Queen Empress wrote to the Maharani Sunity Devi, "I am going to invest him (Maharaja) with the Grand Cross of the Indian Empire, and am much pleased to award thereby my respect and friendship for him"³⁶² On this occasion Sunity Devi was invested with the imperial order of the Crown of India.³⁶³

The Queen Victoria also agreed to offer herself as the God-mother of Prince Nityendranarayan, the son of Raja Nripendranarayan. Owing to this bond with the Queen Empress the young prince was named Victor Nityendranarayan.³⁶⁴ The Raja was appointed honorary Aide-di-camp to the then Prince of Wales and was invested with the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army in 1887.³⁶⁵

Raja Nripendranarayan was present with the Maharani Sunity Devi at the Coronation of the King Emperor in 1902 and appointed Aide-di-camp to the King Emperor Edward VII with the rank of Colonel in the army. The Raja was one of most conspicuous figures as he rode in the procession to Westminster Abbey as A.D.C. to the King Emperor.³⁶⁶ He also occupied a position of honour as a Bengal Ruling Chief at the Delhi Darbar on January first, 1903.³⁶⁷

(In the meantime, the Indian National Congress was established in 1885. The leadership of the Congress

consisted, in its early stages, of liberal intelligentsia. The liberals were friendly to the princes and wanted to preserve the princely order. The Congress or its leaders felt that the British Government did not treat the princes in a proper way. They felt that it was their duty to defend the princes on the Congress platform.³⁶⁸ The Congress Leaders began to approach the Indian rulers to join the Indian National Congress and to subscribe to its funds. The response of the Indian rulers as regards the giving of subscription to the Congress was very enthusiastic. But the response of the Indian rulers as regards their personal attendance at the meetings of the Indian National Congress was not so encouraging as compared with the giving of subscription to the Congress funds. The main reason was that the Government of India was taking sufficient steps to stop this alignment between the Indian National Congress and the Indian states. Their political officers, who were stationed in the Indian states, were asked to tell the Indian rulers that it was "not desirable for native chiefs to be connected in any way with political agitation amongst Her Majesty's subjects outside their own territories."³⁶⁹

In the very beginning, the Indian National Congress was an "organization in strict accordance alike with the policy of the British Government and British Constitution. Thus it was not "viewed with disfavour by the most eminent British statesmen in India – Lords Dufferin, Reay and Connemara."³⁷⁰ But in spite of all this, after two years of its existence, the Congress met with a strong opposition from the Government of India. When the Congress leaders began to approach the Indian princes to join it and to subscribe to its fund, the Government of India was simply alarmed. As regard the Indian States, the policy of the Government of India had always been to keep them away from any political development that was taking place. Not only this, the Government of India had always discouraged the princes from spending money on philanthropic schemes outside their own territories.³⁷¹

In spite of the fact 'that as regards Indian states, the Congress was working within the constitutional limits', the Government of India did its best to stifle their activities in the Indian states by "surreptitious means." The policy of the Government of India formulated during these years as regards the participation of Indian princes in the activities of the Congress movement prevented a large section of the population from taking part in the national development of the country for many years to come.³⁷²

Maharaja Nripendranarayan had developed contacts with the Indian National Congress since its inception. It is learnt from the Congress report of 1886 that the Maharaja had contributed to the Congress fund.³⁷³ When the Congress session for the year 1886 was held in Calcutta a reception party was arranged by the India Club which was attended by the delegates of different regions. Maharaja Nripendranarayan, President of India Club, provided the Cooch Behar Band for the occasion.³⁷⁴ But when the Indian National Congress gradually began to launch anti-British nationalist movement, the British government took a stern attitude towards the Congress and did not want the rulers of the native states to contribute to the Congress fund. For this reason the Indian Princes began to distance them-

selves from the Congress and stopped their financial contribution to the Congress.³⁷⁵ The Maharaja of Cooch Behar followed the suit.

In 1905, the anti-partition agitation was launched in Bengal. Lord Curzon while touring certain areas of Eastern Bengal had talked about a draft proposal of the partition of Bengal in which Cooch Behar was proposed to be included in the newly created Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. Nripendranarayan, however, did not comment on the matter.³⁷⁶

Having shown his unbinding loyalty to the British throne,³⁷⁷ Nripendranarayan played the role of collaborator with the British Government not only in the field of war but also in the arena of politics. Nripendranarayan held the view that British government was for the good of India.³⁷⁸ He refrained himself from being associated with any nationalist movement in British India.³⁷⁹ Having expressed his strong dissatisfaction with the middle class-led nationalist movement in India, he made it clear that he would pursue drastic measures against any nationalist activities in Cooch Behar.³⁸⁰ This pro-British and anti-nationalist stand of Raja Nripendranarayan was actively pursued by the successive Koch Rajas at a time when the nationalist movement made its presence felt in Cooch Behar.

Nripendranarayan was greatly influenced by his father-in-law, Keshab Chandra Sen's religious and political ideas³⁸¹ that played a big factor in modelling the pro-British mentality of the Raja. The Brahmo faith, according to Sunity Devi, "teaches one to be loyal to the throne".³⁸² Besides, politically Keshab Chandra Sen was loyal to the British Crown. He looked upon the British Empire in India as a gift of divine dispensation.³⁸³ and advocated European system of education and highlighted Christianity.³⁸⁴ Nripendranarayan had mixed freely with the elite of the English society, both in India and England. His European training had made him an accomplished prince with English ideas and characteristics.³⁸⁵

Nripendranarayan, while staying in England breathed his last on the 18th September, 1911 at Bex-hill-on-sea.³⁸⁶ A military funeral was accorded to the late Raja on the 21st September both in Bex-hill-on-sea and in London under the instruction of the British King-Emperor.³⁸⁷ Nripendranarayan was succeeded by his eldest son Raj Rajendranarayan.³⁸⁸

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152. Choudhuri , H. N. op. cit., p. 245.
153. The reason for the Company's involvement in the affairs of Cooch Behar has been expressed by Hastings himself in his letter to Sir John Colebrooke on the 15th January , 1773. "we have largely engaged in an expedition in the country of Cooch Behar , a province lying between Rangpur and the Mountain of Bhutan, against the Bhutanese who had possession of it. I shall sedulously promote every undertaking which can complete the line of our possession or add to its security – G. R. George , Memories of Warren Hastings , Vol. 2, London, 1841, p.279.
154. Mehra, P. The Young Husband Expedition , An Interpretation, 1976, p.47.
155. Choudhuri , H. N. op. cit., p. 245. See also Durga Das Majumdar, op. cit., p. 37.
156. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1930 p. 308.
157. Rennei,D.F. Bhutan and the Story of the Dooar War, edi. By H. K. Kuloy, Manjushi, New Delhi, 1970, p. 283.
158. Aitchison, op. cit., p. 72.
159. Banerjee, A. C. The New History of Modern India, Calcutta 1983, pp. 282-283.
160. Notes of the Revenue Commission, 3rd May, 1787, No.21, The C.B.S.R. Vol. II, Cooch Behar, 1884, pp. 151-154.
161. Maharaj of Baroda, the Palaces of India, Collins' St., Tames Place , London , 1980, p-209.

162. Das, K. C. : Modernisation of a Princely State: Cooch Behar Under Maharaja Nripendranarayan, Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, North Bengal University, 1989, Chapter-I, p-15.
163. Turner, S. op. cit., p.37.
164. Home Consultations, 9th December, 1771,(1), (N. A. I.). John Pemble, op. cit., p. 56.
165. Ahmed, Khan Choundouri A. op. cit., pp. 344-345.
166. Acharya, N. N. Historical Documents of Assam and the Neighbouring States, Omsosis, New Delhi, 1983, p. 97.
167. Mercer, Lawrence and Chauvet, John L. : Report on the Cooch Behar State in 1788, C. B. S. R., Vol. II, op. cit., p.2002.
168. Hunter, W. W. A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, Delhi, Reprint, 1974, p. 416.
169. *ibid.*, p. 416.
170. *ibid.*, p. 419.
171. Das, K. C. op. cit., p. 20.
172. Hunter, W. W. op. cit., p. 416. Confer also Bhagabati Charan Bandyopadhyay, op. cit., p-79. However it has been pointed out that the Anglo-Koch treaty eventually established the British control over the Cooch Behar State, and the English Company reduced the status of the State from a weak yet sovereign kingdom to that of a 'tribute paying state'.-- Barman, Rup Kumar: op.cit., p103
173. Ahmed, Khan Choudhury A. op. cit. pp. 211-212.
174. Munshi, Joynath: Rajopakhyan, op. cit., p. 57.
175. *Loc. cit.*
176. *Loc. cit.*
177. Long, J. The Selections from The Unpublished Records of Government from 1748-1767 inclusive First Edition edited by M. Saha, Firma K.L.M. Cal, 1973, p.716.
178. Long, J. op. cit., p-716 and also confer S.C. Ghosal, op. cit., p-266.
179. Choudhri, H. N. op. cit., p. 248; Mercer and Chauvet, op. cit., p. 203; Khan Choudhuri A. Ahmed, op. cit., pp. 212-214.
180. Ghosal, S. C., op. cit., p. 268.
181. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., p. 249.
182. Sen, S. N. op. cit., In the introduction. Confer also B. Das and S. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 4.
183. Das, B and Majumdar, S. op. cit., p. 4.
184. Sen, S. N. op. cit., in the introduction.
185. H. N. Choudhuri, op. cit., pp. 250-251; K. C. Das, op. cit. p-22.
186. Das, K. C. op. cit. p. 23.
187. Warren Hastings mentioned the uprising as "Sannyasi rebellion" and has labelled the Sannyasi Fakirs as "Gypsies of Hindostan – a roving bandity." This is quoted from B. P. Misra's "The Sannyasi Rebellion." Occasional Paper 1, North Bengal University, 1985, p – 3.
188. Roy, Suprakash : Bharater Krishak Vidroha O Ganatantrik Sangram, (in Bengali), Calcutta, 3rd Edition, 1980, pp. 20,44. Some scholars like Gautam Bhadra have shown that there was an earlier peasant movement that had broken out during the time of Raja Prannarayan. See Bhadra, Gautam : Mughal Yuge Krishi Arthaniti O Krishak Bidroha, First Published 1983, Third Edition, 2003, Calcutta, p.133
189. Fuchs, Stephen : Rebellious Prophets, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965. p.110
190. Dasgupta, Atis Kumar : The Fakir and Sannyasi Uprising, K.P. Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, First Published 1992, Foreword by Prof. Barun Dey, p.iii
191. Fuchs, Stephen.: Rebellious Prophets, Calcutta, 1968, p. 111. It may be noted here that the activities of the two robber-Sannyasis Viz., Bhavani Pathak and Devi Chaudhurani have, in fact, been immortalized by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his famous novel, Devi Chaudhurani"- Fuchs, op. cit., p. 111.
192. Roy, Suprakash Bidrohi Bharat, (in Bengali) p. 3.
193. Dasgupta, Atis Kumar: op.cit, pp.6-7

194. Sinha ,N. K. The Economic History of Bengal, Vol. II, Calcutta, 1962, p. 48. As a result of the famine at least one-third of the population of Bengal perished. N. K. Sinha. op. cit. ,p-59.
195. Hunter,W. W. Annales of Rural Bengal , New Delhi, Reprinted, 1975, pp. 21-22.
196. Sinha, N. K. op. cit.,p-54.
197. Dasgupta, Atis Kumar: op.cit, p-7
198. Banerjee, _A. C.: The Agrarian System of Bengal, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1980, pp. 129-130.
199. Ahmed, Khan Choudhury A. History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali), Cooch Behar, 1936, p. 227.
200. Ghosal, S. C. (tr.), op. cit., p. 281.
201. Commissioner H. Douglas' letter to Governor-General Lord Cornwallis, dated the 9th May, 1970, quoted from B. Das and S. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 24.
202. Ghosal, S. C. op. cit., pp 280-281.
203. The Struggle between the Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan and the Maharaja continued from the years 1765 to 1970 A. D. and in this struggle the Sannyasis were on the side of the Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan. – David N. Lorenzen, 'Warrior Ascetics in Indian History' in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Vol. 98, No.1, January–March, 1978.
204. Ghose, J. M: Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal, Calcutta, 1930, p-76. It may be noted here that after the conclusion of the Anglo-Koch treaty the Sannyasis employed by Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan were dismissed and those in the pay of the other party were totally routed by the English. Loc. cit.
205. Dasgupta, Atis Kumar , op.cit
206. Ghosal, S. C. op. cit., p. 380. M. Neogi, Socio-Political Events in Assam leading to Militancy of the Moamaria Vaishnava, Calcutta, 1982, p.52
207. Ahmed, Khan Choudhuri A. op. cit., p. 315; A Mitra, West Bengal District Handbooks. Cooch Behar, op.cit., p. 259.
208. Ghosal, S. C. op. cit., p. 380.
209. Rangpur District Records, Vol I,p.187
210. Mercer and Chauvet's Report ,op.cit,pp.118-124; Chowdhury H.N., op.cit p.251
211. Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. II ,pp.118-124
212. Ghosh, J.M. op.cit, p-82
213. Ahmed ,Khan Chowdhury A. op.cit, p321
214. Revenue Department , Original Consultation No.6,dated 13th August 1787. the evidence is quoted in Atish Kumar Dasgupta , op.cit,p.79
215. Ghosh. J.M. op.cit,p-82
216. Rangpur District Records., Vol. VI , p-237 It should be noted that in official records 'Fakirs and Sannyasis have often been used synonymously.
217. Chowdhury, H.N. op.cit,p-251; Ghosh, J.M:op.cit., p-82.
218. Dasgupta, Atis Kumar: op.cit p-112
219. Sen, S. N. (edi.), Prachin Bangla Patra Sankalan, op. cit., p. 36.
220. Choudhuri, H.N:op. cit., p – 251.
221. Proceedings of the Governor-General In Council, Revenue Department, Vol.- 129, pp. 83-96.
222. Choudhuri H. N., op. cit., p-253.
223. Hunter, W. W. op. cit., p. 420.
224. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., p-268 ff.
225. ibid, p. 254.
226. Sanyal,R. R.L.:' Indirect Rule in a Princely State', in the Kingdom of Kamta-Koch Bihar in Historical Perspectives, op. cit., p.12
227. Choudhuri,H. N. pp. 254 - 255.
228. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, op. cit., p. 205.

229. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General, (Political Dept.), December, 1861, No. 51 p. 38; H. N. Choudhuri, op. cit., pp. 254-255.
230. The C. B. S. R., Vol. I, p. 133.
231. Prul, in the Revenue Dept., dated the 26th August, 1802, quoted from B. Das and S. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 35; H. N. Choudhuri, op. cit., pp. 254-255.
232. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., pp. 255.
233. Das, K. C. op. cit., p-36.
234. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., p-256.
235. Das, K. C. op. cit., p-36.
236. Choudhuri H. N., op. cit., pp. 255.
237. Loc. cit.
238. ibid, p. 256.
239. Munshi, Joynath :Rajopakhyan, op.cit., pp.111-112
240. Chif Secretary to the Government' letter to J. Digby, Commissioner of Coch Behar, dated the 25th April, 1805, quoted from B. Das and S. Majumdar, op. cit., p.45.
241. Das, B and Majumda, S., op. cit., p. 12.
242. Sen, S. N. Prachin Bangla Patra Sankalan, Part – I, pp. 42-43.
243. Choudhuri H. N., op. cit., p. 257.
244. Loc. cit.
245. Das, B and Majumdar, S. op. cit., p. 13.
246. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., pp. 257-258.
247. Das, B. and Majumdar S., op. cit., p. 13.
248. Loc. cit.
249. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General, (Political Dept.) August, 1864, No.11B, p.137.
250. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General, (Political Dept.), July, 1835, No. 6, pp.151 –152.
251. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General, (Political Dept.) August, 1864, No. 11B, p.137.
252. Loc. cit.; Choudhuri, H.N: op. cit., p. 268.
253. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General, (Political Dept.), July, 1835, No. 6, pp.151 –152.
254. Loc. cit.
255. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., p. 268.
256. Letter from Jenkins, Governor-General's Agent to North-East Frontier, to the Accountant-General, 16th November, 1837, C.B.S.R., Vol. II., pp.-75-76.
257. Loc. cit. Confer also Khan Choudhuri A. Ahmed, op. cit., p. 296.
258. Letter of Jenkins, Governor-General's Agent to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, 3rd October, 1838, No. 10, C. B.S.R. Vol. II, p. 82.
259. Foreign Consultations (political), 25th March, 1834, No.64(N. A. I.).
260. Letter of Mr. Swinton, Secretary to the Government, to Mr. Scott, Governor-General's Agent on the North-East Frontier, 22nd October, 1824.
261. It is to be noted here that most of the relatives and influential courtiers of the Raja were opposed to the Anglo-Koch Treaty and British interference in the day-to-day administration of the state – Campbell, Glimpses of Bengal, Vol. 1, Bengali translation by N. N. Paul, Calcutta, 1979, pp 21-22. The reason behind their opposition possibly lies in the fact that they used to enjoy a large number of revenue-free lands. The introduction of the British land-revenue administration had deprived them of those lands and converted most of the land into revenue-paying. Moreover, with the coming of the Company the Bengali Amlas from South Bengal were appointed to the post of high officials and this might have been disliked by the native officials of the State. Some scholars have suggested that it is under the pressure of this lobby the Raja had opposed the introduction of new reforms.- Partha Kumar Sen, op. cit., p. 21.

262. C.B.S.R. Vol , pp. 148-149.
263. Choudhuri.H.N. op. cit.,p-258.
264. ibid p. 276.
265. Munshi, Joynath, Rajopakhyan, pp.124-125.
266. Das, B & Majumder, S.: op. cit. p.15
267. Letter of Jenkins, Governor-General's Agent, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Dept, Fort William, Dated the 26 th April, 1836. quoted from B. Das & S. Majumdar. op.cit. p. 61.
268. Das, B. & Majumdar S. op. cit. p. 15.
269. Letter of Jogendranarayan,. Benares, to Auckland, the Governor-General of India, dated the 4th October. 1839, quoted from B.Das & S. Majumdar. op. cit. p. 64.
270. Choudouri, H.N. p . 278.
271. Hunter, W.W. op. cit. p. 424.
272. Das, K.C. : op. cit. p 65
273. Choudhuri H.N. op. cit. p. 279.
274. ibid. pp. 278-279.
275. Loc. cit.
276. Loc. cit.; Robinson, History of Cooch Behar. Cooch Behar. 1874. pp. 232-233.
277. Hunter,W.W. op. cit. p.424
278. Letter No. 747 from T.W. Maddock, Secreary to the Government of India to Captain F. Jenkins, Governor-General's Agent, North-East Frontier, Dated the 15th March. 1841. C.B.S.R. Vol. II. p-97.
279. Loc. cit.
280. Majumdar,Durgadas: W.B. District Gazetteers : Koch Behar. 1977. p. 39.
281. Letter from A. Campbell. Superintendent of Darjeeling to T.H. Maddock, Secretary to the Government of India, 5th February, 1842, No. 14, C.B.S.R., Vol. II. p.104
282. Ahmed, Khan Choudhuri A. op. cit. pp.364-365.
283. Extract from a Despatch from the Court of Directors. No.12. dated the 19th March, 1845, C.B.S.R., Vol. II. 1884. p. 121.
284. Choudhuri H.N. op. cit. p.280.
285. Letter No .294 of F. Currie, Secretary to the Government of India to Major Fenkins, Agent to the Governor-General, North- East Frontier, dated the 1st February 1945. C.B.S.R., Vol. II. p. 116.
286. Letter No.82 of F. Jenkins, Governor-General's Agent to Offg. Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Dept., Fort William, Dated 12th September. 1847. C.B.S.R. Vol. II. p-128.
287. Letter No. 156 from Offg. Secretary, The Govt . of Bengal, to the Offg. Secretary, the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., dated the 14th December 1848. C.B.S.R. Vol. II. pp.143-144.
288. Loc. cit. Also confer Shashi Bhusan Haldar ."Lectures on Maharaja Narendranarayan Bhup Bahadur Jiban Charit." at the meeting of Cooch Behar Hitaishini Sabha. 7th issue. 1272. B.S. p. 124.
289. Choudhuri. H.N. op. cit. pp. 181-182.
290. Majumdar, Durgadas, op. cit. p.39. A.C. Campbell,op. cit. p.297.
291. Campbell, A.C. op. cit. p. 297. Letter No. 156 from Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India, Foreign Dept., dated 14th December.1848. C.B.S.R., op. cit. p. 147.
292. Cambell. A.C. op.cit, p.297
293. Das, B and Majumdar, S: op,cit p-20
294. Letter No. 399 from the Offg. Under-secretary to the Govt. of India to the Agent to the Governor-General, N.E. Frontier, ,C.B.S.R,Vol,II, p. 158
295. Halder, Sashi Bhusan: op,cit , pp.132-33
296. Leaflet issued by the Secretary , Sashi Bhusan Halder , Hitaishini Sabha , Cooch Behar ,1272,B.S.
297. Loc. cit.

298. Loc, cit.
299. Choudhury, H.N, op,cit , pp. 283-284
300. Loc, cit.
301. Mitra .A, W.B. District Census Handbooks : Cooch Behar , 1951 p. XXV
302. Letter from Maharaja of Cooch Behar to Major W. Agnew , Offg. Governor-General's Agent, North East Frontier, 10 Assar, 354 Cooch Behar Shak , quoted from B.Das and S. Majumdar , p.107.
303. Choudhuri , H.N: op. cit., p.285
304. Letter from Offg. Junior-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Agent to the Governor-General , N.E. Frontier dated the 30th July , 1862, quoted from B.Das , S.Majumder , op. cit. pp. 104-105
305. Loc. cit.
306. Choudhuri H.N. op. cit p.286
307. Loc. cit.
308. Letter from the Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to Major F. Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General , N.E.Forntier, dated the 20th September , 1849, C.B.S.R., Vol. II ,p. 160.
309. Majumdar, . R.C., Roychoudhuri, H.C. and Dutta, K.K.: An Advanced History of India, 4th Edition, 1978, reprint, 1990, p.774.
310. ibid , p. 775.
311. ibid, p. 776. It is evident from the following declaration of Lord Canning in 1858, "the Crown of England stands forth the unquestioned ruler and paramount power in India. There is a reality in the suzerainty of England which has never existed before and which is not felt but eagerly acknowledged by the Chiefs ".- Andrian Sever: Documents and Speeches of the Indian Princely States. Vol.I and II, New Delhi .1958 .
312. Das .B. and Majumdar .S:op. cit., pp. 22-23. Maharaja is said to have refused to provide any help to a person who introduced himself to Maharaja as a young brother of Nana Saheb, who was later arrested owing to Narendranarayan's effort-Letter from Narendranarayan, Maharaja of Cooch Behar to the Magistrate of Rangpur. dated the 16th August. 1861.-ibid. p.102.
313. Letter No. 166 from Under-Secretary to the Govt .of Bengal to the Agent to the Governor-General, North-East Frontier. dated the 17th April. 1862,C.B.S.R.,Vol .II.p.248.
314. Letter No. 105 from from Offg. Agent to the Governor-General, to the Under-Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Dated 9th December 1862,C B.S.R.,Vol II. p. 257.
315. Letter (No.1 of 1850) from the Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Agent to the Governor-General, N.E.Frontier. dated the 24th December. 1849. C.B.S.R. Vol. II.p.162.
316. Nripendranayan's reign has also been termed as the period of modernisation since the Raja with the active assistance and support of the British administration. brought about important changes in the fields of general civil administration, agriculture and land reform, judicial system and especially in the field of education,-K.C. Das, op cit, pp. 90-91,121-191.
- 316*. Bhattacharya, Nibaran Chandra: Koch Biharer Shankhipta Bibaran (in Bengali), 2nd Edition, 1927,p.7.It should be mentioned that Nripenodranarayan's succession right was being questioned by Maharani Nistarini Devi on the ground that he was the son of a lady whom Raja Narendranarayan married through the Gandharva system of marriage. Nistarini Devi wanted his nephew Kumar Jogedranarayan to ascend the throne instead of Nripendranarayan- Extract from the letter Maharani Nistarini Devi to the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, 23rd Bhadur,1270 B.S. Proceedings of the Govt . of Bengal, General (political) Dept. February,1864,No.53.p.27 and Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General (political) Dept, Feb,1864, No50, p23.
317. Letter from Maharanies of Cooch Behar to Offg. Agent, N.E. Frontier. dated the 16th August, 1863 , Cooch Behar Select Records , Vol . II.p.268; H.N.Choudhuri, op cit, p.287.
318. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, General (political) Dept, March, 1864,No.3,p.2.
319. Letter from Offg . Agent to the Governor-General, North East Frontier, 15th january, 1864, To the Maharanies of Cooch Behar ,C.B.S.R. Vol. II, P. 275.
320. Bandyopadhyay, Bhagabati Charan: Koch Biharer Itihas, edi.by N.N. Paul.,op cit ,93; H.N. Choudhuri, op cit, p-

287.

321. Letter from Offg. Agent to the Governor-General, N.E. Frontier, Dated 15th January, 1864, to the Maharanies of Cooch Behar, C.B.S.R.. Vol-II, p-287.
322. Letter No : 456 of Bengal Government, dated the 26th January, 1864 to Col J.C. Haughton, C.B.S.R., Vol.-II. p-276.
323. Letter from Lt. Col. J.C. Haughton, Governor-General's Agent to North East Frontier, to the Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, 10th. November, 1863. Proceedings of the Govt. of Bengal, General (Political) Dept., February 1864, No. : 55-57 (Appendix), pp. 5-7
324. Choudhuri, H.N, op-cit, pp. 288-289
325. Loc. cit ; Nibaran Chandra Bhattacharaya, op.cit, p.21.
326. Das, K.C. op.cit p.89.
327. Neogi, A.K, The Paramount Power and Princely States of India, Calcutta, 1979, p.26
328. Cambell, A.C. op.cit, p-42
329. Devi, Gayatri of Jaipur and Rau, Santha Rama: A Princess Remembers, 1st. edition 1976, Reprint 1988, p-40.
330. Loc.cit
331. Loc. cit.
332. Proceedings of the Govt. of Bengal, Judicial (political) Dept., August 1878, No. : 132, p-77. Brahma Public Opinion, Vol-I, August 8, 1878, p-228, B.C. Bandyopadhyaya, op. cit., p-102
333. Borthwick, M. op-cit, p-187
334. Debnath, S. 'Cultural Imperialism in British India : Case Study of the Cooch Behar Marriage in 1878,' in the Kingdom of Kamata – Koch Bihar in Historical Perspectives, edited by P.K. Bhattacharyya, op.cit, p-423.
335. Cambell, A.C. op-cit, p-43.
336. Choudhury, H.N. op-cit, p-423
337. Loc. cit
338. Campbell, A.C.. op-cit, p.43
339. Bandyopadhyaya, B.C. op-cit, p-106
340. Annual Administrative Report of the Cooch Behar State, 1911-1912 Cooch behar, 1912, pp.4-5; H.N. Chodhuri, op-cit, p424.
341. The Indian Messenger, 11th November, 1883. Prabhati, 17th. Nov., 1883, Bangabasi, 24th November 1883.
342. Choudhuri, H.N. op-cit, p-290
343. ibid, p.291
344. ibid, p-300
345. Campbell, A.C, op.cit, p-298
346. Cooch Behar Annual Administration Report, 1909-1910, p-2.
347. Brochure of the Cooch Behar State (1936-1939), The State Council, Cooch Behar, 1939.
348. Das, K. C. op. cit., p. 255.
349. Campbell, A. C., op. cit., pp. 298, 43-44.
350. Loc.cit.
351. Choudhuri, H. N. op. cit., p. 435.
352. ibid, p. 436.
353. Campbell, A. C. op. cit., p. 44.
354. Choudhuri, H. N., op. cit., p. 436.
355. Campbell, A. C. op. cit.
356. Mazumdar, R. C. and others: Advanced History of India, op. cit, p-837.
357. Loc. cit
358. Campbell, A. C. op. cit., p.402, B.C. Bandyapadhyaya, op. cit., pp. 101-102.
359. Author Unknown: The State of Cooch Behar, London, Unwin Brothers Limited, 1914, p. 14.

360. Choudhuri, H. N., op. cit., p. 437.
361. Loc.cit.
362. Loc.cit.
363. Campbell, A. C. op. cit.
364. Ghosh , A. G and Bhattacharya, M. S.: 'Indian Nationalist Movement and the Maharajas of Cooch Behar State' in the North Bengal University Review (Humanities and Social sciences), Vol.VII, No.1, 1986,pp.63-72
365. Loc. cit.
366. Choudhuri , H. N. op. cit., p. 437.
367. Campbell, A. C. op. cit., p. 44.
368. Patil ,H.S.H:The Congress Party and Princely States , Himalayan publishing House, Bombay, 1981,pp.14-15
369. Sareen .T.R.: 'The Indian National Congress and the Indian States(1885-1890)', Bengal Past and Present , Vol. LXXX III,Sl. No. 156, July to Dec,1964, pp.115-116
370. Foreign Department, S.I..January 1889 , No.3-4 . The evidence is quoted by Sareen, P.R.: op.cit.p.115
371. Foreign departement S.I. March,1890 , Nos. 5,12 quoted in Sareen P.R.,op.cit.
372. ibid , p.117
373. Singh , Hiralal : Problems and Policies of the British in India , 1858 to 1898,p.242
374. Majumder , Niranjn : The Statesman and Anthology , 1875-1975, p.99
375. Singh ,Hiralal, op.cit,p-242.
376. Ghosh , Ananda Gopal and Bhattyacharyya , Malay Shankar: 'Indian Nationalist Movement and the Maharajas of the Cooch-Behar State,op.cit. p-65
377. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State for the year of 1909-1910, p-2.
378. Loc.cit.
379. Das, K. C., op. cit., p. 255 - 256.
380. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State for the year of 1909-1910, p-2. Regarding the emerging Indian Nationalist Movement, Maharaja Nipendranarayan declared , "and I regret to observe there is a marked feeling of disloyalty amongst a portion of those (middle class) who have gained so considerable from British rule in India. I would ask you, gentlemen, to tell people with whom you may come in contact, that British Govt. is good for India. Foreign domination under the existing conditions of things is absolutely a necessity for India and its people for the next hundred years or so. Occurrences have taken place outside the State of Cooch Behar which are very much to be regretted. Such occurrences, I trust, will never happen in my State . If there be anything approaching lawlessness in the State I assure you I shall pursue drastic measures to suppress it" – Extract from Maharaja Nripendranarayan's inaugural speech delivered on the occasion of the opening session of the State Legislative Council on the 8th May , 1909. - loc cit.
381. Bagal,Yogesh Chandra: Keshab Chandra Sen,1st edition, Calcutta-1365 (B.E) pp-143-142
382. Devi, Sunity : Autobiography of An Indian Princess , edited by B.Das , New Delhi-1995,p-201.
383. Sen , Keshab Chandra: Lectures in India , Calcutta , Reprint 1954,p-127.
384. Debnath , S: 'Cultural Imperialism in British India',op. cit, p-27.
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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.¹

Raj Rajendranarayan was born on the 11th April, 1882 in Calcutta.² 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.³ 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.⁴ In 1894, Raj Rajendranarayan left the Mayo College.⁵ and went to England with his father on the first May, 1894.⁶ He was sent to Mr. Carter's Preparatory School at Farnborough⁷ and later was sent to Eton in 1897.⁸

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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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.¹² 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.¹³

Shortly afterwards, while playing a polo game at Trouville,¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹ 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"²⁰ Rs. 48,000 was allotted for the Maharaj Kumar's personal expenses in the State Budget for 1910-1911.²¹

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.²² There the duty of committing the Maharaj's body to the flames fell upon Maharaj Kumar Raj Rajendra Narayan.²³

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.²⁴ 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'.²⁵

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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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.²⁸

Two Installation Durbars were held in the Durbar Hall, one on the 8th November, 1911 and the other on the 9th November, 1911.²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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."³¹

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.³²

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.³³ 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".³⁴

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.³⁵

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.³⁶ 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.³⁷

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.³⁸ 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.³⁹ The Royal proclamation by the King Emperor⁴⁰ and the proclamation of the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur.⁴¹ 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.⁴²

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.⁴³ 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.'⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵ 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."⁴⁶

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.⁴⁷

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, 1912.⁴⁸

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.⁴⁹ 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."⁵⁰

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'.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

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.⁵³ 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."⁵⁴

In 1912, the question of the appointment of a Political Agent for Cooch Behar was raised by Raj Rajendra narayan.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ 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.⁵⁷

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.⁵⁸ 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).⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰

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.⁶¹

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.⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴

The dispute regarding the relaying of the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the district of Goalpara at Tuluk Chhat Bara Laukuti in Tufanganj⁶⁵ was settled during the year of 1912 - 1913.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷

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.⁶⁸

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.⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹

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. 7,00,000.⁷² 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,⁷³ with the permission of Government of India.⁷⁴

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.⁷⁵

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.⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷

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.⁷⁸ 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.⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ 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."⁸¹

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."⁸² Hence, His Highness' budget was kept unchanged.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴

Raj Rajendra Narayan's ideal was his late father Nripendra Narayan. No one was so wonderful nor good as his father.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶

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

became seriously ill.⁸⁸

The Maharaja left Cooch Behar enroute to England on the 12th May, 1913 and arrived there on the 1st June, 1913.⁸⁹ 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.⁹⁰ The Maharaja was removed to Cromer on the 14th August, 1913. There he did not look better.⁹¹ 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.⁹² The Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana breathed his last at Cromer on the 1st September, 1913. He was unmarried.⁹³ The funeral of the late Maharaja took place at 2 pm on the 3rd September 1913, at Golders Green.⁹⁴

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."⁹⁵ But his wish remained unfulfilled. The Governor of Bengal in Council expressed deep regret over the death of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan.⁹⁶ 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."⁹⁷

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."⁹⁸

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 selfishly 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."⁹⁹

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.

CHAPTER - II (contd.)**Section II****The Rule of Maharaja Jitendra Narayana (16th September, 1913 - 21st December, 1922)**

It has already been mentioned that Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan died on the first September, 1913 in England,¹ Maharaj Kumar Jitendra Narayan as the eldest of three surviving brothers, succeeded him as the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.² His Succession was confirmed by the Government of India on the 3rd September, 1913.³

Jitendra Narayana was born on the 20th December, 1886 in Calcutta⁴ when RaJ Rajendra Narayan was four years old.⁵ Jitendra Narayana was first educated at home.⁶ Then he received education at Darjeeling St. Paul School.⁷ Afterwards he accompanied his father to England in May, 1898 and joined the Preparatory School at Farnborough. After the completion of the study at Farnborough he entered Eton in 1899 where he continued his studies till 1904. On his return to India in 1905 he joined the Imperial Cadet Corps at Dehradun and stayed there till the end of 1907, and received military education there as a Maharaj Kumar.⁸

Jitendra Narayana visited England in 1911 and attended His Majesty King George's Coronation as an Honorary A.D.C. to his father, Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. He was also present at the Coronation Durbar at Delhi in December 1911, and was presented on each of these occasions with Coronation Medals.⁹

Jitendra Narayana visited England again for a few months in 1913. During his stay there he married Princess Indira Gaekwar, the only daughter of the Maharaja Sayaji Rao, Gaekwar of Baroda on the 25th August 1913.¹⁰ The Marriage ceremonies, civil and religious, took place at the Buckingham Palace Hotel and the Registrar's office.¹¹ The Gaekwars, Indira Devi's parents were Hindus and Jitendra Narayan's family was Brahmo¹² Moreover, The Cooch Behar royal family was westernised and unorthodox in a way of which the Princess's austere parents strongly disapproved on early occasion. But ultimately they relented because of their strong emotional attachment for each other.¹³

Indira Devi was one of the first Indian princess to go to school and to graduate from Baroda College. She also accompanied her parents on their trips to England. The Maharani Sunity Devi praised Indira, her daughter-in-law, in the following words, "Indira is very clever and very pretty. She knows several languages and has travelled a great deal; for years I had been wanting her to be my daughter-in-law, and I was as fond of her as of my own daughter."¹⁴

Succession to the throne : A few days after Jitendra Narayana's marriage, as already has been mentioned, the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana died at Cromer in England on the first September, 1913. Jitendra Narayana, being the eldest surviving brother of the late Maharaja, succeeded to the throne of Cooch Behar.¹⁵ The succession of

the new Maharaja to the throne was recognised by the Government of India and it was proclaimed throughout the state on the 16th September, 1913.¹⁶ The following proclamation of the State Council was read in England by Mr. Collin, Superintendent of the State and in Bengali by Babu Priya Nath Ghosh, Dewan of the State : "whereas by the demise on Monday, the First of September, 1913 of the late Maharaja, His Highness Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur of blessed and glorious memory, the Gadi of Cooch Behar has devolved upon His late Highness's next brother Maharaj Kumar Jitendranarayana whom the Government of India have recognised as rightfully entitled to the same, the State Council of Cooch Behar do now hereby publish and proclaim that Maharaj Kumar Jitendra Narayana has become the only and rightful Maharaja of Cooch Behar as His Highness Maharaja Jitendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur, and humbly beseech Almighty God to bless him with long and happy years to rule over his subjects."¹⁷

The 16th September, 1913 was observed as a public holiday throughout the State in honour of the occasion.¹⁸ The State Council cabled their congratulations to the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan.¹⁹ The Government of Bengal also congratulated the Maharaja on succession to Cooch Bihar state with sanctions of the Government of India.²⁰ Jitendra Narayan arrived Cooch Behar on the 5th November, 1913 and was accorded a public reception.²¹ In accordance with the custom of the Cooch Behar Raj, 100 gold and 1002 silver coins were struck in the name of the new Maharaja to mark the occasion of the Maharaja's accession to the Gadi.²²

His Excellency Lord Carmichael, Governor of Bengal, arrived in Cooch Behar in the morning on the 17th November, 1913 on the occasion of installation and was accorded a most warm and loyal reception. Two "Installation Durbars" were held in the Durbar Hall, on the 17th November, 1913 and the other on the 19th November, 1913.²³ First "Installation Durbar" was held at 4 p.m. on the 17th November, 1913. There was a large crowd of Durbaries. The principal officers of the State, and the members of the Legislative Council were accommodated on the right and left of the dais. When His Excellency and the Maharaja had taken their places His Excellency rose, and addressing the Durbaries announced that Lord Hardinge, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, having recognised the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan as chief of the Cooch Behar State, it was his solemn duty as Governor of the Presidency of Fort William, in Bengal, to instal the Maharaja in the high position held till his lamented death, by the late Maharaja Raj Rajendra narayan and to transfer formally to the personal rule of the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan the State of Cooch Behar.²⁴

Turning to the Maharaja His Excellency then addressed him by saying that he grieved over the untimely death of the Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayana and recollected the late Maharaja's warm friendship and charming personality. The Governor also mentioned the good work done by the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana, which the new Maharaja's brother carried on with an ardent loyalty to his father's memory and with a sincere desire to carry out his father's wishes. The Governor concluded his speech with the following words, "I congratulate you upon your

accession to your principality. More than half a million of human souls are today committed to your trust May you continue their good work. May you act upto your traditions. May you be faithful to your trust, so that it comes to you in the common fate to lay down your power, Indians and Englishmen alike shall rejoice even while, they sorrow, as I both rejoice and sorrow to-day, in the knowledge that you have earned the commendation of your own conscience and the gratitude of posterity."²⁵

The Governor then taking the Maharaja by the hand installed him on the Gadi. His Highness took his seat and the band played the National Anthem of the Cooch Behar State and the Durbar waited till the salute of 13 guns had been fired.²⁶ The Maharaja Jitendra Narayan addressed the Governor in the following words, " Your Excellency, since Your Excellency visited Cooch Behar in April last, the sad and untimely death of my dear brother has called me to fill his place."

"I fully realise the magnitude of the responsibility which will for the future rest upon my shoulders and the difficulties which will beset my path in the proper discharge of my duties and the administration of the State for the benefit of my people. But to assist me I have the great example of my illustrious father whose footsteps I pray that I may be given the strength to follow, so that I may consecrate my life to the service of my State." He also added that "...his family had in the past been ever loyal to the British throne and he would beg His Excellency to convey the assurance of his devoted loyalty to the person of His Majesty King Emperor and to his Government in India..."²⁷

"In conclusion I can assure Your Excellency that I thoroughly appreciate the great honour. You have done me in undertaking a long and tiring journey for the purpose of installing me on the Gadi of my ancestors." At the conclusion of the Maharaja's address, the Chief Secretary stepped forward and handed to the Governor, on a blue plush cushion, the Khillat, a beautiful diamond ring, which the Governor placed on the Maharaja's finger.²⁸

The second Installation Durbar was held on the 19th November, 1913, where Nuzzars were presented to the Maharaja by his officers and subjects. On this occasion Maharaja Jitendra Narayan issued a proclamation in which he announced that the system of administration established during the time of his father under which the state had made satisfactory progress would be continued with such modifications as from time to time he might deem necessary for the welfare of his people. The gradual development of the representative institutions such as the Legislative Council and Municipal Bodies was the Maharaja's earnest desire. The question of education, sanitation and the supply of pure water would receive from him the same earnest attention as they received from his father and brother.

On the occasion of Installation the Maharaja conferred titles and privileges as a mark of personal distinction on some persons mentioned below who showed the liberality and public spirit which deserved public recognition : (a) The title of Rai Choudhury upon Babu Ishan Chandra Lahiri of Bamandanga. (b) The title of Choudhury upon Munshi

Nisabuddin of Sahebgung and Babu Ramdhan Kayet of Mathabhanga. (c) The privilege of a seat in Durbar upon Bhairab Dan Dugar and Hara Mohan Singh in appreciation of works of public utility performed by them.²⁹

At the time of Jitendra Narayan's accession to the Gadi of Cooch Behar, the royal family consisted of his mother Dowager Maharani Sunity Devi, his wife Maharani Indira Devi, his two brothers - Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan and Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan and his three sisters -Maharajkumari Sukriti Sundari Devi, Maharajkumari Pratibha Sundari Devi and Maharajkumari Sudhira Sundari Devi.³⁰

Names of the leading nobles and officials at the time of accession of the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan were given below. The following was a list of the leading nobles : (i) Kumar Jatindra Narayan, uncle of Maharaja, (ii) Rai Choudhuri Tarini Charan Chakrabarti, the only Mokararidar under the state whose status was like that of Zamindars in Bengal. He was a non-official member of the Maharaja's Legislative Council. (iii) Rai Choudhuri Satish Chandra Mustafi.

Mr. E.W.Collin, Superintendent of the State, was a retired member of the Indian Civil Service. Babu Priya Nath Ghosh and Narendra Nath Sen Esq. Bar-at-Laws were the Dewan and Judge respectively. These three officers, with Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayana were members of the State Council. There were a ten non-official members of the Legislative Council of the State appointed by the Maharaja. They were (i) Kumar Gajendranarayan (Senior) represented the Rajguns. (ii) Rai Choudhuri Tarini Charan Chakrabarty represented the Hindu Jotdars of the State. (iii) Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed represented the Muslim Jotdars of the State. (iv) Babu Bhikan Chand Oswal represented trade and commerce and (v) Babu Satish Chandra Banerjee represented the Bar.³¹

Immediately after Jitendra Narayana's succession to the Gadi of Cooch Behar, the Government of India asked the Government of Bengal to report whether, in the opinion of the Governor in Council, it was advisable to place any limitations on the new Maharaja's powers, especially in connection with the payment of the late Maharaja's debts.³² Lord Carmichael, the then Governor of Bengal, informed Jitendra Narayan that he would like him to promise not to alter, without consulting him, the agreement which Raj Rajendra Narayan made with him (the Governor) concerning the payment of outstanding debts, including the loan of Rs. 11 lakhs.³³ The Maharaja replied that he solemnly promised to the governor not to alter above agreement concerning repayment of outstanding debts without his advice.³⁴ After receiving the Maharaja's reply the Government of Bengal intimated the Government of India that so far as debts were concerned the Governor in Council was satisfied with the Maharaja's solemn promise and did not consider further restriction necessary.³⁵

It was during the reign of Jitendra Narayan that on the recommendation of the Bengal Government, the Viceroy had been pleased, as already mentioned, to extend the privilege of a return visit from His Excellency to the

Chief of Cooch Behar,³⁶ subject to the usual condition that the Maharaja continued to deserve this additional mark of favour.³⁷ Jitendra Narayan expressed his gratitude to the Governor of Bengal for the trouble he had taken in obtaining the great privilege for him. The Maharaja also requested the Governor to convey his grateful thanks to the Viceroy for the privilege which had been granted to him and his successors, a privilege which he would endeavour to deserve by his continued loyalty to the person of His Majesty the King-Emperor and to his Government in India.³⁸

The death of Babu Priya Nath Ghosh, Dewan of the State occurred on the 9th January, 1915.³⁹ Mr. Narendra Nath Sen Civil and Sessions Judge of the State, was appointed Dewan of the State with effect from the 11th January 1915. He also continued to be a member of the State Council.⁴⁰

Modifications in the Constitution of the Councils : Jitendranarayan desired certain modifications in the constitution of the State Council and passed the orders accordingly on the 23rd January, 1915 for modification of the Memoranda of Administration of 1883 and 1891. As per the order (a) in future until further orders the functions of the Judicial Member of Council would be exercised by the Dewan, and the Civil and Session Judge of the the State would not be a member of the Council. (b) The judicial side of the Council would ordinarily in all cases consist of two Members, any difference of opinion between them being referred to a Full Bench consisting of all the Members with the Maharaja as President. (c) Appeals pending in the State Council from the judgements and decrees passed by Mr. Narendra Nath Sen as Civil and Sessions Judge would be decided by at least two members of the Council of whom the Vice-president would be one. (d) Revenue appeals from the decisions of the Dewan would henceforth be similarly decided. (e) In the absence of the President questions that lied within the powers of the Excutive Council might be disposed of by the two regular Members, any difference of opinion being referred to His Highness for decision.⁴¹

In the same year the Maharaja issued another order announcing that Maharaj Kumars Victor Nityendra Narayan and Hitendra Narayan should, henceforth, have the privilege of possessing the following insignia : (i) One horse with Donka, (ii) Two sowars (iii) One flag bearer (iv) One Khasbarder (v) One Bhaplabarder (vi) One gold Ashabarder (vii) One gold Ballambarder (viii) One gold chamardhara (ix) Sixteen with a Havildar. The Maharaja was further pleased to order that on the occasions of their public arrival at, and public departure from Cooch Behar, the Dewan, the Fouzdari Ahilkar, the Secretary to the Maharaja, the Superintendent of Police and an Aide-de-camp would, as the occasion required, receive or bid them farewell at the Railway station.⁴²

Settlement of Boundary Disputes : The question of the relaying of the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the British territory in the district of Rangpur arose during the reign of Jitendra Narayan. The Collector of Rangpur reported that a Traverser, Babu Devendra Chandra Dey, was deputed by the Assistant Superintendent of Survey, Eastern Bengal and Assam in 1911, to relay the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the district of

Rangpur contiguous to Kismats Chatnai and Balapara. The demarcation of the boundary was complete by the Officer-in-Charge, Assam Traverse section and a copy of map with traverse data was received from that office on the 18th September, 1911. According to this demarcation 574 bighas, 7 kattas and 14 dhurs of land were taken from Cooch Behar State and allotted to estate No : 525 of the Rangpur Collectorate, whilst 64 bighas, 4 kattas and 15 dhurs formerly belonging to estate No 525 were found to belong to the Cooch Behar State. Possession of these two areas was respectively, made over and taken by the Collector on the 15th December, 1912. Subsequently a charcha settlement of the lands received from Cooch Behar was carried out by Babu A.C.Chatterjee, Deputy Collector who submitted his report in the beginning of April 1914.⁴³ The Cooch Behar authorities accepted the boundary as correct, signified formal acceptance of the transfer of lands in June 1914. The Maharaja in Council sanctioned the cessation of territorial jurisdiction over the lands which had been found to appertain to Chatnai in the district of Rangpur.⁴⁴ The Governor of Bengal in Council also confirmed in March, 1915 the boundary between Cooch Behar and the District of Rangpur as demarcated by the Officer-in-Charge, Assam Traverse section.⁴⁵

With regard to the relaying of the boundary between Cooch Behar State and the District of Jalpaiguri, the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam directed its demarcation in June 1910 as ascertained by Mr. C.O.'Donel of the Survey Department. The necessity for this demarcation arose from time since the occurrence of the boundary dispute of 1895, and was finally accentuated by the advent of the major settlement operations in the district of Jalpaiguri. An early attempt to settle the disputed boundary was made by a "native surveyor" of the Deputy Commissioner's office, who demarcated the boundary shown in Mr. O'Donnel's (revenue survey) map of 1863 - 1870. The line thus demarcated by the "native surveyor" was formally accepted by the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana in September, 1899 and by the Government of Bengal in January, 1900.⁴⁶

Subsequently on the work of the "native surveyor" being tested with the initial approval on the Government of Bengal and the Cooch Behar State some mistakes were detected by Mr. C.O.'Donel and accordingly as stated above, in June 1910 a revised line as laid down by Mr.C.O'Donel was, with the concurrence of the Cooch Behar State, ordered to be relaid. Mr. D.J.Hart of the Survey Department, being entrusted with the work, commenced operations on the 14th February, 1914 and completed them on the 20th March, 1914 under the supervision of Mr. J.A.Milligan, Settlement Officer of Jalpaiguri.⁴⁷ The Maharaja Jitendra narayan in Council accepted the newly relaid boundary between Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri as demarcated by Mr. O.J.Hart, in November 1914.⁴⁸ The Government of Bengal also confirmed it in April, 1915.⁴⁹ It was reported that 68 jotes were affected by the change of boundary and that while Cooch Behar lost an area of 335 acres, there was a gain of 520 acres, making a net gain to Cooch Behar of 185 acres.⁵⁰

Regarding the demarcation of the boundary between Taluk Mohismari in the Cooch Behar State and Talook

Sibram, Chakla Kajirhat, in the Jalpaiguri district, the Cooch Behar Durbar accepted the proposal of the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division in August 1915 that the line of boundary laid down by the Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Beckett, in 1872 would be relaid and permanently marked by pillars.⁵¹ This proposal was also accepted by the Government of Bengal in November, 1915. It was also decided that the estimated cost of the work amounting to Rs. 4,000 would be paid by the Government and the Cooch Behar Durbar in equal shares.⁵²

Another dispute relating to the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the district of Goalpara in Assam arose during this period. The Cooch Behar Durbar requested the Government of Bengal in June, 1919 to appoint Major F.C.Hirst, Director of the Survey Department, Bengal as the Cooch Behar representative in the joint commission appointed to settle this boundary dispute.⁵³ Accordingly, the Government of Bengal reported on the 2nd August, 1919 that Mr. Major Hirst had been placed on deputation for a period of four months and a half with effect from the 10th December, 1919 to deal with the boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the District of Goalpara as a representative of the Cooch Behar. A Meeting was convened to discuss the preliminaries to the settlement of the Goalpara-Cooch Behar boundary on the 26th August, 1919 at Dhubri. Lieutenant Colonel A. Playfair, Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, Major F.C.Hirst, Representative of Cooch Behar, Mr. C.A.O'Donell, Survey of India, Babu Dwijesh Chandra Chakrabarti, Representative, Gauripur were present at the meeting. There it was proposed, as a preliminary step that (a) The boundary between the Cooch Behar and the Gauripur Estate (Ghurla) would, as far as possible, be the line of possession, but where the line of possession departed materially from Renny's line, the boundary would be adjusted as necessary as possible in terms of Renny's line. (b) Apart from general line of boundary there were places where certain disputes existed. These must be settled on their merits. They would be dealt with after local inquiry, and the boundary fixed according to Renny's line. (c) It was suggested by Major Hirst that boundary might be simplified by straightening it out and either party ceding small strips of land to the other in order to effect this simplification. (d) With regard to boundary between Cooch Behar and Guma Mauza, the alternatives for relaying the boundary appeared to be - (i) The Cooch Behar Revenue Survey 1867-1869, (ii) The Goalpara Revenue Survey, 1867-68 (iii) Actual possession.⁵⁵

The proceedings of the said meeting had been carefully considered and fully discussed, by the Maharaja of Cooch Behar in Council. The Cooch Behar Durbar requested the Deputy Commissioner in October 1919 to ascertain the views of the Assam Government on the above points and communicate them to the Maharaja.⁵⁶ In March, 1920 the Assam Government informed the Cooch Behar Durbar that they had accepted the proposals of the conference with a slight modification. They held that there would not be any deliberate straightening of the boundary. In the event of Col.Playfair and Major Hirst differing on any point, the Chief Commissioner of Assam would be prepared to accept the decision of any arbitrator whom they nominated.⁵⁷

The First World War and the Role of the Princely State of Cooch Behar : A definite pattern of the Government of India's relationship with the native states had been developed by the time the First World War broke out in August, 1914. The Princes rallied to fight for the Empire offering both their personal services and the resources of their states.⁵⁸ During that war the Princes went all out to prove their loyalty to the British Crown. Not only did they subscribe lavishly to the British war effort in men and money, but many of them even fought in the Middle East and European theatres of war.⁵⁹ For instance, the rulers of Bikaner, Nawanagar, Akalkot and Loharu spent time at the battlefield as well. The states like Bikaner, Nawanagar, Sangli, Rewa gave generously of money and munitions. At the same time the rulers helped out on the propaganda front, lending their names to recruitment drives and weighing in on the government's side against elements opposed to the war on ideological grounds. Ian Copland has rightly said that "the war of 1914-18 showed that they (the states) had the resources and expertise to make a valuable imperial contribution also at the all-India and even at the international level."⁶⁰ "Their contribution to the war effort," S.R. Ashton also remarked, "had established them securely as Britain's principal allies."^{60*}

The Cooch Behar state did not remain unaffected by the First World War. On the outbreak of this war the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan at once consulted the Governor of Bengal with regard to the assistance which could be given personally and by the State. ⁶¹ The Maharaja sent a telegram on the 12th August, 1914 to the Governor with the following words. "In continuation of my letter and telegram will you kindly convey through His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General my deep and steadfast loyalty and devotion to the throne and person of His Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor and allow me to place unreservedly my own personal services and those of my two brothers as also such resources as my state possesses at the disposal of Government."

The Governor, in return, sent his warmest thanks to the Maharaja for his message of loyalty and for the offer of his own and his brothers' services and the resources of his state. He also informed the Maharaja that his telegram would be communicated to the Viceroy.⁶²

The Maharaja Jitendra Narayana received the gracious message from His Majesty the King-Emperor to the Princes and people of India on the 19th September, 1914. His Majesty also mentioned that nothing had moved him more than the passionate devotion to his throne expressed both by his Indian and English subjects and by Feudatory Princes and Ruling Chiefs of India and their prodigious offers of their lives and their resources in the cause of the realm. His majesty concluded his message by the following words, "I recall to my Indians' gracious message to the British nation of good will and fellowship which greeted my return in February 1912 after the solemn ceremony of my Coronation Durbar at Delhi and I find in this hour of trial a full harvest and a noble fulfilment of the assurance given by you that the destinies of Great Britain and India are indissolubly linked."⁶³

As regards the offer of the Maharaj Jitendra Narayan's own personal services and those of his two brothers, the Government of India accepted the offer of the Maharaja's youngest brother Maharaja Kumar Hitendra Narayan to serve with the army in Europe. The Government of India issued a Press Communique in which it was announced that "His Excellency the Viceroy had been pleased to accept the patriotic offer of Maharaja Kumar Hitendra Narayana of Cooch Behar to place his personal services at the disposal of His Majesty the King Emperor. The Maharaj Kumar has been selected to serve on the personal staff of the General Officer commanding one of the Brigades of the Indian Expeditionary Force."⁶⁴

Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayana left the front on Military Service in October, 1914 and was employed as Staff Officer in France. He received the distinction of being mentioned in Despatches for good services in connection with the attack on Neuve Chapelle in March, 1915.⁶⁵ He returned to Cooch Behar in December, 1915 and was accorded an enthusiastic public reception.⁶⁶ The sum of Rs. 5,88,813/- was sanctioned for the outfit and expenses incurred in connection with the departure on Military Services of Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayana.⁶⁷ It should be mentioned that the Maharaj Kumar had been appointed as Military Secretary to Maharaja Jitendra Narayan with effect from the 8th December, 1914.⁶⁸

Apart from the offer of his youngest brother's personal services the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan sanctioned Rs. 10,000/- for payment to the Bengal Branch of the Imperial War Fund, and later in 1915 a number of large tents were given to the Government for use in hospital work in Europe. He also contributed the sum of Rs. 10,000/- to the Bengal Ambulance Corps.⁶⁹

During the First World War a Conference of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs was held at Delhi on the 30th, October, 1916. The Maharaja Jitendra Narayan participated in that conference. At the opening of the conference the Viceroy said in his speech that the Indian Princes had stood forth as true "pillars of the Empire" in this war and by offering both personal services in the field and lavish contributions in men, money and material they had earned for themselves a place in the hearts of the British people which would remain for all time. The Viceroy was also glad to mention that the value of the work rendered in the field by the Imperial Service Troops had been recognised by the declaration, recently communicated to him of their eligibility for the Victoria Cross.⁷⁰ In recognition of his assistance and co-operation during this war Maharaja Jitendra Narayan was invested with the insignia of the Knight Commander of the most exalted order of the Star of India on the first January, 1917.⁷¹

The First World War having terminated in the triumph of the Allies, the treaty of peace with Germany was signed on the 28th June, 1919. The 19th July, 1919 was, under the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan's orders cabled from London, observed throughout the state as a holiday. The peace celebrations for which the Maharaja sanctioned Rs.

5,000 were held in December 1919, throughout the State.⁷² In conformity with the suggestion of the Government of India Medallions marking the conclusion of the war were presented to the school children of the state on the 10th February, 1921. The Maharaja Jitendra Narayan had sanctioned a provision of Rs. 2,000/- being made in the Revised Budget for the year 1919-1920 for the supply of 14,854 medallions for presentation to school children in Cooch Behar.⁷³

The organisation of the war effort involved, as a whole, closer co-ordination of administrative activity in the States as well as in the provinces. Lord Hardinge and his successor Lord Chelmsford, held periodical conferences of the leading rulers with a view to furthering the war effort. A few of the leading rulers welcomed this new development and stressed the essential identity of interests between the two halves of India. They also hoped that what had become an annual conference would develop into a permanent council.⁷⁴

During the war time the minority issue was another significant development in which the role of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar cannot be minimized. This issue became the most important part of Hardinge's Viceroyalty as far as the states were concerned.⁷⁵ In December, 1915, Scindia informed the Viceroy that the political officers had used minority periods to remove long standing abuses and improve the finances of the states, but also their methods had shaken the adherence of the people to their traditional customs and ways." So he considered that minorities had worked to alter the ties of personal loyalty and obedience between the subjects and their princes when the latter ascended the throne.⁷⁶ Hardinge felt these complaints were not entirely groundless and considered that a transparent British policy was required in order to allay the suspicion in the minds of the princes but also lay down principles for the future guidances of the Government.⁷⁷ That is why he appointed a committee consisting of the Maharajas of Bikaner and Gwalior, the Begum of Bhopal, John Wood, the Political Secretary of Foreign and Political Department and two other political officers. The committee began to work at Delhi in February, 1916 and recorded their recommendations in a Memorandum. The most significant recommendation was that any measure introduced during a minority 'will be liable to revocation by the minor rulers at any time after he obtains his full powers.⁷⁸ The contents of the Memorandum were welcomed by those princes to whom it was communicated.

The minority issue was the focal point of discussion at the first session of a Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs held at Delhi on 30th October, 1916 . Lord Chelmsford who replaced Hardinge as Viceroy in April, 1916 presided over this session. It was attended by nine representatives from the Bombay states, six from the Punjab, eleven from Central India, ten from Rajputana , and the Maharajas of Cooch Behar, Kashmir, Baroda, Cochin and Benares.⁷⁹ Maharaja Jitendra Narayan participated in the deliberations on the minority issue and expressed his well-thought opinion. He was of the opinion that " it is not convenience to lay down hard and fast rules because conditions may be different in different states at different times ,... conditions may also vary in the same state, and the same rule cannot possibly apply, or may not possibly apply, to two minors of the same state." "Even if there is a Regent, " the

Maharaja felt, "it is better to have a collective body who will act as a check on the individual despotism which might arise otherwise. Another important fact, we should remember, is the personal equation which must come in as the cases arise."⁸⁰ Finally this conference unanimously endorsed the recent memorandum on the subject.⁸¹

Meanwhile, Mr. J.A. Miligan, I.C.S. whose services had been lent to the Cooch Behar state by the British Government, was appointed with effect from the first July, 1916 as Vice-President, State Council, in succession to Mr. E.V. Collin who retired from the service of the state, Mr. B. Ghose, Secretary to His Highness was appointed with effect from the 12th May, 1916 as a member of the State Council. Mr. N.N. Sen, Dewan of the State, acted as Vice-President State Council during the absence of Mr. E.V. Collin on his privilege leave, till he was relieved by Mr. Miligan on the 1st July, 1917. He continued to be a member of the State Council and to exercise the functions of the Judicial Member.⁸²

It should be noted that the post of the Superintendent of the Cooch Behar State was abolished with effect from the 1st June, 1916 and his office would henceforth be styled the office of the General Department of the State, and the Vice-President of the State Council was placed in charge of that Department. As officer-in-charge of the office of the General Department of the state, he would have the charge of and control over, all the departments of which the Superintendent of the State had been in charge, and exercised all the powers and performed all the duties of the late Superintendent of the State.⁸³

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal in Council appointed Mr. J.A. Miligan, I.C.S., Vice-President, State Council, being a European British subject, to be a Justice of the peace within the Cooch Behar State.⁸⁴

Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal honoured the Cooch Behar State by his visit in February, 1918. His Excellency laid the foundation stone of a ward at the Sudder hospital on the 10th February, 1918, and allowed it to be associated with his name.⁸⁵ In December of the same year Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy and Governor-General of India honoured the Cooch Behar State by his visit. To mark the occasion Maharaja Jitendra Narayana sanctioned Rs. 8,000 for illumination and decoration of the town of Cooch Behar. He also provided a certain amount of rupees for laying the foundation stone of Chelmsford Ward in the Sudder Dispensary.⁸⁶

National movement in India and its impact and Formation of the Chamber of Princes :- During the First World War the tide of national aspirations was rising fast throughout the country. Though the Congress as the popular organisation had not yet resorted to any mass movements under Gandhiji's leadership, but it was slowly cutting itself loose from the leadership of the moderates. The emergence of leaders like Tilak broadened the hold of the organisation upon the people at large. The Congress had helped the British during the War with a hope that the British Government would introduce some reforms for the Indians. The British Government recognised that the situation needed new

handling and that there was an urgent need for a new policy. Accordingly, Edwin Samuel Montague, the Secretary of State for India, made the historic announcement on the 20th August, 1917 that "the policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India is in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire."⁸⁷

Soon after making this announcement, Montague came to India and met with the leaders of public opinion in British India and also with several leading Princes. The Conference of Ruling Princes appointed a committee which presented a memorandum. In the summer of 1918, Montague and Chelmsford published a joint report on Indian constitutional reforms, which was of historical importance in so far as it was the first major investigation into the relations of the states with the rest of India and with the paramount power.⁸⁸

The authors of the Montague-Chelmsford Report felt that the isolation of the rulers should be terminated and steps should be taken for joint consultations and discussion by them for the furtherance of their common interests. They suggested that the ad hoc conferences of rulers should be replaced by a permanent body known as the Council of Princes, which would give the rulers 'The opportunity of informing the Government as to their sentiments and wishes, of broadening their outlook and of conferring with one another and with the Government.' The Government of India consulted the Indian Princes regarding these recommendations of the Chelmsford-Montague Report. The Conference of Ruling Princes met at Delhi in January, 1919 and finally gave assent to the formation of the proposed Chamber of Princes.⁸⁹

The Chamber of Princes, styled the Narendra Mandal, was brought into being by a Royal Proclamation on the 8th February, 1921 on behalf of the King Emperor George V by his uncle the Duke of Connaught, at a ceremony at the Red Fort in Delhi.⁹⁰ The Royal Proclamation defined its limits : "My Viceroy will take its counsel freely in matters relating to the territories of Indian states generally and in matters that affect territories jointly with British India or with the rest of my Empire. It will have no concern with the internal affairs of individual States or their rulers or with the relations of individual States with my Government, while the existing rights of these States and their freedom of action will in no way be prejudiced or impaired."⁹¹ It should be noted that the Maharaja Jitendra Narayana attended the inauguration ceremony of the Chamber of Princes held, as already mentioned, at Delhi in February, 1921.⁹²

The Chamber of Princes was a deliberative, consultative and advisory body. The membership of the Chamber was restricted to salute states of eleven guns and over which could be members in their own right and certain other states not having full powers of internal administration were represented by a system of group voting, each group having a representative member. But of 118 salute states, 108 joined the Chamber.⁹³ Since the Cooch Behar state

enjoyed dynastic salutes of 13 guns, it was one of 108 rulers who were members of the Chamber in their own right.⁹⁴ There were 12 additional members in the Chamber elected by the rulers of 127 non-salutes. The total membership was thus 120.⁹⁵

The establishment of the Chamber of Princes, in which the rulers could voice their collective needs and aspirations, had ended the phase of isolation. The process of placing the states in direct relations with the Government of India took time to complete and was not finished until into the 1930s.⁹⁶ According to Barbara N. Ramusack, 'the Chamber of Princes was an innovation in British policy toward their autocratic collaborators and formally ended the earlier practice of isolation. This body would be a vehicle by which some princes could weave alliances among their peers, lobby with British officials, acquire some deliberative experience, and maintain a group status in future constitutional negotiations.'^{96*} However it has been pointed out that from its inception the Chamber of Princes had been unpopular as not supported by such important states as Hyderabad, Mysore and Baroda. The establishment of the Chamber signally failed to improve the administration of the princely states.⁹⁷ The Chamber's non-representative character has also been pointed out, because not a single state represented in the Chamber had a representative assembly on an elective basis. Therefore the views of the Chamber were merely the views of the individual Princes represented in the Chamber but they did not reflect the views of the people of the states.⁹⁸ Besides, the Government of India had carefully limited the Chamber's structure and functions, and princely rivalries and concern for 'izzat' had reduced its representativeness and potential effectiveness.^{98*} Lastly, it has also been alleged that the British had created the Chamber of Princes as a consultative body to stem the tide of growing national awakening. Its creation was a master-stroke of British diplomacy designed to serve only imperial interests. The British had brought the princes on the stage in order to make them a separate political force. This was an essential prerequisite to enable them to play the role of a counter-weight to the nationalist forces.⁹⁹

The year of 1919 found India highly discontented. The introduction of Montague-Chelmsford Refoms was preceded by a tremendous national upsurge throughout the country. The Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the severity of the martial law regime in Punjab had belied all the generous wartime promises of the British and had inflamed the masses generally. The Muslims were deeply agitated over the terms of the treaty of Sevres signed with Turkey in May, 1920, which made it clear that dismemberment of the Turkish Empire was complete.¹⁰⁰ Gandhiji preached the programme of non-violent Non-Co-operation not only to redress the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs but to win Swaraj.¹⁰¹ In December, 1920 the Congress accepted Gandhiji's programme at its annual session at Nagpur, and became a revolutionary body pledged to the triple boycott of the new legislatures, the law court and educational institutions and launched mass civil disobedience all over the country with considerable success from January, 1921.¹⁰²

‘The advancement of national movement in British India had an inevitable impact upon the people of the states. In the first and second decade of the twentieth century, runaway terrorists from British India seeking shelter in the states became agents of politicization. A much more powerful influence was exercised by the Non-Cooperation and Khilafat movement launched in 1920. The Congress passed a resolution at the Nagpur session in December 1920 calling upon the Princes to grant full responsible government in their states.¹⁰³ Simultaneously, the Congress had laid down its policy as being one of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states¹⁰⁴ and asked its members not to initiate political activity in the states in the name of Congress but only in their individual capacity.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless the Non-Co-operation Movement caught the imagination of the people of the states like Cooch Behar.

As the Non-cooperation movement expanded in late 1920 and throughout 1921, the Princes spoke and acted more openly, against this movement as it increasingly threatened the internal tranquility within their states. Princely clients such as the rulers of Patiala, Nabha, Gwalior and Kolhapur acted as political allies of their British patron against the movement.¹⁰⁵⁺ The Non-Co-operation Movement penetrated into the territory of Cooch Behar and stirred all the sections of its people. The Movement which created an environment of intense commotion and unrest throughout the state became a concern to the authorities.¹⁰⁶ In this volatile political situation Maharaja Jitendra Narayan summoned a meeting of the State Council on the 31st January, 1922 and passed a resolution in which the following precautionary measures were adopted to check the spread of the movement : (i) The Maharaja deemed it advisable to issue for the guidance of his officers certain instructions regarding the Non-Co-operation movement and in view of the fact that the neighbouring British Districts of Rangpur and Goalpara were seriously affected by this movement, precautionary measures appeared to be necessary. (ii) His Highness did not propose to review the argument for or against Non-Co-operation, "but it is sufficient to observe that the movement have no 'raison d'etre' in Cooch Behar where 'Swaraj' has long been an established fact". (iii) While picketing of the liquor shops was unobjectionable, but the use of violence to enforce total abstinence from intoxicating liquors or drugs was not to be allowed. (iv) The wearing of Khaddar cloth was entirely unobjectionable but the use of Gandhi Caps by the Maharaja's servants was prohibited as tending to indicate the existence in the state of an authority other than His Highness. (v) If any outsiders' visit to the state and their actions tended to stir up a political agitation within the state, they were to be removed from the state. (vi) 'Hartals' were not to be allowed and the holding of political meetings would be carefully watched.¹⁰⁷

‘The Non-Co-operation movement stirred the minds of the students of the Victoria College. Maharaja Jitendra Narayana addressing the students at the College on the 24th March, 1921, spoke that he had learnt about the students' participation in the Non-Co-operation Movement, and most of the troubles which arose was at the instigation of the students who came from the British districts in Bengal. The Maharaja said that if these students did not like the system of education introduced by him, there was nothing to prevent them from going elsewhere to seek the system to their choice.¹⁰⁸

The Maharaja made precautionary arrangements against the movements not only in the Cooch Behar but also in his largest Zamindari at Debigunj in the Jalpaiguri District. He visited Debigunj and at a Durbar held there on the 3rd February, 1922, announced that as he was one of the largest Zamindaries in this part of the province, he could not maintain an altogether neutral attitude towards the Non-Co-operation Movement. He admitted that the movement had caused a general feeling of unrest and this had somehow spread even to the agricultural community. He also observed that his officials refused to give that assistance to the authorities which they were legally bound to do so. The Maharaja cautioned his officials not to either passively or actively support any activity; otherwise the most stringent measures would be taken against them.¹⁰⁹

In order to stamp out the movement in the territory of Cooch Behar, the State Council further issued an order on the 8th June, 1922, proclaiming that the activities of the political volunteers, viz, publicity of the use of swadeshi goods, picketing, no revenue, no rent programme etc. were illegal; The State Government had no sympathy or relation with such activities of the volunteers; The State Government advised the people not to keep any relation with or to help them in any way and also requested them to inform the police station about the illegal activities of the volunteers.¹¹⁰

∟ In spite of all the repressive arrangements and orders, the Non-Co-operation movement spread to the rural areas of Cooch Behar. The rural market places or the Hats were the centers where from Gandhiji's messages spread to interior region. The people called Gandhiji as their 'Maharaja' and would obey only his orders.¹¹¹ Almost everywhere in the State prohibitory orders under section 144 of the I.P.C. were issued banning all political meetings. Nevertheless, the meetings were held in the country-side violating the state's prohibitory orders, and the political activists were arrested by the State Police.¹¹² The movement gripped the areas such as Sitai, Pundibari and Dinhat. The Congressmen of the neighbouring districts provided leadership to the movement in these areas.¹¹³ The Sitai hat being contiguous to the Rangpur district, was more advanced in political consciousness, where during a political meeting, a clash occurred between the violent mob and the armed police, resulting in the death of several men.¹¹⁴ After this bloody incident a politically surcharged atmosphere prevailed throughout the state. Another bloody clash between the armed policemen and the assembled masses armed with 'lathis' (bamboo sticks) at the Pundibari hat could only be avoided by the intervention of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan who himself came over this hat at the right moment to pacify the agitated masses.¹¹⁵ The state authorities held that the crime figures for the year of 1922 - 1923 had increased due to the lawlessness of the Non-Co-operation movement. The movement continued until the commencement of the rains in 1922.¹¹⁶ Even after the withdrawal of the Non-Co-operation Movement in British India in February, 1922 as a result of the Chauri Chaura incident the movement continued for several months in Cooch Behar. Maharaja Jitendra Narayan eventually succeeded in containing the movement by resorting to repressive measures.¹¹⁸ The Maharaja issued an order on the 24th October, 1922 by which all the cases under the Criminal Procedure code and the Penal Code, that had been instituted as the result of the movement were to be dropped as against those who were the Maharaja's

subjects. As regards the accused who were foreigners, the law was to take its usual course. The persons who were in jail having been convicted in similar cases, and those who had been sentenced to imprisonment and fine might be released on their signing an undertaking that they should never do such unlawful acts again. Otherwise very strongest steps would be taken against them.¹¹⁹

Sitesh Sanyal, the official biographer of Maharaja Jitendra Narayana, wrote in 1922 that, "The Maharaja was stern yet generous - stern when duty demanded that he ought to be so, generous - when he found that the end had been achieved. During the height of the Non-Co-operation movement with its thousand and one concomitant excuses, a movement which affected Cooch Behar not a little, it was the sternness of His Highness blended with generosity that nipped it in the bud here and killed it root and branch."¹²⁰ At the same time it should be borne in mind that the political movements of the states were generally weak and tended to collapse at the slightest pressure.¹²¹ This was largely due to certain factors based upon the prevailing different political conditions of British India and the States. The States generally lacked civil liberties including freedom of association, the comparative political backwardness of the people, and also they were legally independent entities.¹²²

Soon after the termination of the Non-Co-operation movement, Maharaja Jitendra Narayan issued an order on the 25th October, 1922 announcing that from the next April a new council would be constituted of which members would be elected by the Maharaja's subjects.¹²³ This order was, it is believed, intended to democratise the elitist character of the existing Council and thereby to appease the agitated people of the State. However, with the untimely death of the Maharaja the entire project did not materialise.

It is during the time of Jitendranarayan, the State Government also made an attempt to introduce "Cooch Behar State Victory Lottery" in Cooch Behar in 1919. In spite of the presence of Mr. J. A. Milligan, an I.C.S. Officer as Vice-President and Prince Victor Nityendranarayan as President in the Lottery Committee and elaborate meticulous arrangement, the lottery could not be materialised as the Government of India was reluctant to sanction the publication of advertisement of the lottery in British India. The reasons behind the refusal of granting permission for holding lottery or of publishing advertisement in British India are rather amusing. For the Government of India held that the result of such lottery would lead to gambling and other vices leading to the deterioration and ruin of many individuals and families. Hence this is objectionable both on moral and material grounds and as such are discouraged in British India.^{123*} It has, however, rightly been suggested that "during that volatile period of the struggle for Indian independence acquisition of huge amount as a result of holding lotteries might be proved dangerous ... for the British interest in India.^{123**}

/ Activities of Revolutionary Terrorists in Cooch Behar State : The era of revolutionary terrorism had begun in

Bengal by the end of 1907.¹²⁴ After the split of the Indian National Congress in December 1907 both the Moderates and Extremists failed to lead the political Indians, especially the youth and the national movement as a result temporarily receded.¹²⁵ The impatient youngmen of Bengal took to the path of individual heroism and revolutionary terrorism because they could not find no other way of expressing their patriotism. The official arrogance and repression, and the 'mendicancy' of the Congress Moderates, on the one hand and the Extremists' failure to give a positive lead to the people on the other, led the youth of Bengal to the 'politics of the bomb'. Very soon secret societies of revolutionaries appeared all over the country, the most famous being Anushilan Samity and Jugantar. Their activities took two forms - the assassination of oppressive officials and dacoities to raise funds for purchase of arms etc. The latter came to be popularly known as swadeshi dacoities.¹²⁶

The movement of the revolutionary terrorists made its appearance in the territory of Cooch Behar. Many cadres of the revolutionary groups took shelter in Cooch Behar.¹²⁷ But the State authorities never entertained the revolutionaries. Like his father, Maharaja Jitendra Narayan had no sympathy with the revolutionary boys. He announced that he would do everything in his power to stamp out sedition in the State.¹²⁸ In fact, participation in politics in Cooch Behar invariably meant banishment from the State.¹²⁹

The apathy of the Cooch Behar authorities towards the revolutionary movement has been referred to by Charu Chandra Dutta in his work "Purano Katha". Charu Chandra Dutta, the son of Kalika Das Dutta, the Dewan of Cooch Behar, lived in the state from 1908 to 1913, and developed very close links with Sri Aurobindo. In the winter of 1908 a European official of the Intelligence Branch, cautioned him not to keep any paper with him which would appear to be incriminating by the police during a possible search.¹³⁰ In 1909 Prince Raj Rajendra Narayan participated in a meeting held at the Caxton Hall in London in protest against the assassination of Curzon-Wylie by Madanlal Dhingra.¹³¹

When the son of a Head Master of Mathabhanga High School was arrested in Calcutta in connection with revolutionary conspiracy, the house of the Head Master was searched by the Cooch Behar Police and the British Indian Police. The Police party seized the biographies of Mazzini and Garibaldi written by Jogendra Nath Gupta and the history of Sepoy Mutiny written by Rajanikanta Gupta.¹³²

Despite the stern attitude of the State Government, some physical cultural clubs, popular known as Akhras were established in Cooch Behar where club wielding, dagger play and sword fighting were taught.¹³³ Some libraries were established which facilitated the purpose of the revolutionaries. The Patakura Adarsha Pathagar was one such institution.¹³⁴ There was at least one stationary shop at Cooch Behar which had been utilised as the means for attracting students. In these shops newspapers were provided free to attract the students who visited these shops every morning.¹³⁵

The Dacca Anusilan Samity had established its branch in Cooch Behar¹³⁶ and succeeded in enlisting members.¹³⁷ The Upendra Nath Barman, the veteran political figure of North Bengal, remarked in his autobiography that while studying in the Mathabhanga High School he became a member of the Anushilan Samity. The organisation at Mathabhanga was headed by Sushobhan Roy.¹³⁸ Satyendra Narayan Majumdar mentioned in his autobiography that while he visited Mathabhanga, his drive for recruitment of revolutionary cadres was not a complete failure because on the eve of his departure he came in contact with a man willing to join his fold.¹³⁹

Anushilan Samity had established groceries in various districts of Bengal wherefrom its cadres operated. The grocery of Rajshahi was transferred to Cooch Behar in 1915 and placed under Khetra Singh and Dinesh Biswas. The Samity attempted to spread its influence over the members of armed forces and the students. Collection of arms from Bhutan was another object which was abandoned when the Samity found that Bhutanese arms were actually old fashioned match locks. Dinesh Biswas, the Anushilan cadre, was eventually arrested and banished from Cooch Behar in 1917.¹⁴⁰ After his arrest, Prokhat Chakraborty, another Anushilan worker, continued the Samity's work.¹⁴¹

The Victoria College of Cooch Behar which¹⁴² offered free education with nominal lodging charge, had attracted numerous students from Eastern Districts of Bengal. Many of these had revolutionary leanings. Among them mention may be made of Pulin Das, the leader of the Dacca Anushilan Samity and Taraknath Das, the noted revolutionary figure. Political activists like Shyam Sundar Chakraborty, Satish Chandra Dasgupta etc. were the students of Jenkins School of Cooch Behar. But none of them had any political activities of serious nature during their stay at Cooch Behar.¹⁴³ However, the Victoria College authorities had to initiate a confidential file for the students having revolutionary leanings¹⁴⁴ The boarders of college hostel had circulated the Sedition Committee's Report among the students with a view to rousing them.¹⁴⁵ The private boarding houses of the college students offered shelter to revolutionary activities.¹⁴⁶

Enquiry into the Dharail dacoity which occurred in the Nator Police Station in Rajshahi district on the 20th February, 1915 revealed that the Bengal revolutionary groups had active workers in the Cooch Behar State. Three out of six revolutionary youths who were arrested in connection with this dacoity, came from the Cooch Behar State : (1) Kumud Nath Bhattacharya of Pabna who joined the Victoria College in 1914 and stayed in Chhatra Bhandar, (2) Shiva Prasad Bhaduri of Mymensingh who was a student of the first year class of the Victoria College living in Cooch Behar for about one year and (3) Khetra Mohan Singh of Tippera who was an active revolutionary organiser in Cooch Behar. Three other revolutionary youths such as Kala Chand Biswas of Pabna, Jatindra Mohan Choudhuri of Rangpur who was a Second Years Student of the Victoria College and also wrote seditious literature and Jatindra Nath Maitra of Bogra who was a Second Year Student of Victoria college, living in Santikuthir mess, belonged to the same gang

and associated together.¹⁴⁷

Some of the revolutionaries who were involved in the Raja Bazar Bomb Case and whose names were on the cipher list, had connection with the Cooch Behar State. These revolutionaries were Satish Chandra Ghosh of Pabna living in Kalika Bazar, Cooch Behar and Matilal Roy of Dacca, formerly a student of the Victoria College from 1912 to 1913.¹⁴⁸ Besides, several members of the Bengal Revolutionary party had been reported as visiting Cooch Behar. Among them the followings are worth mentioning : (1) Prafulla Madhab Chakraborty of Dacca was formerly a Student of Victoria College and his name was found amongst the papers seized in the Raja Bazar conspiracy. (2) Mani Bhusan Gupta was connected in the Kurul dacoity in Rangpur in February, 1915. (3) Sashadhar Kar and (4) Uma Nath Chakraborty were arrested in connection with the attempted murder of the Additional Superintendent of Police, Rangpur in February, 1915 (5) Nalini Kanta Gupta was a member of Aurobinda Ghose's group at Pondichery. (6) Bhut Nath Sen alias Spider was a member of the Barishal conspiracy.¹⁴⁹

In May, 1915 the Government of Bengal had to bring the issue of revolutionary activities of the Victoria College to Maharaja Jitendranarayan's notice for action to be taken. It was decided that for further information the British Indian Police and the State Police would work hand in hand.¹⁵⁰ The Maharaja also made it clear that he would like to take the stern action against the persons in the state indulging in revolutionary activities. The State authorities had already started a branch something like C.I.D. with this objective.¹⁵¹

Changes in the Constitution of the State Council and Legislative Council : After the retirement of Mr. J.A. Milligan, I.C.S., Vice-President, State Council and of Mr. N.N. Sen, Dewan of the State, in the constitution of the State Council certain changes had been effected during 1919-1920. Mr. H.J. Twynam, I.C.S., was appointed Vice-President, State Council, for a period of three years with effect from the 3rd March, 1920 and also a Justice of the Peace within the state. Babu Pramathanath Chatterjee, the Civil and Sessions Judge of the State, was appointed Judicial Member of the Council in place of Mr. N.N. Sen. Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan, who had resigned his extraordinary membership of the Council and Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan were appointed members of the State Council during the year of 1919-1920.¹⁵² Mr. B.Ghose, Secretary to the Maharaja, continued to be a member of the State Council. As regards the constitution of the Legislative Council of the State, Maharaja Jitendra Narayana reappointed, during the year of 1918-1919 Rai Choudhuri Tarini Charan Chakraborty and Khan Choudhuri Amanatullah Ahmed as additional members of the Legislative Council for a term of three years with effect from the 19th April, 1918 under Section four of the Cooch Behar Legislative Council Act II of 1909. The former represented the Hindu Jotdars of the State and the latter the Mahomadan Jotedars.¹⁵⁴ His Highness re-appointed Kumar Jatindra Narayan to be an Additional member of the Legislative Council for a period of three years with effect from the 20th November, 1919 and appointed Babu Khikan Chand Oswal and Babu Nitya Kumar Ray to be Members for a period of three years each from

the 22nd March, 1920. The first member was to represent the Rajguns, the second to represent trade and commerce, and the third to represent the Bar.¹⁵⁵

As the Maharaja Jitendranarayan had granted permission to introduce a large number of Bills into the Legislative Council, he appointed for one year the following gentlemen to be Additional Members of the Legislative Council of the State under the above Act, with effect from the 1st April, 1920 in addition to the Additional Members already appointed : Kumar Gajendra Narayan, Rai Choudhuri Satish Chandra Mustafi, Mr. Sailendra Ghose, Fouzdari Ahilkar, Babu Jagadballav Biswas, Revenue Officer, Babu Satish Chandra Banerjee, Civil and Sessions Judge, Babu Rajendra Prasad Ray, State Pleader and Babu Binod Bihari Dutt, Pleader.¹⁵⁶

The loss was sustained by the State Council through the death of of Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan on the 7th November, 1920 at Darjeeling, who also was a member of the Legislative Council. The Maharaj Kumar Jatindra Narayan, the representative of the Rajguns in the Legislative Council of the Maharaja died on the 23rd, September, 1920.¹⁵⁷

Under Section 2 of Act II of 1909 (Cooch Behar Legislative Council Act) the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan appointed the following gentlemen to be Additional Members of the Legislative Council of the State for a period of one year with effect from the 1st April, 1921, viz, Mr. Sailendra Ghose, Srijukta Satish Chandra Banerjee, Rai Choudhuri Satish Chandra Mustafi, Srijukta Rajendra Prasad Ray, Srijukta Surendra Kanta Basu Mazumdar and Srijukta Binod Behari Dutta. The Maharaja also appointed Kumar Gajendra Narayan (Junior) to be an Additional Member of the State Legislative Council for a period of three years from the 1st April, 1921 in place of the Late Kumar Jatindranarayan.¹⁵⁸

The State was managed, as before his father's death, by the Maharaja Jitendranarayan with the assistance of the State Council, of which he was himself the President. The Vice-President of the Council, who was also in charge of the General Department of the State, was a member of the Indian Civil Service, whose services had been lent to the State by the British Government. In June, 1921. The other members of the State Council were Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan, the Maharaj's brother, the Financial Secretary to the Maharaja, the Judicial Member of the Council, the Secretary to the Maharaja and the Revenue Officer of the State. There was, as already mentioned , a Legislative Council consisting of the members of the State Council and five non-official members representing different classes and interests of the state. The Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division was ex-officio Political Agent for the state in respect of extradition cases.¹⁵⁹

Under sanction of His Majesty's Secretary of the State for India, the Cooch Behar State had been placed in direct political relations with the Government of India with effect from the 15th November, 1922. His Excellency the Governor of Bengal acted as Agent to the Governor-General of India for the Cooch Behar State.¹⁶⁰

The following memorandum, corrected upto June, 1921, contained the informations relating to the State of Cooch Behar which had direct political relations with the Government of Bengal.¹⁶¹

Serial No.	Name of The State	Name, title and religion of Chief	Date of Birth
1	2	3	4
1	Cooch Behar	His Highness Maharaja Sir Jitendranarayan Bhup Bahadur, K.C.S.I. Hindu	20th December, 1886

Date of Succession	Area of the State (in Square Miles)	Population of State	Average Annual Revenue
5	6	7	8
1st September, 1913	1,307	5,92,372	Rs. 29,67,204

Average annual Expenditure	Tribute to Government	Military Forces (Regular troops) Infantry & Artillery	Military Forces (Irregular Troops) Infantry and Artillery	Salute of Chief in guns
9	10	11	12	13
Rs. 29,63,031	Rs. 67,700-15	—	205	13

Outstanding Debts :- Like his brother the late Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan, Maharaja Jitendranarayan, had to tackle the problem of certain debts and liabilities which had seriously embarrassed the financial position of the state. The State had a burden of debts, some of which had been incurred in the past years and some in the reign of "Maharaja Jitendranarayan himself. On the death of Maharaja Nripendranarayan in September, 1911 total debts were reckoned to be as 26,70,000 of this 3,70,000 was satisfied by foreclosure. It was to pay of 17 lakhs leaving 6 lakh unpaid for the present. To meet the liabilities 5 lakhs were taken from the reserve fund, 3 lakhs from the budget and 11 lakhs were borrowed from the Allahabad Bank as already mentioned. The conditions imposed by the Government were that not less than 3½ (3.51) lakhs should be paid yearly towards principal and interest until the whole amount of the loan was liquidated.¹⁶² After these arrangements were made many more liabilities came to light and in April 1919 the total outstandings were 12 lakhs in spite of apparently regular payment. The details of the actual outstandings were shown in the statement given by Mr. Twynam, Vice-President, the State-Council.¹⁶³

But in June 1921, the total outstandings of the state amounted to Rs. 21,20,000.¹⁶⁴ As Rs. 3,50,000 had been provided in the budget of the year 1921-1922 to pay off the charge of debts, it had been found necessary to raise a loan of 18 lakhs of rupees to free the State from its existing debts.¹⁶⁵ Maharaja Jitendranarayan had approached the

Government as to the possibility of obtaining from the Government of India a loan to pay off his outstanding debts. Of these, the loan to the Bank of Allahabad must be paid at the beginning of April, 1922, as the Bank had threatened to foreclose their security which was Chaklajat Estates and the "Woodlands" Property.¹⁶⁶

In view of the Maharaja's affairs in a very critical situation,¹⁶⁷ The Government of Bengal approached the Government of India in June 1921 to know whether the latter would be willing themselves to make a loan to the Maharaja.¹⁶⁸ But the Government of India, in reply, told the local Government that "as there is no financial provision for a loan at present, we should have to go to the assembly for a supplementary grant and it would be difficult to argue that there are public reasons of state for making a loan to a Prince to enable him to pay off his private debts. The Government has in the past, in dealing with proposals for loans to States, drawn as distinction between loans for private and those for public purposes; and it is more than ever necessary to observe this distinction under present conditions. For these reasons the Government of India regret that they are unable to sanction the loan to the Maharaja from Central Revenues."¹⁶⁹ Under the circumstances, the Government of Bengal proposed to the Maharaja Jitendra Narayana that he should raise a private loan to which the Government would accord its approval.¹⁷⁰ In November 1921 a loan of Rs. 18 lakhs was obtained from the Imperial Bank and outstanding liabilities were for the most part liquidated. The loan bears Interest at 1 percent, above the current bank rate with a minimum of 6 percent, per annum commission at the rate of 1 percent is payable to two guarantee Companies in respect of Rs. 9 lacs each. Repayment is to be effected in six years and the sum certified by the Chief Auditor, Eastern Bengal Railway to be due to the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on account of the net earning of the Cooch Behar State is to be paid to the Imperial Bank and specifically applied to the reduction of the loan account. The provision under Repayment of Debt in the Annual Budget was under the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan's orders placed under the Vice President in the General Department, in whose hands was left the business connected with the service of the debt. It can be also noted that the balance of the loan account outstanding on the 31st march, 1922 amounted to Rs. 19,30,728-12-0.^{170*}

Conclusion : In addition to these, Maharaja Jitendra Narayana had to grapple with a situation arising out of the First World War. The great economic distress through which the world was passing, prevailed in Cooch Behar also. The Maharaja did not allow such bad economic condition to stand in the way of effecting improvements in the State, particularly in the directions of education and sanitation. The several 'surprising' buildings constructed, the several foundation-stones laid for others, the introduction of the nursing system in hospitals, the adoption of improved sanitary methods at the outbreak of epidemic diseases, the re-excavation of several tanks with a view to supplying pure drinking water, the installation of the electric and telephone systems in the town, the opening of the straight roads, the stately marble statue of the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana all these speak to the beneficent activity of Maharaja Jitendra Narayana in making the town prettier and healthier.¹⁷¹

The Raj Rajendranarayana Boarding Institution at Cooch Behar and the Nripendra Narayana Memorial Hall at Darjeeling testify respectively to the fraternal and filial attachment and devotion of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan while the Maharaja's loyalty to the British King-Emperor was evinced by placing the resources of the State at the disposal of His Majesty when the great war broke out and by sending out his younger brother Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan to the front. The greater infusion of native (Cooch Behari) talent into the Cooch Behar State Service, the appointment of a committee to report the educational problems, the encouragement to research work in the domains of old Bengali literature and history of Cooch Behar, particularly by placing the Ancient Bengali Manuscripts of the State Library at the disposal of the Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha or the Literary Society which was started under his auspices and of which he was the patron, to histrionic art, to the development of industry and agriculture in the state, to the starting of Limited banking Corporations in the town, to Swadeshism by himself setting an example to others - all these testify to Maharaja Jitendra Narayan's endeavour for all round development of the State.¹⁷²

Sites Chandra Sanyal held that the two most outstanding events during Jitendra Narayan's reign were two great announcements - One fixing the period of settlement for 99 years after the conclusion of the 30 years settlement granted by his father, and the other regarding the introduction of the elective system in the Legislative Council of the State. But the two announcements remained unaccomplished owing to the untimely death of Jitendra Narayan.¹⁷³

Maharaja Jitendra Narayan was very fond of work. Punctual to the minute, he at once set to work. Into the detail of every question, however dry or dull, he always tried to go. No amount of work was too heavy for him and he seldom left his seat without finished the last item of business placed before him. He was always open and amenable to reason. If he was once satisfied and convinced that a certain decision required some modification, he righted the wrong then and there.¹⁷⁴

Sunity Devi mentioned in her Autobiography that "Jit [Jitendra Narayan] has begun his work well and is doing his best to make the State prosperous. His love for his people is deep and he takes great interest in administration. He works hard and sometimes sits at his table and writes till midnight. He looks into every details himself and I often wonder how he can do so much : a boy who was never brought up as the heir It is hard for him that all the old officers now are either dead or retired and he has to work with new untried men, but he takes it quite coolly."¹⁷⁵ Jitendra Narayan was accessible to all. "Charo durwaza hamesha khula rahe" was his principle. "Let everyone come to me and say his say freely, so that I may learn every first hand and try to mitigate his sorrows if I can." - this was the principle that guided the Maharaja since he ascended the throne of Cooch Behar in 1913.¹⁷⁶

Jitendra Narayan was very tall and extremely handsome. Until he fell ill he had been a fine cricketer and polo-player as well as a talented musician.¹⁷⁷ He loved Shikar no less.¹⁷⁸ He also wrote some charming poems and

dramas. Mention may be made of "Hello Darjeeling" - a one-act drama and "28th February" and "4th May" - two books of poems.¹⁷⁹

As already mentioned, Jitendra Narayana visited England for a few months in 1913 and during his stay there married in August Princess Indira Devi, the eldest daughter of the Maharaja Sayaji Rao, Gaekwar of Baroda. They had five children, three daughters and two sons. A daughter was born to His Highness on the 1st October, 1914 in Calcutta and was named Maharajkumari Ila Devi. A son and heir was born on the 15th December, 1915 in Cooch Behar. He had been named Jubaraj Jagaddipendra Narayan. Another son was born on the 6th July, 1918 in Poona and was named Maharajkumar Indrajit Narayan.¹⁸⁰ The Maharaja and his family went to Europe for a short visit in February, 1919 and while staying in London another daughter of His Highness was born on the 23rd May, 1919. She was named Maharajkumari Ayesha Devi, alias Gayatri Devi. Jitendra Narayan returned from England in September, 1919 and again started in April, 1920 for England where he had left his family. A third daughter was born to His Highness in London on the 5th June, 1920. She had been named Maharajkumari Maneka Devi.¹⁸¹ 'A devoted son, an affectionate brother, a doting husband, a loving father, a kind master and above all a prince among men-such was the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan'.¹⁸²

Maharaja Jitendra Narayan left Cooch Behar in October, 1922 for England. Before leaving he made a Memorandum of Administration of the State which would be given into effect during his absence in India.¹⁸³ The news of Jitendranarayan's serious illness in England was received in Cooch Behar in the middle of December, 1922. All sections of the people throughout the State were not slow to send up prayers to God for the speedy recovery of the Maharaja. Sankirtan parties paraded the streets in the several towns and offered special pujas invoking the blessing of the All-powerful. The Mohamedans were also seen in large numbers in their mosques where special Namaj was arranged for. The Brahmos also met at the New Dispensation Church for special prayer on the occasion. But nothing could ward off the inevitable.¹⁸⁴ Maharaja Jitendra Narayan died of heart trouble and anaemia of the brain on the 20th December, 1922 in the house in Hans Road, London where his wife and children had been living for some months. The Maharani and her parents were present there.¹⁸⁵ Jitendra Narayan died on his 36th birthday. He and Indira Devi had been married nine years and she was, at that time, only thirty years old.¹⁸⁶

The State of Cooch Behar was plunged in deep grief on hearing this melancholy news. The State Council announced with the most profound grief the news of death of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan to the people of Cooch Behar and added that "By deeply lamented death of their beloved Ruler all classes of His Highness' subjects have suffered an irreparable loss. His Highness kindness, geniality and love for his subjects and his solicitude for their welfare will be an abiding memory throughout the State."¹⁸⁷ The State Council also sent a message of condolence to the Maharani of Cooch Behar in London on the 21st December, 1922.¹⁸⁸ A salute of 36 guns corresponding to the late Maharaja's

age at the time of death was fired in the afternoon on the 21st December, 1922 the last gun being fired at sunset.¹⁸⁹

The funeral of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan took place at Golders Green, London, on the 23rd December, 1922.¹⁹⁰ Those present at the funeral service included the Maharaja of Baroda., The Maharajakumar of Gwalior who came specially from Oxford, Nawab Khusru Junj Bahadur of Hyderabad, Sir William Duke, the Under-Secretary of State for India, Colonel Bannerman (representing the Secretary of State for India), and a number of near-relatives and friends of the deceased. Mr. N.C. Sen, maternal uncle of the late Maharaja, conducted the funeral service in Bengali and Captain K. Sen sang a Bengali hymn.¹⁹¹

A funeral procession was also organised at Cooch Behar, which started from the palace and reached the Torsa river-side on the same date at about 5 P.M. which was approximately the corresponding time fixed for the funeral at Golders Green.¹⁹² The people of Cooch Behar could not forget the memory of Maharajkumar Jitendra Narayan for many years. They mourned for the death of the Maharaja with the following words, "The wretched subjects of the state only dragging their existence like so many helpless orphans at the unwarrantable loss of the late lamented Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur, K.C.S.I. The sad recollection of his affection for subjects, of his whole-hearted endeavour for all sided improvement of the State and above all of his tender and beautiful figure which is a rarity even amonge Gods, pierces our hearts through and through with the spear of grief and rends them piece to piece."¹⁹³

Jubaraj Jagaddipendra Narayan, the eldest son of the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan who was only seven years old, succeeded his father on the 20th December, 1922.¹⁹⁴ His succession to the Gaddi of Cooch Behar as His Highness Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur was formally announced on the 24th December, 1922.¹⁹⁵

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1. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department (political) January 1914. p-4.
2. Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Rama Santha : A Princess Remembers : Memoirs of the Maharani of Jaipur, 1976, New Delhi, reprint, 1988, p-37.
3. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (political) February, 1914, p-3.
4. Loc.cit. Sanyal Sitiesh Chandra, Jitendra Narayana Bhup Bahadur, CoochBehar, 1923, p-11.
5. Devi, Maharani Sunity, Autobiography of An Indian Princess, edited by Biswanath Das, New Delhi, 1995, p-90.
'Rajey', i.e., Raj Rajendranarayan once had an attack of false croup, the Maharaja told their doctor, "Durga Das, I shall always be over-anxious about Rajey's health until another son is born." Thus the birth of second son Jitendranarayan, whom Their Highnesses called 'Jit' ,brought great rejoicing to the Cooch Behar royal family--
Loc. cit.
6. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (political) September, 1916, p-3. W.B.S.A.
7. Bhattacharjee Nibaran Chandra, Koch Biharer Sankhpta Bibaran (in Bengali), Second Edition, 1927, p-27.
8. A.A.R.C.B.S. 1905-1906, p-5. N.B.S.L. See also Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September, 1916, p-3. W.B.S.A.
9. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September, 1916, p-3.
10. ibid.
11. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-187. The 26th August 1913 was observed as a public holiday throughout the Cooch Behar State to celebrate the happy occasion. The State Council Cabled to Maharaja Kumar Jitendra Narayan their congratulations on the 26th August, 1913 and issued the following notification. "The Council have much pleasure in notifying to the people of Cooch Behar that the marriage of Maharaj Kumar Jitendra Narayana was celebrated in London on Monday, the 25th August, 1913. - A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, p. 2. and C.B.G., Extraordinary, the first September, 1913.
12. Devi, Sunity : op.cit, p-186.
13. ibid. p-187.
14. Devi, Sunity : Loc cit.
15. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, Chapter-IX, Paragraph-3, See also Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September, 1916, p-3.
16. A.A.R.C.B.S. 1913-1914, p-3.
17. C.B.G, September 11, 1913, p-105. The Maharaja Jitendra Narayana conveyed the following gracious message to his people by cable from Cromer, England. "In the death of my dearly loved brother, I have lost not only a brother's love but the affectionate and intimate relations of a dear friend. In the irreparable loss which has so suddenly fallen upon me, coming close upon the death of my illustrious father of happy memory, I am confronted with the feeling that I have the sympathy of my officers and subjects. I am fully sensible of the very heavy responsibilities which have fallen upon me and I pray that God Almighty may grant me strength and guidance and enable me to maintain and uphold good government, and cause law and justice to be administered and executed with mercy, which I seek to consecrate my life to the service of my State." - Confer also A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, p. 4.
18. C.B.G., September 22, 1913, p-104.
19. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, p-4.

20. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, January, 1914.
21. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1913-1914, p-4.
22. *ibid.*
23. *ibid*, p-5.
24. The Statesman, Calcutta, November 18, 1913, p-8.
25. The Statesman, Calcutta, November 19, 1913, p-8.
26. *Loc.cit.*
27. C.B.G., December 29, 1913.
28. The Statesman, Calcutta, November 19, 1913, p-8. The Maharaja gave attar and pan to Lord Carmichael, and the Dewan performed a similar office for the Governor's staff. An officer of the Cooch Behar State distributed attar and pan to the Durbaries. - *ibid.*
29. C.B.G., Extraordinary, November 28, 1913.
30. Brief Account of Cooch Behar State, 1929-36, Confidential, General Department, C.B., Collection No:1, File No : 6, Batch No : 155. C.B.D.R.R. As already mentioned, Sunity Devi was the eldest daughter of the religious reformer Keshab Chandra Sen and was married to the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayana in 1878 and was decorated with the Order of the Crown of India in 1887. Victor Nityendra Narayan was born in 1888 and educated at Eton and joined the Imperial Cadet Corps in 1906. Hitendra Narayana was born in 1890 and educated at Eton and Cambridge. Sukriti Sundari Devi was born in 1885 and married in 1899 to Mr. Jyotsna Ghosal of the Indian Civil Service. Prartibha Sundari Devi was born in 1891, and married to Mr. Lionel Mander, of the Wolver Wampton according to Brahmo rites in 1912. Sudhira Sundari Devi was born in 1894 and married to Mr. Allen Mander, of Wolver Wampton in 1914. - C.B.G., Extraordinary, November 28, 1913.
31. *ibid*, A.A.R.C.B.S. 1918-1919, p-1.
32. Telegram dated the 12th September, 1913 from Simla, India, Foreign to Darjeeling, Bengal, Political-Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, 1913, confidential, File No : 190, Serial No : 1, p-1. W.B.S.A.
33. Telegram dated the 11th October, 1913 from the Government, Darjeeling to Maharaja, Cooch Behar, *ibid.*, Serial No : 3, p-1.
34. Telegram dated the 11th October, 1913 from Maharaja of Cooch Behar, London to the Governor Lord Carmichael, Darjeeling, *ibid.*, Serial No : 4.
35. Telegram dated the 14th October, 1918 from Bengal, Political Department, Darjeeling to India, Foreign, Simla, *ibid.*, Serial No : 5, pp-1-2
36. C.B.G., Extraordinary, November 28, 1913.
37. Letter No : 30863 P, dated Calcutta, the 21st March, 1914 from Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Superintendent of the Cooch Behar State, Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, March 1914, p-71. W.B.S.A.
38. Letter dated Cooch Behar, the 19th March 1914 from H.H. Maharaja Jitendra Narayana to H.E., the Government of Bengal, *ibid.* P-72.
39. C.B.G., January 25, 1915. An obituary note was published in the Cooch Behar Gazette in the following words : "His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur desires to express his deep regret at the death of Babu Priya Nath Ghosh, Dewan of the State, which occurred on the 9th January 1915, and to place on record his high appreciation of the services rendered by the deceased officer, during the period of his service extending over 37 years. He was loyal and conscientious in the discharge of his duties in connection with the administration of the state and has

left behind him an unbroken record of untiring devotion to the person and interests of His Highness father, as well as of his late brother and himself. - A.A.R.C.B.S., 1914-1915, p-1.

40. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1914-1915, p-1.
41. C.B.G., Extraordinary, January 27, 1915.
42. C.B.G., Extraordinary, November 24, 1915.
43. Letter No : 270, Ret, dated the 16th November, 1914 from the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department - Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, May, 1915, p-11.
44. Letter No : 589, dated Calcutta, the 13th June, 1914 from Dewan of the Cooch Behar State to the Collector of Rangpur, *ibid*, p-12.
45. Letter No : 2797 R., dated Calcutta, the 8th March, 1915 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, *Ibid*, p-12.
46. Letter No : 51/3 - 1879, dated Calcutta, the 28th December, 1914 from Director of the Department of Land Records, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department - Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, February 1915, p-31.
47. *ibid*.
48. Letter No : 1390, dated Cooch Behar, the 5th November, 1914 from Dewan of the Cooch Behar State to the Settlement Officer, Jalpaiguri *ibid*.
49. Letter No : 4807 P, dated Calcutta, the 10th April, 1915 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division *ibid*. April, 1915, p-23.PGB
50. Letter No : 51/3 1879, dated Calcutta, the 28th December, 1914 from Director of the Department of Land Records, Bengal to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, *op.cit*.
51. Letter No : 1310 dated Cooch Behar, the 20th August, 1915 from Superintendent of Cooch Behar State to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division and Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State - *ibid*, November 1915, p-5.
52. Letter No : 12311 P, dated Calcutta, the 18th November, 1915 from Under-secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division - *ibid*.
53. Letter No : 279, dated Cooch Behar, the 16th June, 1919 from Vice-President, State Council, Cooch behar to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal - Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September, 1919, p-59.
54. Letter No : 10847 P, dated Calcutta, the 2nd August, 1919, from Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar - *ibid*., p-62.
55. Proceedings at a meeting to discuss the preliminaries to the settlement of the Goalpara-Cooch Behar boundary. - *ibid*., April 1920, p-12.
56. Letter dated Cooch Behar, the 29th October, 1919 from Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar to the Deputy Commissioner, Goalpara, *ibid*, pp-14-15. The Maharaja was of opinion that (a) with regard to the Ghurla boundary, the Cooch Behar cadastral survey would be followed except at Balabhut where Renny would be relaid, and area of about 205 acres transferred to Ghurla. To attempt to relay Renny's map wholesale would create trouble as it was not possible to relay his original intentions correctly. The Cooch Behar 16" Survey had obviously followed Renny's boundary in the main, but the two lines differed on the comparative maps made in Major Hirst's officers (b) with regard to the Guma boundary the Maharaja held the view that all the disputes would be settled there after local enquiry by the Boundary Commissioners. (c) Regarding the position of the Raja of Gouripur in

this case, the Maharaa of Cooch Behar was strongly of opinion that the Raja of Gauripur ought not to participate in the work of the Boundary Commissioners as, his interests would be represented by the Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara. - *ibid.*

57. Letter No : 1001 R, dated Shillong, the 8th March, 1920 from the Chief Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar, *ibid.* p-16 see also Letter No : 1263 R, dated Shillong, the 3rd April, 1920 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, *ibid.* p-11.
58. V.P. Menon, The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, First Published 1956, Third Edition, 1961. Orient Longman, p-12.
59. D.R. Mankekar, Accession to Extinction - The Story of Indian Princes, Vikash Publishing House, Delhi, 1974, p-15.
60. Copland, Jan : The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire. 1917-1947, Cambridge University Press, First South Asian Edition, 1999, p-33.
- 60+. Ashton, S. R. : British Policy towards the Indian States : 1905-1939, Curzon Press Ltd, London, First published 1982, p-58. It has further been pointed out that what was unique about the princes' assistance rendered to the British Empire during the First World War was its extended scope and unusual intensity. Prior to First World War troops from princely states had fought in support of British interests, but most of these campaigns such as the Mutiny, the Tirah, and the Chinese action, had only lasted for a year or so. As British home reserves of essential war material and man power dwindled, the princes were called upon to maintain their support over an extended period of four years, and their subjects served abroad for long periods either in Imperial Service units or in units of the British Indian army. - Ramusack, Barbara N : *op. cit.*, p. 40.
61. C.B.G. 24th August, 1914. (C.B.D.C.O.)
62. C.B.G., June 15, 1914.
63. C.B.G., June 15, 1914.
65. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1914-1915, p-3.
66. *ibid.*, 1915-16, p-2 (General, Paragraph-6)
67. Proceedings of the Seventh Meeting of the State Council, dated-6.10.14, p-60, Resolution-3.
68. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1914-1915, p-3
69. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1915-1916, p-2.
70. Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs, 1916, Confidential, File No : 683, p-15. It should be mentioned here that Maharaja Jitendra Narayana delivered a speech on the agenda regarding the form of minority administration in Native States in this conference - *ibid.* p-22.
71. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September, 1921, p-10.
72. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1919-1920, General, Paragraph 13, p-4.
73. *ibid.*, 1920-1921, General, paragraph 7, p-2.
74. V.P. Menon, *op.cit.*, p-12.
75. Ashton, S.R., *op.cit.*, p-50.
76. Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, Letter No : 15 to Secretary of State, dated 9th February, 1917, Enclosure No : 2, Political and Secret Subject Files, 1902-31, File No : 2811 / 1917, No. 930 / 1917.
77. *ibid.*
78. *ibid.*, Enclosure No : 4.
79. Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs held at Delhi on the 30th October, 1916, 5th November,

- 1917, 20th January, 1919 and 3rd November, 1919, Delhi, Government of Indian Press, pp-23-38, 40, 53-63, 84-90.
80. Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs held on October 30th, 1916. File No : 683, confidential Home Political Department, (political) p-23-24 (W.B.S.A.).
81. Ashton, S.R. op.cit, p-48.
82. C.B.G, May 29, 1916.
83. Loc. cit.
84. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1916-1917, p-1.
85. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1917-1918, p-3 General, Paragraph-11.
86. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1918-1919, General, Paragraph-13, p-3.
87. Menon, V.P. : op. cit, pp-12-13.
88. *ibid.*, p-13.
89. *ibid.* It should be noted that Lord Lytton had one time suggested the formation of an Imperial Privy Council which would comprise some of the great rulers, but his suggestion was not accepted, with the then Secretary of State. Lord Curzon's plan for the formation of a Council of Ruling Princes had also been brushed aside. Lord Minto's subsequent scheme for an Advisory Council of Rulers and big landholders to combat the nationalist force had met with the same fate. But during the Vice-royalties of Lord Hardinge and Lord Chelmsford, Conferences of Ruling Princes and Chiefs became a regular feature. *ibid.* p-15.
90. Mankekar, D.R., op.cit. p-14. See also Chudgar P.L., Indian Princes Under British Protection, 1976. p-100. It should be mentioned here that while the Government sought the opinion of the Cooch Behar Durbar on the adoption of the term "Narendra Mandal" proposed in the Montague-Chelmsford Report, the Durbar replied in March 1920 that the Maharaja Jitendra Narayana had approved of the above term as proposed in paragraph 306 of the report on the Indian constitutional reforms Letter No : 3593, dated Cooch Behar to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi - Proceeding of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, March, 1920, p-33
91. Menon, V.P., op.cit, pp-16-17.
92. Memoranda on the Indian States, 1921, Superintendent, Government Printing, India, 1922. (S.L.G.B.) p-137.
93. Menon V.P., op.cit, p-17, Chudgar P.L., op.cit, pp-100-101.
94. Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, 1922, Confidential file no. 172 Serial Nos. 1-5, p-1. It should be mentioned here that another Princely State in Bengal was Tripura, which also became the member of the Chamber of the Princes. *ibid.*
95. Menon V.P., op.cit, p-17.
- It should be mentioned here that some important States, such as Hyderabad (Nizam), Mysore, Travancore, Cochin, Baroda and Indore, did not join the Chamber of Princes on grounds *inter alia* that it would be highly improper for Ruling Princes to commit themselves on their individual responsibility to views and policies which might not command the general approval of their subjects. Chudgar P.L., op.cit, pp-100-101.
96. Menon V.P., op.cit., p-18.
- 96+. Ramusack, Barbara N : The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire : Dissolution of a Patron - Client System, 1914-1939, The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1978, p. 40.
97. Kulkarni, V.B. : Princely India and Lapse of British Paramountty, Bombay, Jaico, 1985, p-119.
98. Chudgar, P.L., op.cit, p-101.
- 98+. Ramsack, Barbara N : The op. cit., p. 93.

99. Jain, M.S., Reduction of 'A Rectangle to Triangle. A New Perspective on the Partition of India', in India's Partition Preludes and Legacies, , Jaipur and New Delhi, 1998, pp 325-326.
100. Chandra Bipan, Mukherjee, Mridula and others, India's Struggle for Independence (1857-1947), Penguin Books, 1989, p-184.
101. Menon V.P., op.cit, p-20.
102. Chandra Bipan, Mukherjee, Mridula, op.cit, pp 186-187.
103. ibid., p-357.
104. Menon V.P., op.cit, p-21.
105. Chandra Bipan, Mukherjee, Mridula, op.cit, p-357.
- 105+. Ramusack, Barbara N : op. cit., pp. 112-113.
106. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, p-4.
107. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1921-1922, General, pp 3-4.
108. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, His Highness Late Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, K.C.S.I. of Cooch Behar, Appendix, pp 20-21.✓
109. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1921-1922, General, pp 3-4.
110. C.B.G., Extraordinary, June 9, 1922.
111. Roy Charu Chandra, Charu Rayer Darogairi (in Bengali) Cooch Behar, 1990, pp 86-87, 91.✓
112. ibid., p-87.
113. Roy Charu Chandra : 'Sada Posaker Ek Maharaja' in Cooch Behar Samachar (Newspaper) Cooch Behar, July 11, 1985.
114. Roy Charu Chandra, Charu Rayer Darogagiri, op.cit, p-87.
115. ibid, pp 87-91.
116. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, General Administration and Criminal Justice p-1.
117. Chandra Bipan, op.cit, p-19.
118. Sanyal Sites Chandra, op.cit, p-17, Also see Majumdar Satyendra Narayan, Amar Biplab Jignasa (in Bengali), p-70.
119. C.B.G., November 20, 1922, Part-I, No : XXII.
120. Sanyal Sitiesh Chandra, op.cit, p-17.
121. Sudhir P., 'The Indian States and the Civil Disobeyance Movement of 1930-1931', in Indian History Congress Proceedings of the 37th Session, Calicut, 1976, p-364.
122. Chandra Bipan, op.cit, pp 357-358
123. C.B.G., November 6, 1922.
- 123*. Bhattacharyya, Bedasruti : 'An Attempt to Introduce Lottery under Koch Raj : Studies in the Differences in Social Perspective, in Bhattacharyya, P. K. (ed.), The kingdom of Kamata-Koch Behar in Historical Perspective, Ratna Prakashan, Calcutta, First Published 2000, pp. 157-159.
- 123**. ibid, p. 160. It may be mentioned here that the 'Bikaner War Loan Lottery' which was scheduled to take place in 1918, also met a similar fate because of refusal of the Government of India. In reply to a point raised by the Maharaja of Bikaner about legalised lottery in England, the Government of India sharply pointed out, " this will perhaps not influence our policy in matter as conditions in England and India are not identical." ibid., p. 159
124. Chandra Bipan, p-135.
125. ibid, pp 140-141.

126. *ibid.*, pp 142-144.
127. De, Jiban : Amar Jibane (in Bengali) October, p-11.
128. Maharaja Jitendra Narayana's letter dated, the Palace, Cooch behar, the 23rd, March, 1915 to Mr. Hughes Buller, Intelligence Bureau, Government of Bengal, May, 1915, Confidential, p-179. WBSA
129. Sarkar Pulakesh De : 'Ekada Kono Ek Samaye', in Rash Mela (Bengali Magazine) 1974.
130. Dutta, Charu Chandra : Purno Katha, Upasanhar (in Bengali) p-47.
131. Biswas Biswa, Bir Sarvarkar O Sahid Dhingra (in Bengali), p-47, Bipan Chandra, et al : *op.cit.*, pp 144-145.
132. Majumdar, Satyendra Narayana : Amar Biplab Jignasa (in Bengali) p-30.
133. Personal interview with Dr. Shib Shankar Mukerjee, Cooch Behar, in Ananda Gopal Ghose and Malay Shankar Bhattacharyya, 'Indian Nationalist Movement and the Maharajas of the Cooch Behar State', : *op.cit.* p-67.
134. *Loc cit.*
135. Note on the Activity of Revolutionary Bengalee in Cooch Behar, Intelligence Bureau, Confidential, Part I, the 18th May, 1915, p-1 (W.B.S.A.).
136. Das, Pulin Behari : Amar Jiban Kahini (in Bengali), edited by Amalendu Dey, Anusilan Samity, Calcutta, 1987, Sampadaker Nibedan, p-12.
137. Gupta, Asruman Das : Puratan Prasangey (in Bengali), In Jenkins School Centenary Volume 1961, p-17.
138. Barman Uppendra Nath : 'Smriti Charana', Jalpesh, 4th Chaitra, 1387, B.S.
139. Majumdar, Satyendra Narayan : *op.cit.*, p-70.
140. Ganguli, Pratul Chandra : Biplabir Jiban Darshan (in Bengali), pp 311-312.
141. Hale, H.W., Political Trouble in India, 1917-1937, p-41.
142. Das Pulin Bihari, *op. cit.*, pp 35-37.
143. *ibid.*, Sarkar, Pulakesh De, *op.cit.*
144. Personal Interview with Shiv Shankar Mukherjee, *op.cit.*
145. Personal interview with Pulakesh De Sarkar, Calcutta in Ananda Gopal Ghose, *op. cit.*
146. Personal interview with Shiv Sankar Mukherjee, *op.cit.*
147. Note on the Activity of Revolutionary Bengalees in Cooch Behar, *op. cit.*, p-2.
148. *ibid.*, p-2.
149. *ibid.*, pp 2-3.
150. Letter No : 867 C.I., dated the 25th May, 1915 from Mr. Hughes Buller, Intelligence Branch, Government of Bengal to Maharaja Jitendra Narayana Cooch Behar, Intelligence Bureau, Government of Bengal, 1915, Confidential, Part-I, p-180. WBSA
151. Letter dated Cooch behar, the 23rd March, 1915 from Maharaja Jitendra Narayan to Mr. Hughes Buller, Intelligence Branch, Government of Bengal *ibid.* p-179.
152. C.B.G., January 19th, 1920, CBCO.
153. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1918-1919, p-1. NBSL
154. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1919-1920, p-1.
155. *ibid.*, p-2.
156. C.B.G., March 29th, 1920.
157. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1920-1921, pp1-2. His Majesty the King-Emperor highly appreciated the services of late Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan, the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan's youngest uncle, during the War of 1914-1918.

Winston Churchill, Secretary of the State for War, War Office, White Hall, S.W., dated, 1st March, 1919 recorded the following message :

"Honorary Lieutenant Hitendra Narayan, Maharaj Kumar of Cooch Behar was mentioned in a despatch from field Marshal Sir John D.P. French, dated 31st May, 1915 for gallant and distinguished services in the field. I have it in command from King to record His Majesty's high appreciation of the services rendered." A copy of the message was received by the Cooch Behar State under cover of letter (No. 604 P.D.) dated the 14th June, 1923, from the Government of Bengal and was forwarded to Her Highness Maharani Sunity Debi, C.I. — A.A.R.C.B.S., 1923-24, p.1

158. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1921-1922, p-2

159. Memoranda on the Indian States, 1921, corrected upto June, 1921, Government Printing, India 1922, p-137 (SLGB).

160. Memorandum relating to the State of Cooch Behar, Corrected upto December, 1922, *ibid*.

161. Memorandum on Native States in India, Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political, September, 1921, p-9.

162. Chief Secretary's Note, Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, 1920, Confidential File No : 19/1920, p-5.

163. *Loc.cit*.

Statements of the liabilities of H.H. The Maharaja of Cooch Behar

Old Loans					New Loans and Unextinguished balances of Old Loans				
No.	Creditors	Amount (Rs.)	Interest	Remarks	No.	Creditors	Amount (Rs.)	Interest	Remarks
1.	Allahabad Bank	4,00,000	6%	Due in August 1920, but extended until April 1921 at 7½%	1.	Allahabad Bank	4,00,000	7½%	Due in April 1921
2.	Bank of Bengal	2,00,000	7%	Overdraft taken to pay English Bills and other debts of H.H. and to assist the cash Balance	2.	Rai Janaki Nath Ray Bhadur of Calcutta	3,00,000*	10%	Secured by 2 strings of pearls and His Highness's Life policy.
3.	Ditto...	1,00,000	7%	Extinguished by new Loan No. 2	3.	Kumar Pramathanath Ray of Calcutta	1,00,000*	10%	Secured on simple note of hand plus state recognition, a balance of Rs.15,000 remains with His Highness.

Old Loans					New Loans and Unextinguished balances of Old Loans				
No.	Creditors	Amount (Rs.)	Interest	Remarks	No.	Creditors	Amount (Rs.)	Interest	Remarks
4.	Ditto....	70,000	7%	This loan and interest thereon and an overdraft has been extinguished by new Loan No. 3	4.	Ditto...	1,50,000	10%	Collateral security Same security plus 'Colinton' : balance of Rs. 50,000 with H.H. It is proposed to debit these balance amounting to Rs. 65,000 to privy purse.
5.	Private Loan of His Highness	2,00,000	12%	Rs. 1,00,000 paid out of new loan No. 4 Balance of Rs. 100,000 carried forward as Loan No. 5	5.	Balance of Private Loan	1,00,000	12%	—
6.	Rai Radha Charan Pal	1,50,000	9.5%	Taken to pay Indian carried forward as No. 6	6.	Rai Radha Charan Pal Bahadur	1,50,000	9½%	To be paid from the budget provision for repayment of loans in 1920-21, the current year Rs. 3,50,000

Previous Position

Liabilities : Rs. 11,20,000

Present Position

Liabilities : Rs. 12,00,000

Repayment of Rai R.C. Pal 1,50,000

Interest 1,11,000

 2,61,250

Balance 89,000

Cooch Behar :
The 19th April, 1920

H.J. Twynam
Vice-President, State Council

* Note :-

- a) It is desired to pay off the loans marked by contracting a new loan for Rs. 7,00,000 at a lower rate of Interest.
 b) Interest Charges on the loans amount to Rs. 1,11,250.

Source : Govt. of Bengal, Political Dept., (Political), 1920 Confidential File No. : 19/1920, p.4

164. Note of the Secretary to Maharaja Jitendra Narayana, on the Cooch Behar Loan, Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, 1921, Confidential, File No : 55, Serial No : 6, p-6. WBSA

The liabilities and debts of the state can be divided into two categories : (1) Debts due to English Banks and Tradesmen and (2) Debts due to Indian Banks and tradesmen. Under (i) There were the following debts :-

	£	£
Loans from Messers. Cox and Co.	10,000	
Loans from M/s. Henry S. King & Co.....	12,000	
Interest on the two Loans.....	1,500	
	-----	23,500
Amount due to Tradesmen.....		12,600

		36,100

Under ii) There were the following debts :-

	Rs.	Rs.
Loan on mortgage of woodlands property in Alipour (Calcutta) due to the Allahabad Bank.....	4,00,000	
Interest due at 7% for one Quarter.....	7,000	
	-----	4,07,000
Loan from Bank of Bengal.....	84,295	
On Government Security.....	63,595	
	-----	1,47,890

		5,54,890

Loan from Capitalists in Calcutta :-

From M/s. Radha Charan.....	1,50,000	
From M/s. Promotha Nath Ray.....	2,50,000	
From M/s. Janakinath & Sita Nath Ray.....	3,80,000	
From M/s. Janaki Nath Ray.....	1,00,000	
	-----	8,80,000
Amount due to Tradesmen.....		2,00,000

		16,34,890

Thus it is seen that the total amount of the debts were as under :-

(i) 36100 and (ii) Rs. 1634890. The two debts were together roughly estimate at a sum of Rs. 2150000.

- ibid, p. 3-6

165. *ibid.*, p 3-6.
166. Letter (D.O.) No : 3156 P dated, Calcutta, the 23rd March, 1921 from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Secretary to the Government of India, Political Department, Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, Confidential File No : 55/1921, p-4. WBSA
167. Letter D.O. No : 533 dated Calcutta, the 15th, March 1920 from Mr. W.R. Gourlay to Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, *ibid.*, p-3.
168. Letter D.O. No : 632, P.D. dated Darjeeling, 24th June, 1921 from J. Donald, Bengal Secretariate to the Political Secretary, Government of India, *ibid.* p-9. The Government of Bengal also informed the Government of India that in 1891-1892 the then Maharaja (Nripendra Narayana) received a loan from the Government of India of Rs. 8 Lakhs for his railway scheme and another loan of 2 Lakhs for the same purpose was granted in 1897-1898. Besides in 1895 the Government of India sanctioned a loan of 3.5 lakhs to pay off the Late Maharaja's urgent private debts : D.O. No : 3165 P, dated Calcutta, the 23rd March, 1921 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Secretary to the Government of India, Political Department, *ibid.*, p-4.
169. D.O. No : 2061 I.A., dated Simla, the 2nd August, 1921 from J.P. Thompson Government of India to the Offg. Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, *ibid.*, File No : 55, Serial No : 18, p-14.
170. Letter dated Government House, Dacca, the 4th August, 1921 from the Government of Bengal to Maharaja Jitendra Narayana, Cooch Behar. *ibid.*, Serial No : 17, p-13.
- 170+. A.A.R.C.B.S. - 1921-22, Financial-II, Page-5.
171. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, *op.cit.*, pp 14-15.
172. *ibid.*, pp 15-16.
173. *ibid.*
174. *ibid.*, p-17.
175. Devi, Sunity, *op.cit.*, pp 202-203.
176. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, *op.cit.*, p-13.
177. Devi, Ghayatri and Rao Rama Santha, *op.cit.*, p-46.
- Maharaja Jitendranarayana kept up the sporting tradition handed down by his father, displayed great interest in cricket and was a fine all-round sportsman. The young Maharaja had learnt cricket in England and his interest in Bengal cricket was manifest in his support and help towards the establishment of the Bengal Gymkhana. During his regime a number of amateur and professional Cricketers from abroad like F. Tarrant, H.W. Lee, J. Newman etc. played for the Cooch Behar team. In addition to these, several Indian players from Bombay like M.P. Bajana, J. S. Warden, P. Vithal, S.N. Jos etc. were included in the Maharaja's team. How far Bengali cricket had profited from the Maharaja's encouragement can be seen from the fact that Bidhu Mukherjee, Moni Das, Prof. S. Roy, P. Ghose, Sailesh Bose, Kaladhan Mukherjee S. Aiket etc., amongst others, used to figure prominently in the Cooch Behar team.
- Many notable matches such as between the Maharaja of Cooch Behar's XI and the Governor of Bengal's XI at the Eden Gardens, Calcutta, on November 24, 1917, in which the former won by an innings and 46 runs and Cooch Behar's games with the Governor of Bombay's XI at Bombay in March, 1918 and again at Poona in September that year were drawn in favour of the Cooch Behar team. It is affirmed that during the reign of Jitendra Narayana Cooch Behar did not lose a game. Sporting India, A monthly Journal devoted to the World of Sports and Screen, November 30, 1940, Vol. No : 5, pp 203-204.
178. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, *op.cit.*, p-17.
179. Devi Sunity, *op.cit.*, pp 202-203 See also Bandyopadhyay, Bhagabati Charan : Koch Biharar Irihas, edited by

Nripendranath Paul, Anima Prakashani, Calcuttal, 1987, p-164.

180. Memoranda on Native States, Cooch Behar. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, September 1921, p-9, Sunity Devi, op.cit., p-202.
181. A Brief Account of Cooch Behar State, 1929 to 1936-37, Office of General Department, Cooch Behar, Collection No : 1, File No : 6; See also Gayatri Devi and Santha Rama Rao, op.cit, pp 40-41.
182. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, op.cit, p-20. Jitendra Narayan was devoted to her mother the Dowager Maharani Sunity Devi. Sunity Devi mentioned in her autobiography that, "Jit has been one of the best sons to me, so loving, so kind and thoughtful and he often treats me as if I were the same age as his little daughter." Victor Nityendra Narayan was an affectionate and obedient brother to Jitendra Narayan. Sunity Devi mentioned this in her autobiography that "anything Jit says is law to him. He would give his life for his brother ... In his life Jit comes first." - Devi, Sunity, op. cit., p. 203.
183. C.B.G., November 6, 1922. CBCO
184. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, Debutter Department, P-1. NBSL
185. The Statesman, Calcutta, December 23, 1922. This Report has been quoted from Reuters Special Service, London, December 21, 1922
186. Devi, Gayatri and Rao, Santha Rama, op.cit, p-46.
187. C.B.G., Extraordinary, December 21, 1922. CBCO
188. C.B.G., Extraordinary, December 28, 1922.
189. C.B.G., Extraordinary, December 21, 1922,
190. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, Debutter Department, p-1.
191. Sanyal, Sitiesh Chandra, op.cit, pp 5-6.
192. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, Debutter Department, p-1.
193. A Prayer presented to the Maharani Indira Devi, the Regent by the subjects of Pundibari and Khapaidanga on the 18th May, 1931. Regency Council, Cooch Behar, Collection No : 12, File No : 8, Diary No : 240 (C.B.D.R.R.).
194. Memoranda on the Indian States, 1921, Calcutta, Government Printing, India, 1922 S.L.G.B.
195. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, Debutter Department, p-1. NBSL

CHAPTER II (Contd.)

Section III

The Rule of Maharani Indira Devi as Regent and President of the Council of Regency
(21st May, 1923 —6th April, 1936)

After the demise of Maharaja Jitendranarayan on the 20th December, 1922, his eldest son and heir Jagaddipendra Narayan succeeded to the throne of Cooch Behar.¹ Jagaddipendra Narayan's succession was proclaimed by the State Council on the 24th December, 1922 in the following words.

"PROCLAMATION BY THE STATE COUNCIL ANNOUNCING THE SUCCESSION OF HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA JAGADDIPENDRA NARAYAN BHUP BAHADUR TO THE GADDI OF COOCH BEHAR ON THE DEMISE OF HIS HIGHNESS LATE MAHARAJA SIR JITENDRA NARAYAN BHUP BAHADUR, K.C.S.I. OF COOCH BEHAR."

"Where through the demise of His Highness the late Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur K.C.S.I., the succession to the 'gaddi' of the State of Cooch Behar has devolved on his eldest son His Highness Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, it is hereby proclaimed for the information of all that Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan is the natural heir in the direct line of his father, the late lamented Maharaja, and that steps have been taken to obtain the recognition of his succession by His Majesty the King-Emperor of India."

The State Council also announced that "for the present, the administration of the state would be conducted by the State Council which would exercise all the authority of the Maharaja pending decision as to the form of Government to be established during the minority of the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. All sanctioned existing arrangements would continue until further orders."²

Jagaddipendra Narayan's succession was duly recognised by the Government of India. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal informed the Vice-President of the State Council of Cooch Behar on the 5th January, 1923 that the Governor-General in Council had been pleased to recognise Yuvaraj Jagaddipendra Narayan, the eldest son of the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan as his successor.³ Accordingly, the State Council issued a proclamation on the 8th January, 1923 announcing the Recognition of the Succession of His Highness Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan to the gaddi of Cooch Behar by the Government of India.⁴ The Governor of Bengal conveyed his congratulations in a Telegram on the 5th January, 1923 to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan on succession to Cooch Behar State with recognition of the Government of India.⁵

The State Council had been recognised by the Government of India to be the Supreme Authority in the State pending the formation of a Council of Regency. This was communicated in a letter dated the 12th January, 1923 from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to the Vice-President of the Cooch Behar State Council. By virtue of this authority the State Council exercised all the powers of the Maharaja until the Council of Regency was appointed.⁶

The following Kharita dated the 1st March, 1923 from Lord Reading, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan conveying the recognition by His Majesty the King-Emperor of India of the succession of the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan to the gaddi of Cooch Behar was duly presented by W.A. Marr, Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division at a formal visit to Cooch Behar on the 16th May, 1923.⁷

"My esteemed friend,

Your Highness' Kharita of the 4th February, 1923 was duly transmitted to me by the Government of Bengal. I received with profound regret the news of the death of your father, His Highness Maharaja Sir Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, and I take this opportunity to express again to Your Highness my personal sympathy with you and your family in your bereavement. It gives me great pleasure to inform your Highness that His Imperial Majesty the King Emperor of India has been pleased to recognise your succession to the 'Gaddi' of the Cooch Behar State and I offer you my hearty congratulations.

I trust your Highness may be long spared to rule over your people.

Delhi,

The 1st March, 1923

I remain with much consideration,

Your Highness' sincere friend,

(Sd) Reading

Viceroy and Government General of India

To the above Kharita Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan sent the following reply to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division. "I ask you to ask His Excellency the Viceroy to convey my loyal thanks to His Majesty the King-Emperor and to thank His Excellency for his kind congratulation and good-wishes."⁸

The Rajyavisek ceremony of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan took place on the 10th March, 1923. A Durbar was also held on the same date when the Durbaris presented Nazar to the Maharaja. The Nazar consisting of two silver coins of the new accession coinage struck in the name of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan.⁹

The young Maharaja was born on the 15th December, 1915 in Cooch Behar and he was in his eighth year at the time of his accession to the throne. The leading title-holders and officials at the time of accession of the minor

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan were as follows : (i) Kumar Gajendra Narayan, great grandson of Maharaja Harendra Narayan, Superintendent of Police, 1895-1916 and Member of the Legislative Council representing the Rajguns' or persons descended from the Raj family. (ii) Rai Choudhuri Tarani Charan Chakraborty, the only Mokararidar in the State whose status was similar to that of a Zamindar in Bengal. He was a non-official Member of His Highness' Legislative Council. (iii) Rai Choudhuri Satis Chandra Mustafi, one of the leading Jotedars belonging to a prominent family in the State. (iv) Rai Choudhuri Monmohan Buxi, (v) Rai Choudhuri Promoda Ranjan Buxi, (vi) Rai Choudhuri Suresh Chandra Mustafi, (vii) Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed and (viii) Rai Choudhuri Ishan Chandra Lahiri.

Mr. H. J. Twynam, I.C.S., was the Vice-President of the State Council and the Head of several administrative departments. Mr. B. Ghose was the Financial Secretary and a Member of the State Council. Other Members of the State Council were Nawabzada Abdul Karim Khan, M.A., Bar-at-Law, who held the post of Secretary to the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan. Mr. S. Ghose, B.A. was the Fouzdari Ahilkar or District Magistrate. Babu Jagadballabh Biswas, M.A., B.L., was the Revenue Officer of the State.^{9*}

The following memorandum with regard to Cooch Behar State corrected upto date for the half year ending 31st December, 1922 having direct political relations with the Government of India, through His Excellency the Governor of Bengal.¹⁰

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| a. | Name of State | : | Cooch Behar |
| b. | Name, title and Religion of Chief | : | His Highness Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, Hindu |
| c. | Date of Birth | : | 15th December, 1915 |
| d. | Date of Succession | : | 20th December, 1922 |
| e. | Area of State in square miles | : | 1307 |
| f. | Population of State | : | 5,92,489 |
| g. | Average Annual Revenue | : | Rs. 32,20,077 |
| h. | Average Annual Expenditure | : | Rs. 33,04,827 |
| i. | To Government | : | Rs. 67,700, A 15 / Tribute |
| j. | Infantry and artillery | : | 215 / irregular troops |
| k. | Highest British Authority by whom the Chief has hitherto been addressed | : | Viceroy and Governor-General. |
| l. | Commencement and conclusion of letter in English | : | "My esteemed friend"
"I remain, with much consideration Yours Highness" sincere friend." |
| m. | Salutes of Chief in Guns | : | 13 |

Formation of the Regency Council : While the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan was dangerously ill, he wrote and signed the following document dated the 26th March, 1920 containing an expression of his wishes relating to the administration of the State during the minority of his son.

"In the event of my death before my son and heir, Yuvaraj Jagaddipendra Narayana, attained his majority, it is my wish that the administration of the State, during minority, be carried out by a Council of Regency with my wife, Maharani Indira Devi, as Regent and President of the Council.

The Powers exercised by the Maharaja should be exercised by the Council of Regency, but no title or insignia should be granted. Any grant of land and allowance made by the Council of Regency should terminate with the minority of my son. It is my desire that rupees one lakh per annum be granted to my wife the Maharani, and also suitable allowances for the maintenance and education of my children."¹¹

It was commonly reported in Cooch Behar that after the death of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan, Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan as the nearest adult male agnate of the young Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan had hopes of being appointed Regent himself. But H.J. Twynam, Vice-President of the Cooch Behar State Council was opposed to any such arrangement.¹²

In the same vein, Cooch Behar landholders' Association expressed their views to the Vice-President of Cooch Behar State Council on the 29th December, 1922 regarding formation of the Regency Council. According to this Association, the new Council may be formed as follows : (a) Maharani Indira Devi as President, (b) One European Vice-President of the Council, (c) two Cooch Behari Members of the Council, (d) One Judicial Member of the Council with practical and sound judicial training.¹³

Very significantly, Panchanan Barman, the foremost leader of Kshatriyaisation movement among the Rajbanshi Community, submitted a scheme for the formation of the Regency Council of the State of Cooch Behar before the Bengal Government as well as the Indian Government for consideration on the 19th March, 1923. He was of opinion that Cooch Behar had suffered much in the past years from bad administration and needed a good government urgently. The Regency Council be so formed as to secure a just, stable, efficient and strong government able to wipe out the effect of the previous bad administration.¹⁴ He held that it would be wise that during the minority of the Maharaja, the Regency Council should conduct the administration of the State, and that the Regency Council should be composed as follows : (i) The Maharani, (ii) A British Officer, Vice-President, (iii) An Indian Officer, Member, (iv) Prince Victor, Member, representing Rajguns, (v) A Land holder, Member, representing people.¹⁵

In the meantime, after consulting the views of the Conference of Ruling Princes recently held in Delhi the Governor-General in Council adopted a resolution dated Simla, 27th August, 1917 recognising that the Government of India were "the trustees and custodians of the rights, interests and traditions of Native States during a minority administration. The Governor-General in Council laid down general principles, some of which have been mentioned below :

(i) The administration of a State during a minority should ordinarily be entrusted to a Council. In cases where the appointment of a Regent is in accordance with the custom of the State and a suitable person is available for nomination as Regent, the Council should be styled as 'Council of Regency', and should consist of three to five Indian Members under the presidency of the Regent. The Regent may be either a legitimate mother or widow or a near male relative of the late ruler, provided that the latter was in the full confidence of the late Ruler at the time of his demise.

(ii) In the selection of the Councillors, local talent should be utilized to the utmost possible extent. Where local conditions appear to render it impossible for a Council to administer the State successfully, an officer borrowed from Government Service may be appointed as Superintendent or Administrator of the State.

(iii) Old traditions and customs should be scrupulously observed and maintained.

(iv) Treaty rights should be strictly upheld.

(v) No jagirs or hereditary or personal honours and distinctions should be granted or promised on behalf of the State during the minority.

(vi) The Political Officer is answerable to the Government of India for the maintenance of these principles.¹⁶

Consequently, the approval of the Government of India to the constitution of a Regency Council for the administration of the State during the minority of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was conveyed on the 17th May, 1923 to the Vice-President of the State Council by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. The Chief Secretary further informed the State Council on the 28th November, 1923 the intention of Government of India regarding the duties, powers and functions to be exercised by the Regency Council as follows.¹⁷

(i) A Council of Regency should be established with five members as follows :

(a) Her Highness Maharani Indira Devi, Regent and President of the Council.

(b) A Vice-President.

(c) Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan.

(d) A Judicial Member.

(e) A fifth Member.

(ii) The appointment of Members of the Council was to be filled in consultation with the Government of India and no additional Member could be appointed until Government had approved such addition to the Council.

The duties, powers and functions of the Council of Regency, as approved by the Government of India, were as follows :

(i) The Regent should preside over the Council of Regency. If in any case, the members of the Council were equally divided in opinion, the casting vote should rest with Her Highness the Maharani Regent. In case of difference of opinion between the Maharani Regent and the Political Agent the matter should be referred for the decision of the Governor of Bengal.¹⁸

(ii) The Council of Regency should exercise sovereign powers subject to the reservation desired by His late Highness the Maharaja in his will, namely, (a) that no title or insignia should be granted and (b) that any grant of land or allowance made by the Council of Regency should terminate with the minority, and subject also to an obligation to be guided by the advice of the Political Agent in all important questions.¹⁹

(iii) Decisions of the Council taken in the absence of the Regent should be immediately submitted to her for confirmation, and, in the event of her disagreeing, the case should be re-submitted to the Council, and settled by a majority of votes after her Highness' views had been heard and, if possible, in her presence. Questions connected with the peace and security of the State might require instant and irrevocable decisions. When the Maharani might be absent from India such questions would be decided by a majority of the Council subject to the obligation to refer to the Political Agent when important issues were involved. Such decisions should be immediately communicated to the Maharani Regent for confirmation. Other questions would generally be easily distinguished as (a) those in which the Maharani's views should be ascertained before there could be any decisions and (b) questions of routine and unimportant nature upto which the Council might come to a decision without a reference to the Regent, but subject to her subsequent confirmation. Should the Regent be absent at a time when the Budget be passed, the sanction of the Council should be provisional until her views had been obtained and considered.²⁰

(iv) The Budget as passed by the Council should be communicated to the Governor through the Political Agent whose duty it would be to bring it to his notice for the information of the Government of India, if the Budget as passed made no suitable provision for the family of the late Maharaja or for the administration of the State in the

interests of the young Maharaja.

The Council of Regency should be guided by the Political Agent in all important matters, and in particular the concurrence of the Political Agent would be necessary (a) to any change in the distribution among the Members of the Council of the portfolios assigned to them, (b) to any excess over the Budget provision in expenditure under any head, (c) to decisions of major importance regarding the re-settlement of Land Revenue or alteration in the land laws.

(v) The Maharani Regent should refer direct to the Governor in the matter of the young Maharaja's education and appointment of his tutor or guardian.

In conclusion, the Government of India desired to impress upon the Council that they were the trustees for the young Maharaja, and that in the exercise of their trust duties, it would be incumbent on them to keep themselves in touch with the progress of the administration and to supply such guidance as might appear to them to be needed.²¹

The Regency Council assumed office on the 21st May, 1923 and was composed of the following members : (i) The Maharani Indira Devi, Regent and President of the Council, (ii) Mr. H.J. Twynam, I.C.S., Vice-President of the Council, (iii) Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan, Member, (iv) Babu Jagadballabh Biswas, M.A.B.L., Judicial Member, (v) A fifth member to be appointed later. This was the second Council of Regency in Cooch Behar State, the former being formed during the minority of Maharaja Narendra Narayan.²²

Before the coming of Maharani Indira Devi, the Purdah system was prevalent in Cooch Behar palace. Maharani Sunity Devi worked diligently to encourage the emancipation of women in Bengal, but for some reason she did not attempt to put an end to purdah in Cooch Behar and she lived in the Zenana quarters of the Cooch Behar Palace. It was only a generation later when Maharani Indira Devi arrived in Cooch Behar in an open car, that purdah suddenly ended.²³ Indira Devi was the product of western civilization and went to Europe frequently. Compared with the rigid formality of other Indian royal families in the 1920's, the almost medieval lives they lived, the domination of their courts by ritual and etiquette and the shutting away of their women in zenanas or purdah quarters, the life in Cooch Behar Palace had more the atmosphere of a very large and comfortable country-house.²⁴

Maharani Indira Devi's training for her administrative responsibilities had been remarkably good. She had often been taken into the confidence of her father, the Maharaja of Gaikwar of Baroda, who had discussed many state matters with her and used to say that he wished she had been his eldest son because she had such a good head for government. On his one visit to Cooch Behar he expressed himself as very pleased with the way Indira Devi was running thing.²⁵

Besides, the Indian Government did their best to help Indira Devi run the administration by sending the best available men as Vice-Presidents of the Regency Council. Mr. H.J. Twynam, I.C.S., who had been at Cooch Behar since 1920 was made the first Vice-President of the Regency Council and reverted to Government service in 1923. The following gentlemen successively held this responsible post during the period of the Regency :²⁶

- i) Major C.T.C. Plowden, I.A. (1923-1926)
- ii) Lt. Col. W.G. Hutchinson, I.A. (1926-1931)
- iii) Lt. Col. K.A.G. Evans Gordon, I.A. (1931-1934)
- iv) Lt. Col. J.A. Brett, C.I.E. (March, 1934-1936)
- v) Mr. J.D. Tyson, I.C.S. (March, 1936-April, 1936)

As regards political relations of Cooch Behar State with the Government of India, the Government of Bengal informed the Vice-President of the State Council on the 7th December, 1922 that his Majesty's Secretary of State had sanctioned the proposal of the Government of India that the Governor of Bengal should act as Agent to the Governor-General for the Cooch Behar state with effect from the 15th November, 1922. By this arrangement the Governor would perform exactly the same functions as had hitherto been performed by the local Government or the Governor-in-Council, referring to the Government of India only in matters which, under the existing practice or standing orders, required such references.²⁷

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar State was entitled to a salute of 13 guns. Under the existing arrangements in official functions he ranked immediately after the members of the Viceroy's Executive Council and this was also observed at social entertainments at Government Houses in Bengal. In accordance with the instructions issued by the Government of India on the 5th May, 1923 on the questions of the position and dignity accorded to the Ruling Princes and Chiefs in India, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar State would remain his former position in official functions but would be moved up at social entertainments in Government Houses. In other words, this Maharaja was used to be given seats below the Chief Justice of Bengal and the Lord Bishop of Calcutta at social functions, would henceforth have to be placed above them.²⁸ The minor Maharajas were not ordinarily invited on such occasions. But if he was invited, he should be given his own position. This was done in the case of the minor chief of Kalahandi when he was invited to the Delhi Durbar of 1911.²⁹

The Attitude of the Regency Council towards Missionary Activities and Slavery : The attitude of the Regency Council towards missionary work in the State did not constitute a departure from the policy obtaining before the Regency Council was formed. This decision was arrived at by Her Highness in Council in dealing with the question of missionary activity in the Cooch Behar state and the return to Cooch Behar of a European lady missionary.³⁰ Thus the

wishes of Cooch Behar State regarding missionary activities in the State were forwarded to the Government of Bengal for orders. The Government, in turn, referred the matter to the Secretary of State for India, who, when considering the particular case of Miss Willman, who was not a British subject, observed that christian opinion regarding freedom for missionary enterprise was much more sensitive and influential in England and in America than it was 40 years ago.³¹ He permitted Miss Willman to return to Cooch Behar without mention of conditions proposed by Regency Council. He feared that the example of Cooch Behar might be followed by other States and effect on public opinion in this country would be most unfortunate. Restrictions on admission of missionaries into India had been imposed hitherto only on those of alien nationality for purely political reasons. Policy of avoiding restrictions on missionary enterprise had been following also by His Majesty's Government in case of mandated territories like Iraq. He also added that ordinary law could be applied to prevent abuse of privilege and public disorder.³²

The policy of the Government of India with regard to missionary enterprise in Indian States was laid down in 1883 and the principles which regulated the action of the British Government in this matter were applicable towards all States including Cooch Behar. Though Cooch Behar possessed no treaty precluding interferences in its internal affairs, the British Government decided in February, 1816 to abstain from all interferences, except in the form of advice and representation ... in the unlimited management of the affairs of the State. Accordingly, the Government of Bengal requested the Commissioner of the Rajshahi division who was ex-officio Political Agent of that State, that the principles adopted by the Government of India might be communicated to the Cooch Behar Durbar and that they may be informed at the same time that in view of the state of public opinion in England at the present time, the Secretary of State desired the Durbar to be informed that restrictions on missionary as class were most undesirable and should not be imposed.³³

The Government of Bengal forwarded a copy of the Slavery Convention signed at Geneva on the 25th September, 1926, together with an extract from a declaration made by Sir William Vincent in respect of the Indian States in the sixth Committee of the Assembly of the League of Nations and desired that the Cooch Behar Durbar would work steadily towards the amelioration of any conditions which were not in accordance with the terms of the Convention. The intention of the Convention was to secure the complete suppression of slavery in all its forms and of the slave trade by land and sea. The Government of Bengal in their letter (no. 11433) dated the 28th June, 1928, intimated the Cooch Behar State that His Majesty's Government asked for a summary of any important results that probably followed from the above mentioned communication and requested to be furnished with a report in this respect. In response to this communication, the Regency Council stated that slavery was not practised in any sense nor were any conditions prevalent which might be held to amount to forced labour in any shape was exacted from any one in the State. Therefore, the question of taking action towards the amelioration of conditions which were not in accordance with the terms of the convention did not arise in this State.³⁴

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that in order to suppress the traffic in women and children and thereby to fulfil the obligations arising from India's adhesion to the International Convention on the same subject in 1921, a Bill containing the provisions of Act XX of 1923 and Act V of 1929 of British India was passed into law by the Cooch Behar Legislative Council on the 8th February, 1930 as Act I of 1930 which received the assent of the Regency Council.³⁵

Alteration of the Armorial Bearings of the State : It appeared that the Armorial Bearings of Cooch Behar State had been changed four times since 1868, viz. in 1873, 1877, 1884 and 1902. It also appeared from a letter (No. 10205P) dated the 12th August, 1919 from the Bengal Government that a proposal to alter the Armorial Bearings of the State would necessitate a reference to the Government.³⁶

For the decoration of the Chamber of Princes at Delhi the armorial bearings of the Ruling Princes were wanted. But the Regency Council thought it desirable to introduce some alterations in the existing coat of arms so as to bring it more into conformity with the legendary tales known in Cooch Behar about the founder of the State. In the original banner also presented by the Queen Empress to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar at the Imperial Assemblage of 1877 a tiger was shown and not a lion. So the Regency Council decided that a tiger and not a lion should be one of the supporters. This being approved a new coat of arms was made. Rs. 500 was sanctioned for the decoration. It cannot be said why Maharaja Nripendra Narayan changed the rampant tiger for a lion in 1884. This was perhaps the figure of a lion appealed more to his aesthetic sense and the legendary tales were not placed before him at the time. The description of the new coat of arms is given below :

- (a) Two swords are placed crosswise on a shield.
- (b) A tiger and an elephant are placed behind the shield as supporters.
- (c) A crowned monkey with clubs in hand is made to sit at the top on a globe.
- (d) Two branches and four plants are placed crosswise at the bottom.
- (e) Below the swords there is a ring and over them a scale pan.
- (f) A motto comes at the bottom "যতো ধর্ম স্ততো জয়ঃ" (conquest follows virtue)

Or in other words, a tiger standing on the hinder legs on the left side and an elephant on the right side with faces turned towards each other are supporting a shield with swords crosswise on it holding up the scale of justice on the points of the swords permeated with mercy and rewards (ring and rose plants). The crest consists of the crowned Hanumanji (Monkey) seated on the globe. The new plan was introduced on the 1st April, 1929.³⁷

Restriction on Direct Communication between State Durbars and Foreign Consuls : The Government of Bengal informed the Political Agent of Cooch Behar State on the 15th February, 1928 that the attention of the Government of India had been drawn to certain cases on which direct communications had recently taken place

between Durbars of Indian States and Foreign Consuls or the representatives of foreign powers in this country. The irregularity of this procedure had been pointed out to the several consuls in India. The Government of Bengal also informed him that Cooch Behar Durbar might be informed that if they desired to communicate with foreign consuls etc. such communication should invariably be made through the Political Agent and the Government of Bengal who would in turn address the Government of India.³⁸

As has already been noted, the Cooch Behar State had been placed in direct political relations with the Government of India; and the Governor of Bengal in Council acted as Agent to the Governor-General of India in matters affecting them. The Ruling Princes of Cooch Behar had full jurisdiction. The relation of Cooch Behar with the Government was conducted through their Political Agent. The Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division was the ex-officio Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State and there was a Vice-President of the State Council in Cooch Behar who was an officer lent to the State from the British service. There was no administered areas in the State. The Railway lands in Cooch Behar were included in the Eastern Division of Railway and jurisdiction had been ceded in some areas.³⁹

Proposal for enhancement of Gun-Salutes of the State : The question of number of salutes was re-opened during the Regency period. First, it may be discussed as to the general principles governing the scale of salutes. Permanent salutes (the right to them and the number of guns composing them) were regulated by orders based on the size and importance of the State in question. Personal salutes and personal increases to permanent salutes were sometimes given when the administration or services of a particular ruler had been specially meritorious and there had been rare cases when such personal increases had been made permanent after a period of years as an additional reward or honour. Such cases were very exceptional and the main criterion as regards permanent salutes was the importance of the State.⁴⁰

In 1916 the Government of India contemplated undertaking, after the war, the revision of the tables of salutes enjoyed by the Ruling Princes, with a view to removing existing incongruities. In February, 1917 the Government of India called for the recommendations of the Government of Bengal and the latter proposed that 15 guns should be allowed for two Bengal States - Cooch Behar and Hill Tiperra. It was pointed out that the reasons fixing the salutes at 13 guns were not on record but that judged by the standard of population and revenue. Cooch Behar and Hill Tiperra were inferior to one State only (Alwar) of 16 States which enjoyed a salute of 15 guns. The rulers of Cooch Behar and Hill Tiperra had always been loyal to the British Government and their chiefs had placed the entire resources of their States at the disposal of the Government on the outbreak of the First World War. As regards antiquity they could claim a status hardly inferior to that of any other States in India. On this ground, the proposal was made for an increase in the numbers of guns allotted to them. This proposal, however, was not accepted by the Government of India.⁴¹

The Question was again raised in February, 1920 when a Committee was set up by the Government of India to consider the revision of the salutes' list and a final distribution of war honours. On that occasion the Government of Bengal repeated further contributions which had been made by the two Bengal Chiefs and pressed for the raising of their salutes to 15 guns. But this proposal was also not accepted by the Committee whose opinion on this point was "that the relative status of these princes as compared with that of other states did not justify any increase of the permanent salutes. Moreover neither of them had performed on war services worthy of note." On this, the then Governor of Bengal Lord Ronaldshay remarked, "we have put the case for an increase in the number of guns very fully before the Government of India and we can do no more. The case has been rejected and we have no option but to acquiesce, though we may do so with regret."⁴²

The question of salutes was reopened by the Maharaja of Tripura in 1930 when he had written a letter to the Governor of Bengal for enhancing the number of salutes to his State. The Maharaja observed that all states in central India of far less importance and wealth to Tripura enjoyed a 15 guns salute and thus he found himself placed in a most galling category of inferiority.⁴³

In reply to the Maharaja's letter, the Governor of Bengal admitted that since the adverse decision of 1917 and 1920 the position had to some extent been modified by the development of the Chamber of Princes and by the prospect of still wider co-operation between the Princes and the Government of India. But the Governor of Bengal also added that he was not sure that the moment was altogether opportune for reopening the matter with the government of India.⁴⁴ It was also pointed out that no new facts had arisen which seemed to alter the circumstances of the case. The feeling of inferiority to which the Maharaja of Tripura referred was hardly to carry much weight with the Government of India. Further, by supporting the Maharaja's request the Government of India would find it very difficult to resist the requests from Cooch Behar and also from all other states for an increase in their salutes. Thus the chances of the Government of India accepting any such proposal were too remote.⁴⁵

Regency's Attitude towards Formation of Associations : Since the inception of the rule of the Regency Council various kinds of associations began to appear in Cooch Behar. The Regency Council could not be indifferent to this phenomenon and had to take measures to restrict their activities. With regard to the formation of Associations in the State a Circular Order (No. 5) dated the 28th June, 1923 was drafted on the lines of Bengal Government Circular (No. 4 TM) dated the 29th April, 1910, requiring all associations or public bodies already formed or likely to be formed in the State to be registered in the office of the Registrar of the Regency Council.⁴⁶ The Council had explained reasons for this measure taken as follows.

"The Regency Council have noticed with interest the growth of a recent disposition, among certain sections

of the people of the State, to form themselves into associations or united bodies and give expressions to their ideas and sentiments in social, political and other matters of public interest. Such associations ... have their own duties to perform, ... they are no doubt useful auxiliaries to the administration. But as some times unfortunate aberrations manifest themselves to the discredit of the associations and annoyance of the authorities; it seems expedient that there should be some official checks on these public bodies and their actions and deliberations. To ensure this end it is hereby ordered and notified for general information that such associations or public bodies when properly constituted on a representative basis, should obtain recognitions from the State authorities before they should expect their actions or deliberations to receive the attention of the Regency Council. It should, however, be clearly understood that the Regency Council, or the Departments under them, are neither bound nor expected, to consult the associations or to take into consideration or abide by their opinions."⁴⁷

Circumstances Leading to Expulsion of Thakur Panchanan Barman from the State : It is significant to note that Thakur Panchanan Barman, the undisputed leader of the Rajbanshi community, was banished from Cooch Behar State for a period of five years. Panchanan Barman had already made a petition to the Regency Council criticising its new settlement policy and its consequent enhancement of land revenue.⁴⁸ He had also endeavoured to increase the social consciousness and respectability among the Rajbanshi community of Cooch Behar. These activities of Panchanan Barman were not liked by the State authority.⁴⁹ Not only this, again a petition purporting to have been signed by numerous inhabitants of Cooch Behar State and addressed to His Excellency the Governor-General of India, solicited his intervention in respect of certain allegations made therein,⁵⁰ The chief of which were : (i) Nawab Khasru Jung, a guardian of the minor princes, is stated to be unworthy of the office. (ii) The Maharani Indira Devi apparently so far had not been able to regard herself as a Cooch Behari. She still regarded the State as foreign country and showed an undue preference for things and people belonging to her father's part of the country, as was shown by the appointment of Mr. Vaswani to be tutor in Bengali for the princes. (iii) Nawab Khasru Jung is a man of immoral character involved in the Midland Bank Case, in which Raja Sir Hari Singh figured and ought not to be associated with any department of the State. (iv) Nawab Khasru Jung had brought in one of his nephews a man of notoriously bad character and made him a companion of the princes. (v) Nawabzada Karim, Secretary to the Maharani, ought not to be allowed to associate with the Maharani since he was young and so also was the Maharani. A number of shameful allegations were being circulated and were reaching the ears of the public, causing them considerable grief. In the interests of the good name of the Maharani, Nawab Khasru Jung and Nawabzada Karim - these two officers should be removed from all contact with the Raj family and the State.⁵¹

The allegations made in the petition were serious and full inquiry into these allegation seemed desirable.⁵² This subject had agitated the people of the State.⁵³ But the Government was accused of maintaining silence about the matter.⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Regency Council held the view that this 'forged petition was got up by Rai Saheb

Panchanan Barman, a Jotedar of the State with the aid of his emissaries and agents and that it was circulated to the press and the public by the said Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman with a malicious and mischievous intent.⁵⁵

The following semi-official statement was issued by the Regency Council on the 20th September, 1926 about the aforesaid petition : "Whereas it has come to the notice of the Regency Council that a petition purporting to be signed by a large number of the subjects of the state was sent to the Government of Bengal and was returned by the Government for verifications of the signatures. And whereas it has been ascertained after a full enquiry that all the signatures on the petition were either forged or obtained under false representations.

And whereas the petition contains false allegations and insinuations of a most offensive and scandalous nature against Her Highness the Maharani Regent and her upbringing of His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur, the Maharaj Kumar and the Maharaj Kumaries, which are calculated to lower her Highness in the estimation of the subjects of the State and the general public to create discontent in the State against Her Highness the Maharani Regent and the Regency Administration generally.

And whereas the Council consider it necessary, in the interests of the State, that said Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman should be prevented from carrying on a mischievous propaganda in the State and also to mark their displeasure at his disloyal and scandalous conduct in getting up the forged petition referred to above ...

It is hereby ordered that the said Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman is prohibited from entering the State for a period of five years from the date this order is communicated to him without the special permission, previously obtained, of the Regency Council.

It is further ordered that, if at any time the said Raisaheb Panchanan Barman enters into any part of the state in disobedience of this order, he will be liable to be arrested by the police and removed from the state and that he shall be liable to prosecution ...".⁵⁶

Thus this statement declared, amongst other things, that some of the signature to the petition appeared to be forged. It had also been stated that a certain subject of the state, namely Raisaheb Panchanan Barman, who had been deported, was at the root of this petition. But some questions were raised about this statement. First, if some men had denied having signed, it might be due to fear. The subjects in a Native State were helpless, if they incurred the displeasure of the officials. Secondly, it was not made clear why a certain subject of the state (mentioned in one statement) was deported and whether he was deported after full trial. Thirdly, the official denial said nothing as regards the incompetence of Nawab Khasru Jang.⁵⁷ Lastly, it was inexplicable why the Government of India had so far maintained silence about the matter.⁵⁸

Revolutionary Activities : The Civil Disobedience Movement which had been launched in British India in 1930s failed to make a head way in Cooch Behar State. The failure of the movement in the State may be attributed to the following reasons. Earlier the Non Co-operation Movement was suppressed with an iron hand by the State authority and therefore, the Civil Disobedience Movement in the state did not spread much too far.⁵⁹ Secondly, the Deportation Law of the state was an effective tool in the hands of the State Government providing for banishment of any person from the state engaged in anti-Government activities.⁷² Ramnath Biswas, the globe trotter visited Cooch Behar in 1934 and stated in his account that the subjects of the Cooch Behar State, lived amid great fear of governmental coercion.⁶¹ Singer Siddheswar Mukhopadhyay wrote that he was externed from Cooch Behar State for singing mass-songs.⁶²

It is significant to note that for the first time Cooch Behar State witnessed peasant unrest in some places, particularly in the sub-division of Mathabhanga during the rule of the Regency Council. The root of this peasant unrest was economic.⁶³ The world-wide trade depression of 1930-31 and consequent fall of the prices of agricultural products affected Cooch Behar considerably. Cooch Behar being purely an agricultural State, the people had been hard hit by the low prices.⁶⁴ Though the extension of time for payment of kists and also remissions of revenue granted by the state, but all these produced no desired results. Defaulting jotes were made khas.⁶⁵ Hence, there was large scale land alienation, as a result of which the cultivators had been degraded in the position of Adhiars. It has also been pointed out that all the alienated lands were purchased by the Marwari Community in the sub-division of Mathabhanga.⁶⁶ Incidentally, it should be noted here that Thakur Panchanan Barman, a native Jotedar of Mathabhanga sub-division and also an elected member of Bengal Legislative Council from Rangpur, played a pioneering role in providing debt reliefs to the peasants. These activities of Panchanan Barman undoubtedly provided a source of inspiration to the peasant unrest referred to above, though it did not take the form of a peasant movement. As has been noted earlier, Panchanan Barman being a bitter critic of the Raj family had been banished from Cooch Behar.⁶⁷

It is a historical fact that there was an established revolutionarist tradition in Bengal. Dissatisfied with largely verbal radicalism of the Congress, sections of educated urban youth once again turned towards the methods of revolutionary terrorism towards the end of 1920s.⁶⁸ Despite the repressive measures adopted by the State Government, there was coonnection of the Bengal revolutionaries with Cooch Behar State during the period of Regency Council. It has already been mentioned that Bengal Governement drew the attention of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan to the revolutionary activities in the Victoria College of Cooch Behar and proposed action to be taken in this connection. They also suggested that any reliable information which might be obtained from time to time would be brought to the Maharaja's notice, and both the Bengal Police and the Maharaja's Police might work hand in hand to put an end to such activities. But this joint effort could not curb the revolutionary activities which were carried on in Cooch Behar State even during the period of Regency Council.

On confidential enquiry in February, 1927 it was found out that the revolutionaries A.C. Dasgupta, S.G. Das, A. Biswas, A. Chakravarti, S. K. Roy and A. Nag with others had formed a party and every afternoon they regularly took their bodily exercise in the Shop of Dharendra Nath Sengupta alias Shiren Sadhu of Cooch Behar town and said that they were the disciples of Sankaracharya. They read 'Gita' regularly. They had also got some book with them which were proscribed and of which they were said to read very often "মানুষের ডাক" (call of man) by Barin Ghose. It was also learned that A.C. Dasgupta, S. G. Das and A. Biswas were all residents of Barishal district and the first two persons put up with Dhirendranath Sengupta and the third person put up with Bachpati Thakur. A. Chakravarti and S. K. Roy put up in the College Hostel. They were all College students except A. Nag who was an employee in the settlement office, and put up in a mess near Kalibari and several reports regarding his movements had already been submitted.⁶⁹ It was also learnt that Dhiren Sadhu with other residents of Barishal, including Amulya Ratan Gupta, Professor of Victoria College, decided to hold an anniversary meeting in commemoration of late Aswini Dutta, the great revolutionary of Barishal.⁷⁰ A list of political suspects who were carrying on revolutionary activities in Cooch Behar State is given below.⁷¹

List of political suspects

Class - I

Students

- (a) Active and prominent members
1. Sudhanya Kumar Roy
 2. Sachindra Nath Banerjee
 3. Ajit Narayan Chakravarty
 4. Sudha Sankar Roy
 5. Monindra Nath Dutt.
 6. Birendra Nath Dutt.
 7. Amarendra Nath Sengupta
- (b) Ordinary members
1. Murary Mohan Roy — Victoria College
 2. Satish Chandra Sarkar — Victoria College
 3. Promoda Charan Ghose — Victoria College
 4. Satish Chandra Bhaumik — Victoria College
 5. Sushil Chandra Guha — Victoria College
 6. Haripada Ghose — Victoria College
 7. Sudhir Chandra Sen — Victoria College
 8. Manmatha Nath Gupta — Victoria College

9. Atul Chandra Das — Victoria College
10. Sudhi Goudha Das — Victoria College
11. Ashutosh Biswas — Victoria College
12. Joy Gopal Dutt — Jenkin's school

Bhupati Bhusan Bhowmik, formerly a resident of Mymensingh but later domiciled at Patakura, Cooch Behar and his father worked as a pleader's clerk. He was a student of Third class, section 'A' in the Jenkins school and he was aged about 18 years when his political activity came to the notice of the police in July, 1930. He was an active member of 'Tarun Association' - purely a political one, in the State of Cooch Behar and may be taken into the category of definition 'revolutionary movement'. The members of this association secretly used to meet at the house of Bhupati Bhowmik occasionally and discussed about propoganda work and practised dagger play as well. He possessed some proscribed books with him and was in intimate terms with one Joy Gopal Brahmachari who was suspected to be an 'anarchist' of Bengal. On an occasion the Brahmachari brought some 2½ seers of sulphur from outside the State and gave them to Bhupati who tried to collect materials to prepare explosive articles but to no effect. Bhupati, as a member of 'Tarun Association', had connection with Asitaranjan Dasgupta, an active 'anarchist' of Bengal and others.⁷²

Political suspects like Kalipada Chatterjee and Nilkanta Mukherjee or Nilu of Alipurduars were connected with the Cooch Behar party and that they used to visit Cooch Behar town. Another suspect, Sukumar Sengupta of Jalpaiguri Anushilan Samity, used to visit the house of his uncle Suboth Sengupta who was a Kabiraj at Dinhat.⁷³

Nani Gopal Ghose, son of Nishi Kanta Ghose of Bajrajogini, Police Station, Manikganj, Dacca, a third year student of the technical school, Bogra and his brother Dhiren Ghose who had started a tailoring shop at Bogra town occasionally visited Cooch Behar where his father served under a firm at Bakshihat in Tufangunj of Cooch Behar State. Both Nani and Dhiren were members of Anushilan Samity and used to visit Cooch Behar when his uncle Sarat Chandra Dutta had got a house there. One of his cousins was named Charu Chandra Dutta who worked as a State Librarian. Dhiren Ghose was externed from Cooch Behar State as he was concerned in the theft of a cycle at Cooch Behar towh which was the work of the Cooch Behar Anushilan Party. Dhiren Ghosh was connected with Doraj De who was a student of Class X of the Swedish Mission School and warned since Nani Ghose visited Cooch Behar secretly on the 4th April, 1936 and left on the 5th April, 1936. It was decided by the police that Nani Ghose be kept under surveillance when he visited Cooch Behar and the Bogra DIB to send intimation of his departure if possible. Parimal Pal of Bogra who was a student of the Cooch Behar College was the connecting link between Cooch Behar and Bogra.⁷⁴

Ashapada Ray, an ARC, member of Rajshahi Anushilan Party was connected with the Cooch Behar Anushilan Party. He was reported to be in connection with Bejoy Ballav Dutta, son of Benode Behari Dutta, an Anushilan member of Cooch Behar Party. Bijoy Ballav, a student of the Dacca Engineering School was in Cooch Behar and was kept under surveillance. He was an associate of Doraj De or Kalipada Dutta, and Khagendra Nath Rai or Netai. Nidhi Nath, a Kabiraj of Cooch Behar was connected with the Rajshahi Party.⁷⁵

Khagendra Nath Choudhuri or Netai Ghosh was an important member of the Anushilan. He left Cooch Behar and was in Calcutta at 184 Bowbazar street. He visited Cooch Behar and was kept under strict surveillance. Guru Gobinda Ghose, formerly a student of the Cooch Behar College, was an important member of the Jugantar. Prem Nihar Nandi, an important member of the Anushilan, was then at Gauhati (1936) and was working in the branch of the Comilla Bank.⁷⁶ Jogendra Nath Majumdar of Khemria, Police Station, Itahar, District Dinajpur was living at Cooch Behar and was an important worker of the Anushilan and the DIB had kept an eye on him.⁷⁷

Finally, it should be noted here that a conference was held at Cooch Behar on the 8th April, 1936 when all the DIB officers of all the North Bengal Districts congregated on the occasion of the visit of the Governor of Bengal to Cooch Behar. Among other members present at the meeting was Sub-inspector Satish Chandra Roy of Cooch Behar, DIB. All present were cautioned to be particularly on the look out of the Anushilan activity as it was suspected that this party was working very secretly in North Bengal and Assam.⁷⁸

Celebration of Silver Jubilee of His Majesty the King-Emperor's Accession in Cooch Behar in 1935 : The Regency Council has always taken an anti-nationalistic, anti-revolutionary stand as its predecessors had done in the past. Similarly, following in the footsteps of its predecessors. The Regency Council has always remained steadfast in loyalty and allegiance to His Majesty's Government. Thus it is not surprising that sum of Rs. 1,000 was sanctioned by the Regency Council as the contribution of the Cooch Behar State to His Excellency the Viceroy's All India thanks giving fund started in connection with His Majesty the King Emperor George V's recovery from a serious and protracted illness. The amount was remitted from the treasury to the Private Secretary to His Excellency on the 19th December, 1929.⁷⁹

To mark the 'happy' occasion of the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty's accession, the 6th and 7th May, 1935 were declared public holidays in the State and all the towns were illuminated. In a public meeting held on the 6th May, 1935 in Cooch Behar town under the presidency of Rai Karali Charan Ganguli Bahadur, President of the Silver Jubilee Committee of the State, a Resolution was unanimously adopted in the following terms : "The people of Cooch Behar, in a meeting assembled, express their humble and deep loyalty and offer their respectful felicitations to His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor on the happy occasion of the Silver Jubilee, and pray for His Majesty's long life and

prosperity."⁸⁰

This Resolution was forwarded through the usual channel and in due course the following message signed by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal was received by the President, Silver Jubilee Committee, Cooch Behar. "Sir, your message of congratulation on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of His accession to the throne has been laid before His Majesty the King Emperor, by whose Royal command I am to convey to you His Majesty's thanks and to express his appreciation of the sentiments of loyalty and good will which prompted the message."⁸¹

The Maharani Regent of Cooch Behar wrote the following reply to the Kharita presented to her by the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal by command of the Viceroy and the Governor- General of India, on this occasion of the twenty fifth anniversary of the accession of His Majesty King George V, Emperor of India :

"My dear Lord Willingdon,

On behalf of my son, I write to acknowledge with many thanks receipt of your Excellency's letter of 25th April, 1935 expressing appreciation of the measures taken in Cooch Behar to celebrate in a manner befitting the occasion, the twenty fifth year of the reign of His most gracious Majesty the King Emperor of India. In doing so, I venture, in my capacity of Regent, to assure Your Excellency that my son, like his father and forefathers, will ever remain steadfast in loyalty and devotion to the Throne and Person of His Imperial Majesty. The warmth of his sentiments in this regard will — it that be possible — be enhanced by your assurance of the continuance of His Majesty's sympathy and assistance, a favour for which the Ruler of Cooch Behar State must always remain sincerely grateful."⁸²

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of His Majesty's accession, a Silver Jubilee Medal was sent to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar in England by the India Office. The Maharaja's name had, therefore, been added to the nominal role of the recipients of the Silver Jubilee Medals in the Cooch Behar State, a copy of which is given below :⁸³

Full Names	Titles, designation, distinctions (incase of Women, Mrs. or Miss etc)	Appointments, ranks, gradings, descriptions)
1. His Highness the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar.	.....	.....
2. Her Highness Maharani Indira Devi, Regent of Cooch Behar	.....	.....
3. Brett, J.A.	Lieutenant Colonel, C.I.E.	Vice-President, Council of Regency, Cooch Behar

Full Names	Titles, designation, distinctions (incase of Women, Mrs. or Miss etc)	Appointments, ranks, gradings, descriptions)
4. Chakrabarty, Dineshananda	L. M. S.	Civil Surgeon, Cooch Behar
5. Dutt, Uma Nath	B. L.	Civil and Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar
6. Ganguli, Karali Charan	Rai Bahadur, B.A., B.C.S.	Revenue Officer, Cooch Behar
7. Indrajitendra Narayan of Cooch Behar	Maharaj Kumar	Brother of His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.
8. Majumdar, Sumantha Ranjan	.....	Audit Officer, Cooch Behar
9. Roy, Jogendra Chandra	B.S.C. (Cal. & Glass)	State Engineer, Cooch Behar
10. Sing, Kanwar Rajendra	Captain, Bar-at-Law	Private Secretary to Her Highness the Maharani Saheba, Regent of Cooch Behar.
11. Victor Nityendra Narayan of Cooch Behar	Maharaj Kumar	Uncle of His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.

The Demise of the Dowager Maharani Sunity Devi : The State was plunged into deep mourning when the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan's grand mother The Dowager Maharani Suniti Devi, C.I. passed away at Ranchi on the 10th November 1932.⁸⁴ Maharani Suniti Devi was born in 1864 in Calcutta and was educated at Bethune College before her marriage with Maharaja Nripendranarayan in 1878. After her marriage, at the express desire of Nripendranarayan, arrangement was made for giving her thorough education in English, music and other accomplishments. Sunity Devi had endeavoured to build Cooch Behar as a modern state by bringing renowned Teachers and Professors into the schools and the college of the state and also by bringing Bengalee officers into the state to modernise its administrative system. She was the instrumental in the propagation of the Brahmo religion in the State of Cooch Behar.⁸⁵ She had also made attempts to spread the female education there. The Sunity college (Academy) was founded in the state in 1881 by her sincere efforts. The Sunity Academy has been carrying forward the tradition of female education for last 125 years. Not only she lived the life of the Maharani, but is believed to have also played the role of a social reformer.⁸⁶

Sunity Devi was the first among the Indian princesses who visited England. She was the founder-president of a women's organisation called "Sisterhood of the East" in England. The principal object of this organisation was to solve various problems of the women of the East and also to remove the inequalities between men and women in a society dominated by men. In the aristocratic society of England, Sunity Devi was the most beloved and respected of all Indian ladies. Her relations with Queen Victoria was also very cordial. In 1887, she was decorated with the order of

the Crown of India. Of the Indian ladies Sunity Devi was the first to receive such a prestigious title. In the eyes of Queen Victoria, "She (Sunity Devi) is very pretty and attractive ... such a dear, gentle woman."⁸⁷ She was the first woman in India to write her fascinating 'Autobiography' in English (1921). This work created a sensation among her distinguished readers not only in India but also in England. As a writer in Bengali her notable works were as follows : 'Amrita Bindu' (Vol. I, 1325 B.S.), Amrita Bindu (Vol. II, 1332 B.S.), Sahana (a collection of short stories, 1915) and Sishu Keshab (1922). Her works in English were as follows : The Rajput Princess, The Beautiful Mogul Princess (1918), Nine Ideal Indian women (1919), The life of Princess Yashodhara, The Bengal Dacoits and Tigers, The Autobiography of An Indian Princess (1921), Indian Fairy Tales (1922) and Prayers.⁸⁸

Suniti Devi had given birth to four sons, namely, Raj Rajendranarayan (1882), Jitendranarayan (1886), Victor Nityendranarayan (1888) and Hitendranarayan (1890) and three daughters, namely Sukrity Devi (1884), Pratibha Devi (1891) and Sudhira Devi (1894).⁸⁹

In token of respect to the memory of Her late Highness the Dowager Maharani Sunity Devi, all Courts, Offices, Schools and the College remained closed for five days from the 10th to the 14th November, 1932. A sum of Rs. 9000 was sanctioned by the Regency Council to meet the expenses in connection with the Sradh etc. of her late Highness. According to Hindu rites, her Sradh was performed at Cooch Behar on the 21st November, 1932. All the State Offices, the Courts, the College and the Schools were closed on that day in honour of the occasion. According to her last wishes, her ashes were placed in a Samadhi near her parents' at the Lily Cottage, Calcutta and the Brahmo Sradh ceremony took place there on the 27th November, 1932.⁹⁰ In a memorial meeting held on the 28th November, 1932 in the Caxton Hall for her late Highness Maharani Sunity Devi and presided over by Lady Carmichael, who in her speech paid high tribute in the following words, "... The Maharani (Sunity Devi) held a unique position among Indian women. To begin with she was the daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen and from him must have inherited her religious fervour and profound faith, also that power to enthuse others in movements of a progressive nature among women. She had the pen of a ready writer and has written several charming books She could be a true, loyal and devoted friend, and was always a great lady."⁹¹

Regency Council also received the news with the deepest regret and sorrow of the demise of this Most Gracious Majesty King, George V, Emperor of India, which occurred at Sandringham on the 20th January, 1936. All courts, offices, schools and the college remained closed on the 22nd and 23rd January, 1936⁹² as a mark of respect for his late Majesty's memory. A further Notification was issued in an Extraordinary Gazette on the 25th January, 1936 closing all courts, and offices, schools and the college for the 28th January, 1936 on account of the funeral day.⁹³

Correspondence between the Regency Council and the Chamber of Princes : Cooch Behar being a member

state of the Chamber of Princes, the Regency Council had correspondence with that All-India Organisation and also made yearly contribution towards it. For instance, a sum of Rs. 800/- was remitted by the treasury officers of Cooch Behar on account of the annual contributions of the Cooch Behar State towards the expenditure on the Secretariat of the Chamber of Princes for the year ending December, 1934.⁹⁴ Under decisions from the Regency Council a sum of Rs. 800/- in Government notes payable by the Cooch Behar State as contribution towards the Chamber Fund in the year 1934-35.⁹⁵ The Vice-President of the Regency Council had written a letter on the 14th December, 1934 to the Maharaja of Patiala, the Chancellor, the Chamber of Princes, Motibagh, Patiala in the following terms : "I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Highness' confidential circular letter no. 6, d/27.11.34, requesting His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to attend the next meeting of the Chamber of Princes, to be held at New Delhi on 21st January, 1935. In reply, I have the honour to state that His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar is a minor and has not been invested with Ruling powers, His Highness will be unable to take part in the proceedings of the Chamber of Princes."⁹⁶

Boundary Disputes with Neighbouring Areas : The boundary questions arose during the period of the Regency Council. The first boundary dispute arose between the Cooch Behar State and the District of Rangpur. It has been referred to in a letter No. 214 T R, dated May 29, 1924 from the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department, Jurisdiction Branch, regarding adjustment of boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the Districts of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Goalpara. The Bengal Government say, for reasons stated therein, that the question of the 90 acres of land lost to Cooch Behar Durbar as stated in the Regency Council letter no. 1427 dated the 5th January of 1929, should not be reopened now. As regards the retention by the Durbar of the 51 acres as a set off against the lost 90 acres, the Bengal Government say that Colonel Hirst found Mr. Hart's work of the demarcation inaccurate to the extent of only 20 or 30 links. The Bengal Government, therefore, request that the Durbar may be moved to accept the supplementary report of Lt. Col. F. C. Hirst I. A., as showing the correct boundaries. As a consequence, the Regency Council in a meeting held on the 6th July, 1924 resolved that the supplementary report of Lt. Colonel F.C. Hirst, I.A. be accepted as showing the correct boundaries and ordered that the Government of Bengal and the Revenue Officer be informed accordingly. It appeared from letter (No. 13152P) dated the 8th November, 1929 of the Government of Bengal that the Government of Assam had accepted the proposal of the Regency Council as regards the claim of the Cooch Behar State to Village Baniaguri and had directed that the matter be left over till the Maharaja attained his majority. But the Government of Assam pointed out that they were unable to accede to the proposal of the Regency Council for retaining the fishing right and 'Bhery' rights in the Sankosh river in view of its long and uninterrupted possession of those rights.⁹⁷

Another boundary question arose between the Cooch Behar State and the District of Rangpur. Therefore, the demarcation of the Cooch Behar-Rangpur boundary was taken up during the 1933-34 and a Commission was appointed

for the purpose. Mr. M. O. Carter, I.C.S., Settlement Officer, Rangpur, representing the Government of Bengal and Sreejut Nirmal Chandra Mustafi, B.L., Naib Ahilkar, Mathabhanga, representing the State, were appointed Commissioners.⁹⁸ The demarcation of the Cooch Behar-Rangpur boundary was completed in 1934 and the joint report submitted by the Boundary Commissioners was accepted and approved. It was at first decided to erect 531 pillars along the Cooch Behar-Rangpur boundary but the number of pillars was eventually reduced to 376. The cost of erection was shared equally by the Cooch Behar State and the Government.⁹⁹ The demarcations of the Cooch Behar enclaves in the Rangpur District, and of the Rangpur enclaves in the Cooch Behar State was completed in 1934-35. The complete report with maps submitted by the Boundary Commissioners was adopted by the Cooch Behar State and the Government of Bengal in 1935-36.¹⁰⁰

Proposal for Introduction of Factory Legislation in Cooch Behar : J. George, Under-Secretary to the Government of Bengal wrote a letter (No. 13862P) on the 20th November, 1934 to the Political Agent, Cooch Behar State informing him that he was directed to forward for his information a copy of letter no. F.179-I-A/34, dated the 31st October, 1934 from the Government of India, Foreign and Political Department and of its enclosures on the proposed introduction in Indian States of factory legislation on the lines of the Factories Act, 1934, and to request that as desired by the Government of India, the Regency Council, Cooch Behar State, may kindly be urged if there are factories of any importance in the state, to consider the desirability of introducing and enforcing legislation on the lines of the Factories Act, 1934 and that this Government may be informed of the result in due course for communication to the Government of India.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, on the 9th November, 1934 the Political Agent forwarded the aforesaid copy to the Vice-President, Regency Council for favour of a report at an early date.¹⁰² This copy was finally forwarded from the Vice-President on the 5th December, 1934 to Her Highness the President, Regency Council for favour of order.¹⁰³

It has been known from the above mentioned letter dated the 31st October, 1934 from the Government of India that the Factories Act (Act XXV of 1934), 1934 will come into force on the first January, 1935. Employing interests apprehended that the Act especially its provisions relating to hours of work will intensify competition between factories in British India and factories in Indian States. The Government of India are of opinion that it is most desirable that factory legislation in Indian States should, as far as possible, be assimilated to the legislation in force in British India. It may be mentioned here that a large number of States have either already adopted, or decided to act upto, the provisions of the Indian Factories Act of 1911 in response to a similar request made in that year.¹⁰⁴

The Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal again sent a reminder on the 28th February, 1935. The Political Agent of the Cooch Behar State on the proposed introduction in Indian States of factory legislation on the lines of the Factories Act, 1934 enquiring how the matter stands now.¹⁰⁵ Copy of the aforesaid letter was forwarded to the Vice-President, Regency Council on the 12th March, 1935.¹⁰⁶ The Vice-President in turn sent the copy to Her

Highness the President, Regency Council, on the 18th March, 1935 for favour of early orders¹⁰⁷ by the Political Agent of the State for favour of submitting the report called for therein, at the earliest possible date.

K. C. Ganguli, the Revenue Officer, Cooch Behar reported on 29th March, 1935 to Her Highness the President that "with reference to the Regency Council Letter No. 2272, dated the 18th February, 1935, regarding the factories in the State, I have the honour to state that the Rice Mill is the only factory of a magnitude where on an average about 100 labourers are employed and work at a time. The power in this Mill is generated by Steam Engine. The maximum number of workers employed in State Electrical Power House at a time does not exceed five men. There is no Railway workshop within the state limits which comes under the operation of Factories Act."¹⁰⁸

A few days later the Registrar, Regency Council also reported on the 2nd April, 1935 to the Vice-President informing him that "regarding proposed introduction in Indian States of factory legislation on the lines of the Factory Act, 1934. I am directed to state for information of Government that if legislation on the lines of the Factories Act, 1934 were introduced in the State, it would affect only one concern at Cooch Behar, namely, the Rice Mill." "In the circumstances the Regency Council do not think that the introduction of Factory Legislation and its enforcement would be justified, more particularly as there is nothing to indicate that the concern in question competes in any way with similar factories in British India."¹⁰⁹

Definition of 'Cooch Behar Subject' : In a significant move the Regency Council issued a notification on the 3rd August, 1932 defining "Cooch Behar Subject". According to this notification, the classifications 'Native of the State' and "Domiciled Native of the State" were henceforth abolished and one classification, namely, "Cooch Behar subject" would henceforth be adopted and such privileges as had hitherto been accorded to "Natives and Domiciled Natives" would in future be accorded to "Cooch Behar Subjects."

A "Cooch Behar Subject" was defined as (i) 'One owes allegiance to His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, his heirs and successors and assigns and renounces the claims to the status of subject of an Indian State."

(ii) 'Whose great grandmother, grandfather and father have continuously resided in the Cooch Behar State, and'

(iii) 'Who has no home or permanent abode without the limits of the Cooch Behar State."¹¹⁰

Last Settlement Operations in Cooch Behar (1912-13 - 1927) : Owing to several causes extensive changes had taken place in the topography of the Cooch Behar State. The maps prepared in 1868-1870 in connection with the Revenue Survey of the State had become out of date and could no longer be relied upon. It was therefore decided to have a Traverse survey as well as a Cadastral survey of the State on the lines adopted by the Government of Bengal. The Traverse survey was concluded in 1916-1917. The Cadastral and preliminary record writing began in 1913-1914

and finished in 1916-1917 and 1917-1918 respectively.¹¹¹ The last settlement operations in Cooch Behar commenced in 1912-13 and finished in 1927 during the incumbency of Lt. Col. W.G. Hutchinson, I.A.¹¹²

The late Maharaja Jitendranarayan had publicly announced on the 10th April, 1922 that the settlement should be made for a term of 99 years.¹¹³ But the Government of Bengal was not inclined to accept this proposal. Therefore, on the demise of the Maharaja, the Regency Council in consultation with the Government made a declaration for 30 years' settlement for all lands, excepting rayati lands, unsettled Khas lands in town and bundars settlement for which was fixed for 10 years. The settlement of Khas land only was to be subject to such terms and conditions as might be decided upon from time to time.¹¹⁴

As a result of the present settlement, the land revenue of the State has increased from Rs. 12,62,154 to Rs. 17,98,984.¹¹⁵ Hence, the revenues from all sources for 1926-27 was Rs. 39,37,448 to which land revenue contributed Rs. 18,97,544.¹¹⁶ It is here to note how the land revenue of the State had increased by successive settlements. The following statement gives a thorough reading :¹¹⁷

	Revenue Rs.
(i) On the eve of the First settlement of 1870-72	3,64,140
(ii) First settlement (1870-72)	9,31,024
(iii) On the eve of the Rakamcharcha settlement of 1889	9,59,830
(iv) Rakamcharcha settlement (1889)	12,41,060
(v) On the eve of the present settlement (1912-13)	12,62,154
(vi) Dewan's settlement effected in 1919-20	18,50,853
(vii) Settlement officer's operation (1922)	17,98,984
(Karali Babu's settlement)	

The final report on the survey and settlement operations carried on in the state during the period of 1912-1927 was received from the Revenue Officer with his letter (no. 1003) dated the 10th July, 1929. The report was submitted to him by Babu Karali Charan Gangulu, B.A., B.C.S., who had been deputed by the Government of Bengal to work as settlement officer of the state during the latter stages of the operations. A detailed resolution reviewing the operations was recorded by the Regency Council and the report was ordered to be sent to the state press for being printed.¹¹⁸

Earth Quake of 1930 and Its Impact on Cooch Behar : On the 3rd July, 1930 there was a severe shock of earth quake which damaged more or less almost all the state buildings both in the Sudder and the Sub-divisional towns. It was not possible to provide funds necessary for repairing all the damaged buildings at a time. Therefore, Rs. 1,06,939

was spent to effect possible repairs to some of the principal buildings including the palace, the Vice-President's house, the Council office building, the Treasury building and the Sudder Thakurbari building were repaired during the year 1930-31. The amount was met by making an additional provision of Rs. 20,462 and by effecting a saving of Rs. 86,477 in the existing public works department Budget grants of the year 1930-31.¹¹⁹ repairs were being done almost every year. The most damaging earthquake in the state within living memory occurred in 1897. But this earth-quake of 1930 was not less damaging to property, though no loss of life had been reported.¹²⁰

The Great Economic Depression and Its Impact on Cooch Behar : Not only this, the state economy was also severely affected when the state fell under the grip of the world-wide economic depression of 1930-31. During the year 1931-32 various retrenchments had to be effected owing to the final stringency caused by the economic distress prevailing in the state. Cooch Behar being purely an agricultural State, the world-wide trade depression and consequent fall of the prices of agricultural products affected it considerably resulting this economic distress in the state.¹²¹ In view of the financial situation, in December, 1931 the Regency Council considered it imperative that a reduction in salaries of all state officials should be effected and decided to revert as far as possible to the scale of salaries in force prior to the 1st April, 1927 the date from which the recommendations of the last salaries committee were given effect to. Until a general reduction on that basis could be brought into effect, the 'ad interim' emergent reductions were ordered to be effected on salaries due for December, January and February of the year 1931-32.¹²² With effect from the 1st April, 1932 improved time scale of pay sanctioned from the 1st April, 1927 was abolished and the scale existing immediately before that date was re-established. All personal allowances were discontinued with effect from the 1st April, 1932.¹²³

Thus various retrenchments had to be effected owing to the financial stringency prevailing in the state. The state Engineer Mr. N. K. Nag's services were dispensed with.¹²⁴ The B.Sc. classes of The Victoria College of the State having been abolished during the year 1932-33, the services of two professors of the college were dispensed with.¹²⁵ As a measure of economy the post of the Fouzdari Ahilkar (District Magistrate) was suspended with effect from the 16th February, 1934, the Revenue Officer of the state being vested with the all the powers of a Fouzdari Ahilkar under the Criminal Procedure Code and other laws.¹²⁶

It is interesting to note that policy of retrenchment arising out of the economic depression has also been applied to the allowances of an influential member of the royal family. There was a proposal made in January, 1934 at the instance of Her Highness the Maharani to reduce the allowances of Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan,¹²⁷ the surviving uncle of the present Maharaja. The history of the case was as follows.

During the life time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan the four Maharaj Kumars, Raj Rajendra Narayan, Jitendra Narayan, Victor N. Narayan and Hitendra Narayan, received an allowance of Rs. 2000/- per month each. Maharaja

Nripendra Narayan died in September, 1911 and his eldest son Raj Rajendra Narayan succeeded him. The terms of the Will and Codicil of His late Highness Maharaja Nripendra Narayan directed that the Maharaj Kumars Jitendra Narayan, Victor N. Narayan and Hitendra Narayan should receive an allowance of Rs. 500 per month from the state and Rs. 10,000 per annum or Rs. 833 5-4 per month from the revenues of the Darjeeling and Panga Estates. In addition to the recurring allowances paid under the will to the Maharaj Kumars a sum of Rs. 3 lakhs in cash was also paid to each of the three Maharaj Kumars.¹²⁸

On the death of Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan in September, 1913, Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on accession to the 'Gadi' ordered that his allowance of Rs. 10,000 from the Darjeeling and Panga Estates should be divided equally between his two younger brothers, Victor N. Narayan and Hitendra Narayan. Thus Victor N. Narayan received a total allowance of Rs. 500 per month from the state and Rs. 15,000 per annum (or Rs. 1,250 per month) from the revenues of the Darjeeling and Panga Estates.

In 1915, Maharaja Jitendranarayan made a gift of the Panga Estate to his younger brother Maharaj Kumar Victor N. Narayan. The net income from this Estate then stood at Rs. 10,300 per annum. Victor N. Narayan twice mortgaged this Estate and subsequently in 1926 his indebtedness led the Regency Council to take over the Panga Estate and liquidate his debt amounting in all to approximately six and half lakhs of rupees in connection with the Estate. From the budget of 1917-18 it is seen that Victor N. Narayan was granted an additional allowance of Rs. 6,000 per annum making a total annual allowance of Rs. 27,000 or Rs. 2,250 per month but no order of His Highness can be traced in support of this. The Maharaj Kumar was made a member of the State Council on the 15th January, 1920 and was granted an additional allowance of Rs. 1,000 per month in consideration of the duties he performed as member. His allowance from this date thus totalled Rs. 39,000 per annum or Rs. 3,250 per month. The Maharaj Kumar resigned from the Council of the 1st April, 1922 but by special order of His Highness he was permitted to retain the emoluments of Rs. 1000 granted to him as a member of the Council.

On the death of His Highness in December, 1922 Victor N. Narayan was again appointed a member of the Council and it was ordered in a letter from the Government of Bengal dated the 17th May, 1923 that the present allowances of the Maharaj Kumar should be regarded as including remuneration for the performance of his duties as a member of the Council. The Maharaj Kumar proceeded to England in April, 1927 and resigned from the Council on the 13th February, 1929. His marriage was annulled in 1926. There were two children of the marriage Kumar Nidhendra Narayan who died in 1927 and Kumar Gautam Narayan who was still living.¹²⁹

From the 15th of January, 1915 to the 4th June, 1929, therefore, Victor N. Narayan has been drawing an allowance of Rs. 3250 per month of which Rs. 1000 per month has, since the 21st March, 1929 been applied to the

liquidation of his debts as it has been seen that on the 4th June, 1929 the aggregate amount of the Maharaj Kumar's indebtedness was Rs. 81,664-14-6 The successive increments to the Maharaj Kumar's allowance have been as follows¹³⁰

	Per annum	Per month		
	Rs.	Rs.	A.	P.
Allowance under the Will	16000	1333	5	4
Increments in 1913	5000	416	10	8
Increments in 1917	6000	500	0	0
of the Council in 1920	12000	1000	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	39,000	3,250	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Therefore, Her Highness the Maharani was of opinion that the allowance of Rs. 39000 per annum payable to Victor N. Narayan is too great a burden for the resources of the state. The Maharaj Kumar now lives permanently in England and has no encumbrances since he has no wife to support and the education of his only son has been under taken by the state. The state will take over the Maharaj Kumar's liabilities. Her Highness the Maharani desires strongly that the Maharaj Kumar's allowance should, during the minority of His Highness the Maharaja, be definitely fixed at a figure which the state can be expected to afford. Her Highness also realizes that the Maharaj Kumar should receive an allowance consistent with his position as uncle of the ruling chief and in consideration of this she recommends that the allowance of Rs. 2000 a month be granted henceforth to him. The Vice-President of the Regency Council is also in full agreement with Her Highness on this point. He is also of opinion that the Maharaj Kumar has extremely generously treated in the past both in respect of allowances and also in respect of the discharge of his liabilities by the State.¹³¹

The Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division and Political Agent of the Cooch Behar State is also inclined to agree with the Regency Council that the Maharaj Kumar's allowance is too generous and there is room for retrenchment, especially in the present financial situation of the state, when considerable retrenchment has had to be effected in the expenditure of the state including the Civil List. According to Political Agent of the State, the proposal for reduction of the Maharaj Kumar's allowance from Rs. 3,250 to Rs. 2,000 a month is also justifiable to another reason. There seems to be very little reason for continuing an additional allowance originally granted to the Maharaj Kumar for carrying out the duties of a member of the Council. The Government of India while approving of the appointment of the Maharaj Kumar as a member of the Regency Council made it clear that the existing allowances are to be regarded as

including remuneration for his performing the duties in the Council. Justification for this additional allowance may be said to have disappeared when the Maharaj Kumar ceased to be a member. The Political Agent referred the case in a letter dated Jalpaiguri, the 5th March 1934 to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal for favour of orders¹³² the Government of Bengal approved the proposed reduction of the allowances of Maharaj Kumar Victor N. Narayan and requested the Political Agent of the Cooch Behar State in a letter dated the 11th October, 1934 that the Regency Council should be informed accordingly.¹³³

Owing to the low prices of agricultural products, there had been an acute distress among the people throughout the State as in British India. Cooch Behar being purely an agricultural territory, the people had been hard hit by the low prices. A large number of Jotedars failing to repay the revenue due to the State applied to the Regency Council either for remission of revenue or for extension of time. At first the Regency Council granted time in each of the three 'Kists' for payment of arrears of revenue. The tenants of the Chaklajat Estates had been similarly affected by the prevailing economic distress. The Manager of Chaklajat Estates could not even realise the money required for the payment of revenue and cesses as also for the entertainment of the establishment under him. Accordingly the Regency Council sanctioned the grant of an advance of Rs. 40,000 for the aforesaid purposes.¹³⁴

To mitigate the hardships to the subjects of the State attributable to the prevailing economic depression, the Regency Council granted remissions of revenue to the Jotedars and extended similar concessions to all classes of under-tenants.¹³⁵ The Council issued a notification on the 14th January, 1932 announcing such remissions and concessions.¹³⁶

Despite extensions of time for payment of 'Kists' and also remissions of revenue granted by the State to enable the Jotedars to pay up their arrears, but this produced no desired effect. Provisions therefore were made to make jotes 'Khas' and effect collection from defaulting Jotes on fetching no bid at the Revenue sales. To carry out the scheme a regular Khasmahal Department had to be opened at first by establishing some Tehsil Centres for realisation of rents direct from the under-tenants under the Khas Jotes in 1934 and then placing the Department under an experienced Naib Ahilkar, Srijut Karali Charan Ganguli of khasmahal experience had been recruited as the Revenue Officer of the State and the head of the Khasmahal Department.¹³⁷ Of jotes in respect of which default had been made for many kists, a small number were made khas and brought under the Khasmahal Department.¹³⁸ A new form of lease was adopted during the year 1934-35, in connection with the resettlement of areas on the khas possession of the state. The new system involved the conclusion of separate agreements with the actual cultivators of the soil, who acquired an occupancy tenancy of their respective holdings but had no power to create under-tenures or to alienate their land without permission.¹³⁹ It has been officially claimed that the result of the policy followed had been on the whole satisfactory in as much as it gave relief to the jotedars to some extent while the revenue collections of the state

showed a marked improvement.¹⁴⁰ However it has already been seen how the economic depression caused large-scale land alienation turning cultivators into 'adhiars' and thereby preparing the ground of the peasant unrest in one of the sub-divisions of the State.

The Government of Bengal had directed Mr. Robertson, the Political Agent of Cooch Behar State to review the financial situation of the state and prepare for the Governor a forecast of the financial position before the 31st March, 1936 in view of the impending assumption of ruling powers by the Maharaja. The Political Agent of Cooch Behar State informed the Government of Bengal on the 5th June, 1934 that Lt. Col. Brett, the Vice President of the Regency Council was looking into the finances of the state and he would be able to make a report within a short time.¹⁴¹

J. A. Brett, the Vice President, Regency Council prepared a report on the 15th June, 1934 for submission to the Government of Bengal containing the budget estimate of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1934-35, together with the revised estimate for the year 1933-34. The budget estimate and revised estimate for 1933-34 are compared below.¹⁴²

	Revenue	Expenditure	(+) Surplus
	Rs.	Rs.	(-) Deficit
Budget Estimate for 1933-34.....	26,20,687	26,00,980	+19,707
Revised Estimate for 1933-34.....	24,73,369	25,96,801	-1,23,432

It will be seen that the revised estimates for 1933-34 provide for receipts amounting to Rs. 24,73,369 and for an expenditure of Rs. 25,96,801, thus bringing the margin between income and expenditure to a deficit of Rs. 1,23,432 as against the surplus of Rs. 19,707 which was anticipated when the original estimate was prepared in May, 1933. According to the Vice-President, the main reason for this heavy deficit is the continuance of the world-wide trade depression and the slump in the prices of agricultural products. The estimated deficit of Rs. 1,23,432 was met from the actual opening cash balance of Rs. 3,77,516 available when the financial year 1933-34 commenced. The cash balance was thereby reduced to Rs. 2,54,084 which has been estimated as the closing balance of 1933-34 and the opening balance of 1934-35.

The Vice-President, Regency Council, is of opinion that the financial condition of the state cannot be described as satisfactory. For the last four years, the administration has been carried on at a loss, notwithstanding the fact that the actual cost of the administrative services has been progressively reduced from Rs. 18,48,901 in 1930-31 to Rs. 10,79,571 in 1933-34. If the revised estimate for 1933-34 should prove to be correct the state cash resources will have been depleted during this period to the extent of Rs. 7,69,885 while an asset in the form of arrears of land revenue has

accrued: On paper arrear revenue is recoverable to the extent of nearly 30 lakhs, but the prospect of recovering any considerable portion of it from an impoverished population is doubtful.¹⁴³

F. W. Robertson, Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State, submitted a report on the 14th July, 1934 to the Government of Bengal making a general review of the financial position of the state. His reports gives the following figures showing the very serious drop in the state revenues since the year 1930 and steps which have been taken to reduce the expenditure with a view to balancing the budgets :-¹⁴⁴

Year	Total Revenues Rs.	Civil List Expenditure Rs.	Cost of Administration Rs.
1923-24	36,31,376	3,25,000	11,00,604
1924-25	39,07,065	3,43,285	11,08,419
1925-26	38,66,879	3,43,000	12,99,405
Year	Total Revenues Rs.	Civil List Expenditure Rs.	Cost of Administration Rs.
1926-27	39,85,817	3,93,642	18,20,603
1927-28	41,58,104	5,07,773	18,71,629
1928-29	41,61,797	5,01,982	20,42,815
1929-30	41,06,037	4,34,167	19,44,288
1930-31	29,31,763	4,15,759	18,48,901
1931-32	26,11,308	4,01,946	12,32,807
1932-33	26,53,228	3,63,276	10,80,210
1933-34	24,63,675	4,07,534	10,64,718

(Approximate actuals)

It will be seen that the total revenues of the state have decreased from their maximum in 1928-29 of 41,61,797 to their minimum in 1933-34 of 24,63,675. The cost of administration took a steep upward trend in 1926-27 and reached its maximum in 1928-29 when the cost amounted to Rs. 20,42,835. With decrease in the revenues of the state the cost of the administration has been drastically reduced since 1931-32 and in the year 1933-34 it amounted only to Rs. 10,64,718.

On the other hand, expenditure under the head Civil List with the exception of the two years 1927-28 and 1928-29 when it exceeded 5 lakhs owing presumably to some special expenditure, has remained fairly constant at a little over 4 lakhs and even in the past year 1933-34 when the revenues touched their lowest level showed no decrease.

The only year in which a decrease in this expenditure was apparent was in the year 1932-33 when Her Highness the Maharani agreed to a cut of 10 per cent in the civil list expenditure which was thereby reduced to Rs. 3,63,276. Thus it is found in the year 1929-30 the cost of administration absorbed 47 per cent of the total revenues of the state, while the civil list expenditure accounted for only just over 10 per cent of the total revenues.

In the year 1933-34, on the other hand, the cost of administration amounted to 43 per cent and the Civil list expenditure to 17 per cent of the total revenues of the state. In fact the cost of administration has been reduced to nearly one half while the Civil list expenditure has remained almost the same. It is clear that in order to make income and expenditure balance such drastic cuts have been made under every head of the budget that no further economy is possible if any kind of efficiency is to be maintained, except economy in the Civil list expenditure. In spite of the drastic cuts in expenditure there has been an excess of expenditures over revenues between 31st March, 1922 and 31st March 1933 of about two and half lakhs.¹⁴⁵

G. P. Hogg, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal in a letter dated the 10th October, 1934 has informed the Political Agent of Cooch Behar State that the Government in Council has carefully examined the budget estimate of the Cooch Behar State for 1934-35 and the revised estimate for 1933-34. The Chief Secretary observes that in order to obtain a correct view of the revenue position, the receipts and expenditure on account of loans and advances should be excluded from the figures. Excluding these figures, therefore, the figures for the years 1932-33 (actuals), 1933-34 (provisional actuals) and 1934-35 (estimate) are as follows :-¹⁴⁶

(Figures in thousands of rupees)

	Revenue	Expenditure	Deficit
1932-33			
Actuals.....	26.53	26.77	24
1933-34			
Provisional Actuals.....	24.64	24.99	35
1934-35			
Estimate.....	24.76	25.00	24

With regard to the figures of the State in general, the Governor in Council considers it necessary to insist that, while it is true that the financial position would immediately improve with a rise in the prices of agricultural produce above the present low level there appears at present little prospect of a substantial rise and that, therefore, it would be unwise to act on the assumption that revenue will improve within the next few years sufficiently to produce

a surplus of revenue over expenditure. The substantial reserves which would be necessary to meet deficits which might occur in the meantime, should such an attitude be adopted appear in this case not to exist. The financial position of the state seems, therefore, far from satisfactory, less satisfactory indeed than an examination of the budget for 1934-35 and the actuals for the last years by itself discloses, for the Governor in Council cannot but bear in mind the abnormal expenditure which appears to be inevitable in the near future in connection with the accession of His Highness the Maharaja and the marriage of his sisters.¹⁴⁷

In these circumstances, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal has requested the Political Agent of the State that the attention of the Regency Council may be drawn to the implications of the analysis of the position set out above and the particular to the large fall in land revenue collections and the very heavy arrears outstanding Rs 30 lakhs. The Chief Secretary is to request also that the Political Agent will impress upon them the need to make every endeavour to improve the collections during the year 1934-35. The attention of the Regency Council should also be drawn to the abnormal expenditure which appears inevitable in the near future and they may be asked to state their proposals for meeting it.

The Chief Secretary has also pointed out that in the year 1932-33, a considerable saving in expenditure was secured by a reduction amounting to 10 per cent in the Civil List expenditure. This reduction was not repeated in the year 1933-34, but in view of the urgent need for economy the Chief Secretary is to enquire whether it would not be possible to effect during the current year some economy under the head Civil List in addition to any saving which it may be possible to effect under the subshead "Household Department." Not only this, the Governor in Council is of opinion that the Regency Council should also explore the possibility of reducing expenditure under heads other than those to which particular reference has been made above.¹⁴⁸ In a confidential note dated the 10th November, 1934, which had been prepared for the Maharani Regent's information, Lt. Col. Brett, the Vice President of the Regency Council expressed his opinion that financial position of the state so unfavourable that the exercise of strict control by the Regency Council over every item of expenditure was a vital necessity. Prior to 1930-31 the State Revenue from all sources amounted to more than 41 lakhs, While the total amount collected in 1933-34 was less than 25 lakhs, that is, a fall of 40 per cent. The year 1934-35 opened with an apparent working cash balance in the treasury of nearly five lakhs, but shortly after making over charge, the Vice-President discovered that this was not the true working cash balance in the sense ordinarily accepted i.e. it was not a surplus remaining over from the incomes and disbursements, of former years.¹⁴⁹

According to Lt. Col. Brett, it appeared that on occasions in 1921 and 1927 the total amount of state cash in the treasury was insufficient to meet the immediate requirements of the administration and to tide over the difficulty, sums aggregating Rs. 2,82,000/- were transferred from the general balance of the "Funds and Deposits" to State

Cash. In other words, this amount was borrowed and added to the opening cash balance of those years, in order to meet immediate requirements. Such borrowings should of course have been repaid to "Funds and Deposits" as soon as the revenues began to come in but it appeared that the only repayment of this nature occurred in 1928, when a sum of Rs. 25,000/- was debited to State Cash and credited to "Funds and Deposits". The balance (Rs. 2,57,000/-) so far as could be ascertained, still remained unadjusted, and prima facie it would appear that the opening working cash balance as on 1st April, 1934 was unduly inflated to that extent.¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the official version of the State Government has claimed that though the Regency Council had to move through the world-wide trade and financial depression, they went on with head erect and had been able to hand over the state to the Maharaja Jegaddipendra Narayan at the time of his accession to the Gadi with an honest conscience. Though the cash balance in the treasury was not heavy like that which Mr. Dalton was able to hand over to Maharaja Nripendranarayan (Mr. Dalton's Report shows that he left a sum of 20 lakhs to the Maharaja to bring about the yet unfinished town improvements) the Regency Council 'hope with all the improvements effected during this period they will be able to hand over a decent treasury cash balance including all trust funds at the end of the financial year 1935-36 to the Maharaja to carry out the duties and functions of the Head of the Ruling Family and those of the Ruler himself.'¹⁵¹

Mr. John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal, expressed his satisfaction, on the whole, with the works of the Regency Council in Cooch Behar.¹⁵² While delivering an address on the 6th April, 1936 on the occasion of Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan's assumption of ruling power, the Governor said, "Your Highness is fortunate in that during your minority the affairs of the State have been in the competent hands of Her Highness the Maharani Regent and the Regency Council. In common with those of Bengal, the revenues of the State have been hard-hit by the fall in the price of agricultural products which set in with the economic crisis of 1931. Cooch Behar is pre-eminently an agricultural State and in consequence has felt the effect of the economic depression more severely perhaps than other states or provinces, so that the gross revenue of the State which amounted to rupees 41 lakhs in 1929 - 30, fell to less than Rs. 25 lakhs in 1933 - 34. It redounds greatly to the credit of Your Highness' Mother and the Regency Council that during the period of their administration, the outstanding debt of more than 30 lakhs was oaid off and, at the same time many schemes for the improvement of the state were carried out." The Governor also added that the five years before 1930 had seen the establishment of water works and electric installation, the opening of Sunity Academy for girls, and the erection and improvement of many state buildings, and at the end of that period a general overhaul of the state police force together with improvements of the police buildings was taken in hand.¹⁵³

Changes in the Constitution of the Regency Council : It may not be out of place to note the changes in the consitution of the Council of Regency during this period. Just after the demise of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan the

constitution of the State Council underwent some changes. Rai Choudhuri Satish Chandra Mustafi was appointed a Member and was placed in charge of the Education Department. Babu Pramatha Nath Chatterjee, Judicial Member, having retired, Satish Chandra Banerjee, Civil and Session Judge of the State, was appointed member of the State Council. Subsequently, Jagadballabh Biswas, Revenue Officer of the State was appointed Member in place of Satish Chandra Banerjee.¹⁵⁴

Mr. H. J. Twynam, the Vice-President, Regency Council, having reverted to service under the Government of Bengal, Major C.T.C. Plowden of the Political Department of the Government of India had been appointed Vice-President of the Council of the Regency of Cooch Behar with effect from the 8th November, 1923. The portfolio of the Revenue Department of the State including the Chaklajat Estate was transferred from the Vice-President to the Judicial Member of the Regency Council, who is also the Revenue Officer, with effect from 8th March, 1924. The Governor-General in Council appointed Major C.T.C. Plowden, Vice-President, being a European subject, to be a Justice of the Peace within the State of Cooch Behar on the 11th February, 1924.¹⁵⁵

Rai Choudhury Satish Chandra Mustafi had been appointed an additional Member of the Legislative Council for a term of three years due to the death of Rai Choudhuri Tarini Charan Chakravarty to represent the Hindu Jotedars. Kumar Gojendra Narayan and Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed had been re-appointed to the legislative Council for a further term of three years, the former to represent the Rajguns and the latter to represent the Muhammedan Jotedars. The three appointments referred to above took effect from the 17th November, 1924.¹⁵⁶

Jagadballabh Biswas, Revenue and Judicial Member, Regency Council having died on the 28th July, 1925, Rajani Kanta Bhaumik, Fauzdari Ahilkar of the state, was temporarily appointed to officiate as Revenue Officer and Judicial Member, Regency Council with the approval of the Government of India on the 4th September, 1925. He was relieved on the 12th November, 1925 by Rai Bahadur Lal Khastagir who had recently retired from service under the government of Bihar and Orissa and who had been appointed with the approval of the Government of India on the 22nd August, 1925 Revenue Officer of the state for a period of three years. Kumar Gojendranarayan was appointed fifth Member of the Regency Council, with effect from the 22nd August, 1925. By the death of Jagadballabh Biswas, Revenue Officer and Judicial Member, Regency Council, the State lost an experienced and capable officer who served the State well for many years. All the courts, offices and schools and the college remained closed on the 4th August 1925 as a mark of respect to his memory.¹⁵⁷

Under section four of Cooch Behar Act II of 1909, Kumar Nagendra Narayan was appointed during the year of 1925-26 as an additional Member of Cooch Behar Legislative Council for a term of three years to represent the Rajguns in place of Kumar Gajandra Narayan who, by virtue of his being appointed a member of the Regency Council,

became a member of the Legislative Council and in consequence ceased to be an additional member of the Cooch Behar Legislative Council to represent the Rajguns.¹⁵⁸

Lieutenant Colonel W. G. Hutchinson was appointed under the orders of the Government of India Vice-President of the Regency Council for a period of two years. He took over charge from Major C. T. C. Plowden, Vice-President, Regency Council on the 20th November, 1926. He was afterwards appointed to be a Justice of Peace within the Cooch Behar State under the orders of the Government of India. To mark the occasion of the departure from Cooch Behar of Major C.T.C. Plowden, all the courts, schools and the college of the state remained closed on the 17th November, 1926.¹⁵⁹

The Regency Council in their Notification dated the 5th September, 1927 announced that 'whereas in the memorandum of Administration dated the 4th December, 1891 remodelling the constitution of the Council, it was laid down that a Full Bench on the Judicial side should consist of all the Members with the Maharaja as President, and whereas, in the present circumstances, it had become necessary to amend the aforesaid existing rule for convening a Full Bench, the Regency Council, with the approval of the Government of Bengal, ordered that during the period of the present Minority Administration in the State, a Full Bench should consist of three or more members of the Regency Council, with the Vice-President, Regency Council, as President in the absence of Her Highness the President.¹⁶⁰

Maharaja Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan, Member of Regency Council, left India for England in April, 1927. He tendered his resignation on the 18th July, 1928, as Member of the Council and the portfolio left vacant in the Regency Council by this resignation had not been upto July, 1929.¹⁶¹ The Government of India sanctioned the extension of the appointment of the Lieutenant Colonel W. G. Hutchinson, as Vice-President, Regency Council on the existing terms for a period of two years with effect from the 21st November, 1928, the date on which the period of his appointment expired. The Government of India noted with satisfaction the Maharani Regent's appreciation of the services of Lt. Col. W. G. Hutehinson. Mr. H. L. Khastagir, Rai Bahadur, was appointed Judicial Member, Regency Council and Revenue Officer of the State for a period of 3 years in the first instance with effect from the 12th November, 1925, on which he took over charge. Her Highness in Council confirmed his appointment with effect from the 12th November, 1928, on which the period of 3 years mentioned above expired.¹⁶²

Satindra Nath Guha, the Civil and Session Judge of the State had to be co-opted as a member of the Judicial Committee of the Regency Council to form a full Bench on the 25th March, 1930 and a Special Bench on the 9th July, 1929 and the 8th January, 1930 to dispose of certain revenue appeals, motions and references against the decision of the present Revenue Officer who is also the Judicial Member of Regency Council.¹⁶³

Lieutenant Colonel W. G. Hutchinson, Vice-President, Regency Council, was granted by the Government of India an extension of his appointment on the existing terms till he proceeded on leave pending retirement in April, 1931. His appointment would, otherwise, have terminated on the 20th November, 1930. On the expiry of the extended period of service of Col. Hutchingson, Major K. A. G. Evans Gordon took over charge as Vice-President, Regency Council, on the 31st March, 1931. Kumar Gojendra Narayan, Member of the Regency Council, died on the 8th November, 1930.¹⁶⁴

Mr. H. L. Khastagir, Reveue Officer and Judicial Member, Regency Council, retired from the service of the state on the first January, 1932 and Jatindra Mohan Sengupta, Fouzdari Ahilkar, was appointed from that date to be Revenue Officer and a Member of the Regency Council. The duties of the Judicial Member of the Regency Council had been provisionally taken over by the Vice-President, Regency Council.

Lieutenant Colonel K. A. G. Evans Gordon was appointed to be a Justice of the Peace within the State of Cooch Behar under orders of the Government of India on the 30th July, 1931.¹⁶⁵ Under orders of the Government of India, dated the 11th march, 1933 the period of employment of Lt. Col. K. A. G. Evans Gordon, as Vice-President of the Council of Regency, was extended for a further period of two years with effect from the 1st April, 1932, on the existing terms. Satindranath Guha, Civil and Session Judge and Dineshananda Chakravarty, Civil Surgeon were, with the approval of the Government of India, appointed to be Members of the Regency Council with effect from the 15th June, 1932 due to the resignation of Maharaj Kumar Victor N. Narayan and the death of Kumar Gojendra Narayan (Junior).¹⁶⁶

Lt. Col. K. A. G. Evans Gordon made over charge to Lt. Col. J. A. Brett. on the 13th march, 1934. Satindranath Guha, Civil and Sessions Judge, retired on the 15th February, 1934, and was succeeded by Umanath Dutt, who became a Member of the Council of Regency with effect from the 16th February, 1934 under orders conveyed in Bengal Government letter , dated the 1st February, 1934. Under the orders of the Government of India, dated the 11th April, 1934, Lt. Col. J. A. Brett, Vice-President, was appointed a Justice of the Peace within the State of Cooch Behar.¹⁶⁷

Jatindra Mohan Sengupta, Revenue Officer and Member of the Council of Regency, died at Calcutta on the 11th July, 1934.¹⁶⁸ With the approval of the Government of India Rai Bahadur Karali Charan Ganguli and Sumatha Ranjan Majumdar were appointed as Members of Regency Council on the 12th February, 1935 and the 28th May, 1935, respectively. The Regency Council then and for the remainder of the year 1935 consisted of the Vice-President, the Revenue Officer, the Civil and Sessions Judge, the Civil Surgeon and the Audit Officer with the Maharani Regent, as President.¹⁶⁹

On the other hand, the Legislative Council of the State consisted during the year of 1934-35 of the following:

(i) Regent and President : Maharani Indira Devi, (ii) Vice-President : Lt. Col. J.A. Brett, C.I.E (later replaced by Mr. J.D. Tyson), (iii) Members : S.J. Umanath Dutta, B.L., Dr. D. Chakravarty, Nitibisharad, one vacant (iv) Additional Members : Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, Surendrakanta Basu Majumdar, B. L., Duli Chand Sethia Oswal, Susil Kumar Chakravarty, M.A., and Kumar Rabindra Narayan, Secretary, H. K. Sengupta, B.L.¹⁷⁰

The Regency Council as constituted after the death of the Maharaja Jitendranarayan continued to function until the 6th April, 1936 when Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan had been invested with full ruling powers. It had consisted towards the close of the Regency period of the following : (i) Regent and President : The Maharani Indira Devi, (ii) Vice-President and Judicial Member : Mr. J. D. Tyson, I. C. S., (iii) Revenue Officer : Rai Karali Charan Ganguli Bahadur, B. A., B. C. S., (Retired), (iv) Audit Officer : S. J. Sumatha Rajan Majumder, (v) Civil Surgeon : Dr. D. Chakrabarti, and (vi) Civil and Sessions Judge : S. J. Umanath Dutt.¹⁷¹

Conclusion : The minority administration conducted by the Regency Council came to an end on the 6th April, 1936. Maharani Indira Devi was the Regent of the Cooch Behar State for thirteen years. She was thirty years old while resuming the responsibility as Regent after the death of her husband the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan. She was the only daughter of the Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwar of Baroda and was one of the first Indian princesses to go to school and to graduate from Baroda College. She accompanied her parents on their trips to England.¹⁷² Indira Devi was married to the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on the 25th August, 1913 in London.¹⁷³ One eye-witness to her wedding later described the impact she had on their lives : "I can well remember the sensation all this caused. Indians were rare in England and the saree was still strange enough to attract considerable attention. Indira Devi, in any case, attracted more than attention, for to describe her beauty as ravishing would by no means be using an over worked cliché. Reporters flocked to our home, endless photographs were taken and we small boys lived in a haze of reflected glory. The marriage was the big news of the season. Every illustrated paper gave it full page treatment and for a long time we kept a thick file of cuttings over which we used nostalgically to pore."¹⁷⁴

Indira Devi became the Regent of the Cooch Behar State on the 21st May, 1923 with the approval of the Government of India.¹⁷⁵ As has been noted earlier, Indira Devi's training for her administrative responsibilities had been remarkably good. She had often been taken into confidence by her father, the Gaikwar of Baroda, who had discussed many state's matters with her because she had a good head for Government. On his one visit to Cooch Behar he expressed himself as very pleased with the way Indira Devi was running administration. Gayatri Devi wrote in her Memoirs that 'Indira Devi wished to walk around the palace garden with some government officials on one side and her son Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan on the other, discussing budget or the plans for new hospital or school. She was very serious when people came to advise, consult or inform her.'¹⁷⁶

Five or six A.D.Cs, had the responsibility of managing different departments of the Household. They also escorted Indira Devi wherever she was going, helped to entertain guests at the palace and acted as buffers between her and whoever came to see her. 'In running the extensive menage', Indira Devi relegated a good part of the responsibilities to comptrollers, clerks, A.D.Cs and even relatives who lived with them (the royal family) but the final decisions always had to be hers. Indira Devi relied on Victor N. Narayan, the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan's only surviving brother, for advice because he knew Cooch Behar so well and spoke the Cooch Behari dialect perfectly. But while he took his son Gautam Narayan to England, the whole life of the palace lost much of its Cooch Behari character. The people who now assisted Indira Devi in the ruling of the State all came from other parts of India. Indira Devi's Private Secretary, several senior members of the household retinue, and even Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan's young companions all came from outside Cooch Behar.¹⁷⁷ Among them names of Nawab Zada Abdul Karim, M.A. (Oxon). Bar-at-law, and Major Nawab Khasru Jung can be mentioned. The former was appointed as her Secretary while the latter was appointed as comptroller of the household and also guardian to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan and Maharaj Kumar Indrajitendra Narayan. Both of them came from Hyderabad and were appointed on the 1st April, 1923.¹⁷⁸ Besides, Khasru Jung happened to be a superb horseman and began to supervise the care and training of Maharani Indira Devi's string of hunters' as well as all their ponies.¹⁷⁹ Indira Devi was also known to be a personal friend of Khasru Jung.¹⁸⁰

The Maharani the Regent was always anxious to meet representatives of the people and to receive first hand information of their grievances and aspirations. At times people without previous intimation assembled in large numbers in the expectations of obtaining an audience of Her Highness.¹⁸¹ Indira Devi's own passionate interest and concern for others made her both special and accessible to anybody. She was always called "Ma", not only by her children but also by the peasants of Cooch Behar.¹⁸²

Maharani Indira Devi could speak several languages - 'switching rapidly from one language to another - English to her friends, Marathi to any visiting relatives from Baroda, French to her Swiss maid and Bengali to her children and to any other Cooch Beharis. Indira Devi pursued a very busy scheduled life. At the same time she arranged her hair (something she liked to do for herself) or made notes on a little pad she always kept in front of her as she planned some future projects; a list of guests, perhaps or a meeting with her ministers or a 24 hour party in Calcutta.¹⁸³

Indira Devi was the foremost hostess in India, known internationally for the excellence of parties and at home because she broke new ground for Indian women. She proved that a woman - a widow - could entertain with confident charm and flair. Her hospitality was famous, partly because her expert attention to detail made her friends so supremely comfortable. It was not surprising that every one wanted to be entertained by "Ma Cooch Beharis."¹⁸⁴ It is needless to

say, Indira Devi was one of the most attractive beautiful and elegant women. She had so many admirers, not only in India but abroad as well.¹⁸⁵

When Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan resumed full ruling powers on the 6th April, 1936, his mother Maharani Indira Devi kept herself aloof from the affairs of state administration and spent a good deal of time away from the State visiting Delhi, or especially Bombay, to be with her mother.¹⁸⁶ In the first week of September, 1968 Indira Devi's health had been deteriorating with a variety of illness, the most severe of which was cardiac asthma. She died on the 12th September, 1968 in Bombay. Gayatri Devi wrote in her autobiography that "Even when she (Indira Devi) was ill, her involvement with life had been so intense it was impossible to grasp the fact that she was dead."¹⁸⁷

Notes and References

1. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State (A.A.R.C.B.S.), 1922 - 1923, Cooch Behar State Press, 1923, p-1.
2. Cooch Behar Gazette, January 1, 1923, No. 1, p. 2. The State Council as originally constituted in 1883 consisted of three members under the presidency of the Maharaja. The three members were the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and a Judicial Officer. The office of Dewan was abolished in 1920 and the Revenue Department was placed under the Vice-President (who was designated the Superintendent of the State until 1916). The late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan increased the membership of the State Council and it consisted of H.J. Twynam, the Vice-President, Maharaja Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan, who was a member without portfolio, Mr. B. Ghosh, formerly Secretary and at present designated Financial Secretary to the Maharaja, Nawabzada Abdul Karim Khan, Secretary to the Maharaja, Mr. S. Ghose, Fouzdari Ahilkar (District Magistrate) and Rai Choudhuri Satish Chandra Mustafi, a landholder belonging to a prominent family in the state, who was a state-servant and at present in charge of education department. — Confidential letter No. 2768, dated 28th December, 1922 from H. J. Twynam, Vice-President of Cooch Behar State Council to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bengal, Govt. of Bengal, Political Department (Political), File No. 71, Sl. No. 9, p. 4.
3. Letter No. 106P dated the 15th January, 1923 from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Vice-President, the State Council, Cooch Behar. Govt. of Bengal, Political Department, Political Branch, Collection No. 1, File No. 7, Diary No. 832.
4. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, January 8, 1923.
5. Chief Secretary's office, Calcutta, Political Department, collection No. 1, File No. 7, Diary No. 833.
6. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, January, 1923.
7. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department (Political), May, 1923, P. 26.
8. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, May 21, 1923.
9. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1922-1923, p. 1. With regard to the Rajyavisek ceremony the State Council issued the following Notification on the 7th March, 1923, which gave a vivid description of the procedure of the ceremony.
 - (i) "In modification of all previous orders, the Rajyavisek ceremony of H.H. the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur will be performed on Saturday, the 10th March, 1923 at the palace.
 - (ii) The Pujas in connection with the Ceremony will commence at 3:45 A.M., on the arrival of His Highness at the ceremonial shamiana.
 - (iii) The Debutter Department will arrange the details of the religious ceremonies to be observed in accordance with the shastras and the Raj family custom.
 - (iv) A Durbar will be held in the Sinhasan at 11 A.M., when all Durbaris will be entitled to attend and present Nazar. The Nazar will consist of two silver coins of the new accession coinage which will be available from the Revenue Officer on payment of the price fixed for their sale to the public.

(v) His Highness will arrive at the Shamiana at 11 A.M. to take his seat on the Sinhasan, when the Band will play the Cooch Behar Anthem, the Military will present arms and a salute of guns will be fired, after which the Durbaris will present their Nazar.

(vi) The ceremonial Department will make the necessary arrangements for the Durbar and provide the Insignia etc., required for the Rajyavisek ceremony.

(vii) A limited member of the public will be admitted to witness the Durbar on presentation of passes obtainable from the Household Office, the general public will be admitted to witness the religious ceremonies which will be performed under a Shamiana to be pitched in the palace grounds." — Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, March 7, 1923.

- 9*. A Brief Account of the Cooch Behar State (1929-30 to 1936-37), General Department, Cooch Behar State, collection No. 1, File No. 6 (Preserved on Cooch Behar District Record Room) . The minor Maharaja's mother was the Maharani Indira Devi, who was the only daughter of the Maharaja Sayani Rao Gaikwar of Baroda. The Maharaja Gaikwar was not only an enlightened ruler but he was also a patriot. He was the only ruler who not only won the heart of his people by introducing reforms, some of which, the literary drive, were ahead of those of British administration; but he also by cautious word and deed refused to stand humbly at the footstool of the British authorities. Loc., cit. Confer also Kulkarni, V. B. : Princely India and Lapse of British Paramountcy, (Delhi, Second edition, 1994), pp 115-116.
10. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), February, 1923, P-5. (Preserved in the W.B. State Archives, Kolkata)
11. Letter No. 2749 dated Cooch Behar, the 21st December 1922 from Vice-President, state Council, to the Bengal Govt., Government of Bengal, Political Department (Political), confidential, 1923, File No. 71, Sl. No. 6, pp. 2-3.
12. Government of Bengal, Political Department (Political), 1923, Confidential, File No. 71, Serial No. 11, p. 10.
- H.J. Twynam, Vice-President of the Cooch Behar State Council, informed the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal on the 28th December, 1922 that any such arrangement appeared to him to be most inadvisable because (a) it was contrary to the late Maharaja's wishes, (b) the Maharaj Kumar was overwhelmed with debt, (c) he was vain and easily misled and likely, sooner or later, if appointed he would become progressively more dangerous, (d) he had given evidence of extreme political incapacity. He coquetted with non-co-operators in order to gain cheap popularity and was in discredit with the land holders on this account. Moreover, it might be anticipated that the Maharani would be opposed to the appointment of the Maharaj Kumar as Regent. Loc., cit.
13. Letter No. 1024, dated Cooch Behar, the 29th December, 1922 from Secretary, Cooch behar Land Holders' Association to Vice-President, the state Council. Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), 1923, Confidential, File No. 71, p 19.
14. Letter dated Calcutta, the 19th March, 1923 from Babu Panchanan Barman to the Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal — Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political), 1923, Confidential, File No. 71, Serial No. 23, pp 29-30.

According to Panchanan Barman, with the death of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan and the removal of the Dewan Rai Calika Doss Dutt, one of the ablest administrators in India, the cliques and intrigues gained ascendancy and had, during the reigns of the two late Maharajas, practically ruled good administration out of the country. Though Maharaja Jitendra Narayan was of very generous mind and tried his best to do what could be done, matters could not be mended and palpable wrongs corrected, owing to the great difficulties created during the Dewan Narendranath Sen's administration and the want of good advice and strong determination to carry out well-considered and just measures. Some times steps taken with a view to correct some wrongs, and give some relief to the people disappointed and sufferings from apparent injustices acted quite the contrary way. The recent troubles in the State from April to August 1922 had been the outcome of it. This was the state of things before the death of the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan. The administration had been weak, the parties and cliques were trying to have their own. — *ibid.*

15. *ibid.*, p 30.
16. Government of Bengal, Political Department, (Political) 1917, Confidential, File No. 469, Sl. No. 1, pp 1-4.
17. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, May 21, 1923.
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21. The Regency Council, Cooch Behar, 1926-27, Collection No. 1, File No. 9, Batch No. 303.
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34. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1928 - 1929, p 3.
35. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1929 1930, p 3.
36. A Short Historical Sketch of Cooch Behar, *op. cit.* p 26.

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47. Cooch Behar Gazette, July 16, 1923.
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49. Bandhopadhyay, Sekhar : 'Protest and Accommodation : Two Caste Movements in the Eastern and Northern Bengal, c. 1872 - 1937', *Indian Historical Review*, Vol XIV, No. 1-2, July 1987 - January 1988, p. 225.
50. The Ananda Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, March 25, 1926.
51. *Loc. cit*. Navajuga, Calcutta, April 10, 1926.
52. The Modern Review, Calcutta, May, 1926. It was also stated here that it should be ascertained whether the person who was appointed on the 24th May, 1923, guardian to the Minor Maharaja of Cooch Behar and his Younger brother and also Controller of the Household was the same person who was the native secretary to "Mr. A" in the notorious Midland Bank Blackmailing case in which a Mrs. Robinson figured, should it be found on inquiry that he is the same person, then he should be removed. If the guardian to the Young princes and the Controller of the Cooch Behar royal household be really a man of the antecedents referred to above, the innocent princes and their mother were likely to suffer and also be prejudiced in the eyes of the public through no faults of theirs.
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56. *Loc. cit*.
57. The Ananda Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, April 24, 1926.

58. *ibid.*, June 14, 1926.
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62. Chattopadhyay, Partha (edited) : ' Paribartan', December 21-27, 1983.
63. Ghose, Ananda Gopal and Sarkar, Shekhar : 'Koch Bihar Rajye Rajnaitik Andoloner Ruprekha', *op. cit.* p 405.
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65. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1935-36, general, p 4.
66. Ghose, Ananda Gopal and Sarkar, Shekhar, *op. cit.*
67. *ibid.*, pp 405-406.
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71. Govt. of Bengal, Home Political (Political), I.B. Department, confidential, 1927, File No. 256/15, part - II, p 55.
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73. Proceedings of the Conference of the D.I.B. officers of North Bengal districts - held on 8th April, 1936. - Govt. of Bengal, Home Political Dept. (I.B.), confidential File No. 256/15, Part - II, p 17.
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76. *ibid.*, p 15.
77. *ibid.*, p 14.
78. *ibid.*, pp 10, 14.
79. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1929 - 1930, General, p 3.
80. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1935-1936, General, p 4.
81. *Loc. cit.*
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131. *ibid*, p10
132. Letter No. 851 J, Dated Jalpaiguri, the 15th March, 1934 from the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division and the Political Agent of the Cooch Behar State to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal - Proceedings of the Govt. of Bengal political department, political *op. cit*, p7.
133. No. 1772 p - D., dated Darjeeling, the 11th October, 1934 from Chief secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Political Agent. Cooch Behar State - Proceedings of the Bengal Govt., political department, *op cit*, proceeding No. 6. File No. 3-C-5(2) p-10.
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141. Government of Bengal, Political Department, Political, Confidential, 1934, File No. 933, Sl. No. 11, p 1.
142. No. 519, dated Cooch Behar, the 15th June, 1934 from Lt. Col. J.A. Brett, Vice-President, R.C., Cooch Behar to the Commissioner of the Rajsahi Division and Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State — Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Political, for the quarter ending December, 1934, p. 15.
143. *ibid.*
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147. *ibid.*
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149. Confidential letter No. 22/D dated the 10th November, 1934 from the Vice-President, the Regency Council to the Maharani Regent, Cooch Behar State, General Department, 1934-35, File No. 2. Collection No. 7 (Preserved in the Cooch Behar District Record Room).
150. *ibid.*
151. A Short Historical Sketch of Cooch Behar, *op. cit.* p 14.
152. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1936-37, Chapter - I, general, p 3. It may be mentioned here that during the financial year, 1934-35, a sum of Rs. 80,678 on account of principal and interest was remitted to the Baroda State Bank in part payment of the debt due to that state. The principal outstanding at the close of the year, amounted to Rs. 38,560. This outstanding balance of the Boroda loan in the beginning of the year, 1935-36, together with interest - Rs. 5,888, accruing upto the 20th January, 1936, was remitted to Baroda State Bank during the year 1935-36 in full satisfaction of the debt due to that state. — A.A.R.C.B.S., 1935-36, general, p 6.
153. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1936-37, Chapter - I, general, p 3.
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155. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1923-24, p 1.
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157. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1925-1926, p 1.
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161. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1928-1929, Cooch Behar State Press, 1929, p 1.
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163. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1929-1930, Cooch Behar State Press 1930, p 1.
164. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1930-31, Cooch Behar State Press, 1930, p 1.
165. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1931-32, Cooch Behar State Press, 1932, chapter one, p 1.
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167. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1933-34, C.B. State Press, 1934, chapter one, p 1.
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170. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1936-1937, general, p 19.
171. Registrar, Regency Council, Particulars of the Cooch Behar State, 1934-35, Collection No. 31, File No. 10, Batch No. 206 (Preserved in the Cooch Behar District Record Room).
172. Devi Gayatri, and Rau, Sonatha Ram, *op. cit.* p 7.

173. A Brief Account of the Cooch Behar State, op. cit.
174. The Evidence is quoted in Devi, Gayatri, and Rau, Santha Ram, op. cit, pp 36-37.
175. Regency Council, Cooch Behar, 1926-27, Collection No. 1, File No. 9, Batch No. 303.
176. Devi, Gayatri, and Rau, Santha Ram, op: cit, p 70.
177. *ibid.*, p 52.
178. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordnaty, May 25, 1923.
179. Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Santha Ram, op. cit. p 55.
180. The Maharaja Jugaddipandra Narayan having been at school in England, Major Nawab Khasru Jung found that there was very little work for him in the nature of Guardian to His Highness. In the circumstances, he felt that he was not justified in continuing in a position which practically amounted to that of a sinecure. Besides, his absense from India for a protracted period, as would be necessary was not conducive to his interests. He, therefore, submitted his resignation as Comproller of the household and Guardian of the young Maharaja on the 2nd April, 1928. His resignation was accepted with effect from the 1st June, 1928. - A.A.R.C.B.S., 1928-29, Cooch Behar State Press, 1929, pp. 2-3.
181. Cooch Behar Gazette, Aparil 1, 1933.
182. Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Snatha Ram, op. cit, p 29.
183. *ibid*, p 54.
184. *ibid*, p 60.
185. Dass, Diwan Jarmani and Dass, Rakesh Bhan, op. cit., p 81. Indira Devi was the idol of British aristocracy. She was fond of alcohol and the gay life. She was often seen in a completely hillarious state at private dinner parties in London. Her social life in London was very active. While in Le Touquet in France, Indira Devi concentrated on the gaming tables where she cut a dazzling and exotic figure. Mrs. Evelyn Walsh of Philadelphia, a friend of hers, described her as "The embodiment of charm and grace, the Princess of the One Thousand and One Nights." She wrote about seeing for the first time, at the casino in Le Touquet, "The most fabulously beautiful young Indian lady, holding the longest cigarette holder I had ever seen, wearing a beautiful silk sari and covered with pearls, emeralds and rubies The crowd was totally mesmerized by her." — Dass, Diwan Jarmani and Dass, Rakesh Bhan : Maharani, Delhi, 1973, p 80. and also confer Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Santha Ram, op. cit., p 85.
186. Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Santha Ram, op. it. p 126.
187. *ibid*, pp 305-306.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL HISTORY OF COOCH BEHAR SINCE THE ASSUMPTION OF RULING POWER BY MAHARAJA JAGADDIPENDRA NARAYAN TO ITS ACCESSION WITH THE INDIAN UNION (6th April, 1936 - 12th August, 1947)

On the demise of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan, K.C.S.I., on the 20th December, 1922 in England, his minor eldest son, 'Jubaraj' Jagaddipendra Narayan was proclaimed Ruler on the 24th December, 1922. His succession to the throne of Cooch Behar was recognised by the Government of India. As has been mentioned earlier, the Rajyabhisek ceremony took place on the 10th March, 1923 and Durbar was held on the occasion. Subsequently, the Kharita from the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan conveying the recognition by the King - Emperor of India of the succession of His Highness to the 'Gadi' of Cooch Behar was presented to the Maharaja by Mr. W.A. Marr, C.I.E., I.C.S., the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division and the Political Agent of Cooch Behar State.¹

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was born on the 15th December, 1915 and the time he was placed upon the throne he was only seven years old. Pending the orders of the Government of India, therefore, the administration of the state was temporarily conducted by the State Council formed in accordance with the proposal by the Late Maharaja Jitendranarayan on the eve of his departure to Europe for the last time. As has been stated earlier, the approval of the Government to the formation of a Regency Council was conveyed in the Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government's letter (No. 352 P.D.) dated May, 1923. Accordingly, the state administration was conducted throughout the minority period, by the Regency Council with the Maharani Indira Devi, mother of the minor Maharaja, as Regent and President of the Council.²

It was arranged that the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan would be invested with full ruling powers during the cold weather of 1935-36 and the Viceroy should perform the Investiture ceremonies and would stay as guest of the Durbar for a period of three days.³ The last Viceregal visit to Cooch Behar appears to have been Lord Lansdowne's in 1892. No ceremonial programmes for public arrival etc. were then prepared.⁴ However, on this occasion His Excellency the Viceroy cancelled his visit to Cooch Behar in November-December, 1935.⁵ The ceremony had to be deferred till April, 1936. Finally, it was decided that John Anderson, the Governor of Bengal, would install the Maharaja about the beginning of April, 1936.⁶

Sir John Anderson arrived by special train soon after 10 a.m. on the 6th April, 1936, accompanied by the Under-Secretary, Political Department and the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal and Private and Military Secretaries. What the rains had left of the welcoming message showed boldly over the station when the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and staff awaited His Excellency's arrival. Sir John Anderson drove past a Guard of Honour furnished by

the state troops to the palace. In the rolling park of palace were paraded a guard of honour of the Eastern Frontier Rifles whose band rehearsals during the past few days outside the fine, new military barracks have drawn most of the local population in admiring audiences. Behind them on the lawn were the state elephants caparisoned in scarlet and gold appropriate to the historic occasion and their concerted "salute" which accompanied the bands playing the National Anthem, to the background of booming saluting guns, added a romantic touch to the otherwise conventional part of the proceedings.⁷

'At the Durbur Hall was assembled a large company, though no ladies were present, and half an hour the formalities were due to begin beautifully coloured flowing Turbans and rich apparels blended harmoniously with the general surroundings, the central object of interest being the rich, raised thrones presently to be occupied by His Highness the Maharaja and His Excellency the Governor.' Among this distinguished gathering the principal guests were : Mr. L. J. Twynham, I.C.S., Col. R. B. Butter, Mr. L. G. Pinell, I.C.S., Mr. M. J. Carrit I.C.S., Mr. F.W. Robertson, I.C.S., Mr. R.J.Pringle, I.C.S., Mr. R.H. Hutchings, I.C.S., Captain J.E.J. Davie, Captain H.H. Mc. Gildowani, Mr. J.D.Tyson, I.C.S., Shrimat Yuvaraj Sahib of Baroda, Kunwar Major Amar Singh of Jaipur, Shrimat B.A. Gaekwar of Baroda and all the Durbaries of the Cooch Behar State.

'At 11:30 a.m. His Excellency the Governor arrived at the Durbar Hall to be met by the Regency Council of the State, and preceded by the Bengal Government and State Officers he accompanied His Highness to the throne. The Maharaja who has just attained the majority, is finely and athletically proportioned and he acquitted himself of the ceremony which accorded him the ruling powers over something like 6,00,000 people, with an admirable combination of simplicity and sincerity. Ranged behind the Dais were bearers of various insignia in rich attire.⁸

His Excellency the Governor first read out the 'Kharita' from Willingdon, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, dated New Delhi, the 23rd March, 1936 to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan which was punctuated by the firing of a salute of 31 guns. His Excellency the Viceroy in a message to His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar said, "I have watched with much interest the later stages of Your Highness' education and training, and it is with much gratification that I am now able to accept the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor of Bengal that Your Highness should be invested with ruling powers."

"I congratulate Your Highness on your resumption of the duties, responsibilities and privileges attaching to your high position and I feel confident that you will do your best to maintain and promote further the welfare, security and prosperity of the state and the people now committed to your charge. I trust that the people of Cooch Behar will find in Your Highness a just, kind and sympathetic Ruler."

"Your Highness may rest assured that you may count upon the friendship and support of myself and my successors and in all circumstances you will be able to turn for advice to the authorities charged with conducting the political relations with your state, who will give the most attentive and sympathetic consideration to the problems which may confront Your Highness." "I take this opportunity of conveying to Your Highness my earnest wish for your long life, prosperity and successful rule."⁹

On the conclusion of the reading of the Kharita, the Governor delivered a short congratulatory address, on the conclusion of which he presented the Viceroy's Kharita to the Maharaja. The Governor Sir John Anderson said in his address, "I am present here today on behalf of His Excellency the Viceroy, to invest Your Highness with ruling powers and to transfer formally to Your Highness' personal rule the State of Cooch Behar, which, since 1922, during your minority, has been under control of a Council of Regency presided over by Your Highness' mother."

"Your Highness' father, Maharaj Sir Jitendranarayan Bhup Bhadur, K.C.S.I, unfortunately enjoyed but a brief reign of 9 years in succession to the still shorter reign of his brother, Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan. Your Highness' father, however, pursued the progressive policy that his father had initiated and developed showed the same profound affection for his people and interest in their welfare as his father has shewn. Your Highness' father's charm of manner, unflinching courtesy and engaging personality are, I know, well remembered by those who had the privilege of his friendship. I feel sure that Your Highness will uphold the fine traditions of your family and will pursue the same enlightened and progressive policy of your father and grandfather. I need not remind Your Highness that the great position which you are called upon to occupy is one which carries with it great responsibilities and immense scope for the beneficent activity."

"Your Highness is taking over the administration of this important state at a time when great changes in the Government of India are about to take place. The vision of a more united India, in the administration of which the princes and the people of the Indian states would have a voice was placed before the Round Table conference in England and has since taken practical shape in those portions of the Government of India Act which relate to the Federation of India. The old order is changing and the role of an Indian Prince in the future is likely to be enlarged beyond his functions as the Ruler in a State. His influence may be felt in the counsels of the Indian Empire."

"Your Highness has had the advantages of the best education which England have on offer and, with the opportunities now before you to gain experience in practical administration, it lies in your hands to equip yourself to take a prominent part in the new era which is dawning on India. I am personally happy to know that you have the same love for and skilled in, many sports that your family have always shown." "I recommend to your hands this state on the confident knowledge that Your Highness will do your utmost to promote happiness and prosperity of the people who

are today placed under your direct care."¹⁰

On the conclusion of his address, His Excellency the Governor declared His Highness duly invested with the powers of a Ruling Prince. The Chief Secretary then rose and recited Maharaja's full title :- "His Highness Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan Bhup Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar." A salute of 13 guns was fired in honour of His Highness, the Guard of Honour rose in Arms and the Band played the State Anthem. Faultlessly but modestly attired with magnificent jewels on the Turban and a fine pearl necklace the Maharaja rose to reply." His Highness made the following speech.

"I am deeply grateful to His Excellency the Viceroy for his gracious message and to Your Excellency for coming here to invest me with ruling powers and for the friendly and inspiring words which Your Excellency has just addressed to me." "... I would ask Your Excellency to accept and transmit in the appropriate manner the expression of my abiding loyalty to the Person and Throne of His Majesty the King Emperor. Loyalty and devotion are the watch-words of my House, I believe I shall not be found to lag behind my illustrious ancestors in these traditional virtues."

"I wish, at this moment when I am assuming my powers as a Ruler to express my gratitude both to Your Excellency and to Your Excellency's predecessors for the help and sympathy which have so readily been extended to me and to my state during my minority. I hope that in whatever way the relations of my state with the Paramount Power may be regulated in the future I may count upon the personal interest and sympathy of the Governor of a province with whose fortunes the interests of my state are inevitably most closely bound."

"I wish also to acknowledge the debt of gratitude that I owe to Her Highness my Mother, who has held the position of President of the Council of Regency throughout the period of my minority. "I appeal with confidence to those who are still in the service of the state for a continuance or the ready and zealous service which they have rendered to my forebears and to the Regency Council."¹²

The telegrams were exchanged on the occasion of the investiture ceremony on the 6th April, 1936 between the Viceroy and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar : The following telegram was sent from Viceroy to His Highness : "On this most auspicious occasion I send to Your Highness from Her Excellency and myself as very old friend of your family my warmest congratulations and sincere hopes that in future years you may prove to be a great ruler and that your first care will be for your subjects. I know well that Your Highness will always maintain the great traditions for loyalty that your family has always had towards our beloved King Emperor."

In reply, the following telegram was sent from the Maharaja to the Viceroy : "I am deeply grateful for Your Excellency's gracious message. I value more than I can say the congratulations and good wishes of such good

friends of my family as yourself and Her Excellency. May I, in return, wish you both all future happiness. On this important occasion in my life I affirm in all sincerity that loyalty and devotion to our beloved sovereign which have been the tradition of my family."¹³ It may be mentioned here that in honour of the guests state banquet was held at the royal palace at night on the 6th April, 1936 to mark the occasion of the Maharaja's investiture with full ruling powers.¹⁴

The minority administration of the state by the Regency Council had thus come to an end with the investiture of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan with full ruling powers on the 6th April, 1936. The State Council was formed in place of the Regency Council with effect from the 7th April, 1936.¹⁵ The Maharaja administered the state with the assistance of the State Council which was then composed of as follows : (i) His Highness the Maharaja - President of the Council; (ii) J.D. Tyson, Esq., C.B.E, I.C.S., - Vice President and Judicial Member; (iii) Karai Charan Ganguli, B.A., Member, (iv) Sumantha Ranjan Majumdar - Member and (v) Umanath Dutt, Member of the Judicial side only. It may be mentioned here that Mr. L. G. Wallis, I.C.S., was appointed Vice-President, the State Council and thereby succeeded Mr. J.D. Tyson with effect from the 16th November, 1936.¹⁶

As has been mentioned before, the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was born on the 15th December, 1915. He was therefore twenty first year old when he was invested with full ruling powers in 1936. He was educated at Harrow and Trinity Hall, Cambridge.¹⁷ As has been mentioned earlier, His Highness' mother Maharani Indira Devi was the daughter of the Maharaja Gaekwar of Barada and was married to the late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on the 25th August, 1913.¹⁸ His Highness' father Maharaja Jitendra Narayan breathed his last on the 20th December, 1922 in England. His Highness had three sisters and a brother. His eldest sister Maharaj Kumari Ila Devi was born on the first October, 1914 and was married on the 12th June, 1936 to Kumar Ramendra Kishore Deb Barman, a relative of His Highness the Maharaja of Tripura. His younger brother Maharaj Kumar Indrajitendra Narayan was born on the 6th July 1918. His second sister Maharaj Kumari Gayatri Devi was born on the 23rd May, 1919 and his third sister Maharaj Kumari Menaka Devi was born on the 5th June, 1920.¹⁹

His Highness' grand mother was the Dowager Maharani Sunity Devi, C.I., who was the eldest daughter of the late religious reformer Babu Keshab Chandra Sen and was married to the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan in 1878. In 1887, she was decorated with order of the Crown of India. Her Highness died on the 10th November 1932 in Ranchi.²⁰

His Highness had two uncles and three aunts. Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendra Narayan was born in 1888, educated at Eton and joined the imperial cadet corps in 1906. He married in 1916 a daughter of Mr. M. L. Gupta, Bar at law of Calcutta and had issued two sons the eldest of whom died on the 5th April 1927. The marriage has been dissolved in 1926.²¹ During the rule of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan and of the minority administration Victor Narayan

was first a member of the State Council and then of the Council of Regency. Victor N. Narayan was His Highness father's only surviving brother. The Maharani Indira Devi as a Regent relied on him for advice because he knew Cooch Behar so well and spoke the Cooch Behari dialect perfectly.²² But later he left Cooch Behar for England in 1927 to dwell there permanently and resigned from the Regency Council in 1929. He was killed in a dreadful motor accident on the 31st October, 1937, at Osterly. His son Kumar Gautamnarayan was still living.²³

His Highness' eldest aunt Maharaj Kumari Sukriti Sundari Devi was born in 1885 and was married in 1899 to Mr. Jyotsna Ghosal of the Indian Civil Service. The marriage had been dissolved and she had since been married to Mr. Raymond Conte. The Maharaja's second aunt Maharaj Kumari Prativa Sundari Devi died in July 1932. His third aunt Maharaj Kumari Sudhira Sundari was born in 1894 and married to Mr. Allan Mander of Wolverhampton in 1914. The Maharaja's younger uncle Maharaj Kumar Hitendra Narayan died in 1920.²⁴

The leading title holders and officials of the Cooch Behar State during the year of 1936-37 were as follows : (i) Rai Choudhuri Mon Mohan Buxi (ii) Rai Choudhuri Suresh Chandra Mustafi, (iii) Rai Choudhuri Promoda Ranjan Buxi (iv) Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed and (v) Rai Choudhuri Ishan Chandra Lahiri.²⁵ The leading state officials during the year 1936-37 were as follows : Mr. L. G. Wallis I.C.S., of the Political Department of the Government of India was the Vice-President of the State Council, Rai Karali Charan Ganguli Bahadur, Revenue Officer, were the Members of the State Council, with Srijut U.N. Dutt, B.L., the Civil and Sessions Judge, they formed a Full Bench of the High Court. They were ex-officio Members of the Legislative Council, of which His Highness was the President.²⁶

The Legislative Council consisting of Members of the State Council and six other official and non-official Members representing different interest during the year 1936-37 was composed as follows : (i) His Highness Maharaja Bhup Bahadur-President (ii) L. G. Wallis, Esq., I.C.S. Vice President (iii) Rai K.C. Ganguli Bahadur, B.A., B.C.S (Retd.) Revenue Officer, Member (iv) Srijut Sumantha Ranjan Majumdar, Audit Officer, Member (v) Srijut U.N. Dutt, B. L., Civil & Sessions Judge - Additional Member, (vi) Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, Additional Member (vii) Srijut S.K. Basu Majumdar, B.L., Additional Member (viii) Babu Duli Chand Sethia Oswal, Additional Member (ix) Srijut Sushil Kumar Chakravarti, M.A, Additional Member and (x) Kumar Kabindranarayan, Additional Member. Besides, Srijut Hemendra Kishore Sen Gupta, B.L. was the Secretary of the Legislative Council.²⁷

The Vice-President of the State Council in the General Department was in direct charge of the following departments during the year 1936-37 : Criminal Justice, Police, Jails, Public Works, Electrical Department, Education, State Library, Medical Department, Veterinary Department, State Press, Military Department, Stationery Department, Darjeeling, Civil Department and Registration Department. He was also Ex-officio Vice-President of the Legislative Council and Chairman of the Cooch Behar Town Committee. The Revenue Officer of the State was in direct charge of

the departments noted below : Revenue Department, Excise Department, Court of Wards, Debutter Department, Toshakhana, Treasury, The Chaklajat and Panga Estates and Agricultural Department.²⁸

The other important officers of the state were Captain Rajkumar R. Sing, Bar-at-Law, Private Secretary of His Highness, Srijut S.C. Ghosal, M.A. B.L, Fouzdari Ahilkar, J.N. Madan, Esq, M.B.B.S. (Punj.), F.R.C.S, (Eng.), Civil Surgeon, Rai S.C. Majumdar Bahadur, Superintendent of Police, Mr. J.C. Roy, B.Sc. (Cal. and Glas.), A.M.I.E.S. (Scot), M.R. S.A.N.I (Lond.), State Engineer and Srijut Sarat Chandra Gupta, M.A., Principal, Victoria College.²⁹

Lt. Col. A.S. Meek the Agent to the Governor-General, wrote a letter No. D 10099 - P136 dated Raipur, the 14th December, 1936 to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan carrying the following message : "In continuation of my telegram No. D 10099 - P/136, dated the 11th December, 1936, I have the honour to inform your Highness that His Majesty King George VI has been proclaimed Emperor of India in New Delhi at 9 A.M. this morning."³⁰

In replying, the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan despatched the following telegram dated the 15th December, 1936 : "On behalf of the subjects and Durbar of Cooch Behar State I beg leave to convey the expression of our deepest loyalty and dutiful homage to His Majesty the King-Emperor on his accession to the throne, and our most respectful greetings on the occasion of His Imperial Majesty's Birthday."³¹ The Cooch Behar Durbar also issued a Notification dated the 20th December, 1936 on the occasion of His Majesty the King-Emperor's accession to the throne announcing that "His Most Gracious Majesty King George the sixth has been proclaimed King of Great Britain, Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the seas, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India."³²

After the death of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on the 20th December, 1922, direct political relations of Cooch Behar State were established with the Government of India, who acted through the Government of Bengal and the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, who was also the Political Agent for the State. But the channel for the conduct of those relations was transferred by the Government of India to the Eastern States Agency.³³ In pursuance of the general policy of bringing Indian states into direct relations with the Government of India, it had been decided that before the inauguration of Provincial autonomy, the two States now in political relations with the Governor of Bengal in Council, i.e., Cooch Behar and Tripura, should be included in the charge of the Agent to the Governor- General, Eastern States Agency.³⁴ As a consequence of the accession to it of the two Bengal States it has been found administratively expedient to reconstruct the Eastern States Agency and the Agency as reconstructed will comprise three minor agencies under three Political Agents who had been designated the Political Agent, Bengal States, the Political Agent, Orissa States and the Political Agent, Chhattishgarh States. The Bengal States will comprise Cooch Behar, Tripura and Mayurbhange.³⁵

The State Council issued a Notification in December, 1936 announcing that under orders from the Government of India the political relations of the Cooch Behar Durbar have been transferred from the Government of Bengal and are to be conducted in future through the Agent to the Governor - General, Eastern States, Ranchi with effect from the 1st December, 1936. The Secretary to the Agent to the Governor - General, Eastern States will perform the functions of a Political Agent with regard to extradition and other matters where law or rule requires a Political Agent to act and will be designated normally Secretary to the Agent to the Governor-General and not Political Agent for the purpose."³⁶

L.R. Fawcus, the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division who was also the Political Agent wrote the following letter to the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan of Cooch Behar, dated Commissioner's House, Jalpaiguri, 19th December, 1936. "I very much appreciated the letter in which you referred so kindly to the connection which I have had as Political Agent with the Cooch Behar Durbar and I am very sensible of your personal courtesy in sending me a copy of your letter to Sir John Anderson [the Governor of Bengal]".

It is a matter of regret to me that change in political condition had severed the official connection between the Commissioners of this Division and Your Highness' State but I trust that the cordial personal relations which have subsisted so long with Your Highness and the members of your family as well as with the officials of the state will continue unaffected by the change."³⁷

The Council of the Rulers, Eastern States Agency, adopted the following Resolution in its meeting held on the 2nd January, 1937 in Calcutta : "The Council of the Rulers of the Eastern States Agency notes with great pleasure the entry of the states of Cooch Behar and Tripura into this Agency and heartily invites the Rulers of these states to this Council." Raja Ramanuj Pratap Sing Deo, The Ruler of Korea state, President of Council of Rulers, Eastern States Agency in a letter, dated Korea state, Baikunthapur, the 1st February, 1937 to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan sent the aforesaid resolution to him and extended a hearty welcome to him to their Council on behalf of the organisation and himself."³⁸

Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan, in return, wrote the following letter on the 4th March, 1937 to the Raja of Korea State, Baikunthapur : "I reply to your letter of the 1st February, 1937. I very much appreciated the welcome which the Council of Rulers of the Eastern States Agency have extended to me in their resolution of the 2nd of January, 1937 and I thank you also for the personal invitation which, as President, you have so kindly conveyed to me. It shall be my constant endeavour to associate my Durbar and myself with the work of the Council."³⁹

There arose a question regarding the delegation of executive functions of the proposed Federation under the Government of India Act, 1935 to the Rulers of Cooch Behar and Tripura. A.S. Meek, Agent to the Governor-General,

Eastern States Council, in a confidential letter dated Ranchi, the 21st December, 1936 informed the Bengal Government that the question of the accession of the Cooch Behar and Tripura States to the proposed Federation might arise in connection with Lothian's discussion with those states in Calcutta and in this respect he would be very grateful if the Bengal Government would give him their advice. He also added that "the points related to sections 124 and 125 of the Government of India Act, 1935 and under these sections the Governor-General might entrust the Ruler of a state with the executive functions of the Federation within state and the question arose whether the administration of the states was of such quality as to admit of this delegation being made to them. The Government of India had shown that it was not their policy to entrust such powers to smaller states and they would not be entrusted to states which were not shown to have an efficient machinery of Government. In the Eastern States, the Agent to the Governor-General proposed to recommend that if such powers were to be granted at all, they should only be granted to Mayurbhange, Cooch Behar and Tripura, because these states had a good administrative machinery.⁴⁰

As regards the adequacy of the administration of Cooch Behar State for the above noted purpose, the Bengal Government sought the opinion of Mr. Tyson, the District Magistrate of Dacca, who had earlier served Cooch Behar State as the Vice-president of the State Council.⁴¹ Mr. Tyson, in a confidential letter dated 25th December, 1936, to the Bengal Government, informed them that "the administration of Federal subjects in the Cooch Behar state, in my opinion, be safely made over to the state, or 'the Ruler' (as the wording of Act is). The long standing tradition and the present attitude both of the Administration and of the state subjects is favourable to such a course.' Mr. Tyson further mentioned that 'section 125 of the Act contains sufficient safeguards to ensure that an administration which is at the outset upto the required standards of efficiency is kept upto that standard, while, if the administration were to fail to discharge its obligations through bankruptcy due to the extravagance of the Ruling House (or other cause), I presume that the powers of interference inherent in Paramountcy could be invoked (as at present) to "take over the state" for the time being and put the things right'. The ex-Vice-President of the Cooch Behar state also added that in so far as he had been able to study the matter before he left the state, he had intended to advise the Maharaja at the proper time to ask for an agreement under sections 125 of the Act.⁴²

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal in a confidential letter dated 29th December, 1936 to the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States Council, informed him that before replying on the matter they sought the opinions of Mr. Tyson, ex-Vice-President of the Cooch Behar state and of Mr. Holland, Collector at Tippera, and Political Agent for Tripura. The Chief Secretary mentioned that it would be seen that the standard of administration in both states was sufficiently high to justify the delegation to them of executive functions of the Federation under sections 124 and 125 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The local Government had, of course, little opportunity to be acquainted with details of the internal administration of the two states but saw no reason to differ with the views expressed by Messrs. Tyson and Holland.⁴³

On the question of accession of the states of the Eastern States Agency to Federation, Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan wrote a confidential letter on the 16th March, 1937 to the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States Agency, informing him that at this stage the Cooch Behar Durbar's endeavour was to formulate a basis for their substantial accession to the Federation, and the revised draft of the standard form of the Instrument had been framed in accordance with and followed verbatim the draft recommended by Constitutional Committee of the Chamber of Princes whose report was, with minor amendments, adopted recently by the Informal Conference of Princes and Ministers held in Delhi.⁴⁴

The Maharaja also mentioned in the aforesaid letter that 'the framing of schedule III to the Instrument, a list of certain rights and privileges which the Durbar and Ruler would wish to be accorded special protection on the establishment of the Federation of India, was first undertaken in response to the request of His Excellency's Special Representative and on the lines indicated in Eastern States Agency Letter No. F. 19 / 37 dated the 16th January, 1937, and accordingly that list included the more important extra-territorial rights now being enjoyed. Subsequently the Cooch Behar Durbar had before them the Report of the Legal Sub-Committee of the Constitutional Committee of the Chamber of Princes, wherefrom it appeared that the legal advisers to the Chambers would distinguish between those rights which relate to accepted items in the Federal Legislative list, and those relating to matters outside the list and since also this Durbar are informed that a large number of states favour this classification, they have been disposed (and they assume that there is no objection) to draft a schedule of rights in the manner recommended by the legal sub-committee, but modified in detail and without claim be regarded as exhaustive.'

The Maharaja concludes that 'it is not now proposed to prefer the Cooch Behar Durbar's views on the question of federating on individual items of list III of the seventh schedule to the Act, as His Excellency's Special Representative states that probably a further communication would be made by the Government of India to the Durbar on this subject.'⁴⁵

It is to be noted that the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan along with other Rulers of the Eastern States Agency attended that meeting of the Council of the Rulers which took place at the Grand Hotel on the 22nd November, 1937 at 3 P.M. In the meantime, it was decided that the Head Quarters of the Eastern States Agency would be transferred from Ranchi to Calcutta with effect from the 1st July 1937, and the office would be closed at Ranchi on the 24th June, 1937. All correspondence which could not reach Ranchi by the 24th instant should be addressed to Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta.⁴⁷

It should be noted that the following Kharita dated Simla, the 13th May, 1937 was sent to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan from His Excellency the Crown-Representative Viceroy of India, Linnithgow: "I write to inform

Your Highness that having been appointed by His Most Gracious Majesty the King Emperor of India - to be His Majesty's Representative for the exercise of the functions of the Crown in its relations with Indian states, I assumed the charge of my office at New Delhi on the 1st April, 1937."

"It will be my constant endeavour as has been the case in the past, to maintain and strengthen the friendly relations which have so long existed between your State and the British Government, by a scrupulous adherence to the treaty engagements on which those relations are based." "Your Highness may rest assured that I shall continue to take the closest interest in the welfare of yourself and your state. With earnest wishes for the prosperity of yourself and your people."⁴⁸

G. H. Emerson, the Secretary to Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States Agency, in a D.O. letter No. F.V.77-5/37, in March, 1937 to the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan informing that His Majesty the King Emperor would welcome His Highness as a visitor to the coronation in May, 1937 and that His Highness would be invited to most of the Principal Functions including the Abbey Ceremony.⁴⁹ Accordingly, the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan sailed for England in April, 1937 to attend the aforesaid Coronation Ceremony.⁵⁰ His Highness party consisted of as follows : (i) The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, (ii) Maharani Indira Devi (His Highness' mother) (iii) Maharaj Kumar Indrajitendra Narayan (His Highness' younger brother). (iv) Major Rajkumar Rajendra Singh, Bar-at-Law, Private Secretary to His Highness, and (v) A staff officer to His Highness.⁵¹

His Majesty the King Emperor welcomed His Highness as a visitor to the Coronation. He was accorded the privilege of attending all the principal functions, including Abbey Ceremony. He returned to the State on the 7th September, 1937. During His Highness' absence administration of the state was conducted by the State Council. But constitutional and financial questions of magnitude, under His Highness command used to be referred to His Highness by cable or air mail.⁵² In London Her Highness the Maharani Indira Devi, the Maharaj Kumar Victor N. Narayan, and some members of the staff who accompanied His Highness to England, to attend the coronation ceremony received special Souvenir Medals instituted by His Majesty to commemorate the Coronation - One was sent to the Vice-President through the residency office and another to the Revenue Officer of the State.⁵³

The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan attended the meetings of the Chamber of Princes held in New Delhi on the 24th and 25th February, 1937. His Excellency the Viceroy in his inaugural speech at the 14th session of the Chamber of Princes held on the 24th February, 1937 welcomed the Maharaja of Cooch Behar on his assumption of power in the following terms : "we welcome their Highnesses of Gwalior and Cooch Behar, who have been invested with their Ruling Powers since last this Chamber met, and we trust that they will take an active part in the deliberations of this Chamber."⁵⁴

The following resolution of welcome was proposed by His Highness Maharaja Rana of Dholpur to their Highnesses the Maharaja of Scindia of Gwalior and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar : "Your Excellency, Your Highness : it is with great pleasure that I rise to propose the resolution of welcome to their Highnesses the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior and Maharaja Saheb of Cooch Behar on their assumption of Power."

"His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar who has assumed his powers is no stranger to me personally and my welcome to him is sincere since in years gone by His Highness' father and I were playmates. His Highness comes to us from our Eastern most boundary in the country and in spite of the distance, he actually sits here amongst us to help us in our deliberations. I hope His Highness will continue to be an active member of this Order and be a strength to us all in every way."⁵⁵ The above resolution was passed by the Chamber of Princes (Narandra Mandal) during the session held on the 24th and 25th February, 1937 and resolved that "the Chamber of Princes offers its heartiest congratulation to their Highnesses the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar on their investitures with ruling powers and wishes their long and prosperous rule."⁵⁶

The Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda and Maharani Sahiba visited Cooch Behar on the 2nd January, 1938. A Durbar was held on the 3rd January, 1938 in honour of the occasion and the officers privileged to attend Durbars were presented in order of precedents. On the 4th January, 1938 there had been a state banquet.⁵⁷ A foundation stone was laid by the Maharaja Gaekwar on the 5th January, 1938 at the Sadar Hospital for an X-Ray Ward to be called the Baroda X-Ray Ward of the Cooch Behar Hospital. A donation of the 10,000 towards the construction of the new Ward and its equipments was announced in the meeting and a subsequent donation of Rs. 2,000/- was sent later.⁵⁸

The sad news of the demise of the Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda on the evening of the 6th February, 1939 reached Cooch Behar on the 7th February, 1939 when the town of Cooch Behar was plunged into mourning.⁵⁹ The following notification dated the 7th February, 1939 was issued by the State Council : "It is with most profound regret that the State Council announce to the people of the Cooch Behar State that His Highness Maharaja Farzand-i-Khas-i-Daulat-i-Inglishia Sir Sayaji Rao Gaekwar Senakhas Khel Shamsheer Bahadur, G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E, Maharaja of Baroda and grandfather of His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur, passed away on the evening of the 6th February, 1939." All courts, offices and state institutions remained closed for seven days from the 7th to the 13th February, 1939.⁶⁰

His Highness in Council also received the with deep regret another news of the death of His Excellency Lord Brabourne, G.C.S.I, G.C.I.E, M.C. Governor of Bengal, on the 23rd February, 1939 at Calcutta. All courts, offices and state institutions remained closed on the 24th February, 1939 as a mark of respect. A public meeting was held on the

25th February, 1939 at the Lansdowne Hall, over which the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan presiding. A message of condolence was forwarded to the Military Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Bengal.⁶¹

The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan attended the Conference of the Chamber of Princes held on the 13th March, 1939 in New Delhi under the Presidency of His Excellency the Viceroy. His Highness delivered a speech and said, "It is with the deep sense of sorrow that I rise to associate myself with the resolution of condolence upon the sad and lamented demise of my grand father His Highness the Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda."

"It would perhaps not to be too much to say that with passing away we have lost one of the most distinguished Members of our Order, and Baroda, a Ruler which it may be difficult to replace. In the administration of his state, he not only won the gratitude and devotion of his people who looked upon him as their father but also the esteemed admiration and affection of all his brother Princes, who, I am sure, look upon his bereavement as a personal loss, which we deeply mourn."⁶² In this session of the Chamber, His Highness was co-opted a Member of the Standing Committee, thereby resuming very great responsibilities, both in interest of the state and of the order of Princes.⁶³

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan attended all the three sessions of the Chamber of Princes held in June, 1939 and in August, 1939 and in March, 1940 at Bombay, Simla and New Delhi respectively. During the year 1939 - 40, as has already been mentioned, His Highness was co-opted member of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes, and took an active part in the deliberations of the Chamber which at the time was absorbed in matters connected with Federation.⁶⁴ Dewan Bahadur R. Subbaya Naidu, Chief Minister of the Cooch Behar State was nominated on the Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes with effect from October, 1940 in place of Rai K. C. Ganguli Bahadur, Acting Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar.⁶⁵ His Highness attended the sessions of the Chamber of Princes at New Delhi on the 16th March, 1942 and subsequent days.⁶⁶

In accordance of His Highness' wishes it was arranged that he would be attached to the Light Cavalry at Bolarum (Hyderabad) for military training for a period of three months beginning from June, 1938. But owing to his illness, he joined the regiment on the 1st September, 1938 and remained in it for two months.⁶⁷ In the subsequent years he also joined the regiment for a period of more or less two months.⁶⁸ In the field of aviation His Highness was successful in securing 'A' Pilot's license and became a member of several flying clubs of India.⁶⁹ The temporary honorary rank of second Lieutenant for Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was approved on Spetember 8, 1939 and was notified in the London Gazette on the 17th October, 1939.⁷⁰

Whenever the British Government was plunged in war with any other country, the Rulers of Cooch Behar State as feudatory chief always fully cooperated with them by offering their personal services and the resources of

their state. Like his predecessors Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan pursued the same policy of full and active cooperation with the British Government from the very beginning of the Second World War. At the outbreak of the European War between His Majesty's Government and Germany in September, 1939 the Maharaja of Cooch Behar conveyed the following message in a telegram on the 4th September, 1939 to the Viceroy of India : "In this dreadful crisis I hasten to offer to His Majesty's Government my personal services and the resources of my state."⁷¹ In reply to this, the following message in a telegram dated the 13th September, 1939 from the Viceroy was sent to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, 7th Light Cavalry, Bolarum : "In the name of His Imperial Majesty to whom communicating your loyalty thank Your Highness most warmly for your offer to place your personal services and the resources of your state at the disposal of His Majesty."⁷²

His imperial Majesty the King-Emperor of India sent to India the following message which was published by the State Council, Cooch Behar, in a notification (War) dated the 12th September, 1939. "In these days when the whole of civilization is threatened, the wide-spread attachment of India to the cause in which we have taken the arms has been a source of deep satisfaction to me. I also value most highly the many and numerous offers of assistance made to me by the Princes and people of India. I am confident that in the struggle upon which I and my people have now entered we can count on sympathy and support from every quarter of the Indian continent in the face of the common danger"⁷³

Another letter dated Viceregal Lodge, Simla, the 18th October, 1939 from the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow was received by Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan. The Viceroy said in this letter, "I am most grateful to Your Highness for the generous and patriotic offer of your personal services which you have been good enough to make in connection with the present emergency, and for your readiness to assist by all means in your power in the successful termination of the war. I have already expressed my gratitude to you, but I think it well to address Your Highness at a little greater length in the light of conversations which I have been having with His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief as to the best method of utilising the offers which have been so generously made by the Rulers of the Indian States." The Viceroy further said in his letter that " ... as the situation develops (and this, as you will, I am certain, appreciate may take time) we shall not hesitate if necessary to call on Your Highness and other Rulers for the personal services which you have so generously offered. In the meantime, I would suggest to you that the most useful role which you can play in this critical period is to perfect your state arrangements in anticipation of a possible lengthy period of uncertainty."⁷⁴

The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, in reply, sent the following letter dated Cooch Behar, the 18th November, 1939 to Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, New Delhi : "I thank Your Excellency for your letter of October the 18th. I propose to do my best to implement the suggestion contained in the letter."⁷⁵

His Excellency the Viceroy's appeal on behalf of St. Dunstan Association for contribution⁷⁶ and another appeal made by the Joint War Committee by the Indian Red Cross Society and the St. John Ambulance Association under the auspices of His Excellency the Viceroy asking for funds⁷⁷ were given wide publicity in the state. His Highness' warmest appeal for subscriptions to the officers, subjects and other people was duly met in the state.⁷⁸

The Sub-Committees were formed in all sub-divisions for the purpose of raising subscription for the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund. They had been functioning well with great zeal under the guidance of a Central Committee presided over by the District Magistrate and controlled by the Chief Minister Dewan Bahadur R. Subbayya Naidu.⁷⁹ Collections for Silver Trinket Fund were successfully organised by the ladies of the state.⁸⁰

Various attempts such as organising the Charity Football Match under the personal initiative of His Highness and a Charity Theatrical Performance by College students had been made to accelerate contribution.⁸¹ Girl students of local Sunity Academy staged 'Bisarjan' of Rabindranath Tagore in aid of the War Fund in April, 1941. The performance was a great success and the collections had been sent to augment the War Purposes Fund of this State.⁸²

In a very largely attended public meeting held on the 8th September, 1940 with Dewan Bahadur R. Subbayya Naidu, Chief Minister of the State in the Chair, and it was unanimously resolved to concentrate all resources to fight against Nazism. The Village Defence Parties were organised for the civil defence of the whole State. The local widely read newspaper "Cooch Behar Darpan" published regularly authenticated war news contradicting false rumours and promoting war propaganda activities.⁸³

The Maharaja made the following message for the people of the state, which was published in May, 1940 : "In this grave and critical hour in the history of Great Britain and the Empire, it is my earnest prayer that the leaders of the great political parties in our country will sink their differences and unite with the war of the Princes to meet and destroy this dreadful menace which threatens civilization, our very freedom and all that we hold sacred."⁸⁴ His Highness accompanied by the Chief Minister of the State visited the rural areas in course of which he inspected the Village Defence Parties which had set to work in right earnest. The Chief Minister utilised these occasions in explaining to village folk the real war aims and the necessity for contributing to the war efforts made by the state.⁸⁵

Dewan Bahadur R. S. Naidu, Chief Minister of the State had been appointed to be the representative of the Eastern States in the Bengal Province Committees on war supplies on the nomination of the Resident for the Eastern States for the year with effect from March 1941.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan as a member of the first National Defence Council attended its meeting held on the 6th October, 1941 and the two following days. He also attended a meeting of the Red Cross Organisation of the Eastern States on the 5th January, 1942 at Hastings House, Calcutta as President of the Society.⁸⁷

Lt. Col. C.P. Hancock, Resident for the Eastern States visited Cooch Behar on the 11th January 1942 and stayed for five days. The Resident was pleased to make the following observation at the conclusion of his visit : ".... I find some difficulty in expressing to Your Highness in words how much I enjoyed my recent visit to Cooch Behar and how grateful I am to you for showing me so much of the state. I am impressed by the standard of administration and would describe the state and the state - subjects as happy;"⁸⁸ Major-General F.Gwatkin, Military Adviser-in-Chief, Central Indian State Forces, visited the State on the 20th January 1942 with a view to inspect the forces prior to its admission into the Indian States Forces Scheme, 1939.⁸⁹

With the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in February, 1942, the war suddenly moved much closer to India.⁹⁰ The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was especially vulnerable now that the Japanese advancing into the Burma. Maharaja Kumar Indrajitendra Narayan went on active service abroad.⁹¹ Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan had to spend most of his time in Cooch Behar, as it was quite close to the War Zone. A huge American army base had been installed there, and the famous Burma Road went through Cooch Behar; together they transformed the sleepy little town into a bustling international centre, which came to be known as the "G. I.'s Shangri-la."⁹²

The National War Front movement was inaugurated in Cooch Behar town by the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan on the 5th April, 1942 and in other sub-divisional Headquarters by the Civil Defence Commissioner during April, 1942 who was elected to be the State Organiser of the movement. Sub-leaders and lecturers of the movement visited important Búndars and Hats to allay panic created by the World War and counteract false rumours.⁹³ Elaborate arrangements were made by the Durbar to give effect to immediate A.R.P. measures during the year 1942-43.⁹⁴

Public meeting in Cooch Behar and four other sub-divisional Headquarters and at Haldibari was held on the 14th June, 1942 to observe the United Nations Flag Day in which the residents of the towns including officials and non-officials representing different interests and communities attended the meeting. Speeches were delivered explaining the impicationed importance of the United Nations Flag Day. After the meeting, processions flying flags of the United States, Great Britain and Cooch Behar State passed through the important streets of the towns of the state.⁹⁵

The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan had been appointed as Honorary Lieutenant of the 7th Light Cavalry with effect from the month of June, 1942.⁹⁶ Lieutenant Maharaj Kumar Indrajitendra Narayan, who was attached to the C.I.H, proceeded on active service during the year 1942-43.⁹⁷ His Excellency the Governor of Bengal and the Lady Mary Herbert visited Cooch Behar on the 4th January, 1942 and stayed for a week. On their return to Calcutta the Military Secretary to His Excellency sent the following message : ".... Everything went perfectly that the arrangements were magnificent and that they could not have enjoyed themselves more."⁹⁸

Lt. Col. C. P. Hancock, Resident for the Eastern States, accompanied by Sir Henry Craik Bart, Political Adviser to His Excellency the Crown Representative and Mrs. Hancock, visited Cooch Behar on the 11th January, 1943 and stayed for 5 days till the 15th January 1943. During his stay here the Resident inspected the Cooch Behar Aerodrome and the Military lines, went to Mathabhanga to witness demonstration by the Village Defence Parties.⁹⁹

Lt. Col. K. F. W. Thomas, Military Adviser, Central India States Forces, Gwalior Residency, arrived at Cooch Behar on the 24th April, 1942 and spent a week in inspecting the state forces. While sending his Inspection Note he wrote as follows : "It was a very great honour and pleasure for me to meet His Highness, but a Ruler who takes such a keen interest in his army fills me with the greatest of all admiration."¹⁰⁰

At the crucial hour of the war, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan himself joined the Indian Army (7th Light Cavalry) as an Honourary Lt. Colonel and acted as a liaison officer at headquarters 4th Corps, S.E.A.C. in Burma. While returning from active service in Burma in 1945, General Messervy thanked him for his services and remarked, "I was delighted to have you at my head quarters, and very good work you did too."¹⁰¹

The information concerning Cooch Behar State's war effort from the beginning of the war to the end of August, 1943, was furnished below :-

(a) Contributions towards War Purposes Fund - Rs. 80,000 by the state.

(b) Contributions by the state towards various other funds such as Red Cross, Dunstan, Sailor's Fund, Lord Mayo's Fund and others :

i) Indian Red Cross Society	Rs.	10,000
ii) St. John Ambulance	Rs.	5,000
iii) Dunstan's Association	Rs.	5,000
iv) Contribution for relief of the year raid victims in London and other places in England	Rs.	5,000
v) Lord Mayo's Relief Fund	Rs.	250
vi) Indian Soldier's Comfort Fund	Rs.	411/8/-

(c) War Investment by the state

	Rs.	2,46,300/-
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(d) Contributions and investments by officials and non-officials including jaigirdars, state servants, industrial concern and others :

i) Darjeeling War Mela Fund	Rs.	100/-
ii) St. John's Ambulance Association	Rs.	1269/-

iii) Public contributions	Rs.	26,814/-
iv) China Day collections	Rs.	710/-
		Total Rs. 28,893/-

v) Presentation of 4 Prismatic comprismatic compasses to the chief ordance office, Rowal Pindi

(e) Rs. 20,000/- was spent out of Rs. 26,814/- mentioned under d) 3.) for purchases of Armoured carried named "Cooch Behar."¹⁰²

Not only this, the Maharaja has also placed his personal service and the resources of the State at the disposal of the Crown.

(i) Increased expenditure was being incurred by the State on account of the Civil Defence Department on an average of Rs. 2000/- monthly for adopting measures on food grain control, A.R.P. rationing of petrol, control of tyres.

(ii) Expenditure on account of Additional Police Force due to war situation is Rs. 115/- per mensem.

(iii) Expenses of cost of security of Railway lines had not yet been fixed.

(iv) Specially war propaganda is being done by the state through the local fortnightly newspaper "Cooch Behar Darpan."

(v) Rs. 5,00,051/- realised in fete arranged at Woodlands Palace, Calcutta by Her Highness the Maharani Indira Devi was contributed to Lady Herbert's Bengal Women's War Purposes Fund.

(vi) A Silver Trinket Fund has been opened by the local ladies and the Trinkets gathered valued approximately Rs. 600/-.

(vii) The major portion of the woodlands palace has been made over to the military authorities for the purpose.¹⁰³

(viii) A sum of Rs. 10,000 for war raid victims in England was granted.¹⁰⁴

The year 1942 is an eventful one in the annals of Indian history, for it witnessd a massive movement known as the Quit India Movement. The movement did not erupt all of a sudden but 'was the inevitable outcome of the British policy of naked imperialism followed since 1939 when India was involved unwillingly as a British partner in the World War II. Gandhi was quick to understand the significance of the real intent of the British policy and the magnitude of the crisis posed by the impending Japanese aggression. Gandhiji therefore opined that the only way to extricate India out of the impasse was to launch the uncompromising straight fight against the British for the freedom of the country. Finally the Quite India resolution was passed by the Congress on August 8, 1942 at its A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay. The Quit India movement had widespread impact and embraced not only British India but also the Indian States in its fold.¹⁰⁵

In the mist of the Second World War, the Quit India movement also penetrated into the princely state of Cooch Behar and made a deep impact there.¹⁰⁶ As has already been noted, the Rulers of Cooch Behar State as tributary chiefs of the British Government had always been opposed to Indian freedom movement. Maharaja

Jagaddipendranarayan followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in this regard. Naturally he introduced repressive measures to stem the tide of the Quit India movement so that it did not make any headway in the State.¹⁰⁷

In a meeting of the National War Front held on the 10th July, 1942 at Lansdowne Hall in Cooch Behar town, the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan delivered a speech on the imminent menace arising out of the proposed mass movement by the Congress. According to the Maharaja, the Congress was misleading the Indian people without realising the actual situation. Therefore, he cautioned the assembled people to keep their vigilant eyes so that the public opinion might not be misled.¹⁰⁸

A public meeting was held on the 10th August, 1945 in Cooch Behar town under the Presidency of His Highness the Maharaja. It was largely attended by the elite of the town officials and non-officials. His Highness in his speech exhorted the citizens to close up their ranks and fight the prospective menace of mass civil disobedience suggested by the Congress, which must spell a disaster of the first magnitude.¹⁰⁹ Special Officer, Civil Defence Department visited interior sub-division of the state and appealed to the people aims and objects of the National War Front and impressed upon them not to be panicky, not to place any faith on the Congress propaganda for mass civil disobedience.¹¹⁰

Notwithstanding this stern attitude adopted by the state authorities, the Quit India movement made a headway in the territory of Cooch Behar. It created great excitement in the mind of the students and youths who made posters and distributed them in Cooch Behar town in support of the movement. They were determined to express their solidarity with the Quit India movement.¹¹¹ The state police also became aware of this anti-British activities and made raids into several houses of Cooch Behar town. The arrest of Ramen Bhattacharya, a student activist by the police created unrest among the student community who called strike in the College in protest against this arrest and in support for the August movement. The police responded promptly and arrested the student activists and later expelled them from the state by issuing '24 Hours Notice' of banishment. Among those students who had been expelled were Sourin Bhattacharya, Arun Maitra, Vaidyanath Chakraborti, Mohit Gupta and others.¹¹²

Apart from this, during the Quit India movement, the Congress-activists coming from neighbouring districts organised the meetings in several places in the State of Cooch Behar. Prafulla Tripathy, the well-known Congress activist of Jalpaiguri held several meetings in Cooch Behar.¹¹³ Keshab Chandra Dutta and Anil Chakraborty were arrested as soon as they entered Cooch Behar. Both the activists were jailed for one year and for three months respectively.¹¹⁴ The political activities as well as political organisations were declared unlawful in Cooch Behar State. Apart from such repressive measures adopted by the state authorities the prevailing political awareness among the Cooch Behar people was very low. All these factors stood in the way of organising any powerful political movement in

the princely state of Cooch Behar. The Quit India movement therefore remained mainly confined to the students community in the state.¹¹⁵

Towards the end of the World War II the military assault on the students of the Victoria College of Cooch Behar snowballed into a powerful mass movement against the state authorities. On the 21st August, 1945 Cooch Behar state military men under their officers Kumar Purnendu Narayan and Dinesh Chandra Chanda made an attack on the students of the Victoria College within the College Campus over a trifle incident and as a result of this, as many as 26 students were wounded and therefore, hospitalised.¹¹⁶ Among them the condition of six students were very critical.¹¹⁷ It should be noted that the whole students community and the residents of Cooch Behar town launched a powerful agitation against this military outrage.¹¹⁸ The then underground and banned Communist party played a key role in organising the people's agitation, The Students' Struggle Committee and the Citizen's Committee were formed. They jointly raised the slogan demanding for the open trial and punishment of the guilty military men and called a general strike in Cooch Behar town for the first time in the history of the state. This strike was a successful one. Under their initiative a largely attended mass meeting was held in Cooch Behar town, wherein the main speaker was Professor Durga Kinkar Bhattacharya who was described in his speech the guilty military men as "pantered brutes of Cooch Behar State Force."¹¹⁹ when this military attack on the students happened, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan stayed in Malay with the British army towards the close of the Second World War. The Maharani Indira Devi was also outside the state.¹²⁰ The military outrage had also created a strong agitation among the people, especially the students community of Bengal. Bengal Provincial Students Federation observed Cooch Behar day, called strikes in the colleges of Calcutta and held a large students gathering at the Wellington square in protest against the brutal military attack.¹²¹ In the face of wide spread public agitation and protest the state authorities had been forced to constitute a Tribunal where the guilty military sergeants were tried and punished on various terms of period. Kumar Purnendy Narayan and other 105 guilty military men were jailed for various periods of terms.¹²² It was regarded as the first triumph of the mass agitation against the monarchy.¹²³ This mass movement was ultimately converted in a movement of civil liberties thereby giving rise to various organisations, viz, the Civil Liberty Committee, Cooch Behar State Employees Association, Cooch Behar Bank Employees' Association which were politically dominated by the Communists. These organisations prepared the fertile ground for greater agitation in favour of democracy and merger in the princely state of Cooch Behar in the penultimate years.¹²⁴

Towards the close of the war it was clear that many things would not return the same as they were. The great changes were imminent and India was on the doorstep of a great transition. This was realised by the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan while he said in his opening speech in the Legislative Council on the 7th March, 1945 : "Very nearly a year has rolled by since we met on the last occasion and the world has witnessed many radical changes in different parts of globe The war in Europe is also slowly drawing to an end before long the regenerative forces of

mankind will be diverted to the amelioration of the moral and material condition of the peoples of the world. In India we already see the signs of feverish activity for fostering the economic and industrial development of the country. The Indian States must also bestir themselves in this matter if they are not to be left behind. Here in Cooch Behar many comprehensive and ambitious schemes are under consideration of my Government."¹²⁵

After the termination of World War II, the British imperialism was so weakened that it could no longer maintain the British Indian Empire. It was evident that India was on the verge of independence and unfortunately she was also to be partitioned. The British Prime Minister Clement Attlee officially announced on the 3rd June, 1947 the plan for the partition of the country into India and Pakistan which were to be given immediately the status of a Dominion in the British Commonwealth of Nations and to advance the date of transfer of power to the 15th August 1947. The Plan later to be known as the June 3rd plan was accepted by the major political parties of India.¹²⁶

But what would be the future relationship of the Indian States with the newly made two Dominions remained a baffling question. The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan could realize the gravity of the situation which he referred to in his speech delivered in the opening of the annual sessions of the Legislative Council on the 26th June, 1947 as follows : "when we met last I expressed the hope that in the very near future India would be in a position to shape her own destiny and that the world of the years to come would be our liking. India will soon be divided and certain British Indian provinces will be sub-divided also. Rivalry between the divided parts of the country and of the provinces may be friendly or unfriendly and the position of the Indian States, especially those which are contiguous to both the Unions, whether they join one Union or the other or keep aloof from both, is not going to be as happy as it would have been if they had formed units of one mighty India." Nevertheless, the Maharaja expressed the hope that the constitutions of the two Unions would be framed wisely so that "the gulf between communities is bridged, rather than widened, and the Indian states are made to feel that they will, on joining one Union or the other, be respected members thereof and not submerged in the politically and economically more powerful provinces of British India."¹²⁷

So Independence came to the sub-continent on the 15th August, 1947, and obviously it came at the cost of partition. As per the provisions of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 "two independent Dominions known as India and Pakistan emerged; the Indian states were free to accede to either of the two new Dominions, and the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian states lapsed, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act, between His Majesty and the Rulers of Indian States.¹²⁸ Since Paramountcy was not transferred to the new Dominions, technically the States were independent on the 15th August, 1947. As the Political Department would automatically close down with the lapse of Paramountcy, it was already decided to set up a State Department to deal with the vital question of the future of the princely states. The State Department came into being on the 27th June, 1947 with Sardar Patel, who was Home Member in the Mountbatten Government, as Minister-in-Charge and V.P. Menon,

who was Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy was to play a prominent role in securing the integration of the states with the Indian Union as the Secretary.¹²⁹ It was proposed to ask for the accession of the states to the Union in respect of three subjects : defence, external affairs, communications which the Cabinet Mission Plan had assigned to the Centre. In the formulation and implementation of this policy, Patel, Nehru, Mountbatten and Menon played the most important parts.¹³⁰

Meanwhile, towards the end of April, 1947 the representatives of the States began to take their seats in the Constituent Assembly. The policy of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the Nawab of Bhopal, to maintain the isolation of the Princes failed to prevent them from making a realistic assessment of the situation.¹³¹ The representatives of Baroda, Cochin, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Patiala and Rewa had taken their place in the Constituent Assembly by April, 1947.¹³² Cooch Behar sent its representative later to the Constituent Assembly.¹³²⁺

On the question of Cooch Behar's participation in the Constituent Assembly of India the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan said on the 27th June, 1947 in the Legislative Council that Cooch Behar would have joined the Constituent Assembly of India in April, 1947, but certain difficulties arose from the fact that Cooch Behar and Sikkim had been grouped together for the purpose of selecting a representative. This difficulty had, on a reference to the President of the Constituent Assembly, been surmounted and Cooch Behar now in a position to select a representative allotted for the group even though Sikkim was still unwilling to join in the selection. Accordingly the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had decided that the state should join the Constituent Assembly forthwith and had selected his Chief Minister Mr. Himmat Singh K. Maheshwari as the State's representative. He would be assisted in his task by an advisory committee of three members chosen from among the elected members of the Legislative Council. These three members who had been appointed by the Maharaja were Mr. S.C. Roy Singha Sarkar, Khan Choudhury Amanatulla Ahmed and Rai Sahib S. K. Bose Majumdar. The duty of the Advisory Committee was to keep the Maharaja's representative fully and constitutionally informed of the views and sentiments of the people of the state on the various questions coming up before the Constituent Assembly for decision.¹³³

On the advice of V. P. Menon, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel issued a conciliatory statement on the 5th July, 1947, making a fervent appeal to the Princes to respond to the calls of patriotism by subordinating their personal interests. He did not think that the Princes desired to utilise their freedom from Paramountcy in a manner which is injurious to the common interest of India'. He asked for their accession on the three subjects and assured them that it was not the desire of the Congress to 'interfere in any manner' with their domestic affairs.¹³⁴ He pleaded for their "friendliness and co-operation in a joint endeavour, inspired by common allegiance to our motherland for the common good of us all." The Sardar appealed to the Princes to come to the Constituent Assembly as it was better to make laws sitting together as friends than to make treaties as aliens.' The Sardar's frankness and his appeal to their

patriotism made a profound impression on the minds of most of the princes, as a result of which, an overwhelming majority of them signed the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement. Sardar Patel was most generous in his appreciation of the Princes' co-operation and assured them that their rights and privileges would be fully protected.¹³⁵

The Rulers met in a special session of the Chamber of Princes on the 25th July, 1947, where Lord Mountbatten addressed them for the last time in his capacity as Crown Representative. He told them that although they had been relieved from all their obligations to the Crown, there were certain "geographical compulsions which cannot be evaded." He advised the Rulers to accede to the appropriate Dominion with regard to three subjects and explained to the Rulers that they had nothing to lose by accepting these documents which reserved defence, external affairs and communications to the successor Governments as they had not dealt with these subjects before. He assured them that their accession on these three subjects would involve no financial liability and that in other matters there would be no encroachment on their sovereignty. Finally, he appealed to the Princes to join either Union before August 15, 1947.¹³⁶

The Instrument of Accession was finalised on the 31st July, 1947 by which the Rulers acceded to the Dominion of India on three subjects : defence, external affairs and communications. It did not commit them 'in any way to acceptance of any future constitution of India.' This Instrument of Accession was meant for 140 Rulers who were members of the Chamber of Princes and had full powers in respect of internal affairs. Other two types of the Instruments of Accession were prescribed for smaller states and intermediary states in Kathiawar and Gujrat. The Instruments of Accession of all types were supplemented by Standstill Agreements which provided for the continuance for the time being of all subsisting agreements and administrative arrangements in matters of common interest (such as control of commodities, irrigation and electric power, opium, salt etc.)¹³⁷

So decisive was the impact of Sardar Patel's statement and the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten's address on the Rulers that even the most uncompromising ones among them began to realise that their duty lay, not in seeking isolation, but in integration of their motherland.¹³⁸ As a result, all the states geographically contiguous to India, with the exception of Junagarh, Mangrol, Manavadar, Hyderabad and Kashmir, had signed the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement by August 15, 1947. Lord Mountbatten told the Constituent Assembly on the 15th August, 1947 : "There is established a unified political structure."¹³⁹

The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan decided to join Indian Dominion even before the 15th August, 1947 and conveyed his cordial greetings to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the historic day of Indian Independence in a letter dated the 12th August, 1947. The Maharaja said, "on this great and historic day of Indian Independence, which you have contributed in no small measure to bring about, I send you, on my behalf and on behalf of the people of Cooch

Behar, most cordial greetings."

"The apprehensions of most Indian states, were, as you know, the natural outcome of the feeling that by sheer weight of populations the provinces may submerge and swamp them. The policy of fair play and sympathetic understanding which you have initiated towards the states is, if I may say so, a happy augury for the future of our country. The ready response that policy has evoked from a very large body of rulers is proof of its signal success." "The country surely needs peace and we all wish it to prosper and you can count upon my whole hearted co-operation and my very best wishes in the prosecution of any policy that you may think it necessary to adopt for the restoration of peace and for the eradication of poverty."¹⁴⁰

In replying, Ballabhbhai Patel thanked the Maharaja of Cooch Behar for his letter of greetings and good wishes in Independence Day. Sardar Patel told Maharaja that he was very satisfied 'with the good response which his appeal to the rulers of states to join the Indian Dominion had met and he himself had no doubt that, approached on the right way, the Princes would nobly respond to the country's cause.' Thanking again the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan 'for so readily agreeing to accede to the Indian Dominion', Patel said that "Cooch Behar State occupies a difficult position along with Assam and West Bengal, but I have no doubt that in concert and unity we shall be able to meet all eventualities."¹⁴¹

In this connection, it may be noted that Maharani Gayatri Devi, the Princess of Cooch Behar and second sister of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, wrote in her autobiography that "Ma (Maharani Indira Devi), I remember, had always told us that India's future lay in all the small kingdoms merging their identities into one strong nation. Even as children in Cooch Behar we had supported the idea of Independence. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru had been school room heroes and we often shouted Congress slogans about a free and united India."¹⁴²

Notes and References

1. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State (A. A. R. C. B. S.), 1936-37, chapter 1, general, p. 1.
2. *ibid*, p. 2.
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CHAPTER IV

THE PENULTIMATE PHASE OF COOCH BEHAR RAJ : COOCH BEHAR AS THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S PROVINCE AND ITS RELATED PROBLEMS
(12th* August, 1947 - 31st December, 1949)

With the attainment of freedom, the Indian people began to enjoy the fruit of independence, but the people of Cooch Behar State had still to bear with the repressive rule of the monarchical government. Political parties were not allowed to function in Cooch Behar State. Biren De Sarkar, the Secretary of the C.P.I. of Cooch Behar State and Saroj Bhattacharya, an eminent communist worker and also a teacher of Rambhola High School were externed from Cooch Behar by the royal order of '24 Hour Notice' issued on 7th February, 1947. This banishment of the political activists from Cooch Behar was not a new phenomenon. At least 10 - 12 political activists had been externed from the State in the same way since last 5 years.¹ The State authorities also tried to obstruct the celebration of Independence Day in the state. The Civil Liberties Committee of Cooch Behar decided to celebrate the 15th August of 1947 as Civil Liberties Day. Initially the Committee was denied the permission, but ultimately the State authorities had to give in to the pressure of strong public opinion.^{1*} Prof. Durga Kinkar Bhattacharjee of the Victoria College had been dismissed from the State service on the 17th October, 1947 for taking active part in political activities.² Prof. Bhattacharjee's dismissal gave rise to a wide-spread agitation against the state authorities. The students community was at the forefront of this agitation, and strikes and picketing of the schools, college, bazars and offices were the features of this students movement³ which, with the support and co-operation of all the political parties, soon developed into a mass agitation raising demands for civil liberties, liberation of all the detenués, end of exploitation of the peasants and so on.⁴

It is significant to note that Cooch Behar State witnessed a peasant movement at Uchhal Pukuri and Dhulia region in the sub-division of Mekligung in 1946 under the impact of the Tebhaga movement which was raging the districts of North Bengal,⁵ particularly Thakurgaon sub-division of Dinajpur and the adjoining areas of Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Malda. The salient feature of the movement was that 'share croppers taking paddy to their own threshing floor and not to the Jotedar's house as before, so as to enforce Tebhaga.'⁶ The peasants of Cooch Behar State agitated against the exploitation of the Jotedars and took their land forcefully. They established an independent government over the 30 villages under the leadership of Dineswar Barman, Dalim Bania and Nabanee Barman who were elected by the peasants as their King, Minister and General (senapati) respectively. This independent government by the peasants lasted for three months.⁷ In view of this grave situation, the Cooch Behar State authority resorted to military action to suppress the movement. The ring-leaders including Dineswar Barman were arrested and after trial they were sentenced to jail for several years.⁸ But still the peasant trouble lingered on in the Mekligung villages till December, 1948. The state authority did not consider this peasant trouble as Tebhaga movement since no one

agitated for the reduction of the Jotedar's share from one half to the third; what the peasants (adhiars) did was to appropriate the whole of the paddy themselves. Due to the timely action by the state authority against the ring leaders, this peasant movement subsided.⁹ Their ring leaders had been arrested who were known as Communists.¹⁰

Barring the Hitasadhani Sabha, the only state patronised organisation, there were no other organised political groups in Cooch Behar in pre-independence days.¹¹ As has been noted earlier, the political activities were strictly prohibited in the state. A person was to be expelled from the State by 'the Act of 24 Hours Notice' on the ground of mere suspicion that he was involved in politics. As a result of this draconian act, political activities had been carried on secretly in the state.¹² Since early 1940's the Communists infiltrated into Cooch Behar and formed a party cell there (1944) and its founder-members were Biren Dey Sarkar, Anil Roy, Sushil Dey Sarkar, Nikhil Mukherjee and Bisvanath Saha. Later Shiben Choudhuri and Jiban Dey also emerged as the Communist leaders. They had to carry on political activities secretly in Library, Gymnasium and Clubs.¹³ There were also other political groups such as the Forward Bloc, the Congress Socialist Party etc. in the State. Haru, Amal Basu, Bimal Basu, Durgesh Niyogi and Aparajita Goppi led the Forward Bloc Group.¹⁴ The Indian National Congress did not open its branch in Cooch Behar in pre-independence days. But the Praja Mandal (States People's Conference) was founded in 1946 in the State on the pattern of Congress sponsored programmes such as independence and democracy beside the right of the peasants over their cultivating lands was added to it.¹⁵ The President of the Praja Mandal was Umesh Chandra Mandal, a Gandhite Rajbanshi Pleader of the Dinhata Bar and the Secretary was Ramesh Roy, a C.P.I. worker. Its Vice President was Kabiraj Kamini Kumar Bhattacharjee and Assistant-Secretary was Anil Roy. The Praja Mandal first celebrated Indian Independence Day on the 26th January, 1947 at the present Shahid Bagh in Cooch Behar town and took the oath of India's independence and democracy. In fact, the Praja Mandal was a platform of various political groups among which the Communists were predominant.¹⁶ Praja Mandal leaders and followers demanded the establishment of responsible government in the state and actively supported the merger of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union. They cautioned the people about the dangerous communal politics of the Hitasadhani Sabha and tried to remove Cooch Behari-Non-Cooch Behari animosity.¹⁷

On the other hand, the formation of "Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha" was announced at a largely attended public meeting of the Cooch Behari people held at Cooch Behar town on the 19th May, 1947. Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed presided over the meeting. The sole objective behind the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha was the welfare of the Cooch Behari people. At the said meeting nine proposals dealing with the problems of Cooch Behari people were adopted and sent to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan for his kind consideration. Those proposals included adequate supply of food and cloth, introduction of compulsory primary education, enlargement of Legislative Council and establishment of responsible government. After the end of the meeting the Hitasadhani Sabha leaders paid a salutary visit to the Maharaja and expressed their deep loyalty to him. The Maharaja assured the Hitasadhani

leaders that he would duly consider their proposals and necessary steps would be taken in this regard. On the same day, in a welcome message to his beloved people, the Maharaja said that he was proud of the cordial bond between him and his people and promised to do his best to fulfil the needs of his people.¹⁸

Another meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha chaired by the Education Minister Dharani Sankar Bhattacharya was held at Dinhata on the 31st Jaishtha, 1354 B. S. The Education Minister and Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed at the meeting made fervent appeal to the Cooch Behari people to join the Hitasadhani Sabha as its members and dedicate themselves to the cause of Cooch Behar.¹⁹ The state authorities patronised the growth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. It is said that even the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan addressed the meetings of the Hitasadhani Sabha.²⁰ Rajkumar Indrajitendra Narayan, the younger brother of the Maharaja, also addressed the Hitasadhani Sabha meeting at Mekhligang.²¹ Abbas Uddin Ahmed, a leader of Hitasadhani Sabha and the eminent international folk singer wrote in his memoirs that the Maharaja was sympathetic to the cause of the Hitasadhani Sabha.²²

According to some writings published by the participants of the Merger Movement, the Cooch Behar State Authorities and the British Resident at the Durbar of Cooch Behar patronised the growth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Besides, the Landholders' Association of Cooch Behar was the chief defender of the Hitasadhani Sabha. They had some definite political objectives behind this patronisation. It is said that they became alarmed at the rapid growth of the Tebhaga peasant movement in the border area of the Cooch Behar State which greatly fanned the peasant unrest in Mekhligang and Haldibari and therefore they wanted to free Cooch Behar from the influence of the Tebhaga Movement. The creation of the Hitasadhani Sabha was intended to act as a countercheck to the Tebhaga Movement and to divert the attention of the people from this peasant movement to Cooch Behari Non-Cooch Behari conflict.²³

Very Soon the Hitasadhani Sabha-led movement was directed against the outsiders who were known as Bhatias in Cooch Behar. The Bengalis of East and South Bengal were called Bhatias or outsiders in Cooch Behar. Abbas Uddin Ahmed has remarked that the predominance of the outsiders or the Bhatias was the main reason behind the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha.²⁴ Satish Chandra Roy Singha, the Education Minister of the State, at a meeting held in Mekhligang on the 28th November, 1947 announced that the outsiders should be driven out from the state.²⁵ Khan Chaudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, the President of the Hitasadhani Sabha and Satish Chandra Roy Singha, the leader of the Legislative Council wrote a letter on the 8th August, 1949 to the Adviser, the States Ministry, New Delhi informing him that "Cooch Beharis by nature simple, docile and law-abiding. They are economically and educationally backward. Taking advantage of their backwardness, the Bengalis exploited them in the past and they are exploiting them in the present. Thus there grew a natural dislike for Bengalis among the Cooch Beharis."²⁶ Sir Akbar Hydari, the Governor of Assam and in charge of the Cooch Behar State, wrote to Sardar Patel after his visit to that state that there was strong anti-Bengali feeling in the state, resulting in the Congress as a whole tending to

become unpopular in Cooch Behar.²⁷ Sir Akbar Hydari's successor Sri Prakasa after a visit to Cooch Behar, also wrote to Sardar Patel expressing his impression that the main problem of Cooch Behar was the problem of the majority community, the Cooch Beharis, holding their own against a very small but powerful minority of Bengalis, who were anxious to assert themselves and to get the Cooch Beharis to accept their supremacy in everything, particularly in view of the obvious attempts of the Bengali minority to get the State merged with West Bengal and this resulted in the gradual consolidation of the Hitasadhani Sabha which had recently been rechristened the Cooch Behar Praja Congress. According to Sri Prakasa, the Cooch Beharis were definitely afraid of the growth of Bengali influence and it was the fear complex that predominated in the minds of the Cooch Beharis.²⁸ When this conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the Non-Cooch Beharis was raging the social atmosphere of the Cooch Behar State, the Ministers of the State who were also the Hitasadhani Sabha spokesmen had introduced several communal and repressive measures against the Non-Cooch Beharis in the field of service, education and land distribution.²⁹

The State Praja Mandal Samiti (the States' People's Conference) led by the left leaders predominantly was very aware of the dangerous communal politics of the Hitasadhani Sabha. In a memorandum dated July 28, 1948 addressed to Sardar Patel, Ministry of States, the Praja Mandal Samiti complained that the Hitasadhani Sabha made attempts to divide the Hindus of the state into two factions, namely, Cooch Beharis and Non-Cooch Beharis (The two nation theory). All sorts of rules and regulations had been and were being formed to drive out the caste Hindus of the Indian Union from the State. The Praja Mandal Samiti also held this view that 'the effect of this division among the Hindus had been to effect both the solidarity and expansion of the Muslims and the outcome of this policy was to Muslimize the whole state.' Therefore, the Samiti urged the Indian Union that 'for the safety and interest of the people of Cooch Behar and also for the solidarity of the Indian Union the Cooch Behar State be at once merged with such a province which was indissolubly connected with Cooch Behar culturally, economically, geographically and linguistically.'³⁰

The Hitasadhani Sabha leaders also launched a political movement. A section of the Hitasadhani Sabha and of the members of the State Council wanted merger with Pakistan. Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, the Revenue Minister of Cooch Behar State and his colleague Satish Chandra Roy Singha, the Education Minister of the State propagated at a meeting held in Mekhligang on 17th August, 1948 that they wanted Cooch Behar to remain independent of the Indian Union. They called for the destruction of the State Congress and accused the Congress of anti-state activities.³¹ Another official of the state, Hakim Ahmmad Hossain, while serving as a S.D.O. of Mathabhanga delivered a speech of the occasion of a Muslim religious festival supporting the cause of merger of Cooch Behar with Pakistan.³²

It was reported that since the partition, the Muslims of the State had been persistently trying to establish Muslim majority in the State. The Hitasadhani Sabha of which Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla was the President had practically become the main organisation for their activities to serve their purpose of establishing Muslim domination

in the state and they had achieved appreciable success of the capture of about 10 seats by Muslims with Hitasadhani tickets. The Revenue Minister and the Chief Secretary, who were Muslims, were practically running the administration with other Muslim officials of the state. It was also reported that the Muslims taking advantage of their position in the state were instigating the local people against the enlightened Hindus who were domiciled Bengalees. It was further reported that Barka Mea, an upcountry Muslim of Cooch Behar town and leader of the local Muslim League, Yakub Uddin, Halim Panchayat and Imdad Hussain, son of Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla, the Revenue Minister, had contact with Abbas Uddin Ahmed, the well-known musician, who was a native of Cooch Behar and an employee in the Publicity Department, East Bengal Secretariat (Pakistan) and supplied information of the state through him. They had been to Karachi twice and visited Dacca twice a month.³³

The Muslim League was styled in Cooch Behar as "Sabuj Sangha" and the Chief Secretary of Cooch Behar State was the President of this Association and Assistant Naib Ahilker Matiar Rahaman of Mathabhanga was the Secretary. This Association was situated in the house of the Personal Head Vallet of the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan at Cooch Behar town. Jamaluddin Daftri, his brother and his uncle and O.C. of Tufangang- Anwar Hossain (S.I. of Police) was the trainer. This Association claimed that they had got more than 5,000 able-bodied Muslim volunteers. Wahed Meah, brother of the Chief Secretary Ansaruddin Ahmed, was suspected by the Calcutta Police on the ground that he took active part in Calcutta killing of August, 1946. He came to Cooch Behar with a large booty. This Wahed Meah had been made Honorary Magistrate chiefly because of his connection with the Chief Secretary of the State. One of the brothers of the present Sadar Sub-divisional Officer, Cooch Behar, Fakiruddin Ahmad was the son-in-law of the Chief Secretary. Fakiruddin had since been made the Deputy Secretary of the Revenue Minister Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed. Two of the nephews of the present Revenue Minister as placed in high posts in Pakistan, who frequented the Cooch Behar State on the plea of pleasure visit to their relatives. All these Muslims were connected with the 'Sabuj Sangha' as mentioned above. It was also reported that Abbas Uddin Ahmed, the noted artist, of Cooch Behar, who was reported to be a propaganda officer of the Pakistan Government had influenced some of the Muslim Ministers of the State in engaging his own brother Abdul Karim as Assistant in the Audit Department, although he was an under-graduate. He was later transferred to the Election Office to conduct polling booth and thereby influence Muslim voters. It was further reported that a huge sum of about Rs. 60,000/- had been sanctioned in budget to conduct the propaganda work on behalf of the royalist Hitasadhani Party and the sum was drawn without any voucher by His Highness the Maharaja himself.³⁴

Although unofficially and personally Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan agreed to accede to the Indian Union, he officially signed the Cooch Behar Merger Agreement only after two years on the 28th August, 1949. During this interval period the political environment was complicated by the masterly inactivity pursued by the Maharaja to the anti-India activities of the Hitasadhan Sabha and his ministers. It was argued that without his tacit approval it would

not have been possible for them to carry on such type of activities.³⁵ It has also been said the Maharaja had become a puppet in the hands of the members of the State Council and wanted to maintain the separate identity of Cooch Behar State.³⁶

Just after the independence there arose intermittent tension between the Indian Dominion and the Princely States. In this situation the tiny Princely State of Cooch Behar experienced with multi-dimensional forces and events, operating in tacit or manifest manner. The demand of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to remain independent arose out of three major considerations. First, the Indian Independence Act, 1947 provided the right to the Princely States to merge with either of the Dominions or to remain independent. Secondly, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had been a party to that section of the princely states which voiced for sustaining their independence. Thirdly, the Maharaja wanted to make a balance between the opposing forces within the local political elites propagating that Cooch Behar State should either join India or merge with Pakistan.³⁷ Moreover, the Maharajas of Cooch Behar had never been a direct party to the anti-colonial political movements. Thus the Indian nationalist consciousness could not touch upon the minds of the Maharajas of Cooch Behar. The Praja Mandal Samiti alleged that the Maharaja of Cooch Behar in collusion and collaboration with his Muslim pro-league and scheduled caste ministers thought that he could still play the same reactionary role as was done previously during the British era. The Ministers of the State were absolutely pro-league and they were in constant touch with Pakistan. The Praja Mandal also alleged that a most reactionary group (the Hitasadhani Sabha) had been formed and patronised by the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to serve his own personal purpose of dominating and ruling the people to the detriment of the safety of the Indian Union.³⁸ It has also been said that the Maharaja himself met Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Bengal and invited his opinion about the question of merger referring to the fact that his state was surrounded on three sides by territories of Pakistan.³⁹ It has been further alleged that Cooch Behar State authorities were forcing people to sign against merging and making propaganda against Indian Dominion.⁴⁰ Sardar Ballabhbai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of States wrote to the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that 'the Muslim members of the local Hitasadhani Sabha had their sympathies definitely with the neighbouring East Pakistan.'⁴¹ According to Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar, the Hitasadhani Party was artificially created by the previous State Government to fight integration and it did not represent public opinion.⁴² Shri Sri Prakasa, the Governor and also in charge of Cooch Behar State wrote to Sardar Ballabhbai Patel that he himself had discussed matters informally with Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan during his visit to Cooch Behar. The Maharaja seemed to take a very sensible and philosophical view, for he told the Governor of Assam that 'when all states have gone a few here and there are not likely to be left. The Maharaja naturally would prefer to have a separate existence, but was not very hopeful that would be possible. He preferred Assam to Bengal for he felt all Cooch Beharis' ties with the former.'⁴³

K. N. Katju, the Governor of West Bengal, wrote a letter to Ballabhbai Patel on the 4th October, 1948 informing him that 'there had been all sorts of reports in the newspapers about the developments in Cooch Behar. It was suggested that the Muslims from Eastern Pakistan were infiltrating into Cooch Behar and some reports went to the length of suggesting that there would be a definite attempt made to make Cooch Behar join Pakistan and this movement would not be wholly repugnant to the ruling house. The police report which he recently saw was very much to that effect. But Mr. Himmat Singh K. Maheshwari, the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar met with him and assured him that all these reports were completely baseless. He suggested that all these reports were parts of propaganda for ulterior ends. Nevertheless, K. N. Katju was of the view that Cooch Behar having acceded to the Indian Dominion, the Government of India were vitally interested in its security and should be kept informed of what was happening in the state.⁴⁴ But Sri Prakasa gave a different opinion on the same issue in a letter dated the 29th March, 1949 to Sardar Patel. He observed that as regards reports about efforts to Muslimise the state with a view to its ultimate accession to Pakistan he could find no evidence of any such move during his visit to Cooch Behar nor was the allegation made by any of the many people who came to interview him. Even the State Congress, which had been so vigorous in its denunciation of the Chief Minister and the present Government seemed to have thought fit to drop this part at least of its armoury.⁴⁵

It is also significant to note that Umesh Chandra Mandal brought serious charges against the Chief Minister and the state administration of Cooch Behar in a letter dated 30th March, 1949 Dinhat addressed to A. B. Chatterjee, the Joint Secretary, States Ministry, New Delhi. He alleged that the Chief Minister had gone to Delhi "to make 'tadbir' for keeping the state as one administered by the Centre or to integrate it with Assam. The Chief Minister is very anti-Bengalee and he has already inducted lots of non-Bengalee state officers from Jaipur in places of experienced and able Bengalee officers. Now it is learnt that the present Commissioner of Police, J. Chatterjee is retiring and an Assamese retired Police Officer, some Phukan, is going to be appointed as Commissioner of Police." Umesh Chandra Mandal also alleged that "all the I. B. Papers concerning the participation of the State and of the Chief Minister in the Muslim activities of the neighbouring Pakistan area are being destroyed. Thus he requested the Joint Secretary to take steps to integrate the State with West Bengal, to remove the present Chief Minister at once and to place a Congressite Chief Minister in charge of the state from saving the state from being integrated with Assam, which, if done, would bring about trouble and discontent here. He further requested him to "put a stop to the destruction of the I. B. Papers and keep the present Police Commissioner in service till the integration of the state is effected."⁴⁶

Amidst such reports of alleged anti-Indian activities which have been going on in Cooch Behar State, the Bengalee leaders and various parties and organisations tried hard to draw the attention of the State Department of the Government of India to this volatile ground realities in Cooch Behar and seek its immediate intervention as remedial measure to stop such obnoxious activities there. Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Premier of West Bengal, wrote a letter

dated 13th April, 1949 to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for States and informed him that he was very anxious about Cooch Behar because of certain developments which had taken place there affecting the security not merely of West Bengal but also of the Indian Union. Therefore, Dr. Roy requested him to take up the case of Cooch Behar and its accession to the West Bengal Government.⁴⁷

Sarat Chandra Bose sent Sardar Patel a telegram on 25th April, 1949 in the following terms, "Reported attempts being secretly insidiously made for merging 99 percent Bengali speaking Cooch Behar with Assam. Invite your attention. Detailed reports in Nation 23 and 25 April. Appeal you do justice Cooch Behar and West Bengal." Later he wrote a letter dated 3rd May, 1949 to Sardar Patel on the same issue. The letter runs as follows, "... I have to invite your attention to reports which appear in the Nation of 23 and 25 April and also to the telegrams which appeared in the issue of the Nation of 29 April - (page 3). I do not think the facts contained in the said reports can be challenged. The people of Cooch Behar state are 99 percent Bengali-speaking and there is not a single Assamese there. Apart from linguistic reasons, other reasons such as cultural, geographical, administrative etc, support West Bengal's claim to Cooch Behar and completely negate Assam's claim to it. As you are the Minister-in-charge, I consider it my duty to draw your attention to the situation in Cooch Behar and the demands of the people there."⁴⁸

K. N. Katju, the Governor of West Bengal, wrote letters dated 23rd June, 1949 to both C. Rajagopalachari, the Governor-General of India and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and informed them that "In view of the fact that questions about Travancore, Cochin, Rampur, Banaras and Tehri Garhwal have now been settled, I presume that a final decision about Cooch Behar will not be much delayed. An early announcement will seem to be desirable."⁴⁹

The Members of the Cooch Behar State Congress Committee submitted a memorandum dated 30th March, 1949 to the Governor of Assam who was also the Dominion Agent for the State of Cooch Behar for his kind perusal and necessary action. They pointed out in the memorandum that 'the other day the Deputy Prime Minister of the Indian Union in connection with his budget speech in the Parliament declared that the States of Tripura, Manipur and Cooch Behar will be integrated considering their geographical situation and other conditions. As regards integration of the State of Cooch Behar they beg to submit that the State of Cooch Behar is all along being treated geographically, linguistically and culturally as part and parcel of Bengal. The treaty between the Rajah of Cooch Behar and the East India Company will also show that Cooch Behar is a part and parcel of Bengal and is to be annexed with Bengal.

They asserted in the memorandum that the speaking dialect of Cooch Behar is Bengali as spoken in the Northern districts of Bengal such as Jalpaiguri, Dinajpore and Rangpore. The Court language of the State is Bengali and the medium of education imparted in schools and colleges is also Bengali. List of text books prescribed for Primary and Middle English School and the forms used in the courts will exclusively show that Bengali is the only

medium and tongue of Cooch Behar State people. Not a single Cooch Behar people will understand Assami language in any form.

They also pointed out that trouble is already going on in the Bengali speaking areas of Bihar and Assam, and agitation is going on throughout India for the formation of provinces on linguistic basis. If Cooch Behar be integrated with Assam, they are afraid, the same trouble may arise here too. So their humble prayer is that Cooch Behar State be merged or integrated with the Province of West Bengal.⁵⁰

The Cooch Behar People's Association, a social organisation, actively worked for the interest of the people of Cooch Behar, was formed in Calcutta by the educated elites having Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri background.⁵¹ The Association was located at the G. S. Emporium, Central Avenue, Calcutta. Chunilal Mukherjee, an ex-professor of the Cooch Behar College and a successful businessman of the State as well as Tarapada Chakraborti and Barindra Ghose were the joint secretaries of the Association. From the very beginning the Association worked for bringing Cooch Behar to the fold of the Indian Union. In its meetings mostly held in Calcutta, the Association time and again supported the urgency of merger of Cooch Behar with India. But such activities had not been possible in Cooch Behar due to a general ban on meetings and processions in the State imposed by the strength of the Cooch Behar Public Safety Act.⁵² Later the Cooch Behar People's Association took a leading part in the movement already sponsored by the Bengalee organisers from Calcutta in favour of a merger with West Bengal. The Association received patronisation and support from most of Bengal's political and social elites, viz., Dr. B. C. Roy, Dr. S. P. Mukherjee, Sarat Chandra Bose, Probodh Sanyal, Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Sir J. N. Sarkar and others.⁵³

The visit of Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghose, Ex-Premier of Bengal to Cooch Behar during 1948 generated hope and enthusiasm among the political and social organisations favouring its merger with West Bengal. Dr. Ghose was objective in his mission enabling the people of Cooch Behar to understand the prospect if this area be merged with West Bengal. He cautioned those organisations playing with the native cards. As a result, the people of Cooch Behar favouring merger with West Bengal got boosted. Dr. B. C. Roy, the Premier of West Bengal, as mentioned earlier, had whole-heartedly supported the merger of Cooch Behar in West Bengal for the greater unity and integrity of the newly emerged Indian nation.⁵⁴

The eminent leaders of Assam province countered the arguments of the West Bengal leaders asking for the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal. The Assam leaders tried to prove the arguments of West Bengal leaders as cocktailed and lofty without having any definite social base. To substantiate their arguments the Assam Congress leaders sharply pointed out that the linguistic, cultural, ethnological and religious affinity between Cooch Behar and Assam.⁵⁵ Gopinath Bordoloi, the Premier of Assam; wrote a fortnightly letter dated 18th June, 1949 to the Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru regarding Cooch Behar. The letter runs as follows :

"I had occasion to consult the Assam Provincial Congress Committee and its working Committee in the meanwhile over matters of urgent importance and I am glad to tell you that they unanimously support our stand over the issues I am hereby mentioning."

"In reference to Cooch Behar, they adopted a resolution to the effect that the people of Assam would welcome a merger of Cooch Behar with Assam, provided the people of Cooch Behar decided to do so. It was pointed out that the speaking language, customs, manners and the mode of life of the people of Cooch Behar are the same as the people of Assam, as they belonged to the same kingdom till very recently; and that to merge her with West Bengal would be against her past history, culture and tradition, and what is more, against the declared wish of the people themselves. ..."⁵⁶

The Assam Congress leaders also referred the example of the deep seated influence of the Assamese religious prophets such as Shankar Dev, Madhav Dev and Shreedhar Kandali on the minds of the people of Cooch Behar through the ages. Thus to deprive Assam from getting Cooch Behar in its fold would be an attempt to distort the history.⁵⁷ To accelerate the move and to boost the people of Cooch Behar demanding the merger with Assam, the Chief Minister of Assam, Gopinath Bordoloi had made a hurricane tour in Cooch Behar.⁵⁸ To expedite the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam some administrative higher officials of Assam also came to Cooch Behar and met with the officials of the State. Various organisations of Assam such as Assam Pradeshik Kshatriya Samiti, Assam Jatiya Mahasabha demanded the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam without any delay. Besides, Nilmony Phukan and Sarat Chandra Sinha, two eminent personalities of Assam, came to Cooch Behar during this time and met with the Maharaja. Mr. Phukan argued that Cooch Behar should be merged with Assam and if it was merged with Bengal that would be harmful to the Indian Union.⁵⁹

It is significant to note that the arguments of the Hitasadhani Sabha leaders of Cooch Behar were almost the same as those of the Assamese leaders. For instance, Amanatfulla Ahmed, President, State Proja Congress (better known as the Hitasadhani Sabha) and Satish Chandra Roy Singha, leader of the House, Cooch Behar Legislative Council, wrote a letter to the Adviser, the Ministry of States, New Delhi, dated 8th August, 1949 and the letter runs as follows :

"The people of Cooch Behar (both Hindus and Muslims) unlike the Bengalis have got peculiar characteristics of their own. Their spoken language is quite different from Bengali - it is a peculiar Rajbanshi dialect - having greater affinity with Assamese a fact which Dr. Grierson, the learned philologist in his book of Linguistic Survey, Vol. V, has recognised. It is also spoken language of the entire people of lower Assam. Manners and customs are quite different

from Bengalis and are similar to those of Assamese and are officiated by the Brahmins of Assam. The Bengalis treat them as of inferior stock and are most reluctant to keep any social connection with them." They also pointed out in the aforesaid letter that "... the entire people of Cooch Behar (excluding the microscopic Bengali element) are against the merger of the State with West Bengal.... There grew a natural dislike for Bengalees among the Cooch Beharis ... to caste our lot with such a Province (West Bengal) will be sheer injustice to the people of Cooch Behar and the future of the latter will always remain in darkness."⁶⁰

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan could not, however, remain impartial on the issue of the merger of Cooch Behar. He tilted towards favouring the cause of Assam and openly stated that the State's merger with Assam would be preferred to that with West Bengal for its strategic importance as well as for its cultural homogeneity.⁶¹ As mentioned earlier, the Maharaja told Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam, during the latter's visit to the State that 'he preferred Assam to Bengal for he felt all Cooch Beharis' ties with the former'.⁶² The Maharaja also told V.P. Menon, the Adviser, the Ministry of States, that he was confident that 95% of the population of Cooch Behar would cast their votes in favour of the merger of the State with Assam instead of Bengal.⁶³ The Maharaja also complained that the people from Bengal exploited the State for many years.⁶⁴ The arguments of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan clearly show that he had reservations on the issue of merging Cooch Behar with West Bengal. However, the Maharaja's arguments were rejected as baseless by the various political and social organisations like the State Congress, the State People's Conference in Cooch Behar.⁶⁵

While the political situation was becoming very much volatile in Cooch Behar state, the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru came to Calcutta and announced at a public meeting (held on 14th July, 1949) that the question of merger of Cooch Behar should be settled by a plebiscite as there is a division among the people of that State.⁶⁶

Such an announcement evoked mixed responses. Assam Pradesh Congress Committee, Assam Jatiya Mahasabha and other popular organisation of Assam gave thanks to Nehru for the announcement. Gopinath Bordoloi, the Chief Minister of Assam expressed his pleasure for Nehru's keeping of promises to declare a plebiscite for determining the future fate of of Cooch Behar.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Nehru's announcement for plebiscite in Cooch Behar had been strongly resented by the pro-Bengal movement makers under the auspices of the Cooch Behar People's Association. A public meeting demanding the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal was held on 20th July, 1949 at the Mahabodhi Society Hall, which was presided over by Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghose, a Journalist. Chunilal Mukherjee of Cooch Behar, Satyapriya Banerjee, of the Forward Bloc (Marxist Group), Dr. S. K. Ganguli, President of the New Bengal Association and the President spoke condemning the alleged conspiracy of the Congress High Command, who wanted to suppress the people of Bengal by opposing the re-inclusion of Cooch Behar to the truncated province. According to the speakers, the question of plebiscite raised by the Prime Minister in his Maidan

speech in Calcutta was superfluous in face of the fact that the question of plebiscite was not raised in regard to the merger of several other states.

A resolution was passed in the aforesaid meeting to the effect that the public received with a mixed feeling the announcement of the Prime Minister that the Cooch Behar State was going to be centrally administered and hoped that it would only be a preliminary to its merger with West Bengal at an early date without any plebiscite, on the grounds of its geographical contiguity and cultural and linguistic affinity.⁶⁸

Thus the issue of the merger of Cooch Behar became a heated controversy both in Bengal and Assam. It made the situation in Cooch Behar further a complicated one. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also conveyed this to both Bengalee and Assamese leaders through his correspondences. He told Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal that 'Cooch Behar is a difficult problem.the problem is not easy of solution.'⁶⁹ He wrote to K. N. Katju, the Governor of West Bengal, that "from all evidence, independent as well as otherwise, it seems that merger (of Cooch Behar) with West Bengal is locally unpopular. It is a difficult problem and we will have to think hard about it lest we should provoke an unpleasant local situation."⁷⁰ At the same time he assured Sarat Chandra Bose that "I am fully alive to situation in Cooch Behar. There is no question under consideration of its merger with Assam. You can rest assured that in this matter justice shall be done."⁷¹

On the other hand, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel told Sri Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam that "it is most unfortunate that things should develop on these lines (Bengal versus Assam). I shall see what can be done to check these matters from worsening."⁷² He also wrote to Sri Prakasa, the next Governor of Assam, expressing his own views on the Cooch Behar State's affairs. In a confidential D.O. letter dated 13th April, 1949 to Sri Prakasa, Sardar Patel has pointed out that "as regards Cooch Behar, the problem is complicated for several reasons. "It has a strategic situation, in that it borders on East Bengal, Assam and West Bengal. Politically, it seems to be more connected with Bengal and Assam. Probably, from the point of view of indigenous population, it has affinities more with Bengal than with Assam. It is true that the majority of the people is non-Bengali in the strict sense of the term; at the same time, the court language is Bengali. He further points out, "we cannot think of an isolated existence for Cooch Behar. Merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal may create some local disaffection but will satisfy West Bengal. Merger with Assam may be preferred by the local population, but will set against us practically the whole of West Bengal. The association of the State has throughout history been with Bengalis, though unfortunately as a result of partition the area with which it had association has now gone over to Pakistan."

"My own tentative view is that," Sardar Patel informed Sri Prakasa, "if merger has to come about, it has to be with West Bengal; at the same time, we have to proceed very cautiously because of the considerable Muslim

population and the potentiality of its being a bone of contention between Assam and West Bengal. It is also clear that Cooch Behar must take some Bengali refugees. This may make some difference both to the composition of the population and to the inclinations on the question of merger. However, these are all my tentative views and no settled convictions. For the time being, I should be inclined to leave the state alone. After a few months we shall have to get down to business. In the meantime, we have to provide against two dangers : (i) Any local conflict between Bengalis and Non-Bengalis; and (ii) any infiltration of Pakistani elements. ... I would, therefore, suggest that you might have a close eye on the administration (of the state) and see that there is no cause for complaint or apprehension on the lines mentioned above."⁷³

In the meantime, the activities of the Communists and other left-wing political parties made the political situation volatile in Cooch Behar State. As noted earlier, the State Praja Mandal was predominantly led by the Communists and other left-wing political leaders. The ring leaders of the peasant movement at Mekhligang and other areas were the Communists. According to the I. B. report dated 7th August, 1949, five of the Communist Security Prisoners were arrested in connection with peasant agitation in the state some month ago. They were still being detained in the Dinhata Sub-jail under the provisions of the Cooch Behar State Security Act. Their leader Debi Neogi was brought in custody to Cooch Behar Court on the 6th August, 1949 in connection with the hearing of a petition at Sadar calling into question the validity of the last elections on the ground that he was debarred from exercising his franchise by reason of his detention without trial. Even while in custody, Neogi, at the time of his departure, seized the opportunity and addressed a crowd of people that had gathered nearby, to explain to them the fact that he was being detained indefinitely for his fight against the alleged oppression of the Maharaja and other landowners on the poor cultivators and agricultural labourers.⁷⁴

The Communist detainees in Dinhata sub-jail went on hunger strike. One of their demands being a monthly allowance of Rs. 40. They gave up the hunger strike on 26th July, 1949 on being told that enquiries about the amount of monthly allowance would be made from West Bengal. From 26th to 28th July, 1949 the following slogans were found written on the metalled portion of the main road within the town of Dinhata "Destroy the Capitalist Congress Government," "Release the prisoners," and "Rescue detainees from the jails by force."⁷⁵ Four of the five Communists who were detained in the sub-jail at Dinhata under the Cooch Behar Public Security Act were once again on hunger strike since the 26th August, 1949. They were Debi Neogi, Birendra Nath De Sarkar, Sunil Kumar Ghose and Shibendra Choudhuri. The hunger strikers were demanding enhancement of their personal allowances of Rs. 10/- to Rs. 40/- per mensem. At that time the Assam Detention Rules provided the grant of a monthly allowance of Rs. 10/- and this was accepted by the Cooch Behar Government. But under the West Bengal Detention Rules the allowances was Rs. 40/- per mensem.⁷⁶ Several communist pamphlets were found pasted on lamp posts, trees and walls in Dinhata on the 13th July, 1949.⁷⁷ It was also reported that the Cooch Behar Police had been unable to find any satisfactory clues

regarding the communist posters found pasted in certain places in the town of Cooch Behar in December, 1948.⁷⁸

Himmat Sing, the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State, in the confidential fortnightly report dated 14th June, 1949 mentioned that the Revolutionary Socialist Party sent some emissaries including Biswa Nath Bajpai to establish branches of the organisation in the state. They held an un-authorized meeting in Mathabhanga. Two local workers were arrested by the Police under the Public Security Act but Biswa Nath Bajpai and his companion were allowed by the police to leave the state. In the words of the Chief Minister, "Disruptive elements appear willing to work under any label to achieve their ends. Magistrates and police have been directed to be alert."⁷⁹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for States, could perceive the danger by the activities of the Communists and other left groups and conveyed this in a confidential letter to Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam and also in charge of Cooch Behar State, in the following words; "we should also ensure that the state is properly developed and that the schemes of development, agrarian reforms etc. are pushed through with vigour. Situated as the state is, it is likely to be a scene of communist activities. The removal of causes of discontent among the masses from now on would take the wind out of the communist sails."⁸⁰

At this stage an order for the reorganisation of the Intelligence Department of the Cooch Behar State issued by the Chief Minister on 25th March, 1949 came in for sharp criticism both from the Central Government and the Adviser to the Governor of Assam. The order was as follows :

"His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur is pleased to transfer the control of Intelligence Department from himself to the Chief Minister with immediate effect.

2. His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur is pleased also to order that Mr. R. K. Kaul, Chief Commandant of the Home Guards be put in charge of the Intelligence Department in addition to his duties but without extra-emoluments and directed to submit proposals for the reorganisation of the departments. Kumar Purnendunarayan will place at Mr. Kaul's disposal the necessary information about staff (clerical and detective) and the salaries, allowances or honorarium allowed to them, Such information shall be kept confidential.

3. The Intelligence and Detective Staff attached to the Police Department shall be separated from that Department and amalgamated with the Intelligence Department referred to in paragraph I.⁸¹

A. B. Chatterjee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of States, in his secret note on the subject of "Cooch Behar States Affairs" dated 2nd April, 1949 commented that this was a rather curious order issued by the Chief Minister, Cooch Behar State, placing the Chief Commandant of the Home Guards in charge of the Intelligence Department and

detaching it from the Police Department of which it had always formed a part. This was rather unorthodox and he wondered which was exactly behind this order.⁸² Hence the Chief Minister of the Cooch Behar State was requested to let the Ministry of States know what these changes were and the reasons for making them. But there was nothing in the Chief Minister's letter to show that the Governor of Assam who was in charge of the State had at all been consulted about the reorganisation of this Intelligence Department and it was not unlikely that he had purposely been kept in the dark. S. Narayanswamy, the Deputy Secretary, Ministry of State, in his note dated 20th May, 1949 remarked that it was doubtful how far the changes would be conducive toward better efficiency in the Department. He was of the opinion that although the Chief Minister had stated that the details of the reorganisation had still to be worked out, in any case he should have consulted the Governor of Assam and obtained his views before making any radical alteration in the department dealing with law and order.⁸³

It had also learnt from the I. B. report that the Intelligence Department was a non-police secret department working directly under the Maharaja with a relative and favourite of the Maharaja as the officer-in-charge. This department was actually a secret channel to spend money for political propaganda in the interest of the Maharaja and mainly to render financial help to the leaders of the local Hitasadhani Sabha for propaganda against the Bengalis and Bengal. The Intelligence Detective Staff attached to the Police Department was the Intelligence Branch under the Commissioner of Police.

The Darbar was taking all possible steps in this frantic attempt to avoid a merger with West Bengal Government. As the present Bengali Commissioner of Police could not be fitted in their present scheme the Darbar had to get rid of him. An Assamese was thus coming as his successor.⁸⁴

Another most important but controversial event was the General Election to the Cooch Behar Legislative Council which was completed on 1st June 1949. Out of 25 elected seats, unopposed returns took place in 11 constituencies. In the remaining 14 constituencies contest was keen and in some of them the proportion of voters (including women) who went to the polls was surprisingly high.⁸⁵ All the 11 candidates returned unopposed were nominees of the State Praja Congress (formerly called Hitasadhani Sabha). Out of the 14 contested seats 8 were captured by the State Praja Congress and this raised the direct strength of the State Praja Congress to 19 (11+8). Out of the remaining six seats, five were captured by 'Independents' who were however pro-State Praja Congress and one captured by West Bengal Congress Committee-backed candidate. The results may be classified in other ways as follows :-

(a) Out of total 25 elected Members, 16 were Hindus and 9 were Muslims - the proportion of the Muslim being 36%.

(b) Out of total 25 elected Members, 23 were Cooch Beharis, one Marwari and one Bengali.

(c) The following Bengalis, viz., Messrs. Chunilal Mukherjee, Bhaben Roy and Birendra Chatterjee lost to the State Praja Congress. One Cooch Behari, namely, Umesh Chandra Mandal, who was an official of the West Bengal Sponsored Congress Committee, also lost to a candidate of the State Praja Congress.⁸⁶

Just before the election which was held on 26th May, 1949, as it was reported that Muslims headed by one Bazlur Rahaman of Dinahata submitted petition to the State Council for reservation of seats for Muslims. As a result, eight Muslim majority constituencies had been artificially created in the State by the Muslim Ministers to gain the cause of the Muslims. Besides, a non-Cooch Behari (i.e., less than four generations) could not stand for election to Cooch Behar Legislative State Council. They had a restricted right to vote for election. Thus a non-Cooch Behari residing permanently and continuously in the state for the last 10 years could vote but could not stand whereas a Cooch Behari (being in the State for four generations) could vote as well as could stand for election. This Act was passed in October 1948, by prerogative of the Maharaja. Apart from this, a person having no residence at rural areas cannot stand for election from rural areas thus excluding persons from six municipal areas from contesting in the twenty one rural constituencies. The curing of the constituencies was created by Cooch Behar Government Act dated 5th October, 1948. This Act was again amended on the 27th January, 1949 as a result of which six urban areas of 5 sub-divisions were amalgamated into one constituency namely urban constituency with an idea behind, it was alleged, to shut out the Congress leaders who mostly lived in town. The amendment of Cooch Behar Government Act. also provided that the Maharaja might specially permit any person to stand from any constituency. The Maharaja so far permitted two veteran Hitasadhani members (Muslims) to stand from rural constituency without having any residence in the rural area, whereas none from the Congress side had the fortune to obtain such permission. This amendment indicates the special intention of allowing Hitasadhani members to be returned uncontested.⁸⁷

It is reported that the existing Legislative Council was dissolved on the 23rd March, 1949 but the existing Ministers were ordered to continue in office till the next election was over. So the existing Ministers taking full advantage of their office made extensive propaganda with the help of the sub-divisional officers, other state servants, school teachers, with the following slogans, to exploit mass opinion : "Do you want the Ruling Chief or Congress? Congress does not want the Ruling Chief. Do not be misled by the Congress". Kumar Purnendunarayan (a kinsman of the Maharaja) had been very recently placed in charge of the State I. B. Department, to depict the Congressites as Communist and on that allegation to arrest and detain any one with a view to stifle the Congress activities in the State. This Kuman Purnendu Narayan was only the other day convicted for assaulting the students in Cooch Behar College Hostel, while he was in charge of the State Military. A very large number of voters had been intentionally excluded from the voter's list on the pretext that they were not living in this state for the last ten years. Besides, owing to the

constant preaching by the Hitasadhani Ministers that only Muslim would stand for the Muslim majority constituency and Hindu would stand for Hindu majority constituency, a tension was prevalent between Hindus and Muslims which might turn into a communal clash.⁸⁸

Incidentally, some of the Calcutta newspapers had described the Cooch Behar elections "Sham show" and the scrutiny of nominations "unfair and partial."⁸⁹ A. B. Chatterjee, Joint Secretary, Ministry of States in his note alleged that 'in Cooch Behar there were internal wranglings and considerable disaffection towards the present Chief Minister. He was told by Adviser to the Governor of Assam that the local Congress in Cooch Behar had complained that elections to the Cooch Behar State Assembly were being manoeuvred by the Chief Minister so that a majority of his party known as "Hitasadhani Sabha" was returned. All kind of executive was being brought to bear to secure this in order that if there was at any time any proposal for integration the members of the State Legislature (after the elections) would vote for integration with Assam'.⁹⁰ The Fortnightly report by the Adviser to the Governor of Assam dated 8th June, 1949 also mentioned that "His Excellency has reason to believe that there was manipulation in the conducting of the recent elections — hotly denied by the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar - and there is little doubt that the elected members will demand, (if they are not allowed an independent existence) either Central Administration, or in the last resort, merger with Assam. His Excellency has, accordingly, desired that the Ministry of States should instruct the Chief Minister to stay the summoning of the Assembly."⁹¹

As it was expected, all the twenty five elected members of the Legislative Council met in Cooch Behar on 15th June, 1949 and passed a resolution which was supported by twenty four members; only one member dissociated himself from it. They had laid emphasis in the resolution on the enlightened administration that had, throughout history, characterised the State and urged that its peculiar circumstances warranted that it should remain a separate entity. They also pointed out that "we cannot leave the matter without touching a point which has been pressing on us for some time past. A persistent propaganda has been going on from press and platform to get the State merged with West Bengal. As representatives of the people we should not now cross words with the propagandists in this connection, but we shall be failing in our duty if we do not state the fact that, situated as we are, we cannot subscribe to the idea, if thereby any basis for it, and solemnly declare that Cooch Behar people are dead against it."⁹²

Under these circumstances the Adviser to the Governor of Assam informed the Secretary, Ministry of States, Government of India that "Instructions were sent to the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar, as desired by the Ministry of States to the effect that the members recently elected should not be summoned to meet until further orders. It would appear from reports received however, that an informal meeting of elected members has already been held on 15th June, 1949."⁹³

Earlier, N. K. Rustomji, Adviser to the Governor of Assam had reported that 'the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar came on a visit to the Governor of Assam and was very aggrieved that Cooch Behar was likely to go to West Bengal. He had seen Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Dehra Dun and seemed to have been told of the possible developments. According to the Chief Minister, this would mean the total sacrifice of six lakh of the real people of Cooch Behar to satisfy 40,000 outside Bengalis. He was anxious that the Assembly should be allowed to meet and considered its being not summoned would nullify the whole election.'⁹⁴ N. K. Rustomji also informed Mr. Vellodi, Secretary, Ministry of States that the Governor of Assam handed over to Mr. Shankar, P.A. to the Prime Minister of India, during his recent visit to Delhi, a brief note wherein he complained that "... our only source of information is, for all intents and purposes, the Chief Minister, and we cannot be cent per cent sure of his impartiality."⁹⁵ Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel also made sharp criticism of the Chief Minister's partisan attitude. He wrote to Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam that there had been allegations of partisanship against Himmat Singh Maheswari (the Chief Minister) and from what he (Sri Prakasa) said those allegations were justified. Sardar Patel also pointed out that it was no concern of the Chief Minister as to whom the people of Cooch Behar would be handed over. The same stock of argument was used by the Britisher in respect of the minorities and the depressed classes, but the course of history had shown that what truth there was in that statement.⁹⁶

At this juncture one I. B. report from Ministry of Home Affairs dated 24th June, 1949 regarding the Cooch Behar State's topsy-turvy political development alarmed the Ministry of States, the Government of India. According to this report, the election of Cooch Behar State Council duly took place on 27th May, 1949. The Hitasadhani party members were reported to have captured all the seats. Out of 25 members of the Council about 10 Muslims (exact number was 9) had been returned. A cabinet was going to be formed on the 2nd July, 1949, with 5 Ministers among whom there would be 3 Hindus and 2 Muslims. The Education Minister Sri Satish Chandra Roy Singha was likely to be the Chief Minister in the new set up and the present Chief Minister was likely to be appointed as State Adviser. But the Muslim members were also trying to form a separate group to form the Ministry with the help of Jogen Mandal of Tufangang, Sitanath Roy of Dinhat and Marwari Member Giridharimal Boyed.

It was reported that since the partition, the Muslims of the State had been persistently trying to establish Muslim majority in the State. The Hitasadhani Sabha of which Khan Choudhuri Amanatullah was the President had practically become the main organisation for their activities to serve their purpose of establishing Muslim domination in the State and they had achieved appreciable success of the capture of about 10 seats by Muslims with Hitasadhani tickets. This had unnerved the local Hindus and the present condition had become such that they could not even freely express their views on any subject concerning state affairs. The Revenue Minister and the Chief Secretary, who were Muslims, were practically running the administration with other Muslim officials of the State. It was reported that the Muslims taking advantage of their position in the state were instigating the local people against the enlightened

Hindus who were domiciled Bengalees.

It was further reported that the Muslim immigrants were entertained and Hindu refugees of Eastern Pakistan were not allowed to own any land in the State. This was confirmed by a printed Handbill recently issued by one Kumar Charu Narayan of Natun Bazar, Cooch Behar, a distant relative of the present Maharaja inviting only East Bengal Muslims for settlement in his land.⁹⁷

The I. B. report mentioned above was received by the Ministry of States on 25th June, 1949. From this report it would appear to the Ministry of States that the situation in Cooch Behar was becoming more difficult.⁹⁸ The situation was further being complicated by the State's Chief Minister tendering his resignation letter to Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan on 9th July 1949 by saying that "For some time I have felt that my further stay in the State is likely to be source of embarrassment to Your Highness and to the Government of India. I have had the misfortune to draw upon myself the antagonism of some interested elements and I feel that I must put myself out of the way to render possible a dispassionate solution of the difficult problems affecting the future of the State and it's people. I therefore tender my resignation"⁹⁹

In view of the grave situation in Cooch Behar, the Ministry of States decided that V.P. Menon, Adviser to the Ministry of States should take up the case of Cooch Behar now and settle it's future.¹⁰⁰ Therefore V.P. Menon summoned Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan to Delhi for a discussion by a telegram dated 11th July, 1949, which runs as follows : "I am anxious to meet Your Highness as early as possible and shall be grateful if Your Highness could make it convenient to meet me at Delhi on twenty-sixth July along with your Chief Minister."¹⁰¹ Accordingly, the Maharaja with his Chief Minister came to Delhi and V. P. Menon had discussions with the Maharaja regarding the future of the Cooch Behar State. It was reported in the newspapers that the Government of India would shortly take over Cooch Behar which had been the subject of controversy in West Bengal and an official announcement of the decision was expected to be made later.¹⁰²

The news about proposed taking over of the Cooch Behar State by the Government of India evoked mixed reaction among the various groups in the State. It was reported that the leaders and supporters of the Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha, a state sponsored Muslim-ridden organisation which was dominating the state administration, had been considerably dejected at the reported decision of the Government of India to take over and administer the State centrally. The Hitasadhani Sabha had lost its face with the natives of Cooch Behar who looked upon the sanctity of the ruling dynasty as a sort of religious institution. The liquidation of the Ruler would, therefore, affect their loyalty upon which the Hitasadhani Sabha was banking for so long. The Sabha was also afraid of losing its powers and privileges hitherto enjoyed. Moreover, it apprehended that the recent election which the Sabha had won with an

overwhelming majority by capturing 23 out of the 25 elected seats would be nullified with the ushering in of a new administrative set up by the Central Government.¹⁰³

The embarrassing condition of the Hitasadhani Sabha can also be gauged in a letter dated the 8th August from Amanatulla Ahmed, the President of the Proja Congress (formerly Hitasadhani Sabha) and Satish Chandra Roy Singha, the leader of the House, Cooch Behar Legislative Council to V. P. Menon, the Adviser to the Ministry of States, New Delhi. They told V. P. Menon that "the much talked of integration of Cooch Behar is after all going to take a definite shape. We are given to understand that decision has been taken to keep this State as a Centrally administered one for sometime. The entire people of Cooch Behar (excluding the microscopic Bengali element) are against the merger of the State with West Bengal. The decision of the States Ministry is most welcome to us as it signifies the negation of the claim of West Bengal on the merger of Cooch Behar with that Province. But the decision to keep it temporarily under the Centre has embarrassed us all"¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, there was a feeling of partial satisfaction among the Bengalees called outsiders, who constituted the intelligentsia of the State, over the proposed taking over of the State by the Central Government. They regarded it was a prelude to a merger with West Bengal provided that they could carry on a ceaseless agitation in this regard both from platform and through the Press. While such a movement was not considered feasible with the State by reason of the general ban on meetings and processions on the strength of the Cooch Behar Public Safety Act, the organisers were, therefore, already sponsoring an agitation in favour of a merger with West Bengal by utilizing the Calcutta Press and by holding meetings. The Cooch Behar People's Association, located at the G.B. Emporium, Central Avenue, Calcutta, were taking a leading part in the aforesaid movement from Calcutta. The Bengali elements of the State, too, were looking forward to the end of the feudal Government and the appointment of an Administrator for Cooch Behar and were harbouring the idea of launching a vigorous movement in favour of a merger with West Bengal.¹⁰⁵

But there was no sign of any open movement over the proposed administrative changes in the State of Cooch Behar. An attitude of "wait and see" appeared to prevail in every circle. Much seemed to depend on the selection of the Administrator and the finalisation of the settlement. It was also reported that the Maharaja was flying to Delhi on the 10th or 11th August, 1949 with his Chief Minister for signing the document. On the 6th August, 1949 the Maharaja called the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha for a secret parley, when he was reported to have intimated them of his prospective arrangement with the Central Government. The Hitasadhani Sabha leaders looked sullen on their returning from the parley.¹⁰⁶

It was after prolonged discussion that on the 28th August, 1949 an agreement was signed between C. Raja

Gopalachari, the Governor-General of India and Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan, which came to be known as the Cooch Behar Merger Agreement. As per terms of this Agreement, His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar ceded to the Dominion Government (Government of India) 'full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State,' and agreed to "to transfer the administration of the State to the Dominion Government on the 12th day of September, 1949." It was stipulated that from the 12th September, 1949 the Government of India would be competent to govern the State in such a manner and through such agency as it might think fit. The Maharaja would continue to enjoy the same personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles as before. The Maharaja would with effect from the said day be entitled to receive for his lifetime annually for his privy purse the sum of rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand free of all taxes. The Maharaja would also be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as distinct from state properties) belonging to him on the date of this Agreement.¹⁰⁷

V. P. Menon, Adviser to the Government of India, Ministry of States, further wrote a D.O. Letter on the 30th August, 1949 to Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan to clarify some points raised by the Maharaja. He told the Maharaja that "It is the intention of the Government of India to administer for the present the territories of the Cooch Behar State as a centrally-administered area under a Chief Commissioner." Besides, 'all contracts and agreements entered into by the Maharaja of Cooch Behar before the date of the Merger Agreement will be honoured except in so far as any of these contracts or agreements is either repugnant to the provisions of any law made applicable to the State or inconsistent with the general policy of the Government.'¹⁰⁸

Cooch Behar Under the Chief Commissioner V.I. Nanjappa

(12th September, 1949 - 31st December, 1949)

The Indian Government appointed Mr. V. I. Nanjappa, I.C.S. as the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar State. Mr. Nanjappa was then the Revenue Secretary of the Bombay Government. Previously he was the Administrator of Kolhapur.¹⁰⁹ As Chief Commissioner-designate for Cooch Behar, V.I.Nanjappa arrived Cooch Behar town on 10th September, 1949, 1949 to take over the administration of the State.¹¹⁰ In Pursuence of the Merger Agreement the administration of Cooch Behar State was taken over by V.I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner, on behalf of the Government of India, at an integration ceremony held at Cooch Behar Palace on the 12th September, 1949.¹¹¹ The occasion was marked by a message from Sardar Vallabhbai Patel, which runs as follows : "On the handing over of Cooch Behar to Central Administration, I send to its people my best wishes and assurance on behalf of the Government

of India that, though far, their interests and welfare will claim our close and intimate attention. I am fully aware of the many problems, political and economic, which affect the state and I am confident that with co-operation and assistance we will succeed in solving them in the best interest of the state and the country." Appreciating the Maharaja's gesture and spirit of sacrifice Sardar Patel further said, "to give up sovereignty over territory is no mean sacrifice. I am grateful to him for the spirit of accommodation and understanding which he has displayed and the prompt manner in which he accepted our advice."¹¹²

Speaking at the integration ceremony, the Chief Commissioner V.I. Nanjappa congratulated the Maharaja on his patriotism and statesmanship and the spirit of self-sacrifice in taking this courageous decision in the interest of the people. He assured the people of the State that 'all' existing beneficent schemes for the social, educational, economic and cultural development of the people, now in force in the State, would be continued, and that he would particularly ensure that the schemes with regard to the rehabilitation of refugees from Pakistan in our area shall be executed with the utmost vigour."¹¹³

On this occasion, Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan sent the following message to the people of Cooch Behar State which was read out : "On this solemn occasion which marks the end of long and happy association, my mother and I send you our very best wishes, my beloved people. Wherever we may be, we shall never forget you, your loyalty, and your devotion. We hope that you will always maintain the peace, good will and harmony which have been our common proud heritage. We shall always watch with keen interest your moral and material welfare and always pray for your happiness and prosperity."¹¹⁴

The integration ceremony marked the end of a long separate political entity of Cooch Behar State. Henceforth Cooch Behar became a centrally administered area. Thus it signified the end of the dynastic rule that had been existed for over four hundred years. It also signalled the beginning of an era of democratic rule on the other hand. In other words, the integration of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union which completed the transition from monarchy to democracy was an epoch-making event. It has been reported that taking over of the State administration by the Government of India with V. I. Nanjappa as the Chief Commissioner had been followed by a definite improvement in the situation of Cooch Behar. The so-called popular ministry with a preponderance of the Hitasadhani elements was given a prompt go by with the signing of the papers. Since then the Chief Commissioner had no track with the Hitasadhani Sabha or its leaders who were so long dominating the state administration. During the change-over ceremony the declaration of the Government of India as well as the message of Sardar Patel were read out both in English and Bengali languages. The English signboards in the Courts and other offices had been changed into Bengali under the orders of the Chief Commissioner.¹¹⁵ He threw open the main Hindu temple of Cooch Behar to the Harijans with effect from 24th November, 1949. He took a keen interest in solving the refugee problem and in improving the administration

of the State generally. Thus the newly appointed Chief Commissioner for the State earned a name as an able and popular administrator.¹¹⁶ The above steps together with the virtual relegation of the Hitasadhani Sabha to the background had been largely appreciated by the people, particularly by the Bengalees and "Bhatias" (outsiders) who regarded them as signs of the early merger of the State with West Bengal.¹¹⁷

It is also important to note here that soon after the integration of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Dominion and the placement of the former as the part-C category of State, political leaders in power of the adjoining states such as West Bengal and Assam were once again deeply eager to merge Cooch Behar in their respective provincial territories. Such a kind of transitory situation gave rise to a process of bargaining between the Assamese and Bengali political leadership for justifying their respective claims to bring Cooch Behar to their own folds during the whole year of 1949.¹¹⁸ The claim of West Bengal over Cooch Behar received adequate support from the important political, social and business organisations excluding the Hitasadhani Sabha in Cooch Behar State. The Cooch Behar State Congress, the State Peoples' Conference, the Cooch Behar People's Association, the Communists and other leftists groups, business organizations like Marwari Association, the Bengal Trade Association supported the demand for integrating Cooch Behar with the Province of West Bengal. The parallel force actively operating in Cooch Behar argued for and supported the cause for merger of Cooch Behar with Assam. The Hitasadhani Sabha, a select group of elites in Cooch Behar Court was interested to merge the State of Cooch Behar with Assam. Assam Jatiya Mahasabha, the Assam Provincial Congress Committee and the Assam Congress Parliamentary Party were also in favour of merger of Cooch Behar with Assam. It is also interesting to note that Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, as earlier mentioned, preferred Assam to West Bengal on this issue.

It has also been reported that the leading leaders of Hitasadhani Sabha attended a conference of the All India Gorkha League held at Darjeeling Town on the 30th October, 1949, with the object of working for the formation of Uttarkhand Pradesh comprising Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri. Satish Chandra Roy Singha, ex-Minister of Cooch Behar State, and Vice-President, Cooch Behar State Proja Congress (C.B.S.P.C — formerly the Hitasadhani Sabha), Jaladhar Saha, Secretary, C.B.S.P.C. and Moulvi Maziruddin Ahmed, Assistant Secretary, C.B.S.P.C., and others who were present at the conference made speeches claiming that they had applied to the Central Government of India desiring that Cooch Behar should be a Centrally administered area. But if their prayer did not materialise they desired that Cooch Behar should be united with 'Uttarkhand' province. These leaders also claimed that the people of Cooch Behar wanted to combine with the hillmen, for they were more like them than western Bengalis, socially, politically, and culturally. Hence, they did not like to merge in West Bengal.¹¹⁹

Having noticed such activities of the Hitasadhani Sabha leaders, Sardar Patel informed Jawaharlal Nehru that the local Hitasadhani Sabha was partly Muslim with its sympathies definitely with neighbouring area of East

Pakistan and partly consisting of some members of hill tribes who were looking to Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan for the formation of an Uttarkhand Pradesh.' Patel also expressed the view that the Government of India "should do nothing to encourage this kind of organisation in its mischievous tendencies."¹²⁰

At this juncture, V. P. Menon, the Adviser to the Government of India, Ministry of States, in a secret note on Cooch Behar dated 1st December, 1949 suggested that "The time has now come when we should consider the question of its merger in West Bengal." In this note he clarified the circumstances that would justify inevitably his above stand. He particularly cited the opinion of the Chief Commissioner V. I. Nanjappa who belonged to neither Assam nor Bengal. After a careful study of the situation in the State, Mr. Nanjappa was of the opinion that Cooch Behar should be merged in West Bengal and did not anticipate any trouble whatsoever. Therefore, V. P. Menon proposed that if Ministry of States would approve the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal, it should be effected with effect from 2nd January, 1950.¹²¹ But Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for States, felt the need for holding a discussion before taking any decision on the proposed merger and accordingly a discussion was held on 3rd December, 1949. Sardar Patel, V. P. Menon, Mr. A. B. Chatterjee, the Joint Secretary to the Ministry of States, Mr. Shankar, P.A. to the Prime Minister, Mr. V. I. Nanjappa and in the later part Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru participated in the discussion where it was decided that Cooch Behar should be merged with West Bengal on the 1st January, 1950. It was also decided that Mr. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner should continue in Cooch Behar even after its merger with West Bengal for a period of at least three months.¹²²

V. P. Menon communicated the aforesaid decision of the Ministry of States to Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan in a D.O. Letter dated 6th December, 1949. The letter runs as follows : "I am writing this to inform you that after careful consideration Sardar has decided to merge Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Sardar is convinced that this is in best interest of the people of Cooch Behar and of the country as a whole. The State will be maintained as a separate District with headquarters at Cooch Behar.

2. The balance in the treasury on the date of merger will be retained by the Central Government to be spent on development schemes in Cooch Behar for the benefit of the people of the State. Steps will also be taken to give representation to the people of the State in the West Bengal legislature as early as possible.

3. Sardar desires me to assure you that the rights and privileges guaranteed to you under the agreement will not be affected in the slightest by this administrative change."¹²³

In reply, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan wrote a D.O. Letter dated 15th December, 1949 to V. P. Menon, Secretary to the Ministry of States and gave his assent to the decision taken by the Government of India regarding the

merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal.¹²⁴

V. P. Menon also conveyed the Indian Government's decision to merge Cooch Behar in West Bengal with effect from 1st January, 1950 to Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Premier of West Bengal in a D.O. letter dated 6th December, 1949.¹²⁵ In reply, Dr. B. C. Roy told V. P. Menon that he had placed the matter before the Cabinet and West Bengal Government agreed to all the conditions laid down in that letter.¹²⁶

Meanwhile, reports about the proposed merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal had been leaked out in the Press¹²⁷ and evoked protests from the local people who were demanding a plebiscite. The Ministry of States received a batch of telegrams protesting the proposed merger. This Ministry also received such a telegram from the President, the State Proja Congress (formerly called the Hitasadhani Sabha), Cooch Behar.¹²⁸ V. P. Menon, Secretary to the Ministry of States, in a telegram dated 9th December, 1949 warned the Chief Commissioner V. I. Nanjappa of this development so that he could handle the situation tactfully.¹²⁹ In replying to this, V. I. Nanjappa told V. P. Menon that some local Muslim leaders were displeased, as expected, with the news regarding the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal, which had been published in the Calcutta newspapers and these Muslims were sending telegrams to Delhi as if emanating from different persons. He assured V. P. Menon that he did not anticipate any incident, but he was quite alert to deal with the situation more tactfully. Besides, he was trying to impress the Maharaja of Cooch Behar that his position would not be affected in the slightest on account of this administrative change.¹³⁰

N. M. Buck, the Joint Secretary to the Ministry of States wrote a D.O. letter dated 13th December, 1949 to V. I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar. The letter runs as follows : "we proposed to issue a Press Note on or about the 25th December, 1949 regarding the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal. As you know, the merger is to take effect from the first January, 1950. Although for various reasons we do not propose to make a formal announcement earlier than the 25th December. You should quickly go ahead with all the arrangements for handing over the administration on the fixed date."¹³¹ A few days later in a D.O. letter dated 17th December, 1949 the Chief Commissioner Nanjappa informed N. M. Buck that he was going ahead with all the arrangements as desired by the Government of India regarding the handing over of the State administration to West Bengal.¹³²

In the meantime, publication of news relating to proposed merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal evoked protests from different sections of Cooch Behar and Assam as well. Jaladhar Saha, the Secretary of State Proja Congress, Cooch Behar sent a telegram to the States' Ministry, New Delhi, protesting against 'arrangement going on in Cooch Behar towards merger with West Bengal.'¹³³ In the same vein, Ambikagiri Raychoudhury, the General Secretary of Assam Jatiya Mahasabha sent a telegram to Jawaharlal Nehru and also to Sardar Patel. He pointed out that 'the States' Ministry's decision to merge Cooch Behar with West Bengal forthright in clear contradiction of Pandit

Nehru's public statement at Calcutta that Cooch Behar's future will be finally decided in accordance with the wishes of her people.' He appealed to the Government of India to 'decide Cooch Behar's future only after ascertaining the wishes of her people who are overwhelmingly in favour of merger with Assam.'¹³⁴ The Working Committee of the Assam provincial Congress Committee and the Executive Committee of the Assam Congress Parliamentary Party at a joint sitting held on 16th December, 1949, passed a resolution in which the Committee maintained that 'the pronouncement of the Prime Minister of India in a Calcutta meeting that the question of merger of Cooch Behar would be decided according to the wishes of the people is the real democratic method,' but they also pointed out that 'the merger of Cooch Behar to be made with West Bengal in spite of vehement protest of Cooch Behar people is an undemocratic way as this merger totally ignores the people's will.' Hence this Committee strongly urged on the Government of India 'to stay the question of merger with West Bengal and direct a plebiscite on this issue which would satisfy all on such a matter of great principle.' This resolution was sent to V.P. Menon, the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of States and also to the Hon'ble Premier of Assam.¹³⁵

However, the Central Cabinet met on 28th December, 1949 and approved the merger of Cooch Behar in West Bengal. The report of the meeting is given below : "The Deputy Prime Minister stated that there was disagreement between West Bengal and Assam relating to the merger of Cooch Behar. Cooch Behar is a Bengali speaking area. Public opinion in West Bengal is strongly in favour of merger with that Province. The Central Government Officer in Cooch Behar and the local Congress Committee have also recommended merger with West Bengal. Assam Government is, however, opposed to this course of action. Ministry of States proposed to the West Bengal Government certain terms subject to which merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal on the 1st January, 1950. This was agreed to."¹³⁶ The Government of India issued a Press Note on 28th December, 1949 in this regard.¹³⁷

Cooch Bengal State was thus integrated with Indian Union under Cooch Behar Merger Agreement on 28th August, 1948. Then the state territory was made into a Chief Commissioner's province with effect from 12th September, 1949 and this state of affairs continued upto 31st December, 1949.¹³⁸ The States Merger (West Bengal) Order, 1949 had been signed by the Governor-General of India and the Order had been published in the Gazette India Extraordinary on the 31st December, 1949. It has been said in the aforesaid Order that "it is expedient to provide by order made under section 200A of the Government of India Act, 1935, for the administration of the said state (Cooch Behar) in all respects as if it formed part of the Province of West Bengal."¹³⁹ The West Bengal Government Home Department's Notification No. 3509 G.A., dated 1st January, 1950 which announces the merger of Cooch Behar with the Province states : "In exercise of the power conferred by sub-section (2) of section 7 of the code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Act V of 1898), the Governor is pleased to declare that on and from the 1st January, 1950 the Chief Commissioner's Province of Cooch Behar be constituted into a district." Cooch Behar has also been placed within the Jurisdiction of the Presidency Division. The Administrator of Cooch Behar, V.I. Nanjappa, I.C.S., has been appointed until further

orders, as Magistrate and Collector of Cooch Behar district.¹⁴⁰ Immediately after, the Government of West Bengal 'exalted an Act called the Cooch Behar (Assimilation of State Laws) Act in 1950' in which all the Acts contained in the first schedule were assimilated to the laws of the State of West Bengal.¹⁴¹

Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, Premier of West Bengal, arrived in Cooch Behar Town on 31st December, 1949 by air from Darjeeling to take over the administration of the State on behalf of the West Bengal Government on the next day. Dr. Roy who was accompanied by Mr. J. N. Talukdar, the Commissioner of Presidency Division, was received at the airport by V. I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar, Kumar Gautam Narayan of the Raj family, Mr. Lalit Mohan Bakshi, Chief Secretary to the Cooch Behar Government, Mr. Sukumar Sen, Chief Secretary of the West Bengal Government and Mr. S. Gupta, Inspector-General of Police, who had arrived in Cooch Behar from Calcutta earlier. Amantulla Ahmed, ex-Revenue Minister and Satish Chandra Roy Singha, ex-Education Minister and other leading Cooch Behar citizens were present at the airport to welcome Dr. B. C. Roy. As the Premier alighted from the plane, the state military band struck up the national anthem "Jana Gana Mana." He inspected a guard of honour provided by a contingent of the state military force. It was reported that the Maharaja of Cooch Behar would not be present during the function connected with the merger.¹⁴²

On the first January, 1950 Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy formally announced the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal at a largely attended meeting held at the Parade ground of Cooch Behar Town. Welcoming the citizens of Cooch Behar on their admission into the Province of West Bengal, Dr. Roy made a few important announcements at this meeting as desired by the Government of India. Dr. Roy said that Cooch Behar would be maintained as a separate district with headquarters at Cooch Behar. Representation would be given to the people of Cooch Behar in the Provincial Legislature on the population basis as soon as possible by means of nominations. Dr. Roy further said that the State servants would be absorbed in West Bengal Government Service on terms not less advantageous than those under the State regime.¹⁴³

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, India's Deputy Prime Minister, sent a message to the people of Cooch Behar on the occasion. Sardar Patel in his message said that 'the decision to merge the State with West Bengal was taken by the Government of India only after they were convinced that the interests of her people would be thus better served. The interests of the people of Cooch Behar and of the Country at large demand that the people should now take to the task of consolidation with West Bengal with faith and determination'. Sardar Patel expressed confidence that "the West Bengal Government would realize the special responsibility that owe to the people of Cooch Behar for their progress and prosperity". "I can assure them that the Central Government will continue to watch their future in West Bengal with lively interest." Sardar Patel's message was read out by V. I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar, in English, and by Sukumar Sen, Chief Secretary to the West Bengal Government, in Bengali.¹⁴⁴

V. I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar, welcoming the Premier Dr. B. C. Roy, said, "Today Cooch Behar has become part of West Bengal. The Government of India have taken this important decision after a very careful consideration of all the factors, in the best interests of all concerned. Although Cooch Behar was a distinct political and administrative unit until recently, it has always been geographically linguistically, culturally and economically a part of Bengal. Personally knowing Cooch Behar as I do I see a very bright future for Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Mr. Nanjappa further said that "it is our duty on this occasion to pay tribute to that great Indian leader and statesman Sardar Patel, the architect of India's unity, who is striving to make India strong and great. I must also congratulate H. H. Shri Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar, for his self-sacrifice, far-sightedness and patriotism and for helping to bring about this closer union of Cooch Behar with Bengal."¹⁴⁵

Jagaddipendra Narayan, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, who was not able to be present on the occasion, in a message, read out at the aforesaid meeting, hoped that the Government of India's decision was in the best interests of the people of Cooch Behar and the country as a whole. The Maharaja further said, "I hope and pray that the past controversy on the issue of merger will now be forgotten and the people of Cooch Behar, who have every reason to be proud of the past heritage will be willing to march forward together with good will and amity. In doing so they will not only serve their best interests, but also of our beloved country."¹⁴⁶

Soon after the conclusion of the mass meeting a colourful ceremony of transfer took place in the Council Hall of the High Court on the bank of the famous Sagar Dighi. V. I. Nanjappa as the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar signed a document on behalf of the Government of India transferring the administration of Cooch Behar to Dr. B. C. Roy, the Premier of West Bengal. He then signed another document taking over the administration of Cooch Behar as its Administrator on behalf of the West Bengal Government. The Chief Secretary, the Inspector-General of Police, Presidency Division Commissioner and other high ranking civil and military officials were present at the transfer ceremony.¹⁴⁷

K. N. Katju, the Governor of West Bengal, in a broadcast from Calcutta on the "Merger of Cooch Behar" on the 1st January, 1950 said that 'the ties which bind the people of Cooch Behar and West Bengal are intimate and ancient, a common religion, a common language and a common tradition and long neighbourly relations; and experience has shown that these silken ties are the strongest which bind the people. It is true that Cooch Behar has been for centuries a separate political unit under the direct personal rule of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, but whatever may have been the history of Cooch Behar in British times, even administratively since 1773 the connection between Bengal and Cooch Behar has been close indeed.'

According to K. N. Katju, exigencies of a modern administration and popular demands on a democratic

state make it impossible for small units to function adequately, and considerations of security, safety and well-being all equally require large and well-knit units for administrative purposes. The merger of states into larger unions or neighbouring provinces was therefore a historic and political necessity'.¹⁴⁸ It is also well known that the Cooch Behar state has an area no greater than that of an Indian district. In view of Dr. Katju's above observation, it may safely be concluded that the merger of Cooch Behar in neighbouring provinces was a historic and political necessity. Cooch Behar's integration with the Indian Union as the Chief Commissioner's Province for the time being and later its merger with West Bengal as a district was perhaps a logical conclusion of history. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was also fully convinced as regards the justification of the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal. At a public meeting in Calcutta held on 16th January, 1949 Sardar Patel in his speech said that "... When the people of Bengal claimed Cooch Behar, I went into the whole question and came to the conclusion that their claim was just and proper. Then I tried my best to persuade anybody so as to make the process of merger easy. We succeeded in that, and Cooch Behar is now part of West Bengal."¹⁴⁹ It is learnt from the reports in the newspapers that the Central Government's decision about the merger of the State with West Bengal had created mixed feelings in the State. While one section was obviously jubilant, the other section claiming to represent the indigenous people, seemed full of resentment. Those against merger in West Bengal criticized the Centre's action in not having allowed the people to express their opinion on the question through a plebiscite. They further said that they would continue the agitation against the decision. They preferred administration by the Centre, and if that was not possible, they preferred merger in Assam rather than in Assam.¹⁵⁰

But the people of Cooch Behar as a whole acquiesced to the decision of merger which seemed a good beginning for both Cooch Behar and West Bengal. It has been clearly reflected by an 'Editorial Comment' of a famous English Daily dated 1st January, 1950, which runs as follows : "Merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal takes place today with minimum formality. The province, uncomfortably cramped, naturally welcomes an addition to its area and resources through the incorporation of a State whose landscape and predominantly Bengali speaking population closely resemble those of neighbouring Jalpaiguri. The people of the state seem, for the most part, equally, pleased over the change in their fortunes. Their fate hung for some time in the balance. Assam was eager for them; but its claim was, after due consideration, rejected by the Centre, and hard feelings should not persist."

"Cooch Behar has already passed through a transitional stage, having been Centrally administered since mid-September, and arrangements have been made to prolong the transition. The administration seemingly not be brought completely into line with that of other districts in the province until a few months elapsed. Provision made to safeguard the interests of the people and present officials seem just, and it may be expected that the riches of the state — surplus rice, jute, tea, timber and tobacco - will, when more fully exploited, contribute to the welfare of the new comers to the West Bengal's fold..."¹⁵¹

Conclusion : Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was the 22nd descendant of the dynasty and 35 years old while the Cooch Behar State was merged with West Bengal as a district. He possessed an attractive personality and was very popular in Cooch Behar. Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam during his visit to Cooch Behar in March, 1949 held a talk with the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan informally. Then the Governor of Assam wrote, "He (the Maharaja) appeared to me to be a very decent young person who took great interest in the affairs of the State and mixed freely with every one. He seemed a very popular figure in Cooch Behar."¹⁵²

The people of Cooch Behar had a great reverence for Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. To them His Highness represented godhood. It is believed that if the indigenous people was asked to vote for or against the Maharaja, they would all vote for him. The only hope of the State Proja Congress (formerly known the Hitasadhani Sabha) leadership was the Maharaja taking to politics but their hope, it is believed, had been completely shattered by the Maharaja, firstly by casting his opinion to join the Indian Union without any knowledge or consent of the leadership of the Proja Congress who were then in power and secondly by his temperamental disinclination towards politics. The Maharaja had made his best to introduce the modern type of administration in his State. He had always tried to remain a constitutional head leaving the administration to the charge of the chosen representatives of the people and successfully checked the attempt to declare Cooch Behar an independent State of his Ministers.¹⁵³

'Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan himself is a good speaker in Bengali. It has been rightly said that 'culturally Cooch Behar is an inseparable part of Bengal. The people of Cooch Behar are Bengalees. Bengali is their mother tongue. Bengali is the language of their Court and Ruler. But he expressed his willingness to merge Cooch Behar with Assam instead of West Bengal. It has been alleged that he made this preposterous statement under the venomous influence of the reactionary Hitasadhani Sabha leaders.¹⁵⁴ The main objective of the Hitasadhani Sabha now known as the State Praja Congress was to secure merger of Cooch Behar with Assam and its leadership had in its ranks former Muslims Ministers of the State. The main plank of their propaganda was distortion of the historical truth. It said that the indigenous population of Cooch Behar was more akin to the people of Assam than to the Bengalees. The fact is, nowever, the reverse.¹⁵⁵ However, he has found his way in rectifying his errors and scaled his approval to the merger of Cooch Behar. It has been rightly claimed that 'this historic decision will undoubtedly win him friendship and good will of the entire population of Cooch Behar in common with the people of Bengal.'²⁸⁴ Not only the people of Cooch Behar but also the people of the country will remain grateful to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan for his 'patriotism, far-sightedness and self-sacrifice.'¹⁵⁶

Apart from his popularity as a ruler, there were also some other attributes manifested in Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. He was an ardent lover of sports. He played in various tournaments of Polo, Tennis, Cricket and Football at different centres, viz., Kashmir, Delhi, Meerut and Calcutta. He particularly distinguished himself on Polo with the

result that he had a handicap of three.¹⁵⁷ The Cooch Behar Association Football Cup Tournament was introduced by His Highness during 1939 - 1940.¹⁵⁸ The Cooch Behar Trophy for All India Inter School Trophy (now changed into under 19) bears the signature of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, who was popularly known as "Bhaiya" in sports world.¹⁵⁹ His Highness was the patron of several sporting clubs and institutions in India, which depended a good deal on his support and sympathy towards their maintenance.¹⁶⁰ His Highness had been mainly instrumental in the improvement of Cricket in Bengal. He brought 'Bill' Hitch to India in 1935 and for three succeeding years. 'Many attribute Bengal's success in the Ranji Trophy to "Bill's untiring efforts, but we cannot forget the magnanimity that made those efforts possible.'¹⁶¹ Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was a very keen all round sportsman. He was seen as an able polo player, a mature cricketer and an expert horse-rider, whether it is at Jaipur, Delhi, Calcutta or in England.¹⁶²

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan died of a heart attack in Calcutta on 11th April, 1970. He was then 54 years old. Floral wreaths were placed on his body among others by M. M. Basu, Chief Secretary, and P. K. Sen, Commissioner of Police of Calcutta. The Maharaja of Burdwan also paid his last respects.¹⁶³ The body of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan was flown to the Home town of Cooch Behar in a chartered plane from Calcutta on 12th April, 1970. A large number of people were present at the airport to pay their last respects to the departed Ruler. Wreaths were placed on the bier on behalf of the Army. In the afternoon a funeral procession was taken out with the body and the cremation took place at Rani Bagan on the bank of the Torsa river which hems the town. 'Yesterday offices and many shops at Cooch Behar and some other places in the district were closed soon after the news of the Maharaja's death was received'.¹⁶⁴ 'Obituary' which was published in a famous English Daily in this connection on 12th April, 1970 is given below :¹⁶⁵

"Lieutenant Colonel His Highness the Maharaja Sir Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur was born in December, 1915. Educated at Harrow and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, the Maharaja succeeded to the Gadi in 1922. He was invested with full ruling powers in 1936. During World War II he was made an Honorary 2nd Lieutenant and was promoted in 1946 to the rank of a Lieutenant Colonel. He saw action with the 7th Light Cavalry in Burma and Malaya.

The Maharaja, who was described by people as a natural athlete, was Bengal's Captain for the Ranji Trophy three years in succession. In 1944-45, he steered the Bengal side to the final of the Ranji Trophy. A good polo player before an accident in Jaipur, he had at his best a handicap of three. In addition to polo, he followed the family tradition as a keen supporter of the Turf and rode on his horses at the Tollygunj Gymkhana Races.

He played a number of other games, especially tennis at which he excelled. During World War II, he raised football teams to play matches in Cooch Behar in aid of War Funds. ...The Maharaja is survived by his wife, two sisters and a nephew. One of the sisters is Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur and the other is the Maharani of Rewas in Madhya Pradesh."

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70. ibid, Vol. 8, Letter No. 411, dated 26th June, 1949, p. 517.

71. *ibid*, Vol. 9, Telegram No. 13, dated 8th May, 1949, p. 15.
72. *ibid*, Vol. 7, Letter No. 460, dated 10th July, 1948, p. 550.
73. Extract from a D. O. Letter dated 13th April, 1949 from Sardar V. Patel to Sri Prakasa, Governor of Assam, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.
74. A (secret) Source Report dated 7th August, 1949, Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, Ref. No. D-7491-P/49. NAI
75. The Fortnightly Confidential Report by the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State for the period ending 31st July, 1949. File No. 15(8) - P/49, Ministry of States, 'P' - Branch, pp. 138-140. NAI
76. D.O. No. C/7540/30-17, dated 16th September, 1949 from the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar to A. B. Chatterjee, Ministry of States, New Delhi. File No. - 15(68) - P-49, Govt. of India, Ministry of States, Political Branch, Correspondence.
77. *ibid*, for the period ending 31st July, 1949. *op. cit.*, pp. 141-142.
78. *ibid*, for the period ending 15th January, 1949, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
79. *ibid*, dated 14th June, 1949, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
80. Extract from Secret and Personal D. O. Letter dated 13th April, 1949. File No. 15(8) - P/49, Secret, Ministry of States, P-Branch, p. 20.
81. Ref. No. G 7343 - 48 d/29.3.49. File No. 15(8) - P/49, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch.
82. D-3387 - P/49. File No. *op. cit.*
83. D. No. 4790-P/49, (9) FR. File No. *op. cit.*
84. DIB u/o No. SA/601(17) dated 23rd April, 1947, Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, top secret, (copy of a report, dated 4.4.49 from a very reliable contact of one DIG. IB., C.I.D., West Bengal), File No. *op. cit.*
85. Fortnightly confidential report by the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State for the period 1st June to 30th June, 1949 to the Secretary, Ministry of States, File No. *op. cit.* p. 195.
86. D. O. No. Sc/29/49, dated 27th July, 1949, office of the Adviser to the Governor of Assam, States Department, File No. *op. cit.*, pp. 120, 122.
87. Copy of a 'Secret' Report dated 7th April, 1949 of Jalpaiguri District forwarded by the West Bengal I. B., Calcutta, with their endorsement dated the 2nd May, 1949. D 5057-P/49, Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, Secret, File No. *op. cit.* pp. 154-155. The following instructions were issued in November, 1947 for the preparation of Electoral roles :-
 - (a) Every person who is a Cooch Behari and who has attained the age of 21 years, whether male or female, should be put on the voter's list.
 - (b) Every non-Cooch Behari who has put in a residence of 20 years, whether male or female and has reached the age of 21 years should be enrolled as a voter. - D. O. No. Sc/29/49 dated 27th July, 1949, *op. cit.* p.118.
88. *ibid*, p. 155.
89. D. O. No. Sc/29/49 dated 27th July, 1949 from the office of the Adviser to the Governor of Assam, States Dept. to S. Narayanswamy, Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of States. New Delhi, D 6747-P/49, p. 118. NAI
90. D. 3387-P/49 serial No. 1, File No. 15(8)-P/49, Secret, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch, p. 1.
91. Fortnightly Report from N. K. Rustomji, Adviser to the Governor of Assam to the Secretary, Govt of India, Ministry of States, file No. *op. cit.*, p. 55.
92. Fortnightly confidential report by the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State for the Period 1st June to 30th June,

- 1949, File No. op. cit., pp. 195, 100-101. NAI
93. Letter No. 1/49/C - 1067-71, File no. op. cit, p. 73.
 94. Fortnightly report from N. K. Rustomji, op. cit, (Ref. No. 233) p. 58.
 95. D. O. No. 16/48/C - 962 dated 16th June, 1949, Secret, File No. op. cit. p. 14.
 96. Das, Durga (edi.) : Sardar Patel's Correspondence, op. cit, Vol. 9, Letter No. 34, dated 22nd June, 1949, pp. 42-43.
 97. Extract from Daily Summary of Information of Assam, No. 12, dated 18.6.49, received from Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs by Ministry of States on 25th June, 1949. File No. 15(8)-P/49(secret), 'P' Branch, p. 68.
 98. No. D. 5895 - P/49, dated 10th July, 1949 from Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Assam, Shillong.
 99. D. O. No. 1156/C dated Shillong, 19th July, 1949 from N. K. Rustomji, Adviser to the Governor of Assam to V. P. Menon, Adviser to the Ministry of States, New Delhi.
 100. D. 5895-P/49, Serial No. 16, File No. 15(8)-P/49, Ministry of States, Secret, P. Branch, p. 7.
 101. Menon Statesind, For Secretary, Ministry of States, dated 11th July, 1949. File No. op. cit, p. 8.
 102. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, English Daily, Calcutta, July 28, 1949.
 103. Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India. D. 7491 - P/49, File No. 15(8) - P/49, Ministry of States, secret, P-Branch, p. 148. (Copy of a resource report dated 7.8.49 on "A report on the Cooch Behar situation vis-a-vis the taking over by the Centre - Reaction of the Hitasadhani Sabha", received through Central Intelligence officer, Calcutta, under his endorsement dated the 9th August, 1949.) NAI
 104. Letter No. 110, dated 8th August, 1949, File No. op. cit, p. 158.
 105. Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, D-7491-P/49, File No. op. cit, pp. 148-49.
 106. *ibid*, p. 151.
 107. White Paper on Indian States, Ministry of States, Government of India, New Delhi, Revised Edition, 1950. Appendice XXIV, Cooch Behar Merger Agreement, pp. 212-213. NL. The full text of the Agreement has been appended at the end. Vide Appendix E - i
 108. Ministry of States, Government of India, D. O. No. F-15(19) - P/49, (secret), 'P' Branch. The letter in full has been appended is Appendix No. ...
 109. The Statesman, Calcutta, September 3, 1949.
 110. *ibid*, September 12, 1949.
 111. *ibid*, September 13, 1949, p. 7.
 112. Das, Durga (edi.) : Sardar Patel's Correspondence, op. cit, Vol. 7, Telegram No. 463, pp. 553-554.
 113. The Statesman, Calcutta, September 13, p. 7.
 114. *ibid*.
 115. Copy of a report dated 31st October, 1949, received from C. I. O., Calcutta regarding the situation in Cooch Behar. Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, File No. (64) - P/49, Secret, 1949, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch, p-1.
 116. Copy of a source report dated 28th November, 1949 received from C. I. O., Calcutta, Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, File No. op. cit.
 117. Copy of a source report dated 31st October, 1949, received from C. I. O., Calcutta regarding the situation in Cooch Behar, op. cit.
 118. For instance, S. Narayanswamy, the Deputy Secretary, Ministry of States in a note dated 4th July, 1949 mentioned that the Premier of Assam had expressed his desire that Cooch Behar State should be merged with Assam

- province and not with West Bengal. - D 5785 - P/49. File No. 15(8) - P/49, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch, Secret, Group I, serial No. (10), p. 8. NAI
119. Confidential D.O. No. 284C, dated November 22, 1949 from Chief Commissioner, Cooch Behar to Joint Secretary, Ministry of State, Government of India on 'Proceedings of a Conference of the All India Gorkha League,' File No. 15(62) - P/49, 1949, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch. NAI
120. Das, Durga (ed.), Sardar Patel Correspondence, 1945-50, Vol. 9, Letter No. 27, dated 28 December, 1949, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
121. File No. 15(59) - Political/49, Ministry of States, Govt. of India, Political Branch, Secret, p. 2. Dr. Pranab Kumar Bhattacharyya is of the opinion that V.P. Menon's secret note played a significant role in shaping the opinion of the Indian Government about the future of Cooch Behar State - Confer Dr. Bhattacharyya's scholarly article, namely, "Merger of Cooch Behar : A Case Study of the Differences of Perspectives of the Governments of Assam and West Bengal." in Journal of the Asiatic Society, Vol. XLVIII, No. 4, Kolkata, 2004.
122. *ibid*, pp. 3-4.
123. File No. 15(59) - P/49, Ministry of States, Govt. of India, Secret, 'P' Branch, Correspondence, Serial No. (2), p. 3.
124. *ibid*, Serial No. (8), p. 12.
125. *ibid*.
126. *ibid*.
127. For instance, The Times of India, Bombay, dated 7th December, 1949 reported that the small but strategic Indian state of Cooch Behar, to the North of Eastern Pakistan and South of Bhutan, will merge with West Bengal on January 1st, 1950, it is tentatively learnt here. The Administrator is expected to continue to be in charge of the state even after its merger, in order to stabilise the administration and bring about co-ordination.
128. File No. 15(74) - P/49, Ministry of States, Govt. of India, secret, 'P' Branch, p. 1. NAI. The President of State Proja Congress, Cooch Behar, sent a telegram which was posted on December 6, 1949 to the Prime Minister, to the Secretary, States' Ministry and also to the President of the Constituent Assembly, New Delhi. The telegram reads : "Cooch Beharis Shocked at PTI Reporting From Delhi of Merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal Protest against Exparte Decision Demand plebiscite" — telegram No. 257, telegram received on 9.12.1949, File No. *ibid*, p. 3.
129. *ibid*. p. 3.
130. Letter No. S/ii dated 12th December, 1949 from V. I. Najappa to V. P. Menon, File No. op. cit, p. 6.
131. File No. 15(74) - P/49, op. cit.
132. Letter No. 278/C dated 17th December, 1949, File No. op. cit.
133. Telegram sent on 20.12.1949 from Jaladhar Saha, Secretary, State Proja Congress Cooch Behar to Private Secretary to Adviser, States' Ministry, New Delhi. File No. 15(74) - p/49, Ministry of States. Govt. of India, New Delhi, Political Branch, 1949.
134. Assam Tribune, Gauhati, December 14, 1949. This has been quoted in D.O. No. 103P, dated the 17th December, 1949 from Chief Commissioner, Cooch Behar to A.B. Chatterjee, Joint Secretary to the Govt. of India, Ministry of States, New Delhi. File No. Loc. cit.
135. Telegram sent on 20.12.1949. File No. Loc. cit.
136. Meeting of the Cabinet was held on Wednesday, 28.12.49, at 10.30 A.M. Serial case No. 477/63/49, File No. D/ 2/6 - P/50.

137. Press Note issued by the Press Information Bureau, Ministry of States, Govt. of India, R/1825/P/49. The full text of the Press Note has been appended at the end. Vide appendix No. E -(ii)
138. *ibid.*
139. White Paper on India States, *op. cit.*, Appendix XLVI, p. 309.
140. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, January, 2, 1950. p. 1. This order has been appended at the end ; vide Appendix E (iii)
141. Roy, B : West Bengal District Census Handbook, 1961 : Cooch Behar, pp. 6ff. It is to be noted that the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of States in a letter No. D 261-P/50 dated 4th January, 1950, to Chief Secretaries of all Provincial Governments (excepting West Bengal), Chief Secretaries of all Unions, Chief Secretaries of all States, all Chief Commissioners, all regional Commissioners sent the message which is as follows : "I am directed to state that, with effect from the 1st January, 1950, Cooch Behar State which had been previously constituted into a Chief Commissioner's Province, merged with the Province of West Bengal. It is, therefore, requested that correspondence on all matters which were hitherto addressed to the Cooch Behar Administration may in future be addressed to the Government of West Bengal." — File No. 15(59) - Political/49, Secret, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch, p. 48.
142. Programmes of the visit of Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy, Premier of West Bengal, to Cooch Behar, on 31st December, 1949 and 1st January, 1950 on the occasion of the merger of Cooch Behar with the Province of West Bengal. File No. 15(59) - political / 1949, Ministry of States, Secret, Correspondence, p. 60. Also confer the Statesman, Calcutta, January 1, 1950, p. 1.
143. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, January 2, 1950, p. 1; Also see "Address by Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy, Premier of West Bengal, to Cooch Behar, on 31st December, of Cooch Behar with the Province of West Bengal, on the occasion of the Merger of the State of Cooch Behar with West Bengal," January 1, 1950, Govt. of West Bengal, p. 5. The said 'Address' has been appended at the end ; vide Appendix E (iv)
144. The Statesman, Calcutta, January 2, 1950, p. 1.
145. The Statesman, Calcutta, January 2, 1950, p. 7.
146. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, January 2, 1950, p. 5.
147. *ibid.*, p. 1, see also the Statesman, Calcutta, January 2, 1950, p. 1.
148. The Statesman, *op. cit.* (West Bengal Governor Dr. Katju's speech in a broadcast from Calcutta at the night of 1st January, 1950.
149. The Statesman, Calcutta, January 16, 1950. p. 1.
150. *ibid.*, January 1, 1950, p. 9.
151. *ibid.*, p. 8.
152. The confidential letter dated 29th March, 1949 from Sri Prakasa, Governor of Assam to Sardar Patel, *op. cit.* pp. 17-18.
153. Sen, R. G. : 'Cooch Behar comes into West Bengal...', The Amrita Bazar patrika, Calcutta, January 1, 1950, Magazine section, p. 9.
154. Roy, Sailen : 'A land of Wild Beauty, Song, Joy and Plenty', The Amrita Bazar Patrika, *op. cit.*, p. 10. In this connection, an interesting anecdote might be cited about the late father of the present Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, — The late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan. Though well-versed in Bengali, Jitendra Narayan used to speak in English on ceremonial occasions. The author remembers him saying one day in an address before a gathering in the Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha, "I feel more at home with the English speech when speaking before the

public. As a Bengalee however I deem it a disgrace on myself. Nevertheless, I cherish this hope that my son will in his time please the public with Bengali speeches." The late Maharaja's hope has been fulfilled. *ibid.*

155. Sen : R. G. : *op. cit.*

156. Roy, Sallen : *op. cit.*

157. 'Sporting India', A monthly journal devoted to world sports and screen, Vol. 1, No. 5, November 30, 1940. Cooch Behar supplement, p. 213 : Also confer the A. A. R. C. B. S., 1939-40, chapter 1, general, p. 2.

158. A. A. R. C. B. S., *op. cit.*

159. A. A. R. C. B. S., *op. cit.*, general and political, p. 4.

160. *ibid.*, 1939-40, chapter 1, general and political, p. 4.

161. *Sporting India*, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

162. *The Assam Tribune*.

163. *The Statesman*, Calcutta, April 12, 1970, p. 1.

164. *ibid.*, April 13, 1970, p. 1.

165. *ibid.*, April 12, 1970, 'Obituary' on late Maharaja of Cooch Behar, p. 7.

CHAPTER V

Constitutional and Administrative System of Cooch Behar State

i) The State (Executive) Council, The Legislative Council and the Judiciary :

Barbara N. Ramusack has argued that 'many princes represented a continuity of traditional state formation in India and remained autonomous rulers, exercising substantial authority and power within their states, until 1948. Hence the British imperialists did not create the princely states as states or to reduce them to 'theatre states' where ritual was dominant and governmental functions relegated to imperial surrogates'. According to Ramusack, as a matter of fact, 'the British power gradually restrained sovereign princely authority, especially in defence, external affairs and communications. Nevertheless, Indian princes taxed their subjects, allocated state revenues, had full criminal and civil judicial powers, maintained internal law and order to varying degrees, patronised traditional and modern cultural activities and institutions. Indeed they synthesised elements of rajadharm or indigenous kingly behaviour with those of British models'.¹

As early as 1934 William Burton opined that 'the older school of Indian Princes cherished the idea of the divine right of kingship,' and subconsciously the feeling is still there.' In some ancient principalities, according to him, the maintenance of regal splendour is more important than sound administration. There are others in which there is no clear border-line between the expenses of the court and the administration. This often means that essential services are starved.² Mr. Burton further noted that the quality of government, despite adoption of modern administrative machinery, 'depends almost entirely on the personality of the ruler. Where he takes a close interest in what is going on, knows how to select his men and keeps in close touch with his people, the system is more satisfactory than the impersonal system which exists in so many parts of British India. The experience and inside knowledge of a ruler that can build up in the course of years makes it possible for him to keep a strong check over the oppression by his officers, ...'³ This was, however, mainly true of the larger states which had set up a system of administration approximating to the British model. In the huge agglomeration of states comprising Indian India there was naturally a great diversity of standards of government. In the small states in the Himalayas round Simla, for instance, the raja's powers were circumscribed, he ruled paternally subject to appeal to British authority, much in the same way as a minor baron of the Middle Ages in Europe. There were many similar states in other parts of India, dealt with on similar principles by the British Indian Government. In such cases the administration was supervised by the Political Agent.

The system of administration that came into vogue under the rule of the Koch kings was the monarchical

system, and in its pyramidal structure the king's position was at the apex. The king usually claimed his divine origin and his divine right of kingship.⁴ Though the king was the supreme head of the state administration, there was, under the Koch rulers, a council of ministers which used to play an important role in the administration of the Koch kingdom. The king used to consult with the ministers in times of need.⁵ Like the other Hindu kingdoms, the Koch kings of Western Kamarupa had developed a well network of administrative system. Immediately after the conclusion of the Anglo-Koch treaty of 1773, the Cooch Behar State virtually became a protectorate kingdom and the English East India Company reorganised the administrative system of the State to some extent.⁶

Mr. Beveridge, the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar made the following observation on the Government of the State in his Annual Report for 1865-67, "the administration of Cooch Behar has not many years been that of purely a Native state ; for ever since the treaty with the British Government it has been powerfully acted upon by the European ideas. Its proximity too to Rangpur, and the fact of all the amlah being natives of Bengal proper, assimilated many of its institutions to those of British India."⁷ The Deputy Commissioner further observed that before the appointment of a British Commissioner the Government of Cooch Behar was in a deplorable condition. ' It neither had the small rigour which may be supposed to characterise the government of a thoroughly Native State such as Nepal nor had it the organisation of a civilised State. It was, in fact, a mongrel government, being a cross as it were, produced by the Bhutia or Koch idea of government, and those which the Bengali amlah supposed to be ours. Hence the idea of the Raja being above the law, and of everything in a country being his, existed side by side with the ideas of a Stamp Act, and of appeals, both regular and special, ad infinitum'.⁸ Beveridge's observations though appear to be rather harsh, yet it will be difficult to disagree with the general tenor of his arguments.⁹

The system of administration of Cooch Behar State under the old Maharajas was an exceedingly cheap one. The pay of nearly all the officers was on a wretchedly small scale. The only way in which an officer could honestly live at all was by holding three or four different offices. Thus, while pluralities of appointments were common in some cases, the number of officers was unduly large in others. Besides, the resources of the government was not large. The only source of revenue was land, and even this was not properly taxed. Again, under a weak system of administration, and owing to the want of proper arrangement for the suppression of crime and maintenance of the peace, the material prosperity of the people was at a low ebb, notwithstanding the rich natural resources of the State.¹⁰

K.M. Panikkar credits Lord Mayo, Governor-General from 1869 to 1872, with establishing the practice of forceful intervention during minority administrations in the Princely States.¹¹ British officials frequently denigrated local appointees to Councils of Regencies as motivated by self-interest. Their most caustic criticism was directed at the minor ruler's female relatives. Since the British did not have direct access to the zenana or women's quarters they were particularly anxious to reduce the influence of Indian women, whom they stereotyped as superstitious and of

doubtful morality. In order to counter the zenana's impact in the public sphere and to preserve the patrimony of young princes the British officials resorted to such forceful interventions. Through such intervention princely administrations were frequently rationalised according to British models that furthered British economic and political interests. The measures undertaken by the British officials included reorganised administrative structures and judiciaries, and most importantly, land revenue settlements.¹²

The man destined to put things to right in the Cooch Behar State was Colonel Haughton, who was appointed by the Government as Commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1864 during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan.¹³ His vigorous yet considerate mode of procedure achieved highly satisfactory results in a very short time. He largely improved the resources of the revenue, established a regular budget system regulating receipts and expenditure, introduced thorough reforms in the administration of justice, established a good system of police, cut down all unnecessary expenditure, laid out large sums on public works and education, and encouraged morality and honesty in every branch of administration. When Mr. Haughton left Cooch Behar in 1873, 'he had sown all these seeds of good government and improvement in the State, which under the fostering care of his successors and able assistants' brought the State to a higher stage of development.¹⁴

On 8th November, 1883 Maharaja Nripendra Narayana assumed the ruling power and on the following day he issued the Memorandum of Administration drawn up by the Commissioner of Jalpaiguri and Koch Behar Division. Accordingly, a Council of State was established with the Maharaja as President and three members namely, the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and a Judicial Officer, who were to be the Heads of the three Departments of General administration, the administration of Revenue, and that of Civil Justice. The Superintendent would supervise, direct and control the administration of Criminal Justice and the Police, the Military, Jail, Public Works, Education and Audit Departments and would be the Sessions Judge, hearing all criminal appeals 'which ordinarily lie to the Sessions Judges', but would not act as a Civil Judge except when sitting in Council. The Dewan would be in charge of the Revenue Department, being responsible for the collection of all kinds of revenue, and the supervision of all proceedings in connection with such matters. The Judicial Member of the Council would hear civil and revenue appeals of certain classes, and supervise the administration of Civil Justice, all final appeals lying to the Council.¹⁵

In the Memorandum of Administration of 1883 it was resolved that the annual state budget would be brought up and discussed in the Council, after which it would be submitted to the Maharaja for sanction without which the budget would not be finally settled.¹⁶ No new tax would be imposed by the Maharaja without the consent of his Council, but it would be open to him to veto any such tax proposed by the Council.¹⁷

In 1891, the Memorandum of Administration of 1883 was considerably modified. The constitution of the

Council consisting of two Members (The Member from whom appeals lay before the Council being left out) similar to a Division Bench of the Calcutta High Court, was established. Any difference of opinion between the two members was to be referred to a Full Bench consisting of all the Members with the Maharaja as President. All motions against the orders of subordinate officers were to be heard by a Bench composed of all the three Members of the Council.

On the Legislative side, it was the intention of His Highness to appoint Additional Members from time to time, from amongst the Rajguns, the intelligent and wealthy Jotedars, and from the Bar. Besides, The Civil Judge was appointed Sessions Judge in addition to his duties, and the Superintendent of the State ceased to be a Sessions Judge, and the Dewan, an additional Sessions Judge to which office he had been appointed in 1890-91. The powers of the Fouzdari Ahilkar were defined and made to correspond with those of a District Magistrate of British India.¹⁸

It can be mentioned here that the Audit Department was transferred from the office of the Superintendent of the State, and placed under His Highness' immediate control. It was to remain in Cooch Behar, but would have a distinct and separate existence for check and control of expenditure, which was the chief object of such an institution. In 1894-95, the designation of 'Auditor' was changed, under the orders of His Highness, to 'Accountant-General.'¹⁹

The Chaklajat Estates were placed directly under the Council and the Manager of these estates was made a Member of the Council with a vote, like the other members, with respect to all matters connected with the above estates. But later the Chaklajat Estates finally ceased to be directly under the Council and were placed under the supervision of the Dewan.²⁰

In August, 1885, the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division was appointed by the Government of India ex-officio Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State, for the purpose of articles IV and V of Act XXI of 1879 (Foreign Jurisdiction and Extradition Act), and the Superintendent of Cooch Behar was appointed Justice of the Peace within the State for the trial of European British subjects infringing the laws of the State. The Court of Sessions at Rangpur was given jurisdiction in cases committed for trial by the Justice of the Peace for Cooch Behar.²¹

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the functions of the State Council were three fold : Legislative, Executive and Judicial. On the legislative side the Council passed laws and enactments. On the executive side it regulated the management of the different departments. In matters judicial the Council was the highest court of appeal having final jurisdiction in civil, criminal and revenue suits and proceedings. The Council had the power to frame rules and regulations for the management of the judicial side.²² It is also matter of fact that the State Council which was established by Nripendra Narayan was a nominated body and had all official members. Though it decentralised power, the people were not associated with the administration.²³ The State Council continued to function in almost the same manner for three successive decades.

Another landmark in the history of the state administration was the establishment of the State legislative Council in 1909 by Nripendra Narayan.²⁴ It was founded with a view to giving effect to His Highness' long cherished desire to create a separate Legislative Council for Cooch Behar. The functions hitherto exercised by the State Council, as at present constituted, so far, relating to matters legislative should be performed by the legislative Council. The constitution of the newly founded Legislative Council was as follows : (i) All the members of the State Council as at present constituted, (ii) One member representing the Rajguns, (iii) One member representing the Hindu Jotedars and one member representing the Mohammedan Jotedares, (iv) One member representing the Bar and (v) One member representing commerce and industry. The five new members were to be called Additional Members and would be appointed by the Maharaja. The State Government argued that the time had not yet arrived to introduce the elective form of representation.²⁵

During this period only two other Princely States in India, namely, Mysore and Cochin had similar arrangements.²⁶ It had been mentioned that in constituting the State Legislative Council the Maharaja of Cooch Behar followed the example which Lord Morley, then Secretary of State for India and Lord Minto, then Governor-General of India had set in enlarging Imperial and Provincial Legislative Councils with a view to making them more representative in character.²⁷ Though the Legislative Council, thus constituted, was a nominated body, it represented different social, professional and business interests as well as the leading sections of the people of Cooch Behar State.²⁸ The Legislative Council continued in almost the same way for the next three decades to perform useful functions, more specially in enacting a body of statutory laws adapted mutatis mutandis from British Indian Law.

The constitutional and administrative set up of the Cooch Behar State as laid down by Nripendra Narayan (1863 - 1911) was followed by the next two kings, Raj Rajendra Narayan (1911 - 1913), and Jitendra Narayan (1913 - 1922) during whose reigns no worthwhile changes had been introduced in the administrative as well as constitutional framework.²⁹ The reign of Jagaddipendranarayan (1922 - 1949), the last king of Cooch Behar State, however, witnessed some overhauling changes in the constitution and functioning of the Executive Council as well as the Legislative Council, as a result of which a dyarchical form of government was established in the State in 1939.³⁰

In 1936, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan assumed the ruling powers in his own hands. In 1938, the constitution of the State Legislative Council was radically changed. In that year Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan expressed his wish that more non-official members would be given seats in the Legislative Council, and these additional members would be duly elected by sealed nomination from the public of the sub -divisions of Dinhat, Mekligunj and Mathabhanga. As a consequence, there was now a non-official majority in the State Legislature even after allowing for the casting vote of His Highness the President.³¹ The number of non-official members was raised to a total of eight and that of official members to six with His Highness' special power to cast a vote.³²

In 1939, another momentous step was taken in accordance with the policy which the Maharaja announced in a state notification on 9th January, 1939. It was declared that "His Highness has been pleased to express his personal wish that measures be adopted whereby his subject shall be increasingly associated with the administration of the State. It was further announced that there would be a new full Member of the Executive Council and he would be a Cooch Behari, and in the first instance would be in personal charge of the following Departments : Education, Agriculture and Industries, Registration, Court of Wards, Press and Stationary.

The powers and functions of the new Member of the Executive Council were further delineated in another State Notification issued on 18th January, 1939. "As a full Member," this Notification stated, "he will not only hold charge of his Departments, but he will participate in all proceedings of the Executive Council and his opinion will naturally have as much weight as that of any other Member of the Executive Council. He will be elected by the non-official Members of the Legislative Council from among their members and will be responsible to them". "This means that", the notification continued, "if the non-official Members of the Legislative Council are of united opinion that the new Member's policy in some important respect is not proper or is contrary to the general wishes of the subject of His Highness, it will be open to those members and indeed their duty to move a vote of no confidence in the Legislative Council, and if that vote be passed, the Member would, in accordance with accepted constitutional convention, be forced to resign". he would be replaced by another Member who would be similarly elected and who could command the confidence of the non-official majority.³⁴

It was further declared that the new Member should be known as 'Fourth Member,' as because the Vice-President of the State Council being the first Member, the Revenue Officer being the second Member and Henceforth to be designated 'Revenue Member', the Audit Officer being the third Member and designated 'Finance Member'.³⁵

The swearing-in -ceremony of the Fourth Member, Mr. Sushil Kumar Chakravarty, M.A., M.L.C., took place on 25th February, 1939. Then Mr. U.N. Dutt, B.L., a High Court Judge administered the oath to the fourth Member designate who kneeling before His Highness, swore the following oath : "I, Sushil Kumar Chakravarty, having been elected a Member of the Cooch Behar State Council by the Non-official Additional Members of the Cooch Behar Legislative Council do solemnly swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar, His heirs and successors, and that I will faithfully discharge the duty upon which I am about to enter."³⁵

Thus the new Member, who was a Cooch Behari, took office with effect from the 1st March, 1939, and in the first instance had assumed charge of a portfolio including the Departments of Education, Agriculture and Industries, Registration, Court of Wards, Press and Stationary. As noted earlier, he was responsible to, and dependent on the

confidence of the non-official members of the Legislative Council in respect of these Transferred Departments. But the budget demands of these departments were subject to the scrutiny and vote of the Legislative Council.³⁷

The new constitutional arrangements which the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan had introduced were dyarchical in character. As a matter of fact, the new Member would be a Minister for transferred subjects. It has been pointed out in an Official Gazette of the State that 'in a State, sovereignty vests in the Ruler, in the same manner as the seat of sovereignty in the British Empire vests in His Majesty. The King Emperor normally accepts the advice of his Ministers, so also His Highness the Maharaja does not in practice exercise his sovereign powers in administrative matters without first consulting the Members of His Council : In other words, His Highness is a constitutional monarch'.³⁸

The new Cooch Behar Constitution had been well received in the Indian Press. Only two instances can be cited here. The Statesman had the following comment on the subject : "while some states in India are in turbulence and tribulation about constitutional advance, others are quietly making large changes in their constitution, one of these is Cooch Behar. Now dyarchy has come in, to increase the association of the people with the state administration. The non-officials have elected one of themselves to be a Minister, Mr. Sushil Kumar Chakravarty, a subject of the state. He will from March 1 of this year be in charge of the Departments of Education, Agriculture, Industries, Registration, Court of Wards, Press and Stationary. He will be a full member of the Executive Council but for the administration of his own departments will be responsible to the non-official members of the legislature. In this piece of constitutional advance there is a model for many states."³⁹

'The Federal Law Journal of India' had the following comment on the constitutional reforms in Cooch Behar : "The Maharaja of Cooch Behar and his advisers are to be warmly congratulated on the simply and really substantial reforms that have been introduced in that state, which, commenting on the unreality of the Cochin reforms we had suggested that the proper course to be adopted if there is any real intention to grant responsible government is to appoint elected representatives of the people to the Executive Council. The State of Cooch Behar has followed the straight forward course."⁴⁰

A scheme of direct election providing adequate representation of all classes of interests amongst the people of the State was introduced in 1942 as promulgated in the Cooch Behar Legislative Act (No. III of 1942 - An Act to provide for the better representation of the people of Cooch Behar in the Legislative Council of the State).⁴¹ The framing of election rules, the organisation of electorates, the institution of electoral machinery were accomplished with remarkable speed in the early of 1942. In this way, the constitution of the legislature was fundamentally changed to afford facilities to the people of the State to be increasingly associated with the Government of the State through their accredited representatives.⁴²

Though the Ruler was the source of all authority and power in the State, he had delegated wide powers to the Executive Council, the Legislative Council and Judiciary, reserving to himself the right to decide important question involving policy.⁴³ The constitution of the Executive Council underwent a change with the appointment of Dewan Bahadur R. S. Naidu as Chief Minister of the State with effect from the 15th August, 1940. With this appointment, the designation of the three members of the Council were changed to Ministers, namely, Revenue Minister, Finance Minister and Fourth Minister respectively. The Chief Minister was appointed to be the ex-officio Vice-President of the State Council with effect from the date of his appointment.⁴⁴

Henceforth the Executive Council consisted of His Highness as its President, the Chief Minister of the State as its Vice-President⁴⁵ and three other Ministers as its members, one of whom was elected from the non-official group in the Legislative Council. All the Ministers were responsible to His Highness, the President. Each Minister was in charge of a number of departments in respect of which he exercised clearly defined administrative powers. The entire administration was carried on through well organised departments and these departments addressed their proposals, when necessary, to His Highness the President of the State Council.⁴⁶

On the other hand, the Legislative Council consisted of (a) His Highness as the President, (b) Ex-officio Members viz, the Ministers of the State including the Chief Minister who was the ex-officio Vice-President, (c) elected members viz, (i) two non-official members (one Hindu and one Mohammedan) elected by the Jotedars of the State, (ii) one member elected by the members of the legal profession of the State, (iii) five non-official members elected — one by each of the five sub-divisions of the State, namely, Sadar, Dinahata, Mathabhangra, Mekligunj and Tufangunj, (d) nominated members viz, (i) one to represent the Rajguns of the State, (ii) one to represent commerce and industry in the State, (iii) additional members not exceeding five in number appointed by His Highness. The members of the Legislative Council ask questions and move resolutions on matters of public interest subject to certain limitations. All Legislative measures passed by the Council could not have the force of law in the State until and unless they receive the assent of His Highness.⁴⁷

Cooch Behar State Intelligence Branch in its confidential report dated 17th October, 1942 pointed out that 'the constitutional and administrative reforms appear to have been working satisfactorily and effectively. Generally the intelligentsia appear to have been taking interest in the matter and are looking forward for further reforms. The village folks and uncultured sections of the masses do not appear to have understood the changes and reforms.⁴⁸ In its another report the State Intelligence Branch observed that that State Darbar's sincerity in giving effect to the electoral system for election of Members of His Highness' Legislative Council under the new rules at this critical time arising out of the war emergency which, in the ordinary course of events, would have been deferred had been greatly appreciated by the intelligentsia in general. 'But the election of only one member as people's representative in the Executive

Council was much talked about. It seemed they were eagerly looking forward for more representative bodies of the people in the Executive Council on the ground that 'a single elected member has got to agree with the official majority. It is desired by the people that number of official and non-official members should be equal.'⁴⁹

Looking ahead of the future constitutional growth and progress of the legislature, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan in his inaugural speech delivered on the 25th August, 1942 in the Legislative Council spoke as follows : "Gentlemen, you will all agree with me when I say that the object I had in view has now been fully achieved by the reconstitution of the Legislative Council, providing seats for elected representative of the subjects of the State and by the creation of a non-official majority in the legislature and by the transference of the charge of some of the most important departments — Education, Agriculture, Industries, Medicine and Public health to the Elected Minister of the State." "It will not be out of place," the Maharaja announced, "to mention here that the establishment of such a Legislative Council, as I have the satisfaction to declare open this morning, is to be found only in a few Indian States."⁵⁰

As regards the judicial system, the Rajsabha or the King's Council was the highest court in the Koch kingdom before the coming of the British Commissioners.⁵¹ The Cooch Behar High Court (without an original side) was established in 1883 by Maharaja Nripendranarayan. It exercised the same final appellate jurisdiction as was being exercised by the appellate sides of the High Courts in British India. Modelled on the lines obtaining in the Province of Bengal, it was constituted by Benches consisting of two judges, who, in case of disagreement, might refer to a full Bench composed of all the judges and presided over by His Highness.⁵²

Since the assumption of full ruling powers by Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan in 1936, reorganisation of the High Court had been engaging His Highness' particular attention. The old judicial court which consisted mainly of members of the State Executive Council was unsuited to the times and needed radical alteration. A tentative advance in the direction of separation of the judicial side of the Council from the Executive was made in June, 1939 when the personnel of the Judicial Council was supplemented by appointment of a retired District Sessions Judge of Bengal. The final constitution of the High Court, dissociated from any executive control as envisaged by His Highness, materialised in June, 1941 when His Highness established a High Court of judicature for the whole of Cooch Behar State vesting in it the powers of the final court of appeal, reference and revision, within the State, in matters both civil and criminal, but excluding from its jurisdiction the revenue matters which were left as before to be dealt with by the State Council as a Board of Revenue.⁵³

The Court next to 'Rajsabha' was Upper Adalat or Court of Appeal presided over by the judge and the third court was the Dewani Ahilkar's Court resembling the Sudder Amin's Court of British India of those days. These courts

formed the nucleus of the existing judiciary. In course of time with the reforms and changes introduced in the administration to keep pace with the developments of the judiciary in British India, the Upper Adalat was reconstituted and styled as the Civil and Sessions Judge's Court and vested with the powers both original and appellate almost similar to those of the District Judges in Bengal. Similarly, the Sudder Amin's Court came to be reconstituted and styled as the sub-divisional subordinate courts.⁵⁴

The personnel of the High Court of judicature of Cooch Behar consisted of a Chief Judge and a puisne judge. Additional puisne judges were appointed when it was necessary. The function of the High Court Judges was judicial only designedly dissociated from the executive side of the administration. The administrative control to direct and arrange its business was vested in the Chief Judge with such assistance of the puisne judge as he thought necessary.

The subordinate civil and criminal courts were organised on the same lines as the corresponding courts in the neighbouring British Districts and they administered practically the same codes of law and procedure in Cooch Behar State. There was, however, one distinction in that the functions of the Collectors and District Magistrate in a British Indian District were separated.⁵⁵ There were altogether eleven subordinate courts in the State — four at Sudder, two in each of the sub-divisions of Dinhata and Mathabhanga and one in each of the sub-divisions of Mekligunj and Tugangunj. One Civil Bench Court was started at Haldibari as an experimental measure from the 15th May, 1944.⁵⁶

Fouzdari Ahilkar (District Magistrate) was the head of criminal justice under the control of the Chief Minister of the State who was the controlling authority of the Criminal Department. Each sub-division was under the control of a Naib Ahilkar (Sub-divisional Magistrate) who administered criminal justice within the jurisdiction according to the Cooch Behar Penal Code of Criminal procedure and other laws as adopted in the State. In the sub-divisions of Sadar, Dinhata and Mathabhanga there were (besides the regular court) Honorary Bench of Magistrates who also administered criminal justice and tried the cases transferred to them by the Fouzdari Ahilkar. There was also a Bench Court at Haldibari for the same purpose.⁵⁷ The Chief Minister of the State exercised administrative control over the subordinate judiciary and held charge of the portfolio of the Departments taking within the purview of 'law and order'.⁵⁸ The Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan claimed that the personal liberties and property of his subjects were fully guaranteed by a legal system modelled over a century and a half on that prevailing in the Province of Bengal and by the adoption, mutatis mutandis, of all important British Indian Codes of law and procedure.⁵⁹

From the year of 1865-66, the courts of the State conformed to the code of Civil Procedure of the British (Act VIII of 1859). It was formally adopted in 1875, from which year the main principles of the Rent Law of British India (Act X of 1859) were also followed. The Indian Evidence Act was introduced in 1873 and the Limitation Act in 1880. The

Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Succession Certificate Act, the Control Act and many other important laws were introduced into the State after the installation of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan.

From 1941 the attention of the Legislative Council was mainly directed to make all Acts already introduced upto date by adopting all amendments of the Government Act and to introduce special legislation to suit the requirement of the times, e.g., Electricity Act, Motor Vehicles Act, Standard of Weight Act etc., Bills such as the Patents Bill, Public Health Bill, Animal Contagious Diseases Bill, the Factories Bill, the Army Bill, the Workmen's Compensation Bill etc. were then within the Select Committee. 'In the matter of Legislation', it had been officially claimed, 'the State has not in any way lagged behind the progressive movement in the Government provinces in law and procedure sanctioned by the highest authorities like the High Courts of British India.'⁶⁰ Finally, at the time of integration (1949) Cooch Behar had a High Court with two judges. The Chief Judge asked for retirement immediately after integration and puisne Judge was still carrying on.⁶¹ An Ordinance (the Cooch Behar High Court Continuation Ordinance, 1949) had been issued to reduce the number of judges in consultation with the Government Advocate and High Court Judge.⁶² A separate report was finally made to the States Ministry of the Government of India in this respect. It was considered that Cooch Behar should be brought under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta High Court.⁶³

(ii) The Municipal Government :

The history of local self-government had begun from the time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan (1863-1911) in Cooch Behar State.⁶⁴ In 1885 the Cooch Behar Town Committee Act (Act-I of 1885) based on Bengal Municipal Legislation⁶⁵ was passed. A nominated committee of ten members was created under the Act to function as a municipality for the town of Cooch Behar and the Fouzdari Ahilkar was to be the chairman. Later by an amendment of the Act in 1897 the Superintendent of the State was made the ex-officio chairman. Municipal functions performed by the town committee included maintenance of some of the roads made over to the town committee, street lighting, conservancy and drainage and maintenance of the town chowkidari force. The finance was obtained partly by taxation of properties situated in the town and partly by a state grant. In 1897, the Town Committee Act was extended to the sub-divisional towns of Dinhatra and Mathabhanga and to the bunder at Haldibari. In 1901-1902, the town committees were invested with the power of recording births and deaths, and for registration of carts plying within the town committee area and to levy a tax on cart loads of tobacco and jute coming into the town committee area. From 1903-04 the town committees were authorised to keep cattle pounds.⁶⁶

The following statement will show the receipts and expenditure of each of the above town committees during the year 1903-1904 :

Income

	Cooch Behar			Dinhata			Mathabhanga			Haldibari		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Balance of previous year	6,221	10	7	819	4	9	1,019	12	4	230	11	3
State grant	17,210	0	0	1,148	0	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	0	0
Pound Fund	3,600	0	0	200	0	0	500	0	0	-	-	-
Taxes	9,141	8	9	550	3	0	681	5	0	974	13	0
Miscellaneous	2,311	13	6	2,180	9	5	384	5	3	754	14	6
Narendra Narayan Park	600	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	39,085	0	10	4,898	1	2	4,085	6	7	3,460	6	9

Expenditure

	Cooch Behar			Dinhata			Mathabhanga			Haldibari		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Office establishment	2,786	1	0	381	0	3	290	11	0	299	15	0
Lighting charges	3,104	11	0	294	3	6	173	3	6	233	12	0
Nardendra Narayan Park	2,030	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town improvement	12,269	10	2	2,680	11	6	1,126	4	9	592	3	3
Conservancy	6,724	15	3	142	9	6	486	9	6	257	5	0
Chowkidari establishment	2,388	0	0	488	14	6	417	1	9	424	14	3
Miscellaneous	1,483	9	5	341	5	9	82	12	6	319	2	9
Total	30,287	0	6	4,278	13	0	2,576	11	0	2,227	4	3

The foregoing statements would show that the town committees largely depended on the state grants for the functions. While the Koch Behar town committee could raise a sum of little more than half the amount of the state grant, the smaller town committees mainly depended on the state grants for their existence.⁶⁷

The Cooch Behar Town Committee Act (Act of 1885) which governed the conduct of all municipalities of the State was amended on the lines of the Bengal Municipality Act of 1932. The Cooch Behar Town Committee Act was extended to Mekligunj in 1932.⁶⁸ Again, a new municipality, i.e., Tufanganj was inaugurated in 1939, thus making a total of six municipalities in the State.⁶⁹

It had been the endeavour of His Highness' Darbar to stimulate the civil sense of existing municipalities and

to found new municipalities as occasion justified. There were altogether six municipalities working within the territory of the State under the name of 'Town Committees'.⁷⁰ The Cooch Behar Town Committee Act (Act-I of 1885) which governed the conduct of all municipalities in the State had been amended on the lines of the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932 and Cooch Behar Town Committee (Amendment) Act (No. XI of 1942) had been passed in 1942.⁷¹

The following statement would show the area, the number of houses, of males and females and total population of each of the towns of Cooch Behar state according to the census of 1941 :⁷²

Name of towns	Area (sq. mile)	Number of house	Male	Female	Total Population
1. Cooch Behar	2.2	3,082	9,599	6,401	16,000
2. Dinhata	0.5	717	2,338	1,198	3,536
3. Mathabhanga	0.4	543	1,944	1,064	3,008
4. Mekligunj	0.2	186	836	462	1,298
5. Haldibari	0.5	409	1,076	492	1,568
6. Tufangunj	0.3	251	892	520	1,412
Total	4.1	5,180	16,684	10,137	26,821

From the foregoing statement it can be seen that 26 people per thousand live in the towns of the State. Compared with other parts of Bengal, Cooch Behar State is very rural in character. The following statement would show the rate of increase of urban population in the State in the period between 1881 and 1941.⁷³

Urban Population

Year	Number	Increase of population in each decade	Percentage of increase
1881	9,536	—	—
1891	11,491	+1,956	+2.06%
1901	14,060	+2,569	+22.3%
1911	15,794	+1,734	+12.3%
1921	17,261	+1,467	+9.3%
1931	18,030	+769	+4.5%
1941	26,821	+8,791	+48.8%
Total	Increase	17,286	+181.9%

From the foregoing statement it can be noticed that the urban population of Cooch Behar State had increased rapidly during the last sixty years and its number almost tripled during this period. The increase of urban population had thus made considerable impact on the society and consequently, the rural people showed an increasing tendency of upward mobility towards the towns of the State.⁷⁴

As a matter of fact, the rate of municipal taxation was low throughout the State and the income from the municipal sources being inadequate for a satisfactory progress of municipal improvement, substantial grants-in-aid were made from state funds.⁷⁵ In 1944, the Cooch Behar Municipal Act (Act No. III of 1944) was passed.⁷⁶ the Town Committee of Cooch Behar was converted into a municipality.⁷⁶ But its all members were nominated and it began to function from 6th January, 1946.⁷⁷ The previous functions of the town Committee remained and additional functions were allotted like sanctioning of building plans, powers to demolish dangerous buildings, action for food adulteration etc.⁷⁸

Another notable change in the development of local self-government had been effected in 1946. The department of local self-government was placed under the Fourth Minister of the Executive Council who had been elected by the elected members of the State Legislative Council and was responsible to them. Apart from this, His Highness gave his assent to the appointment of a non-official as the Vice-Chairman of the Cooch Behar Municipality.⁷⁹

According to the Annual Administrative Report of the State for the year 1944-1945, there were six municipalities in the State, viz., Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Mekligunj, Tugangunj and Haldibari. Their main functions as stated by the above mentioned report were : (a) to look after conservancy of the town, (b) to control epidemic, (c) to do some other public utility calculated to promote health, comfort and convenience of the inhabitants. The moffusil municipalities had got their own qualified mid-wives for the benefit of the public. The general public at Cooch Behar got help of the mid-wife attached to the Medical Department. Their free services were always available.⁸⁰

Another significant development in the history of local self-government was that municipal elections in Cooch Behar Town took place in 1949. An uncontested return took place in one constituency and in eight constituencies contest took place. The State Darbar had nominated the Chairman of the Municipality from among elected numbers. A properly elected municipality had begun to function from 1st July, 1949.⁸¹ Under the Cooch Behar Municipality Act only the tax payers and those having passed the matriculation examination were entitled to voting rights.⁸² The only Municipality in Cooch Behar State was the Cooch Behar Municipality while the Town Committees of Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Mekligunj, Tufangunj, Mekligunj and Haldibari were still functioning as before.⁸³

The following table will show the distribution of rural and urban population of Cooch Behar State from 1921 to 1941 (Number).⁸⁴

1921		1931		1941	
Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
5,75,228	17,261	5,72,856	18,030	6,14,020	26,822

Again the following table would show the percentage of urban population to total population in Cooch Behar State from 1921 to 1941 compared to other North Bengal Districts as well as West Bengal. From this table it can be seen that the growth of urban population in Cooch Behar State and other North Bengal Districts excepting Darjeeling during the above-mentioned period was dismally low, whereas the growth of urban population in West Bengal as a whole was much higher than the former.⁸⁵

Percentage of Urban population to total population : 1921-1941 : Number

Districts or State	1921	1931	1941
Cooch Behar State	2.91	3.05	4.18
Jalpaiguri	2.09	2.53	3.28
Darjeeling	10.63	13.61	15.45
West Dinajpur	—	1.13	1.19
Malda	2.51	2.75	3.22
West Bengal	14.67	16.25	21.25

The following table will show receipts and expenditure of municipalities of Cooch Behar State from 1941-1950. From this table it can be noticed that during this period as a whole the amounts of receipts of the municipalities were bigger than their expenditure, and hence they were financially self-sufficient and did not have to depend on the state grants as they did earlier.⁸⁶

Receipts and Expenditure of Municipalities 1941-50

(In Rupees)

Sl. No.	Name of Municipality	1941-42		1942-43		1943-44		1944-45		1945-46	
		Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1.	Cooch Behar Municipality	69275	71176	64617	66675	72122	69493	79399	72554	84916	78343
2.	Dinhata Town Committee	8653	8322	8639	8432	9216	8640	11167	9542	15467	14193
3.	Mathabhanga Committee	11711	10950	8729	7396	8509	7007	21875	20002	9531	8577
4.	Mekligunj committee	4376	3666	4195	4195	4786	3526	4486	3511	4,900	7477
5.	Tufangunj Committee	8110	4252	8507	4145	4416	4546	5746	5269	5426	4848
6.	Haldbari Committee	7805	7704	8819	7490	7906	7452	9908	9232	15522	15522

Sl. No.	Name of Municipality	1946-47		1947-48		1948-49		1949-50		1950-51	
		Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.	Recpt.	Expen.
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1.	Cooch Behar Municipality	111254	104110	126269	107709	150886	134430	154682	149103	189674	176265
2.	Dinhata Town Committee	14366	12740	17405	14307	20950	16564	24077	19054	25150	27297
3.	Mathabhanga Committee	13075	11951	14962	14113	14486	14376	29276	28895	29040	21518
4.	Mekligunj committee	4378	3955	4593	4562	4484	4482	4904	4803	5876	5512
5.	Tufangunj Committee	6351	5363	6014	6646	8582	5830	8860	8770	10225	6904
6.	Haldibari Committee	17656	17656	18742	18742	21341	21341	19445	19445	19246	19246

(Source : Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar)

(iii) The Panchayeti System :

As has been noted earlier, Cooch Behar State was overwhelmingly a rural territory. The following table will show the distribution of rural and urban population and the percentage of rural population to total population of the State from 1901 to 1941 A.D.⁸⁸

Year	Rural	Urban	Number
			Percentage of rural population to total population
1901	5,51,056	14,060	97.51
1911	5,75,218	15,794	97.33
1921	5,75,228	17,261	97.40
1931	5,71,023	18,030	96.94
1941	6,11,882	26,821	95.60

No details are available of the kind of rural administration in Cooch Behar State prior to 1864. There was, however, an institution known as Dewania. These Dewanias were large Jotedars residing on their farms and their tenants resided in the neighbouring areas. There had been no survey or settlement of the State and the tenants were completely under the thumb of the Jotedars or Dewanias.⁸⁹ These Dewanias reigned as civil head of the community, and adjusted disputes among his relatives and dependants.⁹⁰ Much depended upon the personal character and temperament of the individual Dewania, for good or for evil he reigned supreme and the only redress any one had against his vagaries was to appeal to the Rajsabha. After the land revenue settlement operations in the State, the power of the Dewanias was reduced to a great extent and people then had a recorded right in their land which the State acknowledged.⁹¹

As people began to amass money and household property, and as they became more exposed to the depredations of petty malefactors, they began to feel the necessity of some organisation for their security. In 1876, some petitions were sent to the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar State for organizing a village Chowkidary system on the pattern prevailing in the neighbouring districts of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. The chief inhabitants of the taluks prayed to the State for investing the Chowkidars, to be nominated and paid by them, with police functions and a badge as the symbol of office. This prayer was granted and the body increased until in 1882-83 there were 1,576 chowkidars in the State. As it became increasingly difficult to pay this large body of men regularly by raising subscriptions it was proposed to pass an Act to place the villages under a regular contribution according to the valuation of their holdings. The Cooch Behar Village Chowkidary Act (Act III of 1893) was thus passed in 1893.⁹² This Act provided for Chowkidari Unions and for one Panchayet in each union to be a Collecting Panchayet.⁹³ The main object of the said Cooch Behar Act was to maintain village chowkidars and regularise their duties in distinct village unions formed for the purpose under the management of members of Panchayet appointed for the respective Unions. The members of a Panchayet were residents of the Unions; they were not more than five, nor less than three for each Union and were appointed by the Foujdari Ahilkar (District Magistrate).⁹⁴ The number of Chowkidars in the State came upto 1,577 at the end of 1899-1900.⁹⁵

As the years rolled on, certain maladies began to afflict the workings of the Panchayeti system. Thus after a period of 20 years of introduction of the Panchayeti system in the State, the Fouzdari Ahilkar made the following observation during the year 1912-13, "The Collecting Panchayets with a few exceptions worked tolerably well. It may here be observed, however, that complaints against the Collecting Panchayets for non-payment of chowkidari pay have been increasing year by year. In a few cases, it was found that these Panchayets appropriated the money collected by them from the people to their own use and difficulty was experienced in making these Panchayets disgorge the money so spent. It has now become a matter for consideration, whether the existing procedures should be continued any longer or the rules adopted by the Government for payment to Chowkidars should not with advantage be adopted and enforced in the State. The Sub-divisional Officers are being requested to favour us with an expression of their opinion on the matter and a special report will be submitted when these views are known."⁹⁶

But the efforts initiated by the State Authority had failed to wipe out the evils afflicting the Panchayeti system. It was evident by the following statement by the Vice-President, the Regency Council, in his Annual Administration Report for the year 1925-26, "The work of the collecting members of the Panchayets was not satisfactory. The number of complaints received from Chowkidars of non-payment of their wages in time was large. Steps are being taken to introduce a system of payment to the Chowkidars of their salaries at the thanas once a quarter in the presence of the Gazetted Officers."⁹⁷ Besides, the attendance was unsatisfactory and the work of the Rural Police in

the matter of reporting births and deaths and epidemics was also unsatisfactory.⁹⁸

The total number of Chowkidars was 1,586 ; the total number of the members of Panchayets was 1,914 ; the total number of collecting members of Panchayets was 374 and the total number of villages served was 1209 during the year 1925-26. The maximum and minimum pay of the Chowkidars continued to be Rs. 6 and Rs. 4-8-6 respectively.⁹⁹ The laws as in force in Bengal (Bengal Act VI of 1870, Bengal Act 1 of 1871 and Bengal Act VIII of 1922 with subsequent modifications and rules of Chowkidari Manual in force in Bengal) was introduced with necessary modification in this State by Act III of 1893, Act III of 1894, Act III of 1896, Act II of 1904, Act IV of 1906 and the Regency Council Notification dated the 1st August, 1926.¹⁰⁰

The appointment and duties of Panchayets were determined according to the aforesaid Acts and were substantially the same as in places in Bengal where the Bengal Government Acts mentioned above, were in force. Union Boards including Union Benches and Union Courts as established in Government Districts under Bengal Act V of 1919 (Bengal Village Self- government Act, 1919) were not in existence in Cooch Behar State.¹⁰¹

It is worth remembering the observation of S.C. Majumdar, Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar State on the Chowkidari system. He pointed out in 1938 that 'the current chowkidari system in this State is very old and out of date as compared to the system that was vogue in the neighbouring districts and elsewhere in Bengal even before the introduction of the Union Board system. The Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act III of 1893 appears to have been compiled on the lines of the Bengal Village Chowkidari Act VI of 1870. But the former was modified only upto 1904 (by Act III of 1894, Act III of 1896, Act VII of 1898 and Act II of 1904) by adopting as far as practicable, the Bengal rules which had been framed upto that year (1904) only, while the Bengal chowkidari Act of VI of 1870 was modified upto the year 1922 and was supplemented by the Bengal Chowkidari Manual of 1923 containing about 243 rules laying down elaborate instructions on the working of the Bengal Chowkidari Act.' Therefore, the Superintendent of Police considered it necessary that with a view to improving the efficiency of the Cooch Behar Rural Police, the present chowkidari system be overhauled and the Bengal Chowkidari Act as amended upto 1922 and the Bengal Chowkidari Manual of 1923 be adopted 'mutatis mutandis.'¹⁰² Apart from this, there were some main drawbacks of the present chowkidari system as pointed out by the Superintendent of Police of Cooch Behar in 1938, which are given below :

(a) Under section I of the Bengal Chowkidari Act every member of the Panchayet was appointed for a terms of three years. This rule was not adopted in Cooch Behar State. This term of three years at a stretch improved the popularity of Panchayeti system and also the interest and efficiency of the members.

(b) Panchayeti was generally unpopular in this State and one of the main causes of this was that the

number of Chowkidars allotted to a collecting Panchayet being in most cases very small, the 10 percent they got out of the total collections of chowkidari tax, very unfavourably compared with the drudgery of collection. The number of defaulting collecting Panchayets who had to be distrained every year in this State, was rather shocking.

(c) Another deplorable fact was that the divisions of Unions in the 'Village Crime Note Book of the State Police' did not tally with the existing Chowkidari Union, whereas in Bengal they were identically the same. This division of Unions in the aforesaid Note Book was made in 1918. It was evident that this was done quite independently of the then existing Chowkidari Unions and the result had been that police work in connection with the aforesaid Note Book now became exceedingly complicated.

(d) In Bengal the normal number of houses that were allotted to each Chowkidar was from 100 to 120. But in this State, except in Kotwali and Tufangunj Thanas scarcely 20% of Chowkidars had got more than 60 houses to their share. Consequently, the average number of Chowkidars in this State was unnecessarily large as compared with those of Bengal.

(e) The main drawback of the chowkidari system in Cooch Behar was the absence of the post of Daffadars. These Daffadars were important factor of the rural police in Bengal. Like the Chowkidars, Daffadars were appointed under the provision of section 35 of the Bengal Chowkidari Act II of 1870, which corresponded with section XV of the Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act III of 1893. In Bengal there was one or two Daffadars to every Union. They not only exercised general supervision over the work of Chowkidars but in point of fact, formed an important link between the Police and the Chowkidars. Ordinarily they were the main source of the Police for the collection of rural intelligence and were of a great help to them in the detection and prevention of crime.

(f) Another drawback was the absence of the President in Panchayet system. In Bengal the Presidents were invested with certain special powers, duties and functions such as powers of arresting persons committing offence in his presence (Section 64 Criminal Procedure Code), of ordering unlawful assemblies to disperse and of compelling them to disperse by the use of civil force (Sections 127, 128, Cr.P.C.), to be the headman for the purpose of section 45(3) Cr.P.C., to be visitor of all Upper and Lower primary schools and all pounds, public ferries and public serais in his Union and to enquire into all cases of unnatural death when there was no suspicion of suicide or foul play. With all the above powers and functions and in addition, revenue and criminal processes other than warrants of arrest, search and distraint were addressed to the Presidents for service through Daffadars and Chowkidars and they were also appointed as local registrars of births and deaths.¹⁰³

The Superintendent of Police finally suggested that "the Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act III of 1893 was

compiled on the lines of the Bengal Village Chowkidari Act II of 1870, but while the latter has been modified from time to time upto the year 1922, the Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act was modified by adopting the Bengal rules as modified only upto 1904. It is therefore necessary that the Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act should be brought up to date through (a) amending the Cooch Behar Chowkidari Act by adopting the rules of the Bengal Village Chowkidari Act as amended upto 1922, and (b) adopting 'mutatis mutandis' the Bengal Chowkidary Manual of 1923."¹⁰⁴

Likewise, the Fauzdari Ahilkar was of the opinion that law and rules regarding Chowkidars in force in this State were very old, though the same was based on Government law and rules, now there was much difference between them and the rules in force in Bengal, for the reason that in Bengal the Village Chowkidari Act had been repealed long ago by Bengal Village Self -Government Act (Bengal Act V of 1912). Therefore, according to him, the law and rules now in force in Bengal regarding Daffadars and Chowkidars as embodied in Bengal Village Self -Government Act (Bengal Act V of 1919) should be introduced in Cooch Behar State and then the State would be on a par with British Indian Districts.¹⁰⁵

It is to be noted here that difficulties in the working of the Chowkidari system as modified by the Bengal Village Self -Government Act, 1919 were felt by the Government of Bengal. Consequently by Government's Resolution No. 2954 PL, dated the 28th July, 1938 a Committee was appointed to enquire into the working of the Chowkidari system throughout the Province of Bengal with Mr. E.N. Blandy, C.I.E., I.C.S. as President to 'examine and advise Government on the policing of rural areas and on matters relating to organisation, efficiency and working of the Chowkidari system in Bengal.'¹⁰⁶

Taking all these factors into consideration the State Government also felt the necessity for reforming the present Chowkidari system obtaining in the State and passed the Cooch Behar Village Chowkidari Amended Act (No. VIII of 1941) in 1941. As regards duties of the Panchayets they were now similar to what were in force in Bengal. Their duties were mainly concerned with speedy communication of information about occurrence of crime (e.g. - murder, rape, dacoity, riot etc.) and other matters mentioned in section 45 of the Criminal Procedure Code to the Police Stations or to the nearest Magistrates, with assistance in maintaining village peace and with moving local authorities for requirements of the villages in respect of roads, sanitation, water supply, education, medical or veterinary assistance and the like matters. In some cases, They were also invested with the work of registration of vital statistics.¹⁰⁷

The following table shows the number of Chowkidars, Panchayets and their collecting members during the year 1944-45 together with number of villages served by them and also the number of President Panchayets appointed in the State under sections 3 of the Cooch Behar Village Chowkidari Amendment Act (No. VIII of 1941) :¹⁰⁸

No of <u>Chowkidars</u>	No of <u>Panchayets</u>	No of collecting Members	No of President <u>Panchayets</u>	No of villages served
1,560	1,618	400	35	1,209

The proportion of Chowkidars to population during the year 1944-45 was 1 to 379 and to area was 1 to 83 of a square mile.¹⁰⁹ Maximum and minimum pay of the Chowkidars was Rs. 6 and Rs. 4 respectively during the year 1942-43.¹¹⁰ The following table shows the demand and realisation of the Chowkidari Fund for the year 1944-45.

		Rs.
1. Total amount of annual fund deduction		6,100
2. Balance of the previous year		3,200
	Total	9,300
3. Amount realised during the year		5,977
4. Amount remained unrealised on the 31st March, 1945		3,323
5. Amount of fine realised		562
6. Amount of penalty		24
7. Miscellaneous		1,727
8. Total of items 3,5,6 and 7		8,290
9. Interest on Government Promissory Notes		547
	Total	8,897

The opening balance by the chowkidari fund during the year 1944-45 was Rs. 20,952-10-1 and the balance carried over at the end of the year was Rs. 23,585-6-10.¹¹¹ The table below shows the number of Extradition Warrants issued from the State and received back after execution as well as the number received and returned after execution by the State during the year 1943-44 and 1944-45.¹¹²

	1943-44	1944-45
Extradition Warrants issued from the State	14	16
Extradition Warrants received back	7	1
Extradition Warrants received back unexecuted	7	1
Extradition Warrants received by the State	8	14
Extradition Warrants returned by the State after execution	5	12
Extradition Warrants returned by the State unexecuted	3	1

The Secretary to the Resident for the Eastern States in a confidential letter dated the 4th April, 1944, to the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State asked the latter to let him know whether experience showed that Panchayets tended to increase good relations between State officials and the population or merely to make the latter more vocally critical of the former, and the whether in fact they made for collaboration or for irresponsible criticism.¹¹³ In reply the Chief Minister informed him that "experience shows that the system is helpful for the purpose for which it is intended. The members have no much say in influencing good relations or otherwise between State officials and the population ; but it is a fact that they collaborate with the local administration in any work cast upon them. Critical appreciation of the works of State officials is gradually perceptible ; but it's true that the members as they stand now do not make the people more vocally critical of the State officials or that they make for irresponsible criticism." Finally it should be mentioned here that the Chowkidari Panchayets under 'the Cooch Behar Village Chowkidari Amendment Act', 1941 continued to function in Cooch Behar State until the State was merged with the Indian Union in August, 1949.¹¹⁴

In conclusion, it deserves particular mention that the internal administration of the Princely States and their political set up varied greatly. There was a very wide difference in the degree of administrative efficiency by the most advanced and the most backward States. According to the information circulated by the Chamber of Princes in 1946, over 60 States had set up some form of legislative bodies. In several others, schemes for associating people with the governance of their States were under consideration. However, in most of the cases, the development of representative institutions did not approximate to the growth of self-governing institutions in the British Indian Provinces, which were on the threshold of complete freedom. 'But everywhere there was a growing consciousness of the rights and liberties of the people and a new spirit was abroad'.¹¹⁵

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CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE STATE

Section- I

Agriculture, Industry, and Trade and Commerce

Shinkichi Taniguchi, the Japanese scholar, wrote that after the fall of the successors of the great kingdom of Kamarupa in the 13th and 14th centuries, many petty tribal kingdoms emerged in this part of India. The Koch kingdom was one of them. These kingdoms were mostly tribal in their agrarian structure as well as in social system. When these petty kingdoms attained a sufficiently large production base through the introduction of advanced systems of agriculture, the ruling sections of these kingdoms started to embrace Hinduism. Since the 15th century changes in their agriculture from shifting type to settled one using a plough brought about changes in land ownership. These changes were closely associated with the rise of a group of rich peasants (Jotedars), and also with the increasing involvement of the tribal people in the outer and wider economy personified by merchants cum money-lenders. These political and socio - economic changes went side by side with very remarkable changes in tribal society and culture.¹

It is needless to say, agriculture constituted the main occupation of the people of the Koch kingdom from the early days. For the purpose of irrigation, the villages generally grew up around the river side. Agriculture was looked upon as noble profession by the people including those of the Brahmanas.² Manual labour was never looked upon with any odium or disgrace.³ Here it may be pointed out that Haridas (Haria) who became the Mondal or the king of Chiknajhara used to plough lands and produce "Karpasa" (cotton).⁴

The villages in India played a significant part in the economic life of the people of India from the early days, that is to say, the people lived a rural life with agriculture as their chief occupation. A noted scholar has pointed out that 'like other parts of Bengal the largest number of people of Cooch Behar State were also agriculturists and lived in villages.'⁵ In the words of Captain Lewin, the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar State during 1875-1876, "The entire State is divided into small farms, and upon each farm (locally known as a jot) is built the home of the farmer, with the houses of his immediate relatives, and perhaps an undertenant or two. Hence the whole country, throughout its length and breadth, consists of small circles of cultivation, each with its central homestead, shut in and embosomed in bamboo, plantain and other quickly growing trees."⁶ As a matter of fact, land was the most important source of income of the Cooch Behar State. In order to absorb the growing population cultivation had been extended since the time of the first settlement (1870-72) either through a system of inducement such as changes in the mode of assessment

or through outright state pressure.⁷

Cooch Behar was, as of now, pre-eminently an agricultural princely state. With the exception of potters, barbers, drum-beaters, washermen and fishermen, there was almost no other section of the people which did not largely depend upon agriculture for their subsistence. All other occupations or professions were pursued in addition and were supplementary to agriculture.⁸ According to the census of 1921, of the total population of the state 5,25,496 or 88.7 percent were supported by agriculture, 15,444 or 2.6 percent by industries, 26,311 or 4.4 percent by commerce, 5,630 or 0.1 percent by professions and 19,608 or 3.3 percent by other occupations. There was one rent-receiver to 42 cultivators.⁹ In 1940, the total area of Cooch Behar state was 8,50,766.33 acres and the cultivated area was 5,67,042.66 acres. In the same year the total revenue from land amounted to Rs. 17,98,984.¹⁰

Agriculture was then, as of now, 'gamble in rains'. The failure of rains means a sure famine. Means of artificial irrigation like canals and tanks were few. The methods of cultivation were old and primitive. Implements were few and over wide areas, practically the only mechanical aid to cultivation was the plough.¹¹ In matters connected with agriculture as in other things the people had their peculiar superstition. New modes of cultivation or the rearing of new crops were regarded with fear as being incongruous. In other words, the system of agriculture which obtained in the state several generations ago thus remained unaltered.¹²

The soil of Cooch Behar is of alluvial formation and has a large admixture of sand. The greater portion of it is a light loam that can retain moisture and easily give it out and does not become water-logged. When dry it does not cake up, but yields to light pressure and easily gets dissolved. Ploughing is not thus difficult and does not entail much labour on the cultivator or his cattle. Although the soil differs in character in different parts of the state and even in different portion of the same taluk.¹³

Almost every cultivator had cattle of his own and used cowdung and litter as manure for his tobacco, sugarcane, jute, mustard seed, wheat and barley as far as his own supply went. Little or no manure was applied to the soil in the case of other crops. Oil-cake was also sometimes used as manure. The abundant and generally seasonable rainfall enabled the cultivator to do without irrigation. The soil also retained sufficient moisture. Tobacco plants however needed frequent watering both in the nursery and in the field.¹⁴ Thus a small area of the tobacco crop was irrigated and specially near the river banks. Irrigation was not practised on any other crop of the state.¹⁵ Droughts were of exceedingly rare occurrence in the state.¹⁶ A cheap and simple process of irrigation could however largely improve the condition of agriculture in the state.¹⁷ In 1943, the total area irrigated in the state from the wells (15,897.66 acres) and other sources (348.00 acres) was 16,245.66 acres.¹⁸

On the subject of irrigation, the Post-War Reconstruction Conference held at the Lansdownee Hall on the

25th and 26th February, 1944 expressed the opinion that 'irrigation is not a crying need in the state being an area of heavy rainfall.... Moreover, the state being intersected by a very large number of rivers any project to use river water for irrigation by constructing drains and canals would be extremely costly. The surface soil and sub-soil being very sandy the rivers dammed up might change course or the canals may develop into uncontrollable rivers very quickly. The Conference therefore were of the opinion that only small irrigation projects of local value 'may be taken up of which the administration should advise the P.W.D. of the demand who would make necessary surveys and prepare plans and estimates and execute the works. The appointment of a Special Irrigation Officer for the purpose was also recommended.¹⁹

Crops : Rice formed, as of now, the staple crop and was divided into two classes, namely, bitri (early rice) and haimanti (winter rice), each of which was sub-divided into a great many varieties. The winter rice was much the more important crop. The other principal crops were jute, tobacco and mustard, Jute and tobacco were paying crops. Wheat, barley, pulses, maize, tij, sunhemp, sugarcane and the millets like cheena (panicum millaceum) and vegetables were grown in the state on a small scale. Bamboos grew extensively in the state. As for the rotation of crops, bitri rice and jute generally followed mustard seed, pulses, wheat, barley and tij. Haimanti rice was sometimes grown after the bitri rice was harvested. Jute and tobacco were also sometimes successively grown on the same land, but as both these crops required manuring this rotation was not largely followed.²⁰

The following were the principal crops which were produced in the state, namely :-²¹

- | | | | |
|------|-------------|----------|--|
| I. | Rice | | |
| II. | (a) Cereals |(a) | 1. Wheat
2. barley
3. Cheena (millet)
4. Kaon
5. Maize |
| | (b) Pulses |(b) | 1. Khesari
2. Musuri
3. Matar
4. Kalai
5. Mung |
| III. | Oilseeds | ..... | Rape and mustard |
| IV. | Sugar | ..... | Sugarcane |
| V. | Fibers | ..... | Jute |

VI.	Drugs and narcotics	Tobacco
VII.	Root crops	Potato

All of these crops were raised in every part of the state in a more or less degree. With the exception of paddy all other crops were only of a secondary nature and the extent of their cultivation was not large.²² The following table will show the total area sown with crops in the state during the year 1939 - 40.²³

Total area sown with crops in Cooch Behar State during the year 1939-1940.

Cooch Behar State		Mekli- gunj	Matha- Bhanga	Lal- bazar	Dinhata	Cooch- Behar	Tufan- gunj	Total
English or Vernacular Names		Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres	Acres
Food grains	1. Rice.....	69235.33	81815.66	63537.33	98172	112431	63458.33	488649.66
	2. Wheat.....	86.66	6.33	48.33	655	956.66	235	1988
	3. Kaon.....	57.33	62.66	7.33	207.66	18.66	42.33	396
	4. Cheena.....	1.66	10.66	0.33	20.66	39	3.66	76
	5. Other food grains..... including pulses	128.33	421.66	157.33	3556	2739.33	1122	8118.66
Total		69509.31	82316.97	63744.65	1023641.32	116184.65	64857.66	499228.33
Oilseeds	6. Mustard.....	325.66	888.66	2342.33	6348.33	11879	13615.66	35397.66
Total		325.66	888.66	2342.33	6348.33	11879	13615.66	35397.66
Sugar	7. Sugarcane.....	25.66	10.00	73.00	27.66	9.33	17.66	163.33
Total		25.66	10.00	73.00	27.66	9.33	17.66	163.33
Fibres	8. Jute.....	13836	7911.33	4829.33	9080	6883.66	2316.66	44857
Total		13836	7911.33	4829.33	9080	6883.66	2316.66	44857
Drugs and Narcotics	9. Tobacco.....	6352.33	14096.33	13734.33	11562.66	12068.33	1056	58870
Total		6352.33	14096.33	13734.33	11562.66	12068.33	1056	58870
10. Potato including root crops....		96.33	20.66	27.66	443	258	237.66	1083.33
Grand Total		90143.29	105243.95	84751.30	130072.97	147282.97	82104.96	639549.66
11. Area sown more than once....		11647.66	7524	3846.66	31191	12530	5817.66	72557
12. Net area sown during the year		78495.66	97720	80904.66	98882	134753	76287.33	567042.65

Although paddy was grown all over the state there were special tracts known for the excellence and abundance of this crop. The western portion of Pargana Mekligang, the northern portion of Pargana Mathabhanga, a tract in the north of Pargana Cooch Behar known as Gird Chowra and almost the whole of Paragana Tufangang were well-known paddy producing areas.²⁴ Mustard-seed formed one of the staple crops of Tufangang which raised this crop very extensively. The supply of oil in the greater portion of the state was obtained from that pargana. Tobacco was, as of now, one of the principal crops of the state and the most profitable of all agricultural products of the people. With the exception of the north of Cooch Behar and Tufanganj the cultivation of tobacco was extensive almost everywhere else. Lalbazar Pargana was specially famous for the excellence of its tobacco. This crop was, as of now, also very largely raised in Mekligang, Mathabhanga and Dinhata, and formed one of the staple products of agriculture of those areas. The traffic in tobacco was large, and the people made a good deal of money by it. Tobacco was sent down in boats to the eastern districts of Bengal in large quantities. During the early days the Burmese merchants annually used to take away thousands of maunds of tobacco from Mekliganj and Lalbazar. The value of the annual exports of this crop was about 10 lakhs of rupees as early as 1876. A very small portion of tobacco remained in the state, and that only for home consumption.²⁵ Even after partition of the country, Cooch Behar alone supplied about 72 percent of the total tobacco output of West Bengal.²⁶

Of the manufactural crops jute was one of the principal crops of the people. It was, as of now, largely grown in every part of the state. The traffic in this article was large and had helped the springing up of Bundars all over the state. Haldibari owed its prosperity to jute traffic only. The jute grown in this state had fine fibre, and in demand in Calcutta. It fetched better price than most other jute. The cultivation of sugarcane, another manufactural crop was extensive in the south - west of Dinhata and in the south of Lalbazar. The cultivation of this crop was gradually extending to every part of the state. Besides raising the crop the people drew juice from it and prepared molasses out of the same. Sugarcane paid better than paddy or mustard - seed.²⁷ The following is the statement showing the approximate area under different principal crops and the yield during the year 1919.²⁸

Statement showing the approximate area under different principal crops and the yield during the year, 1919.

Sl. No.	Name of Pargana	Total area of pargana in square miles	Percent of total area of pargana under jute	Total area in acres under jute.	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area under tobacco	Total area in acres under tobacco	Yield per acre in maund	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area under paddy	Total area in acres under paddy	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area of pargana under mustard	Total area in acres under mustard	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds
1.	Cooch Behar	309	4	8,000	15	1,20,000	4	8,000	15	1,20,000	30	60,000	18	10,80,000	3	5,750	5	28,750
2.	Mathabhanga	230	4	6,000	15	90,000	8	12,000	15	1,80,000	30	45,000	18	8,10,000	1	1,500	5	7,500
3.	Tufanganj	190	4	4,800	15	72,000	1	1,200	15	18,000	35	42,500	18	7,65,000	4	4,800	5	24,000

Sl. No.	Name of Pargana	Total area of pargana in square miles	Percent of total area of pargana under jute	Total area in acres under jute.	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area under tobacco	Total area in acres under tobacco	Yield per acre in maund	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area under paddy	Total area in acres under paddy	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds	Percent of total area of pargana under mustard	Total area in acres under mustard	Yield per acre in maunds	Total yield in maunds
4.	Dinhala	209	4	5,250	15	78,750	4	5,250	15	80,000	40	55,000	18	9,90,000	1.5	2,000	5	10,000
5.	Laibazar	176	2	2,250	15	33,750	10	11,250	15	4,68,750	35	40,000	18	7,20,000	1	1,000	5	5,000
6.	Mekli gunge	193	5	6,000	15	90,000	3.5	43,000	15	64,500	33	40,000	18	7,20,000	1	1,200	5	6,000
	Total	1,307	—	32,300	—	4,84,500	—	42,000	—	6,31,250	—	2,82,500	—	50,85,000	—	16,250	—	81,250

Prices of Chief Agricultural Products : With the opening up of the state by roads and railways and the facility thus afforded to the export trade the prices of food-grains were gradually rising. In the times of old Maharajas food stuff was extremely cheap, probably because what was grown in the state remained in it, and few people had any occasion to buy food. There had been an increase in the price of other articles also. The table showing variation of the prices of different articles during the four decades ranging from 1870 to 1900 has already been furnished in the following chapter.²⁹ This increasing trends in the prices of the principal crops continued in the later decades under our study. The following sub-joined table gives the names of the principal crops cultivated in the state, the time of their cultivation and reaping as well as their appearance in the market, together with the out turn and market price during the 1920s :³⁰

Name of crops	Month or Months during which cultivated	Month or Months during which harvested	Month or Months when available in market	Average outturn in maunds per bigha		Average value per Maund of 80 tola seer			Net income of the cultivator from one bigha		
				Md	Sr	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Haimanti Paddy	May to August	Nov' to January	Nov' to June	6	0	3	8	0	10	8	0
Bitri Paddy	Feb. to March	June to August	July to October	7	20	2	15	0	11	0	0
Tobacco	Sept. to November	March to April	May to September	5	0	18	1	0	45	2	8
Potato	Sept. to November	Feb. to March	Feb. to April	12	0	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jute	April	August to September	September to Decr.	5	0	10	3	0	25	7	6
Mustard seed	October	January to February	January to March	1	20	8	8	0	6	6	0
Wheat	October to November	March	March to April	6	0	4	12	0	13	2	0
Cheena	January	March	March to April	6	0	3	3	0	9	9	0
Kaon	January	May	May to June	8	0	2	15	0	11	12	0
Pulses	August to September	March	March to April	3	0	5	3	0	7	11	6

It can be seen from the foregoing table that tobacco was the most profitable agricultural crop. Next came jute. But net income derivable from mustard-seed was rather little.

But there had been considerable fall in the prices of all agricultural crops owing to the economic depression which commenced in the state in the year 1930-31.³¹ During the year 1931-32, the price of common rice ranged from Rs. 2-14 to Rs. 4-2 per maund ; of tobacco from Rs. 5-8 to Rs. 15 per maund ; of mustard seed from Rs. 2-12 to Rs. 4-8 per maund ; and of jute from Rs. 2-12 to Rs. 6-10 per maund. From the foregoing figures it will be seen that the price of paddy and that of the other chief crops of the state were much lower than those of the previous year owing to the trade depression and the economic condition of the people consequently was not good.³²

But the state gradually recovered itself from the unabated fury of the economic depression and there was again upward trend in the prices of agricultural produce in the later years, particularly after the termination of the Second World War. In September, 1946 the price of haimanti paddy was Rs. 5-12-0 per maund, of common rice was Rs. 11 per maund, of tobacco was Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 per maund, of mustard seed was Rs. 16 per maund, of jute was Rs. 16 to Rs. 20 per maund, and of mustard oil was Rs. 70.³³ The prices of the agricultural products continued to rise in subsequent years also. In September, 1947, the price of common rice was Rs. 24 to Rs. 32, of haimanti paddy was Rs. 14 to 16, of bitri paddy was Rs. 11 to 13 ; of mustard seed was Rs. 22 ; of jute was Rs. 22 to 24 ; and of tobacco was Rs. 80 to Rs. 100.³⁴

The State Government's efforts towards Agricultural Improvement : The backwardness of agriculture throughout the state was remarkable, the more so as the climate was so favourable. Not only was the variety and in some cases the quality of the crops grown, exceedingly meagre, but the implements of agriculture were absolutely primitive and agricultural livestock were of the poorest quality. No attempt was made, it has been argued, to exploit the possibilities which the soil and the climate held out but the cultivators went on doggedly growing rice, tobacco and jute again and again. It mattered not that the situation of his land was much better suited for the growth of other crops. The cultivators pinned his faith on rice, tobacco and jute. There were patches of sugarcane fields in Lalbazar. Mustard was grown a good deal in Tufanganj and Cooch Behar, pulses in Cooch Behar and Dinahata to some extent. This with a few miscellaneous seeds crops and some quantity of a poor variety of potatoes, vegetables and fruit made up the total produce. Consequently, the system of agriculture which obtained in the state several generations ago, remained unaltered 'even at the present day.' The people took no sufficient interest in the breeding of the cattle used for agricultural purposes. As a matter of fact, it seemed that they had no knowledge about efficiency of sound breeding. There was no scientific manuring of the fields. Notwithstanding the innate richness of the soil, the land had begun to lose its ancient productivity.³⁵

The main income of the agriculturists was the produce of the land, chief of them being tobacco, jute, rice and mustard seeds. Owing to the economic depression the prices of agricultural products had fallen heavily and this slump in prices had told very badly on the agriculturists of Cooch Behar State as it had been in Bengal.³⁶ His Highness' Government made all possible endeavour to improve the agriculture and to cope with the economic depression. This Government had opened an Agricultural Department with an Agricultural Officer mainly for demonstration and propaganda work in the interior in connection with profitable substitute crops on economic basis and jute restriction, and some success had already been noticed in the sugarcane cultivation and gur manufacture by the cultivators.³⁷

In order to bring as much areas as possible under improved crops, improved varieties of seeds, (sugarcane) cuttings, manure and implements were sold and freely distributed among the willing growers.³⁸ New crops such as Bogra and Hill potato, 321 and 431 varieties of sugarcane, pusa IV wheat, Akola variety of ground nut were introduced and supplied to the selected growers.³⁹ Improved aus paddy seeds such as Kataktara, Dherial and improved aman paddy seeds such as Indrasail, Dudsar, Chinsurah No. 2 were sold and tried in several taluks with success. Improved jute seeds such as D 154, G.O. were supplied at cost price for the benefit of the cultivators.⁴⁰

In order to enlighten the local agriculturists and to educate them on improved agriculture, extensive tours were made by the Agricultural Officer and also by the Agricultural Demonstrators. The Agricultural Officer, in the course of his tour, met the cultivators who were instructed in all kinds of agricultural possibilities in the state. Some of the cultivators took keen interest in agricultural discussion. The subjects dealt with were chiefly the manufacture of gur (molasses), the proper method of tillage, selection and preservation of seeds, conservation of cow-dung manure in covered pits and proper manuring etc.⁴¹

A Model Agricultural Farm in Cooch Behar town had been established by the state for the purpose of experiment in and demonstration of improved methods of agriculture and bringing those improvements to the notice of the cultivators. Arrangement had also been made for agricultural training of the subjects of the state, and suitable stipends had been provided for the encouragement of the candidates receiving training in the Cooch Behar Model Agricultural Farm.⁴²

Cattle-wealth was a great factor in the agricultural operations, and improvement of cattle was of vital importance in an agricultural State like Cooch Behar. His Highness' Government were fully alive to this important fact and introduced and also provided stud bulls to improve the local breed of cattle in the different centres of the State.

A Model Dairy Farm had been established in Cooch Behar town with the pedigree bulls and cows as well as buffaloes with a view to constitute eventually a pedigreed herd, and to supply pure milk and milk products to the

people of the state. Arrangement had also been made for proper training of the Cooch Behar subjects in animal husbandry and dairy farming in the Model Dairy Farm at Cooch Behar on suitable stipends.⁴³

It may be noted here that the experimental tobacco farms at Nilkuti and at Dinhatra had already been started in 1905-1906. 176 bighas of land were included in the Nilkuti Farm and 20 bighas in the Dinhatra Farm. The imported seeds of tobacco which were experimented in the noted farms were Virginian or American, Turkish and Cuban. The results in all cases had been successful and expert opinion pronounced the quality of the tobacco growth in the state farms to be almost as good as tobacco grown in America. The highest price obtained was Rs. 60 per maund and the lowest price Rs. 25, while the average price per maund of the country tobacco was Rs. 12 only. All these circumstances led the Dewan to think that the objects of the foundation of the farms had been practically attained and that the jotedars would be induced to adopt improved methods of tobacco cultivation as being more lucrative than those hitherto followed. The Dewan therefore recommended that Nilkuti Farm be abolished with effect from the 1st July, 1912, but that the Dinhatra farm being in the centre of the chief tobacco area in the state, be maintained for the present, and his proposals had been sanctioned by His Highness in Council.⁴⁴

An attempt was made to induce some of the Jotedars to grow foreign tobacco with seeds supplied by the state but the tenants here, as in other parts of India were very conservative in matters of agriculture and were slow to change systems which had come down to them from their forefathers and the scheme did not therefore succeed. However in the Agricultural Farm experiments had been taken up for growing and curing different varieties of tobacco for the manufacture of cigar and cigarettes as cottage industry.⁴⁵

The subject of tobacco cultivation was again raised by A.S. Wilson, the Supervisor, the State Gardens Department of Cooch Behar. Before coming to India Mr. Wilson had spent many hours in the Museums at Kew Gardens and also in those in other parts of London examining tobacco. He stated in a letter dated the 3rd February, 1938 that 'but I had never seen such good quality of tobacco as that which was exhibited at the Cooch Behar Industrial and Public Health Exhibition held in November, 1937, the fine texture of the leaves and the productiveness of the plants point that the soil in the Cooch Behar state is admirably suited for tobacco growing.' In view of growing demand for virginian tobaccos and the amount of factories that had been erected in India within the last few years for dealing with tobacco, he therefore proposed a trial should be made of the various forms of Virginia Tobacco.⁴⁶ Later on it is learnt from the Administrative Report of the State that Virginia Tobacco was one of several new crops which were introduced in the state. Nearly 60 bighas of land were put under Virginia Tobacco by 87 growers of Gossanimari. The growers were supplied with adequate seeds and seedlings. Nearly 200 lbs of Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco were obtained during the year 1944-45.⁴⁷

In spite of these measures initiated by the State Government for agricultural improvement, the table given below containing the data relating to yield rates of the crops for the period 1871-72 to 1949-50 shows that the yield rates of paddy, jute and tobacco, the major crops of the state, were not noticeably high during the stated period. Again the same table clearly demonstrates that the yield rates of paddy and jute declined in the same period.⁴⁸

Name of the crops	Yield Rates		
	years		
	1871-72	1903-04	1949-50
Paddy	2.61	2.50	1.52
Jute	Not available	1.86	1.58
Tobacco	Not available	1.86	Not available

From the foregoing discussion one observer has rightly pointed out that the presence of the pyramidal shape of agrarian society (at the top of which the jotedars and at the bottom the adhivars), the extension of cultivation, the mostly unchanged cropping pattern associated with heavy bias towards the cultivation of food crops, namely, paddy and also with remarkably increasing tendency of the cultivation of cash crops, jute and tobacco, the below satisfactory and declining level of yield rate also with multiple cropping practice, the negligible use of manure and irrigation were broadly the chief features of agriculture of Cooch Behar State during the period under study. On the basis of these findings, the noted observer has rightly concluded that the agriculture of the state during our period was 'nature - dependent, under - developed, inefficient with unchanged technology and above all, not modern. But at the same time it contained the seeds in form of extension of cultivation, increasing tendency of cultivation of cash crops, multiple cropping practice, of modern agriculture which developed during the time period after the merger of the state with India.⁴⁹

Industry and Craft : According to the census of 1931, out of the total population of 5,90,866 in Cooch Behar state, industry supported only 15,444 persons or 2.6 percent. One observer has argued that before long the people of Cooch Behar was self-contained as regards their cloth and other very simple bare necessities of life. But want of necessary finance and of organisation and enterprise, habit of using mill made cloth and consequent loss of interest and impetus, and want of market for selling such products were some of the many causes for the decay of this important cottage industry.⁵⁰

One of the oldest industry of Cooch Behar was rearing, spinning and weaving of eri.⁵¹ The climate of the state was very favourable for rearing both mulberry and eri silk worms. Eri silk worms were extensively reared in Cooch Behar in olden times. In 1941, in few localities even these worms were reared.⁵² This industry was confined to

women for domestic consumption. Very little was sold in the open market. These endi chaddars were very stout and wore very long and rough. They were not however made in large quantities.⁵³

Formerly the people used to wear home-made cloth in Cooch Behar as in every other part of India.⁵⁴ Even in 1905s, it has been seen that the village homes weaved quantities of what was called locally fota and patani. These fotas were either plain or coloured and were worn by Rajbanshi women. The textured was rough and the thread used was imported. Gamchhas were locally made in fewer quantities. The old industry of making coloured gamchhas with flowered borders was almost extinct in 1950s.⁵⁵

In 1941, one commentator said that before long a kind of striped but very durable cotton cloth called phota and very fine Mekhli woven from the thread of jute (patesari) were manufactured by handloom in almost every house, besides fine endi woven out of thread of wild silk for family use and for sale. But all these had become a decadent industry although there were a few houses here and there where weaving of endi cloth might be seen in 1940s. Likewise, some mekhli of coarse quality was woven in the Mekhliganj sub-division and was sold in Mekhliganj hat.⁵⁶ It has been pointed out that the manufacture of Mekli became extinct, because the spinning of fine jute thread was a difficult art and did not pay in the days of cheap imported cotton-yarn. The import of foreign cloths had however served to practically extinguish the native industry.⁵⁷ During 1940s, in some villages in the Dinhat sub-division and some other villages in the state a few persons had got handloom for weaving endi chhaddar and cloth. But they did not manufacture such cloths on any commercial basis but only for individual family use.⁵⁸

As for pottery, good clay being unavailable in Cooch Behar, pottery wares were not of very good quality.⁵⁹ There were some potters manufacturing various pottery articles including earthen rings for wells. But these potters worked under the most primitive method of manufacture and whatever they produced their works were not fine and lasting. Hence they could not satisfy local demands, and every year potteries (earthen wares such as hari or cooking pot, Kalsi or water jars etc.) from Mymensingh, Pabna and other districts were imported by boat in Cooch Behar State and got a brisk sale at the market. In 1941, the local pottery industry was a decaying one.⁶⁰

Bamboo baskets, dharas and dollies were prepared by some patni and dom people barely meeting the local demands only. Some cane works (such as making cane boxes, cane chairs, cane baskets, moras etc.) were done in the Cooch Behar Central Jail as a part of jail industry. But the articles produced therein were too few to command or create any market for sale on a commercial basis.⁶¹

Carpentry and joinery were not extensively practised in the state.⁶² Some wood works of crude and ancient type such as making of Dhenki or orgonic (for husking paddy), maikosh (big wooden box and bedstead combined),

baiyam (wooden jars) and such other articles were found in the moffusils during 1940s. Besides this, the most important cottage industry in wood works was the manufacture of cart-wheels, which had got a very good demand among the cultivators and other cart drivers, cart being the cheap means of conveyance in moffusil communications in the state. But these cart wheels were all manufactured by up country artisans and mistries and the centre of this industry was in Dinahata. Wooden chairs, tables and stools etc. (works of cottage industries) were being imported here by boat from Dacca and Mymensingh villages and having a brisk sale in the towns. This shows that local artisans could not and did not meet the local demands for such articles. There was no other furniture industry worthy of mention in the state except the state P.W.D. maintained Artisans School in the capital town, where furniture were manufactured or were made to order but were not offered for commercial sale among the general public. In 1941, one commentator remarked that 'in recent years Cooch Behar town had seen the growth of several furniture shops as also the outlying towns.'⁶³

Blacksmith turned out the ordinary implements of agriculture and daily use. The patterns were local and the weapons were generally light. The local blacksmiths were good fashioners and knew the art of tempering steel. Blacksmiths were mostly outsiders in the Cooch Behar state.⁶⁴ Gold and silver smiths were numerous. Locally they went by the name of banias. Gold work was not so very good, as its use was limited only to a few families. Silver ornaments were more generally sold, the chief articles being the necklace (har), bracelets (mutha), ear-ring (footi) and ornaments for the legs (Bankharoo).⁶⁵

There was little of brass or bell-metal industry. The preparation of brass lotus was confined to Mekhliganj ; elsewhere the industry was not at all extensive. As in other places, brass and bell-metal utensils were most extensively used in every house-hold, rich or poor, in the Cooch Behar state and lakhs of rupees were being drawn annually from the state by the sale of imported brass and bell metal articles of other districts or provinces.⁶⁶

As in Bengal, cottage ghanies were one of the important home industries of Cooch Behar bringing subsidiary income to the agriculturists. These ghanies would manufacture and supply pure mustard oil both to the villagers as well as towns people of this state. The state produced the best mustard-oil in whole Bengal. Tufanganj was specially known for its mustard-seed and mustard-oil.⁶⁷ In 1941, one commentator said that 'only a few years ago there were cottage ghanies in almost every important villages of the Cooch Behar state, and the most important centres of oil industry Chilakhana and Balarampur ghanies would supply the major demand for mustard oil in the state. But now-a-days by the unequal competition of the mill oil, most of these Chilakhana and Balarampur ghanies have been compelled to cease their works as they possibly cannot supply oil as cheap as the mill can do under the present circumstances in which they work. A few Chilakhana ghanies are still working at a loss and disadvantage for unequal competition of the mill.'⁶⁸

In 1941, the same commentator also remarked that 'some gur from the juice is at present being manufactured in Barmaricha and other villages, and in the suburb of Cooch Behar town. But the quantity produced is so small that it can barely meet the demands of the local markets for a few days only, and even now local demands for gur, both Khejura (manufactured from the juice of palm tree), and kushari (manufactured from the juice of sugarcane) are being supplied by imports from other districts mainly by the Marwari Mahajans or aratdars (wholesale dealers). The present growth of this industry which is now in its infancy, is due to the state encouragement given to the cultivators for sugarcane cultivation and gur manufacture by the Department of Agriculture'.⁶⁹

It has already been stated that the industrial, agricultural and economic developments of the state had received due attention from Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. He took a very keen interest for an all round industrial and agricultural improvements of the state. In April, 1937 a separate portfolio was created in the Department of Industries and Agriculture. Since then this Department was making efforts for the revival and development of the industries and agriculture of the state. How the works of the Department expanded in succeeding years may be observed from the following figures of the budget estimates for this Department.⁷⁰

Budget Estimates for the years

	1936-37	1937-38	1938-39	1939-40
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Department of Agriculture and Industries	2,170	28,292	64,189	54,109

In 1938, five candidates selected by His Highness in Council from among Cooch Behar subjects for practical training in the Industries Department of the Government of Bengal.⁷¹ They were appointed in June, 1939 as Sectional Demonstrators of the three different sections viz., (1) Brass and Bell-Metal section, (2) Soap section and (3) the Jute weaving section. Besides these, a Moulder and Castor was appointed in the Metal Casting section.⁷² Apart from the existing sections, the following new sections viz. (1) Biri making section, (2) Peripatetic Demonstration parties, (3) Industrial Museum, (4) Jute Spinning and Rope making sections were added to the Industries Department during the year 1940-41.⁷³ It may be mentioned here that after the completion of the practical training in the Industries Department of the Government of Bengal, Satyendra Nath Roy joined the Industries Department of the state as Supervisor of Industries during the year 1939-40.⁷⁴ His Highness' Government had also provided a number of suitable stipends for students during their training period in all the sections and a boarding house accommodation in premises of the Industries Office for the convenient accommodation of the moffussil candidates had also been provided.⁷⁵

With a view to making an investigation into the causes that led to the decay of village industries and the possibilities of their revival, the Supervisor of the Industries was asked to make an industrial survey during the year 1939-40. The sub-divisional Naib Ahilkars furnished with the nature and condition of the industries and the localities where such industries flourished but were now extinct. With the help of these reports the Supervisor of Industries started his investigation.⁷⁶ As a result of this investigation schemes were adopted for moffusil propaganda by sending Peripatetic Demonstration Parties in moffusil and some new sections were added to the Industries Department. Bengali translation of some portion of the industrial survey report was published in the Cooch Behar Darpan, an official fortnightly Bengali newspaper, for propaganda and to make known to the people of the state the condition of the existing industries of the state. Propaganda was also made with the help of the peripatetic demonstration party and through the medium of the Cooch Behar Darpan.⁷⁷

As before in 1927 during the Regency period His Highness' Government organised a grand Agricultural, Industrial and Public Health Exhibition in Cooch Behar town in November, 1937. It is known from the Administrative Report of the State that many interesting industrial exhibits were displayed and interesting lectures with lanterns and slides regarding agriculture and industries were held which gave stimulus to local industries and agriculture. The policy of holding such exhibition was to give publicity to this form of state enterprise, with a view to securing the popularity and success of future exhibition.⁷⁸ As an object lesson of industry and agriculture, small departmental industrial and agricultural museum had also been opened.⁷⁹

Cooch Behar being purely an agricultural state, His Highness' Government had made endeavour to encourage the establishment of factories and mills in production ancillary to agriculture. A Notification in this regard was published on the 1st April, 1937 offering special concessions to outside capitalists and induced them to invest capital in the state for suitable industrial enterprises.⁸⁰ In 1941, one observer said that 'there were Rice and Oil Mills in Cooch Behar and a Rice Mill in Changrabandha (Mekliganj sub-division) which were working well. Messers Ralli Brothers received a state licence to plant a jute press at Haldibari which had already been started and was working well. Babu Hari Ram Rathi also received a state licence for establishing a Rice Mill at Dewanhat in the Sudder sub-division.'⁸¹

The State Government had established an industrial school known as "the Cooch Behar Bayan Silpa Bidyalaya" which was the only Technical School in the state where a limited number of pupils could learn weaving. The school had got provision to provide some scholarships to its students while undergoing training. The school was popular among the local people for facilities it afforded for systematic training in the art of weaving. Apart from this, the Artisans School in Cooch Behar was a workshop of the Public Works Department of the state for brick grinding, smithy and carpentry and was run on the treasury advance system. It may be noted here that this Artisans School was originally established as a state institution for professional (vocational) training to the people of the state.⁸²

In January, 1940 the Government of India asked the Cooch Behar state to furnish about labour legislation in the state and if there were any modern factories compared with those in British India.⁸³ In reply, the then Acting Vice-President of the State Council in his letter No. 4465 dated 24th January, 1940 stated that "there are at present only three mills in the state, viz., two Rice Mills and a jute press. One of the two Rice Mills was started in 1937 and the jute press in 1935. The necessity of any labour legislation on the lines of the British Indian Acts has not yet been felt in the state. The Acting Vice-President further mentioned that '..... in 1935 the Regency Council did not think it necessary to enact any factory legislation in the state for reasons stated therein. The labour condition in Cooch Behar do not appear to be such as would require introduction of legislation measures which are in force in British India.'⁸⁴

The Fourth Minister of Education and Development, Cooch Behar State wrote on 12th December, 1941 to His Highness the President, State Council, that 'the Department of Agriculture and Industries was doing its best for the economic, industrial and agricultural development of the people of the state. With a view to helping the agriculturists and other unemployed people of the state by providing suitable subsidiary occupation of home industries, so that the people could earn some money from such home industries during their leisure-time or during cessation of their agricultural operation. The Department of Industries had launched in constructive schemes for providing free practical training to the Cooch Behari peoples in different cottage industries, e.g., handloom weaving, jute weaving, jute spinning, carpet making, knitting, eri-rearing, brass and bell metal casting, brass sheet metal works, welding works of brass and bell metal articles, washing soap making, biri making in a central institute at the Sadar composed of different sections of the Industries Department of the state and also by Peripatetic Demonstration Parties in different moffussil centres in the cold weather. For the encouragement of the students willing to learn cottage industries, there were arrangements for providing stipends to suitable candidates in different subjects of practical training. The Fourth Minister of the state further wrote that it had been the declared objective of the state in the Department of Industries to provide necessary finance in the shape of small industrial helps and loans on very easy terms of repayments to the trained students of the Industries Department and also to other small cottage workers either in cash or in the shape of raw materials or equipments.'⁸⁵

Education and Development Minister, Cooch Behar State, in another letter dated the 19th August, 1942 to H.H. the President, State Council, wrote that 'the Department of Industries was a propaganda and development department working for the industrial advancement or revival of cottage industries. The Industries Department was imparting practical training to young subjects of the state in several cottage crafts for a period of not more than one year for each candidate in several technical sections and its peripatetic moffussil demonstration units so that the trained and skilled workers could supplement their income by taking the industry as their spare time business. Provision had also been made for the grants of the stipends to the students in the different practical sections and for the

grant of free gift and industrial loans to trained students and other cottage workers for starting their industry or for improvement of their existing cottage crafts. Thus the purpose of the Industries Department was, according to the Minister, a propaganda and academical one, although some receipts were obtained from the sale proceeds of the products of demonstration and training units of the Department.⁸⁶

In pursuance of the State Council orders contained in Council office letter No. 74981/20-1 dated the 4th November, 1942 to the address of the Education and Development Minister, a Committee was formed with Satish Chandra Roy Sinha Sarkar, B.L. as the Chairman to consider the usefulness of the Industries Department and the maintenance of the different sections for the benefit of the subjects of the state and to submit a report on the matter to the State Council. Accordingly the Committee held two meetings, one on the 19th November and another on the 6th December, 1942 and discussed all the matters concerning the Industries Department. The Committee were unanimously of opinion that "the works of the sections of the Industries Department should be conducted in such a manner as would enable the people of the state to take up these in the form of cottage or small scale industries and to supplement their income by earning something out of these. If the works can be successfully conducted it is sure that there would be appreciable development of cottage industries in the state."

The Committee further observed that for the achievement of appreciable success by all the different sections of the department, it was necessary to organise propaganda and to send demonstration parties all throughout the state during the winter season for more than six months in a year, and for this purpose all possible help viz, money, material and accessories should be afforded to the intending and enthusiastic parties.⁸⁷

The Post-war Reconstruction Conference held in Cooch Behar town in February, 1944, consisting of Chief Minister as the President, Revenue Minister, Education and Development Minister and other high officials of the state took up amongst others the subjects of Post-war industrial development and the possibilities of (a) heavy, (b) small and (c) cottage industries were considered separately. The Conference were of unanimous in opinion that without proper development of all possible heavy industries in the state 'the finance of the state and the wealth of its people cannot be much increased by agriculture alone.'⁸⁸ The Darbar had therefore formulated schemes for post-war agricultural and industrial development in the state. Under these schemes it was decided that facilities and official backing for starting mills etc. under the heavy and small and cottage industries should be given for the industrial development in the state. The Darbar also expected that within next twenty years a great industrial and agricultural development should be achieved in the state.⁸⁹

Industrial development was noticeable in Cooch Behar State owing to the facilities and official backing provided by the State Government. There were some crude jute presses scattered all over the state, especially in

several important market places. There was no curing factory for tobacco and whatever curing done was crude and intended for local consumption. After the end of the Second World War the State Government intended to set up a cigarette factory at Dinhata and imported one entire unit of cigarette manufacture. This unit remained unused in Cooch Behar till 1950-51. Since 1944 plyboard manufacture had been very popular in the town of Cooch Behar and several firms which manufactured plyboard in moderate quantities were set up.⁹⁰

During the Maharaja's administration a small but good distillery used to run in the suburbs of Cooch Behar, near the Torsha bridge. The products of this distillery used to find favour with several fashionable clubs and bars of Calcutta city. The owners of the factory cultivated good relations with reputed firms in Calcutta. Since 1950, however, this distillery had closed down. The Maharaja's administration had a state printing press and much good work used to be done at the Cooch Behar State Press, as the publications of Cooch Behar State testified it. The Cooch Behar State had a Transport Agency and maintained a workshop. This Transport Agency had been taken over by the West Bengal Government after Cooch Behar's merger with the latter, but the workshop was maintained. There was a small match industry in Cooch Behar. In 1951-52 the following factories were registered with the Chief Inspector of factories and all of them were located in Cooch Behar. The West Bengal Government Press (formerly the State Press), the West Bengal State Transport Workshop, the Artisans School, The Cooch Behar Distillery Company Ltd., the Cooch Behar Oil Mills Ltd., Wood Craft Production Ltd., East India Plywood Company Ltd., and the Cooch Behar Match Company Ltd.⁹¹

Trade and Commerce : According to the census of 1931, only 4.4 percent of the people of Cooch Behar state had for their occupation trade and commerce. Most of them, if not all, were Marwari traders, bankers, owners of jute firms or the up-country shop keepers. The cloth merchants, tobacco merchants, piece good merchants, rice-merchants, hardware merchants, even the fish merchants or importers were all either Marwaris or up-country people. Besides, the Ata, Dal etc. were also prepared by up-country people in the state. The local people had got no interest or enterprise in any of these commercial activities. They had lost practically all hold on the trade, industry or commerce of the state.⁹²

As early as 1872, W.W. Hunter in his "Statistical Account" of Cooch Behar State has stated that 'nearly all the commerce of the state except such as was carried in the weekly markets, was in the hands of foreign merchants, chiefly Marwaris from Bikanir.⁹³ The chief exports from the state were tobacco, jute, mustard-seed, rice, and mustard oil, and the principal imports were piece goods, salt, brass and copper utensils, sugar, molasses, pulses of sorts, spices, cocoanuts, betel-nuts, beads, dried fish etc. The crops of the state not only sufficed for the local wants, but there was a large export of jute, tobacco, rice and mustard-seed. The native merchants estimated the exports at about £1,50,000 per annum and the imports at £90,000 per annum as follows :- Exports — tobacco, £70,000 ; jute

£40,000 ; mustard-seed and oil, £20,000 ; rice £10,000; miscellaneous £10,000. Hence total value of export was £1,50,000. Imports — cloth, £50,000; salt, £15,000; other articles, £25,000. Thus total value of imports was £90,000. The balance of trade was thus in favour of the state.⁹⁴ In 1872, a rough estimate was made of export and import, when the exports were valued at Rs. 19,20,000 and the imports at Rs. 9,00,009. Since that time jute trade had, thanks to the North Bengal Railway, more than doubled itself. As regards tobacco the extension had not been so marked.⁹⁵

Though nearly all the commerce in the hands of foreigners, chiefly Marwaries, there were also some European firms at Haldibari and Chawrahat, both by the side of the railway. With the spread of the railway, European merchants were opening business in other parts of the state also. Native enterprise was at a discount. The Cooch Beharis, like the Bengalis of other parts of the country, could but ill-afforded to compete with the European traders and were bound to fail. This was borne out by the gradual falling of the river traffic, which was almost entirely in the hands of Bengalis and the increase of the railway-traffic. The bridging of the navigable rivers very often acted as a deterrent to country-boat traffic and this was being gradually marked in this state also.

Before the opening of railways, nearly the whole of both inward and outward traffic used to be carried on by country-boats. The railways had considerably diverted the traffic from the rivers and had almost monopolised the export of jute. Tobacco, mustard seed, mustard oil and oil-cake were however still largely sent down by boats. Tobacco was very rarely exported by railway, as frequent trans-shipments damaged the leaves and deteriorated the quality.⁹⁶

The Gitaldaha Manshahi railway line (3'3³/₄" gauge) opened in 1893, followed by Manshahi Cooch Behar extension in 1898, and another extension from Cooch Behar to Alipur Duar in 1900. The railway which in 1913-14 became the Cooch Behar State Railway and the Bengal Duars State Railway did much to develop the resources of the state and greatly facilitated the disposal of produce of all kinds.⁹⁷ The prosperity of Haldibari was largely owing to its situation on the Eastern Bengal Railway.⁹⁸

The partition of the province of Bengal had hurt the river trade of the state, because all rivers in the state fell either into the Tista or the Brahmaputra both of which were, as of now, in East Pakistan (presently known as Bangladesh). As a consequence all river traffic was almost at a standstill and the railways and the Cooch Behar airfield then had to take all the inward and outward trade. Owing to the excessive freight charges the trade of jute had suffered very badly. The long circuitous rail route made it difficult for jute to arrive at Calcutta at the proper time. While transport by air was extremely costly, especially at a time when jute prices had slumped a great deal. The other chief article of export, tobacco, was very rarely exported by railway as frequent transshipments were liable to damage the leaves and spoil their quality. Tobacco was therefore mostly sent out by aeroplanes from the Cooch Behar airport.⁹⁹

Consecutive three historical events badly affected the economy of the Cooch Behar state. First, the outbreak of the first World War (1914-18) had caused dislocation of trade and disrupted economic life of the state. It seriously affected the jute market by lowering the prices¹⁰⁰ and contributed to the abnormal rise in prices of imported articles, specially of those which were required for necessities of existence.¹⁰¹ Cooch Behar State, in common with the rest of India and the British Empire, was passing through a period of financial stringency.¹⁰² Secondly, the trade and commerce was also seriously affected by the world-wide economic depression.¹⁰³ Owing to the low prices of agricultural products there had been an acute distress among the people throughout the state as in British India.¹⁰⁴ The trade depression brought about consequent scarcity of money in the State.¹⁰⁵ Thirdly, Cooch Behar State passed through a distinct economic crisis as a result of the outbreak of the Second World War.¹⁰⁶ After the declaration of War by Japan, there had been a deadlock in trade and commerce, specially in Bengal. There was no purchases of jute or tobacco, the two commercial crops of Cooch Behar. Money-market was also became very tight.¹⁰⁷

Cooch Behar State did not occupy a prominent position in the sphere of trade, commerce and industry. It had not attained even a moderate degree of prosperity therein.¹⁰⁸ In 1942, Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce was of opinion that 'as the purchasing power of the people of Cooch Behar was very limited and as there was nothing like tea plantations and such other concerns providing employment to a large amount of men and requiring supplies of various materials, the trade and commerce in the state was not expanding and were not in a flourishing condition. Hence this Chamber maintained that merchants of standing had shifted to Alipurduar which had become the centre of supply to many tea gardens and its importance was daily increasing.¹⁰⁹

The trade of Cooch Behar consisted mainly of the export of agricultural products and the import of manufactured goods and other necessities of life.¹¹⁰ The table given below shows the quantity of jute, tobacco and paddy exported from the principal Bunders of the State during the year 1939-40.¹¹¹

Sub-Division	Names of Bundars	Paddy		Jute		Tobacco	
		Export Mds.	Import Mds.	Export Mds.	Import Mds.	Export Mds.	Import Mds.
Sadar.....	Cooch Behar.....	54,432	—	87,747	—	43,877	—
	Dewanhat.....	20,525	—	34,853	—	57	—
	Baneswar.....	2,597	—	—	—	98	—
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		77,554	—	1,22,600	—	44,032	—

Sub-Division	Names of Bundars	Paddy		Jute		Tobacco	
		Export Mds.	Import Mds.	Export Mds.	Import Mds.	Export Mds.	Import Mds.
Tufangunj.....	Buxirhat.....	49,400	-	34,850	-	-	-
	Ranirhat.....	22,720	-	8,300	-	175	-
	Balarampur.....	18,500	-	9,500	-	300	-
	Chilakhana.....	2,400	-	450	-	-	-
	Tufangunj.....	2,140	-	750	-	-	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		95,160	-	53,850	-	475	-
Mekhlignunj.....	Haldibari and Dewangunj	1,83,473	-	37,118	-	56,844	-
	Mekhlignunj and Changrabanda	11,320	970	11,462	-	42,798	99
	Jamaldaha.....	20,500	-	12,198	-	10,493	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		2,15,293	970	60,778	-	1,10,135	99
Mathabhanga...	Calicangunj Bundar.....	16,835	-	19,388	-	33,852	-
	Ghokshadanga.....	5,000	-	1,000	-	6,000	-
	Gosairhat.....	5,000	-	1,000	-	15,000	-
	Sitalkhuchi.....	4,000	-	1,000	-	1,500	-
	Akrahath.....	3,000	-	1,000	-	2,500	-
	Sangarbari.....	5,000	-	1,000	-	2,000	-
	Siberhat.....	30,000	-	1,500	-	4,000	-
	Nishigunj.....	2,500	-	1,000	-	2,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	
		71,335	-	26,888	-	66,852	-
Dinhata.....	Chowrahath.....	50,000	-	36,000	-	60,000	-
	Gosanimarihat.....	10,000	-	4,000	-	42,000	-
	Nazirhat.....	2,000	-	10,000	-	1,000	-
	Chowdhurirhat.....	62,000	-	35,000	-	2,500	-
	Sitaihat.....	15,500	-	20,000	-	50,000	-
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		1,39,500	-	1,05,000	-	1,55,500	-

Incidentally, it may be noted here that during the year 1939-40 the price per maund of common rice ranged from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4-8-0; of mustard - seed from Rs. 3-8-0 to Rs. 6-12-0; of jute from Rs. 5-0-0 to Rs. 18-0-0 and of tobacco from Rs. 8-0-0 to Rs. 24-0-0 ¹¹²

The principal sites of commerce were the town of Cooch Behar, the sub-divisional stations and the important village bunders. Jute and paddy used to be exported from every part of the state. But after the merger of the state in the province of West Bengal the export of paddy had stopped, tobacco was mostly sent down from the airport of Cooch Behar and collected from the marts of Mekliganj, Mathabhanga and Dinhata sub-divisions. The bunders of Tufanganj sub-division largely exported mustard-seed and mustard oil. The chief jute exporting centres still were Haldibari, Changrabandha, Chawrahat, Mathabhanga and Cooch Behar; the principal tobacco centers were Mekliganj, Mathabhanga, Sibpur, Bawra, Gosanimari and Chawrahat; the principal marts dealing in mustard seed and mustard oil were Balarampur, Tufanganj, Ghoramara, Natabari, Ambari, Bakshiganj and Mahishkuchi. The chief bunders were Haldibari, Mekliganj, Mathabhanga, Dinhata (Chawrahat), Fulbari (Tufanganj), Dewanhat and Kholta in Cooch Behar Sadar, Gosanimari and Sitai in Dinhata subdivision, Balarampur, Ghoramara, Natabari, Lawkuti and Mahishkuchi in Tufanganj sub-division; Moranga in Mathabhanga sub-division and Changrabandha in Mekliganj subdivision. These bunders were seats of trade and commerce where merchants permanently resided and had firms and warehouses for the conduct of business. They were either situated on big rivers or by the side of public roads and commanded a large share of the outward and inward trade. The number of important bunders in the state was twenty five.¹¹³

There were 142 Hats or village markets which had been held twice a week for carrying on the internal trade.¹¹⁴ Of the Hats of the state the largest was the one at Dewanganj in Mekliganj; the next ones were Chawrahat in Dinhata, the sub-divisional hat in Mathabhanga and Changrabandha in Mekliganj which were equally important. The Dodeyahat, 3 miles north of Cooch Behar town was celebrated as large grain market.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

'In Cooch Behar', one commentator has pointed out, 'there was hardly any change of the society. Rather the society, in spite of so many changes, had remained pre-industrial and pre-capitalist'. The feudalism in Cooch Behar remained virtually static with a few cosmetic changes in the successive periods. There was no major industries and more so there was no steady movement for change. The fact remains that in Cooch Behar feudalism as introduced by the British did not give rise to industrialisation or capitalism.¹¹⁶

Of the total population of 5,90,866 (1931 census) not more than 18,000 persons lived in urban areas and the rest of the people lived in the villages. The vast majority of this rural population viz., 88.7 percent depended upon agriculture alone and had practically no other subsidiary calling for their subsistence. Moreover, as in Bengal and elsewhere, agriculture did not give occupation to the cultivators throughout the year owing to seasonal and other conditions. During the intervals of non-occupation the agriculturists had to pass their days in enforced idleness for want of work.¹¹⁷

As a consequence, the people of Cooch Behar were mostly poor, unenterprising, backward and ignorant, and for climatic condition they were a bit idle too. They were heavily indebted to their "Marwari Mahajans" who controlled the prices of their agricultural products, they being the only purchasers. The whole people had got no organisation among themselves for mutual economic advantage, such as co-operative banks or any other co-operative associations or warehouses through which they could sell their agricultural or industrial products and save themselves from the hand of the middlemen Mahajans.

The main income of the agriculturists was the produce of the land, chief of them being tobacco, jute, rice and mustard-seed. As has been already observed, owing to the economic maladjustment and deadlock during the 1930s the prices of agricultural products had fallen down heavily and this slump in prices had told very badly on the agriculturists of Cooch Behar State as it had been in Bengal. And the full brunt of this economic dislocation and crisis was being borne by the cultivators here owing to the fact that they had absolutely no subsidiary occupation to add to their income when their agricultural produce could not fetch even the cost of cultivation, not to speak of any profit. Besides, they had lost practically all hold on the trade, industry or commerce of the state.¹¹⁸

Before the advent of the British the life of the common people were comparatively easy. Food stuffs were comparatively cheap and within the reach of the people. More or less villages were self-sufficient. With the advent of the British and opening of the state with other parts of India through railways, and involvement of the Europeans in trade and commerce the prices of food stuffs were gradually increasing.¹¹⁹ Rapid price rise was not only responsible for misery of the common people but also brought disastrous result on the economic life of the people. Increase of taxes by the British was also one of the major causes of the price hike.¹²⁰ The prices of the necessities of life had been ruling high continually for a long period. Specially prices of food stuffs and clothing were very high.¹²¹ It was not surprising that a number of people should, under the circumstances, be driven to the necessity of disposing of their properties by sale or seeking the help of the money-lenders.¹²² Despite the introduction of rationing system and other ameliorative measures by the State Government, the price-hike of essential commodities continued to linger upto the later part of 1940s.¹²³

In fact, the peasantry formed 88.7% of the total population in the state.¹²⁴ The structure of agrarian society that evolved over time under the royal ownership of land was of pyramidal shape in terms of number of holdings in different categories of land holding. The pyramid was however composed of three categories of land holders or tenants. First, at the top of the pyramid there were a few jotedars or large husbandmen who held land direct from the state. It was seldom that these jotedars cultivated themselves all the lands held by them. Secondly, in the middle of the pyramid, there were sub-tenants, namely, chukanidars. The numbers of chukanidars were larger relative to that of Jotedars. The chukanidars held land from Jotedars and paid cash rent to them. Finally, at the bottom of the pyramid,

there was a class of sub-subtenants, namely, adhiyars. The number of this class of tenants was the largest. The adhiyars held land from chukanidars and paid them kind rent to the extent of half share of their produce. It should be mentioned in this context that elsewhere these adhiyars had derivative sub-grade, namely, dar-chukanidar.¹²⁵

The rates of rent payable by each class of tenants were fixed by the settlement. The Jotedar paid his assessment direct to the state, and was only permitted to receive from the chukanidar a certain percentage above that assessment. In the same way, each successive undertenant was only allowed to exact fixed rates.¹²⁶

With the coming of the English, the older land system witnessed a change in the state. In 1790, the Izaradari system was introduced in the state.¹²⁷ This Izaradari system not only led to rack renting and extortion by Izaradars from the ryots, but also fostered extensive subinfeudation.¹²⁸ Ultimately, the Izaradari system was abolished in 1872, and Khas collection was introduced in the same year.¹²⁹ Under the new land revenue settlements introduced in the state, the holders of the temporarily settled tenures under the state were called jotedars. The tenants directly under the proprietors of revenue-free and mokarari (permanently settled at a revenue fixed in perpetuity) estates were also designated jotedars. As many as six grades of under tenures, namely, chukanidar, darchukanidar, daradarchukani, tasyachukani, talichukani and tasyatalichukani were recognised in the state.¹³⁰

In 1888, the Sub-infeudation Act was passed to check the further development of sub-infeudation in the state and to prevent the creation of new rights in place of existing ones when they lapsed or became extinct. By that Act, the letting by anyone but jotedar of any land that was not let already was prohibited and a jotedar was prohibited from letting out lands to persons other than actual cultivators.¹³¹ The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act V of 1910) came into force in 1910 prohibiting the letting of land by an undertenant lower than chukanidar (i.e., an undertenant of the first grade) and a chukanidar might let only land which was in khas possession.¹³²

In course of time large number of new tenancies had, however, been created in contravention of the above law and generally at very high rates. Their number was estimated at 50,000 in the whole state in 1918. Therefore, the State Government conferred on the helpless illegally settled cultivating ryots a right and title to the land they held, defined the incidence of their rights and protected them from eviction in 1918. The then Dewan called these cultivating ryots or Krishi Prajas 'the backbone of the country' and as 'builders of its wealth.' According to his estimate, they constituted almost 90% of the cultivating population.¹³³ In view of creating of the innumerable illegal tenancies by verbal contract and of their recognition at successive settlements of the state, it must be said that the provisions in the existing Tenancy Act of 1910, though good in theory, had failed to produce the desired effect.¹³⁴

Originally the jotedars were the cultivators of the soil and residents of the state. Gradually there was an

influx of the foreigners from other districts. They were more intelligent than Cooch Beharis and they began to usurp all real power in the state. It was observed in 1930 that already more than half the temporarily assessed area in the Cooch Behar state was owned by foreign jotedars. Even during the Rakam Charcha resettlement a much larger quantity of land in the state was included in jotes belonging to foreigners than in those held by natives. The necessity of introducing effective rent law to prevent ousting of cultivating tenants by speculators was foreseen even during the first settlement of land revenue.¹³⁵

Adhiars were a class of farm servants and generally poor men.¹³⁶ They cultivated land on the condition that they would get half the produce of the crop. They generally lived in the land lords' premises or on land in their khas possession, and paid rents for the same. Some times they cultivated land with the plough and cattle lent by the land-lords, but more generally they had their own implements of agriculture. Adhiars were generally regarded as labourers. They were not considered to have any right or title but to be liable to be ejected at the will of their employer.¹³⁷

As early as 1872 the State Government ordered that any adhiar who cultivated the same land with his own cattle for twelve consecutive years, would acquire a right of occupancy in respect of such lands. This provision was embodied in section 29 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act V of 1910). Such occupancy right was inheritable but not otherwise transferrable. In the course of the settlement and re-settlement operations in this state, however, Terijes or record of rights were never prepared for the adhiars nor were attempts made to ascertain which of them had occupancy rights. Apart from this, the adhiary lands often changed hands and the adhiars were generally treated as labourers or tenants -at -will.¹³⁸

A new class of agricultural labourers emerged in Cooch Behar state partly as a result of largescale eviction of adhiars during 1940s.¹³⁹ Even Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan confessed in a letter to the Resident, Eastern States Agency, dated 6th July, 1943 that 'the number of landless subjects in the state is large and they have very very little sustaining power and always suffer badly every year when agricultural stocks run low.'¹⁴⁰ This was, no doubt, one of the vital factors that paved the way for the peasant as well as adhiar movement in some pockets of the state,¹⁴¹ which were the manifestations of the prevailing social tension arising out of the oppressive jotedari system.

On the question of the development of agricultural and industrial resources of Eastern States, Maharaja Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, Ruler of Patna State made an important observation in a confidential circular letter dated the 16th November, 1940, addressed to Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, Ruler of Cooch Behar. He expressed his view prophetically in the following words, "If we think a little about our present backwardness, we will simply be appalled. If we consider about the future and the necessity for our moving with the times, as well as doing our duty by our people, we will undoubtedly be dismayed at the bleak prospect and the apparent impossibility of our surviving as

separate administrative units in the not very distant future, because of our inadequate incomes. It has, therefore, been very rightly pointed out by a distinguished Ruler of this Agency, that our salvation as well as our safety lies in improving our natural resources and increasing our incomes. To my mind this will only be possible by the improvement of agriculture and the development of industries in the states."¹⁴²

In conclusion, it would not be out of place here to refer to the scholarly debate on industrialisation in the princely states which appeared during the 1970s. In his pioneering dissertation, John Hurd tried to compare 'development' in the princely states with that in British India. Hurd focused on three variables : the structure of the male labour force, migration and urbanisation and concluded that although economic development declined in both British and princely India from 1901 to 1931, the princely states in general lagged behind the British districts. Two basic categories of factors were responsible. One was British policies that hindered growth, such as the refusal to extend any guarantee for developmental loans. The other was the historical evolution of the states. For example, the higher the percentage of Jagirdars in a state, the lower was the level of development, and Hurd argued that the Jagirdars siphoned off revenue from the state treasury.¹⁴³ In another article on industrial development, Hurd claimed that the British acted ambivalently to safeguard their interests. They intervened in the princely states to secure the abolition of transit duties and the construction of trans-continental railways and roads to facilitate British trade. But they did not intercede for the princes in British capital markets since industrial development in the states was not a colonial priority.¹⁴⁴

But C.P. Simons and B.R.Satyanarayana challenged Hurd's argument on his selection of samples and asserted that comparisons between the states and British India are invalid. The economy of imperial India was indivisible, comparisons conceal more than they reveal and there are no scientific means to measure the factors that influenced economic development in such a heterogenous area as India. Rather they compared statistics on the princely states and British India as a whole. They concluded that differences in favour of British India were statistically insignificant and that economic development in British India and the princely states was commensurate.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, the numerous general overviews of Indian economic development under the British do not evaluate in any depth agricultural or industrial activity in the princely states, even as part of the indivisible imperial economy. So once again, case studies must suffice to illustrate industrial development within the princely states.¹⁴⁶ According to Barbara N. Ramusack, the terms of this scholarly debate on industrialisation in the princely states have yet to be revised.¹⁴⁷

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CHAPTER VI (Contd.)**Section-II****Review of Economic Activities and Financial Position of the State**

The economy of the Princely State of Cooch Behar, some scholars held, was of a static semi-feudal nature, heavily dependent upon traditional agriculture in pre-British days. The minimum daily needs of the people could be met with the meagre resource available to them within the State.¹ But there was merely subsistence living and no economic prosperity and social mobility in the State. There was a lack of transport and communication and no foreign contact. Hence no trade and commerce could develop either within the State or with the outside world.²

With the conclusion of a treaty between the Cooch Behar State and the English East India Company in 1773 (which was in the latter's favour), this intercourse began to generate its impact on the traditional economic set up of this region and the consequent change followed the logic of history. The reign of Harendra Narayan (1783- 1839) had set the stage for change. The State of Cooch Behar came into direct contact with the British administration. From then onwards the land tenure system and land revenue settlement began to be geared into motion and the traditional agrarian economy of the state started shaking off its age old slumber.³

Before the arrival of the English East India Company and at the initial period of their rule the economy of Bengal was mainly dependent on agriculture and artisan industry.⁴ But British policy brought about a commercial revolution, established a new economy and bound India's economy to the heels of the British economy, the process of deindustrialisation commenced⁵ and gradually India was converted into a centre for the supply of raw-materials for British industries and a market for the import of British manufactured articles. As a result of which India ceased to be a manufacturing country and agriculture became the only source of nation's subsistence.⁶ As a part of India Cooch Behar State also could not escape the impact of the colonial economy.

It has also been argued by some scholars that after British administration established in Cooch Behar State, a process of transition from subsistence economy having limited market potentiality to a wide colonial market - oriented economy began to spring up and this transition in its wake led to commercialisation of agriculture in the state. The extended communication network with improved road, rail and river transport further widened the prospect of commercial agriculture and broadened the scope of trade and commerce.⁷ The communication system was tremendously geared up by the opening of the Cooch Behar State Railway for traffic in 1893. The rail transport greatly facilitated and augmented supplies of commercial and agricultural goods, helped the growth of trade and commerce, created a variety of new avenues of employment and thus played a vital role in socio-cultural development in the state and the neighbouring British provinces. The Official Administrative Report stated that the rail link changed the entire

pattern of the state's economy.⁸ The development of transport and communication facilitated the movement of agricultural goods from the rural areas to the towns, bazars and bundars in increasing quantities. With the opening up of the country by roads and railways it was natural that the export - import trade of Cooch Behar State was gradually expanding.⁹

With the opening up of the state by roads and railways and the facility thus afforded to the export-trade, the prices of food-grains were gradually rising. There had been an increase in the price of other articles also. In the time of the old Maharajas food-stuff was extremely cheap, probably because what was grown in the state remained in it and few people had any occasion to buy food. The following table shows the variation of the price of different articles during the four decades. It will be observed that every decade shows a marked increase of the price over its predecessor.¹⁰

Name of Article	Average price per maund for the decade ending								price per maund in	
	1870		1880		1890		1900		1900	
	Rs.	As	Rs.	As	Rs.	As	Rs.	As	Rs.	As
Paddy	0	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	12
Common rice	1	4	1	4	2	4	3	9	4	0
Tobacco	6	0	4	0	6	0	9	0	10	0
Jute	4	8	3	8	3	2	4	0	5	0
Mustard seed	3	0	3	8	3	2	4	0	5	0
Mustard oil	—	—	10	2	10	12	12	12	18	0

When the British Government took charge of the state during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan (1863 - 1911), finances were in a deplorable condition. There was no control over the receipts and expenditure of the different departments, which made their own collections and disbursements and only remitted the surplus to what was called the 'Majudat'. The system of framing budgets of revenue and expenditure was not in vogue and both the receipts and disbursements were without proper control. Although there was a Nikashi Adalat or Accounts Office, the accounts were kept in a loose manner and were not properly checked. One of the first steps taken by Colonel Haughton, the first Commissioner of Cooch Behar State (1864 - 1873), was to make all the departments to remit their collections into the Majudat, and to submit bills for their expenditure. A regular budget system of controlling the finance was, under orders of Government of India, introduced from the year 1866 - 67.

Colonel Haughton was appointed the Commissioner of Cooch Behar State in 1864. In that year, the total revenue of the state amounted to Rs. 7,87,967 whereas the total expenditure of the state amounted to Rs. 6,33,413 leaving a surplus of Rs. 1,54,451. The revenue of the state was gradually improved under a well-organised system of

government. In the year 1883 - 84, just after Maharaja Nripendra Narayan's installation, the receipts from all sources came upto Rs. 14,65,550, and in 1899 - 1900 they amounted to Rs. 22,72,608 showing a large increase of about 9.5 lakhs of rupees in the course of seventeen years.¹¹ But here it may be pointed out that the total expenditure of the state in the year 1899 - 1900 amounted to Rs. 23,17,436 leaving a deficit of Rs. 44,855.¹²

Under the British administration of the state during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan there was an aggregate saving of Rs. 12,86,011 from the revenue of the state. The greater portion of this was invested in Government Promissory notes and shares and debentures of Joint Stock Companies. The cash balance in 1883-84, just after the transfer of charge of the administration by the Government to the Maharaja, amounted to about Rs. 2,75,600. In the course of the sixteen years that followed large sums were expended on the palace, the general re-settlement of the state, improvement of communication and construction of the railway and other public works, in all amounting to close upon fifty lakhs of rupees. The whole of this amount could not be met from the ordinary revenue of the state and there was a total deficit of Rs. 13,03,189, which had to be made up by disposing of the Government securities and contracting a loan of eight lakhs from Government. The cash balance on the 31st March, 1900 stood at about three lakhs and a half of rupees.¹³

The total revenue of the state for the year 1911-12 amounted to Rs. 27,40,068 against Rs. 26,94,231 of the previous year, showing a net increase of Rs. 45,837.¹⁴ On the other hand, the total expenditure of the state for the year 1911-12 amounted to Rs. 26,68,774 against Rs. 29,15,996 of the previous year or a decrease of Rs. 2,47,222 resulting in a surplus of Rs. 71,294 against a deficit of Rs. 2,21,765 of the previous year, a result which will be considered highly satisfactory in view of the unavoidable expenditure which was incurred for the Delhi Durbar, the Sradh of the late Maharaja Nripendra Narayan and the installation of Maharaja Raj Rajendra Narayan.¹⁵

The opening cash balance of the year 1911-12 was Rs. 14,66,929 inclusive of Government money and deposits amounting to Rs. 6,17,082 and the closing balance was Rs. 13,90,685 inclusive of Government money and deposits amounting to Rs. 4,47,733 resulting in a decrease of Rs. 76,244. On the 31st March, 1912 the Government money amounted to Rs. 1,52,058 and the deposits and funds to Rs. 2,95,675. The details of the state cash are given below and it will appear that the state cash balance shows an increase of Rs. 71,654 and that of the Chaklajat Estates Rs. 21,451.¹⁶

	At the close of 1910 - 11	At the close of 1911 - 12
	Rs.	Rs.
Cooch Behar State	6,98,479	7,70,133
Chaklajat Estates	1,51,368	1,72,819

In the princely state of Cooch Behar, the Marwaris were the leading money-lenders.¹⁷ The rural agricultural economy of Cooch Behar led to the emergency of a new economic class, who became known as the money-lenders. They played a significant role as an economic institution of the rural agricultural society.¹⁸ But the factor which mostly helped the Marwari Mahajans in the money lending business in Cooch Behar was absence of any landed aristocracy usually seen in the rural sector of Bengal.¹⁹ Apart from the non-existence of any landed aristocracy, there was also no state provisions to advance agricultural loans to the peasants. Thus the state was totally devoid of any banking tradition or indigenous banking system and this void, no doubt, made the money-lending a profitable venture in the state. The Marwaris were the right persons who took advantage of the situation fully.

The Marwaris established Kuthis in the state as they did elsewhere. Particularly, two Kuthis doing brisk business, came to be known as the Bara Kuthi and Chhoto Kuthi. The old buildings of these Kuthis can still be seen at the Cooch Behar town just opposite to the Rajbari gate. However, the Choto Kuthi was the largest banking Institution and though its chief concern was money lending it got involved in other business activities too. The Kamala Bank deposited its surplus money at Chhoto Kuthi in exchange for interest at a very later period and the Kuthi like the present day Reserve Bank, acted as the 'lender of the last resort'. The Mahajans of Cooch Behar on many occasions used to take loans against hand-notes from this Kuthi.²⁰ The Baro Kuthi was also a banker to the Maharajas of Cooch Behar. They relieved the Maharajas many times from financial distress by granting massive amounts as loans to the royal family. So what the House of Jagat Seth was to the Bengal's Nawabs, the Baro and Chhoto Kuthis were to the Maharajas of Cooch Behar State. These two Kuthis also advanced loans on interest to the small cultivators.²¹

There were also many small Marwari money-lenders in Cooch Behar State and they usually lent money to the distressed peasants. There were three types of money lending in the state : (i) The general loans, the interest of which was very high, i.e., about 37 - 50 percent, lent to the peasants against the guarantee of land to be mortgaged to the money-lenders, (ii) Muli or value loans, provided to the peasants to be repaid by crops within a stipulated period, failing which the debtors would have to pay high rate of cultivated crops as per present market price, (iii) The Bhutali loans by which the debtors were contracted to render wage free labour on the lands of the money lenders.²² However, it seemed that the Marwari money lenders were least interested in the third type of money-lending²³ as this system was a hazardous one and most of them did not belong to the landed gentry having large land holdings.²⁴

The Marwari money lending system proved to be ruinous in many instances. This was evident from the State Administrative Report for the year 1912-13, which had correctly sketched the portrait of Marwari money lending in the rural sector of the state. It stated that the people were purely agricultural and although the soil was generally rich and fertile and a good harvest was obtained with very little trouble, they were involved and remained in debt to the Mahajans from year to year.²⁵ The ruinous effects of the money-lending practice of the Marwari Mahajans was also felt

in an earlier Administrative Report of the State : "A ruinous practice widely prevails here, viz, the system of making advances to the cultivators for their crops while the crops are still green in the fields, the cultivators take advances or undersell them at wretchedly low rates, while the inability to satisfy the Mahajans brings about suits for the value of the crops at rates ruinously exorbitant and the so-called high prices, therefore, inevitably benefit the merchants and impoverish the people. A single season of poor crops and high prices plunges the defaulting cultivators deeper into debt, from which years of plenty and prosperity cannot rescue them."²⁶

Therefore the mode of Marwari money lending had been so disastrous and ruinous that the state Government thought of rescuing the debtors from the clutches of the Mahajans either by making provisions in the state to the peasants who already felt over head and ears in debt to the Marwari Mahajans or by promulgating laws to protect the interest of the peasants. That the state authority was thinking of protecting the peasants or debtors from the Mahajans was indicated in the State's Administrative Report for the year 1912-13.²⁷ With this end in view the Cooch Behar Banking Corporation Limited came into existence in 1912. This was the first time that a regular banking business had been started in Cooch Behar state. The Company had been floated with a capital of one lakh of rupees divided into 2,000 shares of Rs. 50 each and most part of the capital had been subscribed by the people of the state.²⁸ This institution was not the last of its kind. The Co-operative Financing Society also came into being in 1930 to offer financial help to the distressed cultivators.²⁹ At the same time, a firm step was taken under direct state patronage by enacting laws to rescue the cultivators from the dangerous Marwari practice of money - lending. According to the provisions of the laws, the money -lenders could not extract from the debtors unlimited amount of money and interest. Another aspect of the laws enacted was that the court would not allow any case of money - lending which extracted interest exceeding the principal amount advanced.³⁰

The outbreak of the First World War (1914-18) caused much dislocation of normal economic life of the Cooch Behar State. The great war seriously affected the jute market and the price varied from Rs. 2 to 12, the lower price prevailing during the greater portion of the year 1914-15. The price of tobacco which fluctuated between Rs. 16 and Rs. 20 in the previous year came down further and did not exceed Rs. 17 a maund, the lowest price was so low as Rs. 6. As regards mustard seeds, there was at first some little falling off in the price. But with the appearance of new seeds in the market exports increased and the price rose to Rs. 7 a maund against the highest rate of Rs. 6 - 8 in the previous year. There was not much change in the price of the oil which was generally sold at Rs. 18 a maund.³¹

As a matter of fact, Cooch Behar was an agricultural region and judging from an agricultural point of view by the index afforded by the prices current, which ruled the markets of the principal crops, the general condition of the people during the year 1914-15, as per the Administrative Report, was anything but satisfactory. One special feature was that the landless classes suffered equally with those who depended on agriculture for necessities of life. Owing

to short outturn large imports of rice were obtained from Rangoon which was consumed even in distant corners of the state. Supplies of rice were also obtained from Behar. In spite of those supplies, the rate was high in the price of rice. The lowest price was Rs. 4 - 2 for Rangoon rice and the highest price was Rs. 7 - 8. Pulse and other food grains also had suffered owing to unfavourable rains and even for vegetables, which were ordinarily grown extensively in the state high prices were obtained. The war also contributed to the rise in the prices though as in other parts of India, suitable measures were adopted to prevent shop keepers from arbitrarily demanding unreasonable rates. Increase in prices of food grains during the previous two years had already taxed the resources of the landless classes and people with fixed income, and a further rise in the following year considerably accentuated their difficulties. The middle classes which could neither beg nor borrow, even when good securities were offered, suffered most. As regards the land-owning class, the high prices of food grains proved to their advantage in previous year. But in the year 1914-15 the dislocation of the jute market caused by the war and the consequent fall in the price seriously affected their condition. They generally depended on this crop, i.e., the jute for the satisfaction of their dues to their landlords and Mahajans. During the previous year the lowest price for which the crop was sold was Rs. 8 a maund which in the year 1914-15 was so low as Rs. 2. The result was that the paying capacity of the ryots considerably diminished and their indebtedness increased. There was no doubt, according to Administrative Report of the State, that there was great hardship amongst the ryots, the majority of whom having no accumulation to fall back upon, had to buy their own food grains.³²

Above all, Cooch Behar State was in common with the rest of India and the British Empire was passing through a period of financial stringency. This was felt acutely by the cultivating classes who could not sell the plentiful crops they had been reaping at remunerative prices, while the prices of many articles which they required, especially cloth and salt, had gone up enormously. Efforts were being made to foster the production of indigenous cloth, but the state was not in a position to spend adequate sums on this or on the other projects for developing internal resources in which Maharaja Jitendra Narayan took so great an interest.

An important phenomenon had occurred in Cooch Behar during this period. In common with the rest of Bengal the State was threatened with an outbreak of Hat looting crime due to the high prices (alluded to above). The first symptoms were, however, rigorously dealt with and no serious occurrence, according to Administrative Report of the State, took place. It is known from the Administrative Report of the State that by combining severity with subsequent clemency the Maharaja Jitendra Narayan nipped the outbreak in the bud and such an effect was produced that 'no recrudescence of the trouble need be feared.'³³

Owing to the abnormal rise in prices of imported articles, especially of those which were required for necessities of existence, the condition of the people did not improve during this period. Of the articles for which exorbitant rates were being charged in the local markets, wearing cloth was one. To enable the people to tide over the

difficulty, Maharaja Jitendranarayan sanctioned advance of necessary funds from the treasury for purchase of piece goods from Calcutta for sale to the people direct under arrangements made from the Dewan's office. Thus cloth was made available to the people at cheaper rates than those prevailing in the local markets at the time. The distress of the people according to the Administrative Report of the State, was thereby relieved to a certain extent.³⁴

It should be stated here that the revenue of the state for the year 1921-22 amounted to Rs. 32,61,110 against Rs. 31,69,048 of the previous year 1920-21 showing an increase of Rs. 92,062. On the other hand, the total expenditure of the state for 1921-22 amounted to Rs. 31,93,566 against Rs. 35,76,095 of the previous year 1920-21 showing a decrease of 3,82,529.³⁵

The cash balance at the treasury at the close of the year 1921-22 amounted to Rs. 5,92,308 against Rs. 9,02,206 of the previous year 1920-21. This sum included cash of the Government of Bengal amounting to Rs. 2,20,689, and deposits and funds of the state amounting to Rs. 2,65,565. The actual closing cash balance of the year 1921-22 is shown below :³⁶

		1921-22
		(Rs.)
Cooch Behar	Treasury	57,577
Chaklajat	Treasury	48,476

After a decade later the wave of world-wide economic crisis began to tell upon the people of Cooch Behar from the year 1336 B.S. (1930) and it continued to linger with unabated fury in the state even in the year 1345 B.S. (1938).³⁷ The original budget estimate for the year 1930-31 was framed with a revenue of Rs. 41,16,902 and an expenditure of Rs. 39,68,023 including amount of Rs. 1,50,000 set apart from the Reserve Fund, the result showing a surplus 1,48,879 on the revenue. Since the framing of the budget, however, the situation became very acute on account of the world-wide trade depression and consequent low prices of state crops - more especially jute, tobacco which made it very difficult to collect the land revenue. The collections thus fell far short of the estimates and the revised estimate was prepared with a revenue of only Rs. 30,52,782. The expenditure for the year 1930-31 was, therefore, carefully reviewed and after cutting down as much as possible without impairing the efficiency, it was taken in the Revised at Rs. 35,26,247. The margin between revenue and expenditure causing a deficit of Rs. 4,88,465 instead of the surplus which was anticipated at the time of framing the original budget. The actual revenue and expenditure for the year 1930-31 brought to account were, however, Rs. 29,31,763 and Rs. 34,27,403 respectively, thus increasing the deficit to Rs. 4,95,640. The fall in the revenue as compared with the revised being mainly due to a further short collections of land revenue.³⁸

Owing to the low prices of agricultural products, there had been an acute distress among the people throughout the state as it had been in British India. Cooch Behar being purely an agriculture state, the people had been hard hit by the low prices. Several Jotedars failing to pay the revenue due to the state applied to the Regency Council either for remission of revenue or for extension of time. The Regency Council realising the adverse economic situation granted time in each of three Kists for payment of arrears of revenue. The Regency Council did not consider it necessary to grant any remission of revenue as prayed for in several of the petitions in the year 1930-31.³⁹ But in the next year Regency Council had to afford measures of relief to afford to the Jotedars and tenants in their difficulties owing to the economic distress to pay revenues and rents due from them. The Regency Council in their Notification dated the 14th January, 1932 announced as follows :

i) 'For every jote for which the whole of the arrears and current demand has been satisfied within the current Revenue year (1338 B.E.) the jotedar will be entitled to a remission of one third of the Revenue demand on that jote due for 1339 B.E.'

ii) 'For every jote for wich the whole of the arrears and current demand upto and including the Kartick kist of the current year (1338 B.E.) has been satisfied, the jotedar will be entitled to a remission of one fourth of the Revenue demand on that jote due for 1339 B.E.'

iii) 'Similar concessions shall be shown to all the tenants and under-tenants by Jotedars and other superior landlords (whether jotedars and superior landlords have themselves received the above concessions or not) in all cases where tenants and under-tenants have paid to their respective landlords all Kists due upto the end of 1339 B.E. or the Aswin Kist of 1338 B.E. as the case may be.'⁴⁰

It was thus noted that from the begining of the economic depression, generous remissions of revenue and rent had been allowed from year to year in the state at rates ranging between 7 annas and 4 annas and decreasing as conditions became stabilised. The remission allowed in the year 1935 was at the rate of 2 annas in the rupee conditional on payment of the dues of a Kist within the date of sale advertised in the State Gazette. The State Government also announced that in the light of a further change in economic conditions a further reduction of the rate of remission would be fully justified. For non-agricultural holdings, which were not affected by the outturn and market prices of crops, no remission was granted in 1935 and remissions of 4 annas and 2 annas in the rupee were granted in the years 1933 and 1934, respectively only in cases in which there was no outstanding arrears, under ordinary circumstances no remission could be granted in respect of such holdings for the year 1936.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan in Council accepted the proposals of the Revenue Officers of the state for a special remission of land revenue both on agricultural and non-agricultured land to mark the ocasion of the Maharaja's investiture with full

ruling powers.⁴²

As a matter of fact, the economic depression commenced on the 1338 B.S. or 1930-31 suddenly and astoundingly to the people, especially to the Cooch Behari people and deeply hit them. The Marwari Jotedars were full of resources and the foreign Jotedars also had some resources, but the Cooch Behari Jotedars and others had none except what they could get from agriculture or jotedari and it was upon their unfortunate hands that the burden of economic distress had fallen most heavily and most of their jotes had been made Khas. The under-tenants Cooch Beharees as they were, had also suffered most from the provisions of their land on which they were living, being Khas.⁴³

The President, the Land-holders Association of the state, wrote to the State Council on 7th June, 1938 stating that 'the economic crisis was still lingering with unabated fury in Cooch Behar state in 1938. The economic condition of the country was not improved but going from bad to worse.' The people were surprised to find in Cooch Behar Gazette published on 1st June, 1938 that a jote having arrears would be put upto auction sale unless the amount of arrears to the extent of the Kist of the year 1345 B.S. be not paid with the current demand. 'Under the present economic depression of the Country', the President pointed out, 'it had been a great and difficult question with the jotedars to pay even the current demand and much more would it be impossible and impracticable to pay the arrears and current demand at the same time. The result would be that the jotedars who were paying revenue so long to the state loyally and with great difficulty would not save their remaining jotes to be made Khas. It would be death blow to the last surviving Jotedars and would bring in terrible economic catastrophe.'⁴⁴

'In the severe economic circumstances', the President maintained, 'the stringent provisions of law should be applied with moderation and with sympathy to the Jotedars, Chukanidars etc. specially the Cooch Behari people who are generally poor, and not with the view of forming a Khas Mahal Department and to add some gain to the state. The Bengal Government applied what is known as the "Sunset" law with great moderation to suit the present economic condition.' The application of the section 99 of the Cess Act in Rangpur and some other districts', the President added, 'has done and is still doing good to the Zemindars and Jotedars and under-tenants alike. The application of this provision might have saved and still may save the Cooch Beharee from ruin.'⁴⁵

Needless to say, the poor financial condition of the inhabitants of Cooch Behar state was a fact. This was amply reflected in another D.O. Letter dated 11th June, 1941 from Rai Sahib Ashutosh Dutt of Mekligang to the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State. 'For the last 10 or 12 years Cooch Behar people', he wrote, 'is financially very hard pressed. Before this every jotedar was solvent. Many useful institutions developed with their help and co-operation. Practically no Jotedar was a defaulter. Revenue of the state was secure and was regularly paid during every Kist. In

bad years the Jotedar could easily raise a loan for paying revenue, mortgaging the Jotes. During a revenue sale the number of no-bid jotes was negligible.'

According to Raisahib Ashutosh Dutta, 'Now things have quite changed. Money has become scarce; jotes have practically no value, nobody is keen to buy jotes, Jotedars with difficulty can pay their present revenue; every Jotedar is a defaulter; number of no-bid jotes is very numerous. To realise revenue of the no-bid jotes from the cultivators, the State had to establish the Khasmahal Department. Many jotes became Khas. Thousands of certificates, to realise state dues had to be issued of which very little is realised. All these point to but one fact - that the paying capacity of the cultivators has diminished considerably. They could not pay their rent, consequently the Jotedars could not pay. The same unsatisfactory financial condition of the cultivators still remains. The Jotedars are paying their revenue with difficulties. Only those jotedars who have other sources of income such as business or service are paying their revenue. The Khasmahal department is experiencing the same difficulties; many cases of certificates are pending, many Pattani tenures are being sold by the Khasmahal department every month.'⁴⁶

'These facts clearly indicate', Raisahib Dutt further pointed out, 'the pitiable financial condition of the cultivators. The daily increasing large number of landless cultivators also corroborates that the cultivators cannot pay. If they are to pay their rent, very little is left to keep their body and soul together; if they are to live they cannot pay the whole amount of their rent. ... so they cannot pay their landlord or Khasmahal; consequently they either lose their tenure or about to lose. This will explain the act of ever increasing large number of landless cultivators and enormous number of pending certificate cases in the Khasmahal department and the public sale of pattani tenures by the state.'

'The following factors are responsible', Raisahib Dutt argued, 'for the low paying capacity of the cultivators. Their standard of living, since the last war, ... has little improved while their earning capacity diminished with the fall in the prices of their produce and on account of diminishing yield from the deterioration of the soil. They are spending a little more money but earning less than they did before the last War. The longer this unsatisfactory financial condition of the cultivators remains, the greater will be the difficulties of administration and the worse it will be for the inhabitants of the state-both Jotedars and cultivators and all classes of middlemen.'⁴⁷

With the outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939, Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan offered to place his personal services and the resources of his state to His Majesty's Government of Great Britain.⁴⁸ This great war precipitated the economic crisis in the state of Cooch Behar. Cooch Behar passed through a distinct economic crisis as a result of war conditions. The Railway transport difficulties and inconveniences in procurement of necessary materials hampered considerably the progress and development of beneficent activities of the state in many direction. The abnormal increase in prices of all commodities in general had not only affected detrimentally the

civil population of the state but had also considerably increased the cost of administration. The very serious situation created in the matter of supplies of food stuffs to the civilian population had to be tackled with considerable caution and care in order to avoid a serious catastrophe. It can be known from the Administrative Report of the State that the crisis on account of scarcity of food supply had been successfully averted without depending for much outside help.⁴⁹

It was reported in June, 1942 that Kerosene, salt, sugar and other articles were being sold as according to the prices fixed. There had been dearness in the supply of kerosene and sugar. The price of paddy had gone up to Rs. 3/12/- per maund and of common rice Rs. 6/4/- per maund. The Hatibandha Marwari firm had exported 1400 maunds of paddy to Lalmonirhat Rice Mills during the month of June, 1942. The firm was contemplating to export more paddy to Serajganj and Lalmonirhat. Madan Gopal Swa, Akshoy Prasad Swa, Satish Chandra Swa - all merchants of Mathabhanga town, each of them exported by boats 200 maunds of rice and 300 maunds of paddy to their native places at Manikganj. The Paikars from Dhupguri, Maynaguri, Patgram and Falakata purchased paddy in large quantities at Ghokshadanga and Diberhat and took those for tea gardens. The situation was thus becoming worse day by day.⁵⁰ All these reports were conveyed to the Fauzdari Ahilkar of Cooch Behar and Naib Ahilkar of Mathabhanga so that they could take necessary steps to prevent extensive export of food stuffs beyond the state territories or it might lead to scarcity of food among the state subjects.⁵¹

Although Cooch Behar had usually a surplus of rice in normal years, yet owing to a large deficiency in rainfall in 1942 (108.94 inches in 1942 against 144.55 inches in 1941) the outturn of winter paddy in the last seasons was far from satisfactory. The result of census taken revealed that the outturn was as low as 25 lakhs of maunds against 66 lakhs of maunds which represented the sixteen anna output. The most optimistic view also did not place the outturn above eight annas, i.e., 33 lakhs of maunds while the state's normal consumption amounted to 46 lakhs of maunds per annum.

The situation beyond Cooch Behar state's border was worse still. The import of rice from Burma, Malaya and Indo China had totally ceased and imports of what from Australia dwindled almost to nullity. Though faced with deficit herself India was exporting wheat and rice to the Middle East and Ceylon, her population had increased appreciably by immigration of evacuees from Burma and arrival of troops from Egypt, Abyssinia, China and other countries. It was estimated by an expert on food problems (Dr. R. Mukherjee) that India had not got food for 68 millions out of her 400 millions of people this year (1942). Besides, the tea gardens in the Duars used to buy large supplies of paddy from the Cooch Behar state and this year also the state had received repeated requests from them to export paddy which however the state had to refuse. They had employed Agents who had established depots near the State's border and were buying at any prices. The State Government's attempts to achieve parity in prices failed for the reason that as soon as this Government raised their controlled rates they increased their prices correspondingly.⁵²

Owing to the disparity in prices, the people of the State near the border, for whose welfare the State Government restricted exports, tried their best to evade the State's Police, Village Chowkidars, Export Duty Staff and Village Defence Parties by smuggling under cover of darkness. At Jamaldah Hat which stood near the border in Mekligunj Subdivision and near which a planters agent had established a depot, there had been a riot on the 26th February, 1943 and the Hat was looted as a result of attempts to control prices.

Incidentally, control of prices of paddy and rice was abolished in adjacent British Districts with effect from the 1st February, 1943 and so after mature deliberation following prolonged and careful study of the situation it was decided to suspend control of prices of paddy and rice in the state. Under the present conditions the State Government had two alternations open to them :- (i) Controlled low prices but sufficient grains not available or (ii) uncontrolled high prices but stocks conserved. So the state had to adopt the latter alternative. The situation was discussed in a conference of the Naib Ahilkars held on the 12th February, 1943 and in a fuller meeting of the Civil Defence Committee (in which elected councillors and high officials of the state were present) on the 11th March, 1943 and the decision to remove price control of paddy and rice was approved. As a result of this abolition the prices of paddy and rice had jumped up.⁵³

It is important to notice that in order to facilitate the flow of food grains and to inaugurate a scheme of complete free trade in Eastern region, the Government of India issued a notification dated the 18th May, 1943 for withdrawing from the Provincial Governments of this region the authority to exercise certain statutory powers under the Defence of India Rules in respect of control of food grains and for conferring authority to exercise the same powers to the Regional Commissioner (Food), Eastern Region. In order to regularise the position and to create free trade conditions and uniformity throughout the region, the Resident of Eastern States Agency, therefore requested the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan of Cooch Behar to issue similar notification under "Your version of the Defence of India Rules conferring upon me authority to exercise similar powers in your state as are now exercised in the provinces by the Regional Commissioner." He further mentioned that the food situation had become so acute in parts of the Eastern Region that immediate action had to be taken, and there was no time for preliminary discussions or conferences.⁵⁴ In response, the Maharaja explained to the Resident in a confidential letter dated 13th June, 1943 the critical food situation in the state. He mentioned that 'owing to very deficient rainfall during the last season (1942), the yield of paddy in the state had been most unsatisfactory with the result that the available food stocks were far below the normal requirements. They were already having a good deal of agitation in some of their subdivisions for want of paddy as also trouble in the shape of looting in some hats and strikes among the vital services of the states for want of food. The meagre stocks which were then available in the state were being conserved with care and were being utilised to meet the state's requirements by a system of equitable distribution. Any disturbance of the existing conditions, would affect badly the sustaining power of the state subjects who economically were very weak and could

not even afford at present one meal a day.' The Maharaja also pointed out that the State Durbar would have had absolutely no objection to the Bengal Government making purchases within the state if only they had a surplus, but at present any depletion of our slender stocks would mean a great setback to their food position. Hence he expressed hope that the Resident would recommend the exclusion of Cooch Behar state from the free trade zone.⁵⁵

According to the Maharaja, Cooch Behar state was in deficit for about 4,22,224 maunds of paddy and there was practically no likelihood of their getting any stocks from their neighbouring areas as export out of Assam Valley, which was adjacent to them, was banned and it was not possible for Bengal to spare anything for them. The Maharaja argued that if his state would be excluded from the free trade zone, it might not be a burden on Bengal and exercise a disturbing influence on other markets where Bengal might draw her supplies. In this connection, the following statement was furnished by the Maharaja regarding the paddy position in the state in 1943.⁵⁶

The Statement showing paddy position of the Cooch Behar state in 1943

Sub-divisions	Haimauti Paddy Mds	Probable yield of Bitri Paddy this year Mds	Estimate yield of china, kaon, Mize etc. Mds	Population	Estimated consumption upto 30th Nov. 1943 Mds	Total Surplus deficit	Remarks total deficit Mds.	
Sudder	29,700	3,00,000	2,700	1,50,186	4,50,558	118,158	—	
Dmhata	25,000	3,70,000	3,300	1,59,694	4,79,082	80,782	—	
Mathabhanga	1,75,659	1,38,212	3,200	1,47,026	4,41,078	124,007	—	
Mekligung	83,448	71,429	1,700	88,159	2,64,577	108,000	—	
Tufangung	12,423	2,77,854	2,925	94,833	2,84,499	—	8,703	
Total	3,26,230	11,57,495	13,825	6,39,898	19,19,794	4,30,947	8,703	4,22,244

In response to the suggestion made by the Resident, Eastern States Agency, to the Cooch Behar Durbar to tide over the food crisis, the Maharaja pointed out that the merchants of the state had not much stocks left with them then and the advice to them by the Darbur to retain stocks for local consumption would not have the desired effect. As regards purchase for food grains for the urban population and the landless subjects of the State, the Maharaja maintained that the number of such landless population in the state was large and they had very little sustaining power and always suffered badly everywhere when agricultural stocks run low. Besides, the amount required for purchase of paddy for the landless class, it was estimated, would cost several lakhs of rupees, which the Darbar would be unable to finance.⁵⁷

But the Maharaja of Cooch Behar was informed that the Government of India had decided upon a policy of free trade in the Eastern Region including Cooch Behar State after very careful consideration and the Regional Food Commissioner would not consent to a policy of protection in Cooch Behar.⁵⁸ Ultimately, the Cooch Behar Darbar had to change its position and decided to comply with the decision of the Government of India. At the same time, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar wanted to know from the Resident that "if famine conditions akin to those prevailing in Bengal now were to spread to this state as a result of adoption of free trade policy, whether this Darbar can expect any financial assistance from the Government of India or supply of food stuffs from other parts of India on the lines the Government of Bengal receive".⁵⁹ Later on the Resident explained to the Maharaja the difficulties which he would experience in making out a case for Cooch Behar to be segregated from Bengal in respect of food grains control. Even so, he pointed out, 'it would always be open to the Cooch Behar Darbar to use their counterpart of the food grains control order 1942, which was published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, dated the 21st May, 1942 for the purpose of controlling exports of the main food grains outside state territory.'⁶⁰

During this period of crisis of foodstuffs and as adequate alms giving had become impossible for the generous public there was a large influx of beggars to Cooch Behar town and other subdivisional towns as well as some other places like Gossanimari and Sitai.⁶¹ Most of the beggars were often found on streets of the towns were residents of the state, hailing from interior places. This beggars were loitering in the streets of the towns, some of them lying diseased here and there and some of them dying on the streets. The relief committees consisting of merchants and public spirited gentlemen were formed to supply rice or cheera free of cost to the starving people and beggars, and to supply rice and paddy to the poor distressed people at a reduced price. Owing to prevailing economic distress in Bengal and surrounding districts of Cooch Behar state an influx of poverty stricken beggars from outside was apprehended. But such influx of real beggars from outside into the state had not been to an appreciable extent.⁶² Nevertheless, the state administration adopted preventive measures so that no beggars from outside travelling by train be allowed to land at Gitaldah, Bamanhat, Dinahata, Dewanhat, Cooch Behar and Banerwar Railway stations.⁶³ As a consequence of these measures, 650 beggars and destitutes were removed from the jurisdiction of Dinahata Police Station from 1st October, 1943 to 6th November, 1943 and 969 beggars from the jurisdiction of Kotwali Police station from 1st September, 1943 to 11th November 1943.⁶⁴ Apart from this, there were many middle class families, who had small income had to starve in silence for several days in a month in view of the high prices of rice and other commodities prevailing now.⁶⁵

On the other hand, Dewan Bahadur R. Subbaya Naidu, Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State wrote a letter dated the 5th January, 1943 drawing the attention of the Resident for the Eastern States to the difficulties experienced in the matter of export of tobacco and jute from Cooch Behar State. He wrote, "As you may be aware, this state is purely an agricultural state and has to obtain all the money necessary for its requirements from its trade with other

parts of British India. On account of inadequacy of production in the state we have had to restrict the export of paddy in any considerable quantity from the state limits. The state therefore has to depend upon what it could get from other agricultural products such as jute, tobacco, mustard and also sundries such as skins and hides for the inflow of money into the state. ... There has been considerable restriction imposed upon the supply of wagons to Cooch Behar state generally. Exports to Calcutta have been practically stopped and to other places also they have been allowed in extremely meagre quantities..."

This state produced, the Chief Minister pointed out, enormous quantities of jute and tobacco and the annual exports from the state were generally estimated at 1,35,500 and 1,51,500 maunds respectively. Large quantities of the stuff therefore were locked up in the state limits. Practically the whole export trade had been brought to a standstill and at the rate of one or two wagons that were now allowed from the state it might be really impossible to clear up the stocks to any appreciable extent in the near future. The Darbar realised the abnormal times through which the country was now passing and the particular difficulties that were apparent in Calcutta and other places; but an amount of greater consideration than had been accorded to it by the Railway Administration was really necessary in the interests of the financial stability of the state.⁶⁶

As a matter of fact, the Railway traffic had played a vital part in the economy of the state. When this traffic was out of gear, the vitality of the trade and commerce of the state was affected badly. During the Second World War the supply of railway wagons over all sections of the Railway had been drastically reduced on account of military requirements.⁶⁷ Restrictions had been placed on the booking of articles by goods trains between Calcutta and Cooch Behar from the 1st week of October, 1942 and this restriction affected the import of food stuffs into Cooch Behar. Articles other than articles of food had also been seriously affected by the virtual cessation of goods traffic to and from Cooch Behar. Between the beginning of October and the end of December, 1942 only 74 wagons had been received for the export of jute and tobacco. By the later date applications had been registered with the Cooch Behar Darbar for the despatch of about 2000 bales of jute and wagons to export this jute were required as follows :-

Cooch Behar station.....	500	wagons
Dewanhat station.....	40	wagons
Dinhata station.....	800	wagons
Patgram station.....	200	wagons
(For Mathabhanga)		
Haldibari station.....	400	wagons
Changrabandha station.....	100	wagons

In addition to the Wagons for the export of jute, the following wagons were also required at Cooch Behar station for the export of tobacco to the following places.

Narshingdi	6	wagons
Comilla	1	wagons
Fetchhuganj	2	wagons
Dacca	2	wagons
Narayanganj	2	wagons
Chandpur	1	wagons
Hajiganj	4	wagons
Cittagong	4	wagons

The shortage of Kerosene was also chiefly due to the lack of railway transport as there had been a restriction on the booking of all goods via Santahar which had restricted the regular flow of supplies to their agents in North East Bengal. From the above, it was evident that the economic life of Cooch Behar State had been seriously upset by the non-receipt of railway wagons both for imports and exports.⁶⁸

The Chamber of Commerce of Cooch Behar State in their letter dated the 4th November, 1942 to Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, President, State Council, expressed some grievances and inconveniences felt by a large number of merchants interested in the export of various agricultural products from Cooch Behar (particularly Jute & Tobacco). The Chamber wrote that due to the restriction on the booking of jute, tobacco and other goods from Cooch Behar for an indefinite period extending over two weeks to one month, there was absolutely no booking of the goods mentioned above for a long time at a stretch.

The Chamber pointed out that as the financial resources and the storing capacity of the merchants in their godown were limited and because due to the unrest all over the country and the emergency created by this war they apprehended the risk of loss or damage to their stock, it was not possible for them to go on purchasing these two commodities in very large quantities without the possibility of clearing their stocks by exporting them. The inevitable result was this that the cultivating ryots were not in a position to dispose of their goods to the merchants at fair and reasonable prices because the latter were not at all interested in such purchases unless they in their turn were in a position to clear their stocks by sending to Mills and Presses in Calcutta and other places. This absence of facilities for transport of the commercial crops of the state was seriously affecting the economic life of the cultivators.'

The Chamber was also afraid that the state would soon be confronted with the series of problem of relieving the distress of the people unless there was a speedy remedy of this deadlock in the trade and commerce of the state.

Owing to the closing of booking of goods from Calcutta to Cooch Behar by goods train for more than a month there was no import of food stuff and clothing materials, and other necessities of life in Cooch Behar on account of which there was already a great shortage of such things and there would be serious inconveniences and sufferings to the people unless immediate steps were taken for opening the booking of goods from Calcutta to Cooch Behar by goods train.⁶⁹

During 1940s paper currencies of lower denominations were issued in Cooch Behar State for a limited period of time. This paper currencies were issued at a time when the British Indian coinage was the legal tender of the State. During this volatile period of the Second World War it is possible that there was an acute crisis of small coins in British India as well as the territories of the Princely States. To overcome this problem i.e. the shortage of coins of smaller denominations, the State Council authorised the Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce to circulate paper coins in the markets. It is presumed that the Government of India gave their approval to this arrangement.^{69*}

Even during the war-time, a Post-war Reconstruction Conference was held at the Lansdowne Hall in Cooch Behar town on the 25th and 26th February, 1944. The Chief Minister Dewan Bahadur R. Subbayya Naidu who presided over the conference, the Revenue Minister Rai K. C. Ganguli Bahadur, the Education and Development Minister S. C. Roy Singha Sarkar, the Civil Defence Commissioner L. M. Baksi, the State Engineer J. C. Roy, Assistant Sate Engineer D. M. Sen, the Secretary were among others who were present at the conference. At the direction of the President, the Secretary explained the real significance of the word Reconstruction as regards Post-War activities and the necessity of making their plans ahead, were pointed out. It was explained that the aim should be to secure a general standard of living which would leave a reasonable margin over the minimum requirements of human life. It was suggested that to meet the heavy expenditure needed for the purpose, the state should be industrialised and it should use all available resources, grow, newer and better variety of both 'consumer' and 'money' crops and develop cheap electric power. The importance of communications was pointed out and some other main items such as indebtedness, marketing, transport facilities and improvement of live stock were also suggested for consideration. It was hoped that although a large expenditure would be required it would not be difficult to get the money by the state.⁷⁰

Especially the subject of Post War Industrial Development was taken up and the possibilities of (a) Heavy, (b) Small and (c) Cottage industries were considered separately. The Conference were of unanimous in opinion that without proper development of all possible heavy industries in the state, the finance of the state and the wealth of its cannot be very much increased by agriculture alone. As no mineral deposit has yet been discovered in the state the conference were of opinion that special economic crops should be grown on all available lands without prejudice to the cultivation of food crops and for that purpose cultivation of cotton, Linseed, castor, Tung-oil trees, groundnut, sugarcane,

fruit trees etc. should be introduced and the existing cultivation of tobacco including virginia tobaccos, jute and other crops be developed. Following industries were considered desirable and practicable :

(a) Heavy industries : (i) Cotton and Jute Mills, (ii) Transport, (iii) Tobacco industries such as Cigar, Cigarettes, Pipe Tobacco, Bidis, Hooka tobacco and Cheroots, (iv) Paper Mills, (v) Plywood and Match Factory, (vi) Glass Factory, (vii) Tea Industry, (viii) Electric Power, (ix) Cultivation of soft wood trees, bamboo and sabai grass, (x) Sugar Mills. The possibility of starting manufacture of alcohol and glass could be investigated.

(b) For small industries following were recommended : (i) Oil pressing, (ii) Soap making, (iii) Tile making and Potteries, (iv) Dairying (v) Fruit preservation and condiment making (vi) Cotton spinning and hosiery (vii) Band saw-mill and Kiln seasoning of timber, (viii) Silk industry (ix) Rice milling, (x) Brass and bellmetal castings, (xi) Agricultural implement making and iron culteries (xii) Small leather industry (xiii) Manufacture of catechu (xiv) Sugar mill and gur manufacturing, (xv) Cheroot and cigar, and (xvi) Bone manure and a large number of other small industries.

(c) Under cottage industries following were recommended : (i) Hand spinning and weaving, both cotton and silk (ii) Mekli and other jute products, (iii) Manufacture of Gur and Sati food etc, (iv) Bamboo and cane works and matting and shola products and (v) Oil pressing and a few other minor industries. In this connection, running of industries directly by the state as commercial undertaking was also considered and the conference was of unanimous in opinion that this should not generally be done. The responsibility of state should be to create facilities for industrial development and give official backing.

On the subject of agriculture, intensive and extensive cultivation of economic crops as mentioned under industries and food crops on scientific lines was stressed by the Conference. Cultivation of nutritious crops so as to improve the health and physique of the people has to be actively encouraged, such as wheat, pulse, dal, soyabean etc. For this purpose wide propaganda through lectures, posters, cinema and loud speakers, supply of good seed and introduction of different manuring processes and better implements, improvement of cattle, holding of exhibitions, provision of cheap transport and better marketing facilities were discussed. Indigenous ploughs being very inefficient in tilling the soil deep enough, introduction of "sobkum No. 2" which can easily be drawn by the ordinary bullocks of the state was considered desirable. As this matter is intimately conected with improvement of cattle, selective breeding, castration of indigenous bulls along with distribution of pedigree bull calfs born and reared in the local dairy farm and mass vaccination of cattle should be taken up. Appointment of a live-stock expert with staff was considered necessary in this matter.⁷¹

We would like to discuss here the major sources of income of the state's exchequer under the following

heads : (i) Land revenue, (ii) Excise, (iii) Stamps, (iv) Railway, (v) Income Tax and (vi) Export Duty. There were also other sources of revenue in Cooch Behar State, but those departments had had most insignificant role in terms of income to the state exchequer. Hence those were not mentioned in this chapter.

(i) Land Revenue : As in British Indian provinces, the economies of most princely states were mainly agricultural with differing patterns of land control, land revenue assessment and tax collection. Many observers claimed that princes contracted more from their peasants than did the British Indian Government, but that peasants in princely states were 'happier' than those under colonial rule. However, little rigorous research on the agricultural economies in the princely states supports these opinions.⁷² As a matter of fact, land revenue formed the most important item of revenue of Cooch Behar state exchequer. Raja was the owner of all the lands of the state. He divided the land among the persons called Jotedars. Jotedars were liable to collect revenue of their respective jotes and remit the same to the state.⁷³ The revenue paying lands of the state were divided into 'Mal' and 'Debutter'. The first was available for state revenue, and the second was dedicated for the maintenance of the worship of deities. The 'Debutter' lands were subsequently included in the state revenue roll after money grants had been made for the performance of the religious rites and ceremonies. The persons responsible for the payment of the land revenue immediately to the state were called Jotedars. There were different grades of Chukanidars or undertenants under the Jotedars besides some krishi Praja. Under the existing Tenancy Act only two grades of Chukanis (viz., Chukanidar and Dar-Chukanidar) could be created. Since the year 1934-35 Khas lands of the state had generally been settled with the actual cultivators and sub-letting had been prohibited in the case of such Pattani holdings.⁷⁴

Regular survey and settlement had been made at intervals since 1870. The last resettlement was concluded in 1927 and was based on traverse and cadastral survey conducted under the supervision of the Director of Survey, Government of Bengal. The settlement operations were conducted by the experienced officers lent by the Government of Bengal and were inspected by the Director of Land records of the Government of Bengal who also gave necessary instructions. The present Revenue Minister of the state, who was a Bengal Government's pensioner and had worked in several districts of Bengal and Behar, was deputed to this state to work as Settlement Officer during the last settlement operations. Copies of 125 record of rights and Vandyket copies of the cadastral maps were supplied to all tenants and undertenants. The record of right had an evidential value under the Tenancy Act.⁷⁵

Settlement of land revenue and rents was made after classification of Taluks and of soil. Fixation of rates of revenue was made for different classes of soil. Fair and equitable rents, according to the Administrative Report of the state, were settled for all grades of undertenants according to the scale of profits hitherto in force. The rates of revenue for 12 out of 15 classes of land had remained unaltered for over half a century. The incidence of land revenue was not higher, Official Administrative Report claimed, than that for similar temporarily settled tenures in the neighbouring

British districts.⁷⁶

The period of settlement was generally 30 years and lands in Towns and Bunders and payasti lands or alluvial accretions were subject to a 10 years settlement according to past practice.⁷⁷ The incidence of land revenue per acre for total assessed area was Rs. 2-2-7 while incidence of land revenue per acre for cultivated area was Rs. 3-2-3.⁷⁸ The following table shows incidence of the land revenue assessment on area and population in Cooch Behar state in 1943.⁷⁹

Nature of Tenure	Total area	Deduct		Balance, that is, fully assessed area for which returns are available		total revenue from land of the State (Column 2)
		Area not fully assessed	Area for which the returns required for this table are not available	Total	Cultivated	
1	2 Acres	3(a) Acres	3 (b) Acres	4 (a) Acres	4(b) Acres	5 Rs.
Temporary settled (Jotedari system)	8,43,735.20	92,310.08	NIL	7,51,425.12	5,51,836.33	20,17,2491

Population of the State (Column-2)	Total revenue from Land Per head of (Columns 5 and 6)	Land revenue assessed on fully assessed area [Column 4(a)]	Incidence per acre of land revenue (Column 8) on fully assessed area (Column 4)		Population of fully assessed area	Land revenue assessment per head of population of fully assessed area (Column 8 and 11)	Towns of over 10,000 inhabitants	
			For total area	For cultivated area			Number of towns	Aggregate population
			9	10					11	12	13
6,39,898	R. a. p. 3- 2- 5	R. 20,01,788	R. a. p. 2- 10- 7	R. a. p. 3- 10- 4	Not available	R.a.p. Not available	5	26,792

The following table shows the rates of land revenue (agricultural land) of the Cooch Behar state :⁸⁰

Sl. No.	Class of land	Rates per Bigha ($3\frac{1}{40}$ bighas = 1 acre)								
		1st Class			2nd class			3rd class		
		Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P
1.	Betel-nut garden.....	4	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
2.	Bastu & Udbastu (Homestead).....	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
3.	Garden.....	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0	0
4.	Bamboo.....	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2	0
5.	Tobacco (1st class).....	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	8	0
6.	Tobacco (2nd class).....	1	4	0	1	4	0	1	4	0
7.	Tobacco (3rd class).....	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
8.	Awal.....	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	15	0
9.	Doem.....	0	14	0	0	13	0	0	12	0
10.	Soem.....	0	11	0	0	9	0	0	8	0
11.	Chaharam.....	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
12.	San-Khar (Thatching grass).....	0	7	0	0	6	0	0	5	0
13.	Jala.....	0	8	0	0	8	0	0	8	0
14.	Layek Patit (Culturable fallow land).....	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
15.	Na-Layek Patit (Non-culturable Follow land).....	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0

The following table will show rates of land revenue for the towns and Bunders of the State of Cooch Behar.⁸¹

Rates of land revenue for Cooch Behar Town

Sl. No.	Class of land	Rates per bigha		Remarks
		1st class	2nd class	
		Rs.	Rs.	
1.	Frontage.....	400	240	Class I - For the entire frontage Re 1 - 4 per cubit or Rs. 400 per bigha, Back holding Rs. 10 per bigha. Class II - For the actual frontage occupied by the shop as 12 per cubit (2' cubits deep) or Rs. 240 per bigha for the back holding.
2.	Back holding.....	10	10	
3.	Houses other than shops.....	10	10	

Rates for Haldibari and Dinhata Towns

Sl. No.	Class of land	Rates per bigha		Remarks
		1st class	2nd class	
		Rs.	Rs.	
1.	Frontage.....	100	.....	Rs. 100 a bigha for the entire frontage occupied or unoccupied and Rs. 6 a bigha for the back holding. Both are 1st class Towns.
2.	Back holding.....	6	.....
3.	House other than shops.....	6	.....

Rates for Mathabhanga Town

1.	Frontage.....	100	.....	Rs. 100 per bigha for the entire frontage occupied or unoccupied and Rs. 5 a bigha for the back holding.
2.	Back Holding.....	5	.....
3.	House other than shops.....	5	.....	It is a first class town.

Rates for Mekligunj and Tufangunj and Changrabandha Bunder

Sl. No.	Class of land	Rates per bigha		Remarks
		1st class	2nd class	
		Rs.	Rs.	
1.	Frontage.....	80	.....	The rate for Block No. 1 is for the entire frontage and that for Block No. II is for the actual frontage.
2.	Back holding.....	5	.....
3.	House other than shops.....	5	.....

2nd class Bunders

1.	Frontage.....	4	Rs. 4 a bigha for the whole area occupied or unoccupied.
2.	Back holding.....	.....	4
3.	Houses other than shops.....	.....	4

3rd class Bunders

Sl. No.	Class of land	Rates per bigha		Remarks
		1st class	2nd class	
		Rs.	Rs.	
1.	Frontage.....	.....	4	Rs. 4 a bigha for the whole area occupied or unoccupied.
2.	Back holding.....	.....	4	
3.	Houses other than shops.....	.....	4	

As a matter of fact, the land revenue system of the state was changed thoroughly since 1870. The revenues were fixed on the basis of regular settlement and were periodically revised in different operations in which the Bengal provisional rules followed.⁸² The results of these settlement operations increased the collection of land revenue which sometimes raised upto 95.5%.⁸³ The gradual increase of the land revenue can be shown from the following list of total revenues fixed in the different settlements⁸⁴

Period		Total Revenue
		Rs.
1.	On the eve of the first settlement of 1870-72	3,64,140
2.	First settlement of 1870-72	9,31,024
3.	On the eve of the Rakam Charcha Settlement of 1889	9,59,830
4.	Rakam Charcha Settlement of 1889	12,49,060
5.	On the eve of the Resettlement Operations of 1912-13	12,64,154
6.	The Late Dewan's Resettlement given effect to in 1919-20	18,50,853
7.	The Revisional Resettlement operations given effect to in 1927	17,98,984

Since the year 1932-33 and during the general economic depression, remissions of rent and revenue were granted on a liberal scale.⁸⁵ Remissions of revenue and rents at the rate of two annas per rupee were granted during the years 1935-36, 1937-38 and 1938-39.⁸⁶ In the year of 1936-37 a special remission of three annas in the rupee was granted to mark the occasion of His Highness' investiture with full ruling powers. Besides, instalment facilities were arranged to assist the payment of arrears.⁸⁷ During the year 1939-40 and 1940-41 remissions of revenue and rents at the rate of one anna per rupee were sanctioned.⁸⁸

The incidence of revenue, Official Account claimed, was not burdened by the levy of cesses. Such local cesses as were levied in British Indian districts e.g., road, P.W.D and primary education cesses, were not imposed in the state. The Durbar's revenue policy, according to the official report, had discouraged any form of taxation which might be irritating to state subjects or impede the free movement and development of trade, and since the rule of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan began, no new taxation had been imposed. It was characteristic of this policy that in 1938 His Highness personally announced to his subjects that all bridge tolls in the state would be abolished.⁸⁹

Excise Revenue : One of the most important sub-heads of the revenue was excise. Since the institution of an Excise Department in 1869, the excise revenue had steadily increased, although the use of drugs and spirits had received every possible discouragement at the hands of the authorities. The excise revenue of the state for the year 1869-70 was Rs. 15,798 and in 1899-1900 it rose upto Rs. 87,117, showing an increase of Rs. 71,319.⁹⁰ Again, the excise revenue for the year 1910-11 was Rs. 1,59,790⁹¹ and it came up to Rs. 2,26,798 in 1940-41, thus showing an increase of Rs. 67,008.⁹² In 1944-45, the excise revenue amounted to Rs. 4,07,145.⁹³ Thus it was evident that the excise revenue had steady and rapid increase during the period mentioned above.

It has been known from the Administrative Report of the state that there were 23 Country-Spirit shops, 80 Ganja shops, 50 Opium shops and 10 Imported Liquer shops, or total of 163 shops in the whole state in 1942.⁹⁴ In

settling the excise and opium shops in the state the auction system and the Rules applicable to the Auction system as laid down in section III of the Rules framed by the Board were followed.⁹⁵

The excise revenue from outstills which was Rs. 67,584 in the year 1941-42 decreased to Rs. 61,310 in the year 1942-43. The revenue from duty levied on consumption of Ganja decreased from Rs. 27,088 to Rs. 24,250 and that from duty on opium increased from Rs. 57,785 to Rs. 60,115 in the above period. The current demand of excise revenue for the year 1942-43 was Rs. 2,45,261 against Rs. 2,27,066 of the previous year showing an increase of Rs. 18,195. The collections amounted to Rs. 2,43,335. The incidence of the excise revenue per head was Re. 0-6-1 (Annas six and Pie one) in the year 1942-43 on the basis of the population of the Census of 1941⁹⁶ while it was Re. 0-5-0 (five annas) in the previous year.⁹⁷

It deserves particular mention that opium and other drugs like morphine, heroine, medicinal opium, cocane were not cultivated in the state but these were imported. Particularly, 6 mds of opium was purchased in the year 1936 from Ghazipur Opium Factory at Benares. 6 mds - 21 srs - 8 ch- of opium was consumed in the state during the year. The maximum selling price of opium by retail vendors was Rs. 140/- per seer. The following statement will show total consumption of opium (in seers) as well as per 10,000 of population and revenue derived from opium and its percentage to the total gross revenue in the state of Cooch Behar during 1936.⁹⁸

Consumption of Opium in 1936 (in seer)	Population according to the Census of 1931	Consumption per 10,000 of population in 1936 (in seer)	Revenue derived from Opium in 1936	Percentage of the Opium revenue to the total gross revenue in 1936
261½ seers or 262 seers	5,90,886	4.43 seers	26,400-8-0	17.58%

It is important to notice that the total demand of land revenue for the year 1942-43 amounted to Rs. 29,58,735 and the total collection was Rs. 16,28,398, leaving a balance of Rs. 13,30,337 for recovery.⁹⁹ But in the case of excise revenue for the year 1942-43 the total demand was Rs. 1,92,033 and the total collection amounted to Rs. 1,90,033 leaving a balance of Rs. 2,000 for recovery. Thus it is evident from the above that land revenue was still a single largest source of income to the royal treasury compared to excise and other revenues.¹⁰⁰

Stamp Revenue : The introduction of stamps was first effected by the Maharaja Narendra Narayan who passed a Stamp Act in 1861.¹⁰¹ The stamp law of 1861 was four months after its passing amended in the year 1862, and penalties for the breach of the stamp law were inserted in the code. A further amendment of the law was made in April, 1866 on the abolition of the Narayani coinage, regarding the mode of computation of the value of stamps from

Narayani to British Government rupees.¹⁰² By May, 1876 three different kinds of stamps came to in use in the state, namely, judicial, documentary and court fee. Up to the end of 1872, the stamp papers used to manufacture at Cooch Behar and a system of stamping by hand was in vogue. Soon the stamps began to be printed by the Cooch Behar State Press under the Superintendence of the Treasury Officer.¹⁰³ In 1891, the settlement of rent was made compulsory to be on stamp paper within the limit of the stamp law.¹⁰⁴ Like every other source of income the history of the stamp revenue of the state was the history of rapid progress. In 1864-65 the stamp revenue amounted to Rs. 25,965 and it came up to Rs. 1,70,730 in 1899-1900, thus showing an increase of Rs. 1,44,765.¹⁰⁵ In 1941-42, the notable change was the transfer of the administrative controlling power of the Stamp Department to the Controller of Separate Revenue.¹⁰⁶ The total stamp revenue of the state for the year 1910-11 was 2,14,950.¹⁰⁷ Again, in 1941-42, the total stamp revenue amounted to Rs. 2,30,951.¹⁰⁸ and it came up to Rs. 2,60,022 in 1944-45, thus showing an increase of Rs. 45,072 during the above period.¹⁰⁹

The following statement showing the sale of Stamps during the year 1938-39 and 1939-40

Kinds of stamps	1938-39			1939-40			Increase			Decrease	Remarks
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.		
Judicial.....	1,47,242	8	0	1,54,063	0	0	6,820	8	0	—	
Documentary.....	23,160	0	0	28,950	8	0	5,790	8	0	—	
Court fee.....	46,923	0	0	50,999	0	0	4,076	0	0	—	
Copying fee.....	5,215	8	0	5,873	0	0	657	8	0	—	
Miscellaneous.....	244	7	0	438	13	0	194	6	0	—	
Cartidge.....	1,434	0	0	1,503	0	0	69	0	0	—	
Adhesive.....	3,897	0	0	4,632	0	0	735	0	0	—	
Embossed.....	1	9	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 9 0	
Service.....	8,538	12	3	8,903	8	3	364	12	0	—	
Total -	2,36,656	12	3	2,55,362	13	3	18,707	10	0	1 9 0	

Source : S. R. Majumdar, Finance Member, State Council, Treasury Department, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.C.B.S. for the year 1939-40, appendix II, p vi.

Income Tax : Only in 1889 a proposal was made by the Vice-President of the State Council to introduce income tax in Cooch Behar. He put forward the argument that the land revenue leviable upon the agricultural classes in the state had been raised by about 25 percent during the period of First Settlement. So he suggested the imposition of an income tax on the non-agricultural classes on the principles obtaining in British India. But from a report by the Dewan Babu Kalica Das Dutt on the subject, it appeared that by adopting the rules of income tax obtaining in British India, a sum of about Rs. 18,000 only would be derived. Therefore, the State Council decided to keep the matter in abeyance.¹¹⁰

Finally, after a long period of more than fifty years the Cooch Behar Income Tax Act (Act No. V of 1941) came into force from 1st April, 1941.¹¹¹ The Income Tax Law of the state was modelled completely on the British income tax law.¹¹² The demand for the year 1942-43 was Rs. 71,533 income tax and Rs. 13,492 super tax against Rs. 93,268 income tax and Rs. 9,419 super tax respectively of the preceding year. The fall in the demand of the year as compared with that of the preceding year was due to the reduction in the rates of income tax. This demand was further reduced on account of adjustment of refunds due in respect of assessments for 1941-42 completed before the notification reducing the rates of income tax was published. The net demand of income tax thus came down to Rs. 23,290. Net collections amounted to Rs. 27,598 income tax and Rs. 11,010 super tax. The excess over the demand of income tax was due to excess collections and advance payments made during 1942-43. The total expenditure of the income tax department in Cooch Behar for 1942-43 was Rs. 12,884 against Rs. 10,611 of the preceding year. The percentage of expenditure to the total revenue was 46 percent.¹¹³

The Cooch Behar Excess Profits Act had come into force on the 1st day of April, 1943, the first assessment year being 1943-44, the rate of which was 25% excess over the standard profit, the minimum standard profit being fixed at Rs. 30,000. As already mentioned, the return of income tax and super tax in the year 1942-43 were Rs. 71,533 and Rs. 13,492 respectively and thus both taxes amounted to Rs. 85,025. The number of assesseees during the year ending 31st March, 1943 was 1651 only.¹¹⁴ Again, the total revenue of the income tax amounted to Rs. 2,09,033 in the year 1944-45 and the total expenditure of the Income Tax Department for the same year was Rs. 9,748. The percentage of expenditure to total revenue was 4.66 only.¹¹⁵ It should be mentioned here that Gobinda Mohan Dutt, the Secretary of Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce submitted a petition dated the 16th January, 1942 to His Highness the President, State Council drawing his attention to their grievances regarding income and other taxes. The members of the Chamber of Commerce pointed out in their petition among other things that 'after the declaration of war by Japan there had been a deadlock in trade and commerce, specially, in Bengal. There was no purchaser of jute or tobacco, the two commercial crops of Cooch Behar. As soon as the Rice Mills stopped purchasing paddy its price would go down to a great extent because no one dared purchase in large quantities and stocked paddy or any other agricultural produce. The members of the Chamber of Commerce felt that if the War continued an economic crisis worse than the previous one of 1930s affecting all classes of people was coming upon them, and it was not the time for imposing a new tax like the income tax, and to extend its operation to sources of income to which the law was not applicable. The members of the Chamber therefore requested His Highness to take the changed circumstances into his kind consideration and to suspend the operation of the Income Tax till the war came to an end. The members of the Chamber of Commerce concluded that the burden of taxation as a whole was much higher in Cooch Behar than in British India and prayed that not only the laws relating to taxation should be brought into line with those in British India, but also that their administration should be fair and equitable.¹¹⁶ The table of the rates of income

tax levied by the state has been appended at the end of the chapter.

Railways :Railways came to the princely states in varying degrees, but their long-term impact has not been adequately analysed, either for the microcosm of individual states or for the macrocosm of the princely states and British India. Barbara N. Ramusack wrote that 'Railway development has been viewed narrowly as a site of contestation between the durbars and the British, with a focus on the high construction cost of railways attributed to the guaranteed interest system that lessened the incentive for cost containment. According to her opinion, more analysis is needed of the extent to which railways fostered ties between social, religious and political associations in the princely states and British India, and affected the commercialisation of agriculture and the development of industries in the states.'¹¹⁷

The communication system was geared up with the opening of the Cooch Behar State Railway for traffic in 1893. This rail link changed the entire pattern of the state's economy.¹¹⁸ With the opening up of the state by railways it was natural that the export-import trade was gradually expanded.¹¹⁹ Before the opening of the railway nearly the whole of both inward and outward traffic used to be carried on by the country-boats.¹²⁰ This was due to the fact that most of the big rivers of the state were navigable throughout the year. In 1893, the opening of the the Northern Bengal State Railway¹²¹ had considerably taken away the traffic from the rivers and had almost monopolised the exports of jute, tobacco, mustard seeds and mustard oilcake. This rail link opened up the state a great deal for the purpose of trade and commerce and served to increase the value of the produce.¹²² In this way, the development of communication benefited not only the cultivators but also the state that had made a remarkable progress in developing its economy. According to the opinion of one scholar, after opening up of the railways in the state, a process of transition from the subsistence economy having limited market potentiality to a wider colonial market - oriented economy began to spring up and this transition in its wake led to commercialisation of agriculture in the state.¹²³ Thus the Cooch Behar State Railway not only led to the augmentation of its commercial and agricultural resources and facilitated the growth of trade and commerce but also played a major role in the enhancement of the earnings of the state revenue. The following is a list which shows the net earnings of the state railway during the period between 1900 and 1945. It will also show that the State Railway had become a regular source of substantial earnings and thus contributed to the increase of the state's exchequer.¹²⁴

Year	Gross earnings	Working expenditure	Net earnings
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1900	94,792	43,190	51,602
1901	1,27,596	52,929	74,667
1910-11	2,17,388	1,09,532	1,07,856
1921-22	3,06,142	1,40,825	1,65,317
1928-29	5,36,677	2,58,594	3,05,083
1942-43	4,28,308	1,97,648	2,30,660
1943-44	5,06,313	2,32,750	2,73,563
1944-45	5,08,000	2,34,000	2,74,000

The following is the revised schedule of rates and fares for Coaching and Goods Traffic on the Cooch Behar State Railway in 1923.¹²⁵

PASSENGER FARES

	Maximum per mile			Minimum per line		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Pies.		
First class	0	2 8	12
Second class	0	1 4	6
Inter class	0	0 6	3
Third class	0	0 4	1½

GOODS RATES

Class				Pies per maund per mile	
	Maximum			Minimum	
1st } 2nd }	1	100
3rd } 4th } 5th } 6th } 7th }	1	166
8th	1.04	
9th	1.25	
10th	1.87	

Needless to say, the Communications played an important part in opening up the territories of the state, in developing trade and commerce, and in enhancing the state revenue. In 1941, the position of Cooch Behar state in respect of communication was somewhat as follows :¹²⁶

1. Railways	44 miles
2. Metalled Roads	35 ³ / ₄ miles
3. Kutch Roads	1061 miles
4. Telephone Office	6 Nos.
5. Post Office	28 Nos.
6. Telephones	49 Nos.
7. Concrete Road	1 ¹ / ₁₂ miles

Export Duty: The Cooch Behar Export Duty Act (Act VI of 1941) came into operation in May, 1941 and in the first instance the Act was made applicable only to tobacco exported out of the state.¹²⁷ This export duty act had its scope extended in February, 1942 to include duty on Bamboo and Simul and Bhelli. The rate of duty on tobacco was raised from 3 annas to 4 annas with effect from the 1st April, 1943 in connection with the levy of new duty on Bamboos and Simul and Bhelli.¹²⁸

The total collection during the year 1942-43 on account of duty on tobacco were Rs. 69,251 - 1 against the revised budget estimates of Rs. 85,000. The collections of duty on bamboos were Rs. 1,694 - 15 and those of Simul and Bhelli were Rs. 965-10-9. The fall in collection on duty on tobacco was among other causes due to unsettled conditions of tobacco market, due to spread of war in the east, considerable restriction in the supply of wagons and strictest control over boats and commandeering of some of these which seriously interfered with river borne traffic in tobacco.¹²⁹ The following is the list showing internal custom duties levied on exports from the state in the year 1942-43.¹³⁰

Names of dutiable articles	Rates of duty	Yield in 1942-43	Remarks
I. Tobacco	3 annas per maund	Rs. 69,251-11-0	Rates of duty raised to 4 annas with effect from 1st April, 1943.
II. Simul & Bhelli			
(a) Logs in round	3 pies per C.ft	} Rs. 965-10-9*	*Imposed with effect from 16th Feby'43
(b) Swan timber i.e. planks & scantlings in any form (excluding Plywood)	6 pies per C.ft.		Rates of duty raised to 6 pies and 1 anna on (a) & (b) respectfully with effect from 25.3.43

Names of dutiable articles	Rates of duty	Yield in 1942-43	Remarks
III. Bamboo			
(a) Carried by Ry.	1 anna per S.ft.	} Rs. 1,694-15-0*	*Imposed with effect from 8th Feby' 1943. Rates of duty revised as follows with effect from 1st April, 1943 :- (a) same as 1942-43 (b) Re. 1/9/-per 100 (c) 5 annas per 100
(b) Whole bamboos	Re. 1/- per m 100.		
(c) Split bamboos carried by road and river	8 annas per 100		
IV. Hides & Skns :			
(a) Goat skins	Rs. 6/8/- per maund	}	... Imposed with effect
(b) Cow hides	Rs. 3/8/- per maund		... from the 1st April '43
(c) Buffalo hides	Rs. 3/- per maund		...
V. Horns of Buffalo	Rs. 4/- per maund	...	Do
VI. Bones	Rs. 4/- per maund	...	Do
VII. Paddy	8 annas per maund	}	Do with effect from the 2nd August, 1943
VIII. Rice	12 annas per maund		

The following statement showing collections of export duty sub-divisionwise in the state during the year 1942-43 :¹³¹

Name of the sub-division	Tobacco			Bamboo			Simul & Bhelli		
	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.	Rs.	a.	p.
a) Sadar (Cooch Behar).....	8,155	5	3	32	12	0	342	2	3
b) Tufanganj.....	175	1	9	85	5	0	0	9	0
c) Dinhat.....	20,534	0	3	147	7	6	235	9	0
d) Mathabhanga.....	22,735	11	3	100	10	6	383	7	6
e) Mekliganj.....	17,651	8	6	136	12	0	3	15	0

The total expenditure for the administration of the Export Duty Department during the year 1942-43 was Rs. 22,503-1-1 against Rs. 26,538 in the previous year. The percentage of expenditure to total income being 31 percent

against 45 percent of the preceding year.¹³² Certain amendments were made in the Export Duty Act during the year 1944-45 to strengthen more effectively the administration under the Act. The total collection of export duty during the year 1944-45 amounted to Rs. 4,36,903-14 against Rs. 1,35,486-5-9 in the previous year. The total expenditure of the export duty department for the same year was Rs. 33,586-10-5 against Rs. 27,664-12-10 in the previous year. The percentage of expenditure to the total income was $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent against 20 percent in the previous year.¹³³

Tobacco Excise : Tobacco Excise Department was reorganised on the recommendation of the Controller of Central Excise, Calcutta who paid a visit to Cooch Behar on 8th May, 1944.¹³⁴ The total revenue of tobacco excise in the year 1944-45 was Rs. 32,62,657-7-3 as shown in the statement below against Rs. 17,17,142-13-7 in the previous year 1943-44, thus showing an increase of Rs. 15,45,514-9-8. According to the Administrative Report of the State, the increase had been attributed to enhancement in the rates of duty. The total revenue comprised the following :¹³⁵

	Rs.	a.	p.
i) Collection on account of tobacco excise duty	32,37,488	9	0
ii) Fines and penalties	665	0	0
iii) Collection on account of license	24,631	13	9
	<hr/>		
Total =	32,62,785	6	9

The total expenditure for the administration of the tobacco excise department stood at Rs. 75,341-0-8 during 1944-45 against Rs. 33,991-3-10 in the previous year. The increase was due to enhancement in the staff of Range Officers and Clerks.¹³⁶ It should be mentioned here that a remarkable change had occurred in the revenue history of Cooch Behar during 1944-45. The land revenue hitherto formed the chief source of the income of the state exchequer. But this tradition was suddenly broken in 1944-45 as the tobacco excise revenue took precedence over the land revenue of the state in terms of income. In that year the total land revenue of the state including Khasmahal amounted to Rs. 26,13,224,¹³⁷ whereas the total tobacco excise revenue amounted to Rs. 32,62,657-7-3.¹³⁸ This phenomenal increase of the tobacco excise revenue contributed not only to the increase of the total revenue of the state treasury but also to the stability of the state economy to a great extent.

Let us have a look at the finance of the state during the year of 1944-45. The total revenue of the state for the year 1944-45 amounted to Rs. 93,65,699 against Rs. 70,75,968 of the previous year 1943-44, thus showing an increase of Rs. 22,89,731. The principal variations were as follows :

	Rs.
i) Land revenue.....	+2,09,539
ii) Excise.....	+92,036
iii) Tobacco Excise.....	+17,13,562
iv) Export Duty.....	+3,00,997
v) Stamps.....	+62,382

The total expenditure of the state for the year 1944-45 amounted to Rs. 57,48,162 against Rs. 49,28,348 of the previous year showing an increase of Rs. 8,19,814. The increase was due to the following reasons : (i) introduction of the time-scale of pay, increased rates of dearness allowance and grant of war allowance to the officers (ii) re-organisation of some Departments, and (iii) starting of some new Departments.¹³⁹

The total Cash Balance on the 31st March, 1945 amounted to Rs. 84,08,144 in the Cooch Behar Treasury and Rs. 4,29,955 in the Chaklajat Treasury. The distribution according to the books of the Audit Department was given below.¹⁴⁰

	Cooch Behar Treasury	Chaklajat Treasury	Total
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1. State cash	66,04,462	4,08,333	70,12,795
2. Local Funds	3,27,743	—	3,27,743
3. Deposits	2,69,394	21,622	2,91,016
4. Government of Bengal	12,06,545	—	12,06,545
Total	84,08,144	4,29,955	88,38,099

Financial Statement No. 1.

Statement showing comparative Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooch Behar State for the years 1938-39 and 1939-40.

Heads of Revenue	Actuals for 1938-39	Actual for 1939-40	Difference		Heads of Expenditure	Actuals for 1938-39	Actual for 1939-40	Difference	
			Increase	Decrease				Increase	Decrease
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land Revenue	16,63,589	20,75,360	4,11,771	.....	I. Civil List.				
Excise Revenue	1,79,785	2,42,600	62815	.....	1. Privy Purse	1,01,913	1,20,087	18,174	.....
Stamps Revenue	2,36,657	2,55,363	18,706	.....	2. Maharaj Kumaris	31,655	34,000	2,345	.....
Civil Justice	1,285	1,452	167	.....	3. Household Deptt.	2,58,294	2,95,322	37,028	.....
Criminal Justice	18,009	16,244	.....	1,765	Total	3,91,862	4,49,409	57,547	.....
Jail	12,208	16,601	4,393	.....	II. Administration.				
Rice Mill	2,200	2,200	.....	.....	4. State Council	67,379	79,683	12,304	.....
Registration Deptt.	13,421	15,954	2,533	.....	5. Private Secretary's Office	17,340	19,539	2,199	.....
Education	47,136	49,187	2,051	.....	6. General Deptt. Office	13,053	13,310	257	.....
Mechanical Department	2,649	3,283	634	.....	7. Revenue Deptt.	61,887	64,122	2,235	.....
Public Works Deptt.	11,643	12,064	421	.....	8. Sub-Divisional Office	99,979	1,06,312	6,333	.....
Forest Deptt.					9. Audit Deptt.	24,387	23,804	.....	563
State Gardens	306	317	41	.....	10. Survey & Settlement	9,677	10,238	561	.....
Electrical Deptt.	34,754	36,070	1,316	.....	11. Treasury	10,557	11,557	1,000	.....
Agriculture & Industries Deptt.	2,540	6,880	4,340	.....	12. Excise	10,446	12,385	1,939	.....
State Press	2,053	2,566	513	.....	13. Stamps	7,890	8,036	146	.....
Stationery Deptt.	855	548	.....	307	14. Civil Justice	27,433	28,120	687	.....
Lansdowne Hall and State Library	1,927	932	.....	995	15. Criminal Justice	16,052	17,526	1,474	.....
Debutler Department	1,29,399	1,65,219	35,820	.....	16. Jail	33,786	37,463	3,677	.....
Interest on Loans & Investments	59,638	99,109	39,471	.....	17. Registration	7,258	7,432	174	.....
Sundries	9,486	8,469	.....	1,017	18. Education	1,60,265	1,65,943	5,678	.....
State Railway	4,11,723	4,32,363	20,640	.....	19. Medical	54,572	75,293	20,721	.....
Chaklajal Estates	4,75,371	5,27,864	52,493	.....	20. Public Health & Vaccination	9,821	10,416	495	.....
Darjeeling Estate	44,404	57,940	13,536	.....	21. Public Work Deptt.	4,14,648	4,68,131	53,483	.....
					22. Forest	523	8,437	7,917	.....
					23. State Gardens	26,378	28,979	2,601	.....
					24. Electrical Deptt.	51,883	52,277	394	.....
					25. Police Deptt.	1,00,017	1,05,962	5,945	.....
					26. Veterinary Deptt.	8,574	8,575	1	.....
					27. Agriculture & Industries Deptt.	40,525	51,747	11,222	.....
					28. State Press	17,513	24,231	6,718	.....
					29. Stationery Deptt.	12,524	12,993	469	.....
					30. Lansdowne Hall & Library	3,130	3,925	805	.....
					Total	13,07,577	14,56,446	1,48,869	.....
					31. Debutler Deptt.	63,335	63,724	389	.....
					32. Toshakhana	5,965	6,610	645	.....
					33. Military	40,010	45,996	5,986	.....
					34. Phakhana	21,882	18,568	.....	3,314
					35. Shooting Camp	9,488	9,571	83	.....
					36. Education of Rejions	14,720	14,082	.....	638
					37. Ceremonials	1,672	30,088	28,416	.....
					Total	93,737	1,24,945	31,178	.....
					38. Pensions	1,04,053	98,845	.....	5,208
					39. Allowances	1,86,341	1,80,025	.....	6,316
					40. Municipal Grants	21,894	22,898	1,004	.....
					41. Donations & Contributions	10,885	11,567	682	.....
					42. Government Tribute	67,791	37,791	.....	.....
					43. Reserve Fund	3,17,013	2,24,941	.....	92,072
					44. Miscellaneous	8,496	2,624	.....	5,872
					45. Unforeseen	43,875	8,979	.....	34,896
					Total	7,60,258	6,47,580	.....	1,12,678
					46. State Railway	1,90,113	1,99,401	9,288	.....
					47. His Highness' Estates :-				
					(a) Chaklajal Estates	3,22,896	3,93,396	70,410	.....
					(b) Darjeeling Estate	35,799	64,754	28,955	.....
					Total	3,58,695	4,58,060	99,365	.....
					Deposit with E. B. Roy for Capital works.	.....	1,10,000	1,10,000	.....
Grand Total of Revenue	33,61,038	40,28,615	6,67,577	.....	Total Expenditure	31,65,577	34,79,535	3,13,958	.....
					Surplus :-	1,95,461	5,49,080	3,53,619	.....
					Grand Total :-	33,61,038	40,28,615	6,67,577	.....

Source : A. A. R. C. B. S. for the year 1939-1940, C. B. S. Press, 1940, Appendix-1, p.i.

Financial Statement No. 2.

Statement showing the comparative Receipts and Disbursements of the Cooch Behar Treasury for the years 1938-39 and 1939-40.

Particulars	RECEIPTS				Particulars	DISBURSEMENTS			
	Actuals	Actuals	Difference			Actuals	Actuals	Difference	
	1938-1939	1939-1940	Increase	Decrease		1938-1939	1939-1940	Increase	Decrease
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Opening Balance	17,31,826	20,62,212	3,30,116	.....	State Expenditure	28,67,652	30,86,270	2,18,578	.....
State Revenue	28,85,687	35,00,750	6,15,063	.....	Government of Bengal	24,27,201	2,85,211	.....	2,91,960
Government of Bengal	24,73,226	20,51,747	.....	4,21,479	Personal Account	1,990	10,350	.....	140
Personal Account	3,272	6,997	3,722	.....	LOCAL FUNDS:-				
LOCAL FUNDS:-					Anonymous Charity Fund	88	.....	.....	88
Anonymous Charity Fund	57	59	2	.....	Anti Cholera Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Anti-cholera Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	Anti Tuberculosis Fund	5,759	10	.....	5,749
Anti-Tuberculosis Fund	6,011	10,442	4,431	.....	Bhubannath Scholarship Fund	42	42	.....	.....
Bhubannath Scholarship Fund	45	45	.....	.....	Communication Improvement Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Communication Improvement Fund	224	296	72	.....	Children Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Children's Fund	290	343	53	.....	Contribution Works P.W.D.	25,920	1,24,320	98,400	.....
Contribution Works, P.W.D.	1,03,154	96,948	.....	6,206	Darjeeling Fire Insurance Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Darjeeling Fire Insurance Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	Government Paper Special Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Government Paper Special Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	H. H.'s Investment Fund	.....	5,480	5,480	.....
H. H.'s Investment Fund	2,331	963	.....	1,368	Pound Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Pound Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	Priyanath Dutt Medal Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....
Priya Nath Dutt Medal Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	Reserve Fund	62	.....	.....	62
Reserve Fund	.....	.....	.....	.....	Sudder Hospital Fund	18	1,036	1,018	.....
Sudder Hospital Fund	745	366	.....	379	Temple Scholarship Fund	36	36	.....	.....
Temple Scholarship Fund	39	39	.....	.....	Sudder Town Committee	47,822	57,820	10,001	.....
Sudder Town Committee	48,583	58,186	9,603	.....	Dinhata Town Committee	9,160	8,979	.....	181
Dinhata Town Committee	8,749	9,130	381	.....	Mathabhanga Town Committee	7,198	6,943	.....	255
Mathabhanga Town Committee	8,243	8,291	53	.....	Mekligunj Town Committee	2,771	4,380	1,619	.....
Mekligunj Town Committee	2,771	4,390	1,619	.....	Haldibari Town Committee	11,387	9,838	.....	1,549
Haldibari Town Committee	10,315	9,834	.....	481	Tufanganj Town Committee	.....	3,296	3,296	.....
Tufanganj Town Committee	.....	3,300	3,300	.....	Trust Fund of Princess Sudhira Mander	1,988	1,453	.....	535
Trust Fund, in favour of Princess Sudhira Mander	2,787	2,500	.....	287	Trust Fund of Princess Sukni Devi	1,493	1,477	.....	16
Trust Fund in favour of Princess Sukni Devi	1,493	1,477	.....	16	Victoria College Hostel Fund	625	217	.....	408
Victor N. N. Memorial Fund	.....	573	573	.....	Vidyasagar Memorial Fund	120	120	.....	.....
Victoria College Hostel Fund	217	217	.....	.....	Village Chaukidari Fund	5,029	5,116	.....	87
Vidyasagar Memorial Fund	120	60	.....	60	Total	1,19,518	2,30,576	1,11,058	.....
Village Chowkidari Fund	8,270	8,255	.....	15	Cooch Behar State Revenue Deposit	22,734	16,785	.....	5,919
Total	2,04,444	2,15,719	11,275	.....	Cooch Behar State General Deposit	68,306	38,596	.....	29,710
Cooch Behar State Revenue Deposit	21,052	16,120	.....	9,947	Cooch Behar State Civil Deposit	26,246	15,046	.....	11,200
Cooch Behar State General Deposit	71,011	1,46,799	75,788	.....	Cooch Behar State Criminal Deposit	820	1,029	209	.....
Cooch Behar State Civil Deposit	25,240	17,942	.....	7,298	Total	1,48,106	71,456	.....	46,650
Cooch Behar State Criminal Deposit	1,084	755	.....	329	Cooch Behar State Advances recoverable	99,356	1,78,196	79,840	.....
Total	1,18,387	1,81,625	63,238	.....	Cooch Behar State Permanent Advances recoverable	175	15,400	14,925	.....
Cooch Behar State Advances Recoverable	86,000	55,575	.....	30,425	Darjeeling Estate Advances recoverable	19,961	10,604	.....	9,357
Cooch Behar State Permanent Advance	10,000	7,000	.....	3,000	Bullion Account Advances recoverable	800	.....	.....	800
Darjeeling Estate Advances Recoverable	33,454	18,411	.....	15,913	Suspense Account	.....	.....	.....	.....
Bullion account	2,399	.....	.....	2,399	Miscellaneous Cash Remittance	.....	.....	.....	.....
Suspense account	4,180	.....	.....	4,180	Darjeeling Estate Cash Account	77,857	76,381	.....	1,476
Miscellaneous Cash Remittance	1,52,145	1,02,128	.....	50,018	Chief Accounts Officer, E. B. Railway	4,11,723	4,32,363	20,640	.....
Darjeeling Estate Cash Account	80,730	75,368	.....	5,373	Total	61,52,830	62,47,497	94,658	.....
Chief Accounts Officer, E. B. Railway	4,29,347	4,23,500	.....	5,847	Closing Balance	20,62,242	24,53,585	3,91,443	.....
Grand Total	82,15,081	87,01,082	4,86,001	7,91,820	Grand Total	82,15,081	87,01,082	4,86,001	.....

Source : S. R. Majumdar, Finance Member, State Council, in the Audit Department, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.C.B.S. for the years 1939-40, Appendix No. 1, p.ii.

Financial Statement No. 3

Statement showing the Comparative Receipts & Disbursements of the Chaklajat Treasury for the years 1938-39 & 1939-40.

RECEIPTS					DISBURSEMENTS				
Particulars	Actuals	Actuals	Difference		Particulars	Actuals	Actuals	Difference	
	1938-1939	1939-1940	Increase	Decrease		1938-1939	1939-1940	Increase	Decrease
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Opening Balance	1,64,448	1,59,493	.....	4,955	Chaklajat Estates Expenditure	3,22,896	3,93,305	70,409	.....
Chaklajat Estates Revenue Account	4,75,371	5,27,864	52,493	.....	Chaklajat Estates Revenue Deposit	59,614	74,723	15,109	.....
Chaklajat Estates Revenue Deposit	52,925	82,570	29,645	.....	Chaklajat Estates General Deposit	559	1,033	474	.....
Chaklajat Estates General Deposit	746	2,788	2,042	.....	Chaklajat Estates Advances Recoverable	59,352	1,17,470	58,118	.....
Chaklajat Estates Advances Recoverable	59,903	1,17,667	57,764	.....	Cash Remittance	1,52,146	1,02,128	.....	50,018
Chaklajat Estates Loan Account	667	.....	.....	667					
					Total	5,94,567	6,88,659	94,092	.....
					Closing Balance	1,59,493	2,01,723	42,230	.....
Grand Total	7,54,060	8,90,382	1,36,322	.....	Grand Total	7,54,080	8,90,382	1,36,322	.....

Source : S. R. Majumdar, Finance Member, State Council, in the Audit Department, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.c.B.S. for the year 1939-40, Appendix No. 1, p. iii.

Financial Statement No. 4.

Statement showing the Ledger Balances of the Account with the Cooch Behar State as they stood on the 31st March, 1940.

LIABILITIES				ASSETS									
Heads of Account	Amount			Total			Heads of Account	Amount			Total		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Government of Bengal				4,13,153	10	0	1. Cash in hand :-						
2. Local Funds :-							(a) C. B. Treasury	23,18,593	6	2			
(a) Anonymous Charity Fund	59	0	0				(b) Imperial Bank	1,34,991	11	1			
(b) Anti-Cholera Fund	1	14	0				(c) Chaklajat Treasury	2,01,722	10	3			
(c) Anti-Tuberculosis Fund	10,772	13	6								26,55,307	11	6
(d) Bhubannath Scholarship Fund	97	8	11				2. Investments :-						
(e) Communication Improvement Fund	640	2	0				(a) C. B. State Loan Account	30,260	15	3			
(f) Children's Fund	4,763	6	10				(b) Chaklajat Estate Account	6,740	12	0			
(g) Contribution Works, P.W.D.	95,004	6	4								37,001	11	3
(h) Darjeeling Fire Insurance Fund	47	2	0				3. Capital Account :-						
(i) Govt. Paper (Special Fund)	1,458	14	3				(a) C. B. State Railway	25,16,158	2	9			
(j) H. H.'s Investment Fund	2,674	8	4				(b) Darjeeling Estate	8,04,775	0	3			
(k) Pound Fund	957	11	0								33,20,933	3	0
(l) Priya Nath Dutta Medal Fund	4	3	6				4. Advances Recoverable :-						
(m) Sudder Hospital Fund	540	8	0				(a) C. B. State Advance	1,62,546	8	9			
(n) Temple Scholarship Fund	207	15	6				(b) Chaklajat Estates Advances	1,882	0	11			
(o) Town Committee Sudder	9,576	4	0				(c) Darjeeling Estate Advance	4,738	7	3			
(p) Town Committee Dinhata	544	14	0								1,69,167	0	11
(q) Town Committee Mathabhanga	9,453	1	0				5. Permanent Advance :-						
(r) Town Committee Mekligunj	1	5	3				(a) C. B. State Permanent Advance	16,425	0	0			
(s) Town Committee Haldibari	3,433	10	0				(b) Chaklajat Estates Permanent Advance	1,993	5	4			
(t) Town Committee Tufanganj	4	0	11								18,418	5	4
(u) Trust Fund-Princess Suchira Mander	614	14	1				6. Debenture Lodge "Siwalik"	1,000	0	0			
(v) Trust Fund-Princess Sukriti Ghosal	774	3	0				7. Profit of the Darjeeling Estate not remitted within the year	9,676	2	2			
(w) Victor N. Narayan Memorial Fund	573	6	3				8. Do of the C. B. State Railway	1,38,712	15	1	1,38,712	15	1
(x) Victoria College Hostel Fund	0	0	0										
(y) Vidyasagar Memorial Fund	212	11	2										
(z) Village Chowkidari Fund	47,250	8	6										
Total				1,88,388	12	4							
3. Deposits :-													
(a) Cooch Behar State Revenue Deposit	18,159	8	0										
(b) Cooch Behar State General Deposit	1,40,208	0	10										
(c) Cooch Behar State Civil Deposit	14,024	3	0										
(d) Cooch Behar State Criminal Deposit	642	8	6										
				1,73,034	4	4							
(e) Chaklajat Revenue Deposit	18,178	13	6										
(f) Chaklajat General Deposit	3,474	8	3										
				21,653	5	9							
4. Bullion Account				8,317	0	0							
Total				8,04,547	0	5							
Assets as per last Account				50,12,189	0	6							
Add Surplus Revenue of the Current year	5,49,079	11	0										
Less written off as per Council Office Nos. 1115 dated the 13th June 1939 and Nos. 1651 dated the 8th August 1939, respectively.	15,598	10	8										
Total				5,33,481	0	4							
Grand Total				63,50,217	1	3	Grand Total				63,50,217	1	3

Source : S. R. Majumdar, Finance Member, State Council, in the Audit Department, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.C.B.S. for the year 1939-40, Appendix 1, p. iv.

Financial Statement No. 5.
Statement of all Government Securities (state and private) kept under the custody of the Treasury Officer, Cooch Behar.

S. No.	Names of Parties	3% Loan	3 1/2% Loan						5% Loan	3% Loan	5% Loan	4% Loan	4% Loan	Total
												Punjab		
		1851-54	1842-43	1865	1879	1854-55	1900-1	1947-50	1945-55	1896-97	1940-43	1960-70	1948	
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1.	H. H.'s Investment Fund	9,000	17,100	-	-	-	-	-	600	-	-	-	-	26,700
2.	Kanakeswari Aye Fund	-	1,400	1,500	500	1,000	500	-	-	-	-	-	4,900	
3.	Bhubannath Scholarship Fund	-	-	-	-	1,300	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,300	
4.	Communication Improvement Fund	-	2,300	500	500	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,300	
5.	Children's Fund	-	4,000	-	-	1,300	-	-	3,500	-	-	-	8,800	
6.	Bhairabram Singh Fund	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	
7.	Ramchan Kayel Trust Fund	-	-	3,700	-	-	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	5,700	
8.	Temple Scholarship Fund	-	-	1,100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,100	
9.	Chowkidari Fund	-	5,600	-	-	-	-	-	9,000	-	-	-	14,600	
10.	Pashar Mahamad Trust Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1800	-	-	1,800	
11.	College Hostel Fund	-	-	-	-	-	6,200	-	-	-	-	-	6,200	
12.	Vidyasagar Memorial Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,400	-	-	-	-	2,400	
13.	Maharaj Kumari Sukriti Devi	-	50,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50,000	
14.	Maharaj Kumari Sudhira Mander	-	-	-	-	53,900	-	-	-	-	-	-	53,900	
15.	Hem Chandra Das Gupta	-	-	-	-	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000	
16.	Tarapada Talukdar	-	6,500	3,300	-	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	
17.	Anonymous Charity Fund	-	-	300	-	-	100	-	900	-	-	-	1,300	
18.	Reserve Fund	1,50,000	-	-	-	98,900	3,600	-	8,26,500	-	-	7,98,200	35,000	19,12,300
19.	Court Wards Surplus Fund	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18,000	-	-	-	-	18,000
20.	Sasi Kanta Talukdar	-	-	2,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000

Source : S. R. Majumdar, Finance Member, State Council, in the Audit Department, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.C.B.S., 1939-40, Appendix 1, p. v.

Revenue Statement showing Demands, Collections, Remissions and Balances of Excise Revenue for the year 1939-40.

Exciseable Articles	Demand			Collections			Remissions	Balance		
	Current	Arrear	Total	Current	Arrear	Total		Current	Arrear	Total
	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P	Rs. A.P
Tax of Out-still shops of country spirit	68,880-0-0	447-0-0	69,357-0-0	68,880-0-0	.....	68,880-0-0	.....	.....	477-0-0	477-0-0
Ditto of fresh date plum juice	320-0-0	.....	320-0-0	320-0-0	.....	320-0-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Licence fees of Imported liquor shops	100-0-0	.....	100-0-0	100-0-0	.....	100-0-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Ditto of Denatured Spirit shops	100-0-0	.....	100-0-0	100-0-0	.....	100-0-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Duty on Ganja	28,260-6-0	.....	28,260-6-0	28,260-6-0	.....	28,260-6-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Chemists and Druggists permits	57-0-0	.....	57-0-0	57-0-0	.....	57-0-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Ditto Deficiency of excess of 2½ percent	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
License fees of Ganja	14,200-0-0	319-0-0	14,519-0-0	14,200-0-0	.....	14,200-0-0	.....	.....	319-0-0	319-0-0
Ditto of Opium	3,444-0-0	13-0-0	3,457-0-0	3,444-0-0	.....	3,444-0-0	.....	.....	13-0-0	13-0-0
Duty of Opium	52,552-8-0	.....	52,552-8-0	52,552-8-0	.....	52,552-8-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Duty on Imported spirit	25-0-0	.....	25-0-0	25-0-0	.....	25-0-0	.....	.....	.....	.....
Miscellaneous collections	43,327-1-1	.....	43,327-1-1	43,327-1-1	.....	43,327-1-1	.....	.....	.....	.....
Total	2,11,265-15-1	809-0-0	2,12,074-15-1	2,11,265-15-1	.....	2,11,265-15-1	.....	.....	809-0-0	809-0-0

Source : K.C. Ganguli, Revenue Member and Chief Excise Officer of the State, Cooch Behar, A.A.R.C.B.S, 1939-40 Appendix III, p. ix

The Statement showing the rates of Income Tax levied by the Cooch Behar State in the year 1943.

SCHEDULE - I.

Rates of Income Tax.

A - In the case of (1) every individual, (2) Hindu Undivided family (3) every firm and (4) other association of individuals, not being a case to which paragraph B of this schedule applies :-

1. On the first Rs. 500/- of total taxable income in each case.	Nil.
2. When the total annual income is Rs. 1000 and upwards but less than Rs. 2000	1½ pies in the rupee.
3. When the total annual income is Rs. 2000 and upwards but less than Rs. 3000	2¼ pies in the rupee.
4. When the total annual income is Rs. 3000 and upwards but less than Rs. 4000	3 pies in the rupee.
5. When the total annual income is Rs. 4000 and upwards but less than Rs. 5500	3¾ pies in the rupee.
6. When the total annual income is Rs. 5500 and upwards but less than Rs. 7000	4½ pies in the rupee.
7. When the total annual income is Rs. 7000 and upwards but less than Rs. 9500	5¼ pies in the rupee.
8. When the total annual income is Rs. 9500 and upwards but less than Rs. 12000	6 pies in the rupee.
9. When the total annual income is Rs. 12000 and upwards but less than Rs. 15000	7½ pies in the rupee.
10. When the total annual income is Rs. 15000 and upwards but less than Rs. 20000	9 pies in the rupee.
11. When the total annual income is Rs. 20000 and upwards but less than Rs. 25000	10½ pies in the rupee.
12. When the total annual income is Rs. 25000 and upwards	1 anna in the rupee

Provided that no income tax shall be payable when the total annual income is below Rs. 1000.

B - In the case of every company and in every case in which income tax is to be charged at the maximum rate -

Whatever the total annual income..... 1 anna in the rupee.

SCHEDULE II.

Rates of Super-tax.

(1) When the total annual income is less than Rs. 20,000.....	Nil.
(2) On the amount in excess of the above limit.....	1 anna in the rupee.

The Cooch Behar Excess Profits Act had come into force on the 1st day of April 1943, the first assessment year being 1943-44, the rate of which is 25% of the excess over the standard profits, the minimum standard profit being fixed at Rs. 30,000.

2. The return of Income Tax and Super-tax in the year 1942-43 as at follows :-

1. Income Tax	Rs.	71,533/-
2. Super-tax	Rs.	13,492/-
		85,025/-
	Total Rs.	85,025/-

3. The number of assesseees during the year ending 31.3.43 is 1651 only.

Source : Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, Cooch Behar, dated 31.8.1943 (Reply to the Questionnaire - 9 appended with the copy of Chamber of Princes' Circular No. 87/VII-232, dated 12.8.1943 regarding regarding Levy of Income Tax in Cooch Behar State.) Collection No. 34, File No. 34, Batch 53 (ORD), C.B.D.R.R.

Notes and References

1. Majumdar, Durgadas : West Bengal District Gazetteers : Koch Behar : Calcutta, 1977, p. 8.
2. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State (AARCBS), for the year 1865-66, p. 25. See also Choudhuri, H.N. : the Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar State Press, 1903, p. 298. Even the general administration of the state was lamentable. Mr. H. Beveridge, the first Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar state (1864-66) made the following remarks in 1865 on the affairs of Cooch Behar : "Before the appointment of a British Commissioner, the Government of Cooch Behar was in a deplorable condition. The resources of the Government were not large. The only source of revenue worth mention was land, and even this was not properly taxed. Again, under a weak system of administration, and due to the want of proper arrangement for the suppression of crime and maintenance of the peace, the material prosperity of the people was at a low ebb, notwithstanding the excellent natural resources of the state. Absence of suitable means of communication kept the former and his produce confined within a small compass and the products of agriculture fetched a fabulously low price In short, Cooch Behar was far behind the British Districts of Bengal." — Loc. cit.
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6. Dutt, R. C. : The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age, 5th Edition, Preface, pp. vii-viii.
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11. ibid, p. 411.
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14. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1911-12, Finance III, p. 15.
15. ibid, p. 16.
16. ibid, p. 15.
17. ibid, p. 195. See also A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-13, Paragraph 67.
18. Ghose, Ananda Chandra, The History of Cooch Behar, edited by Shashi Bhusan Halder, Cooch Behar State Press, 1272 B.S., p. 158.
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20. Dey, Krishnendu : 'Itihaser Aloy Koch Behar' (in Bengali), Zila Byabasayee Samitee, Smaranika, Silver Jubilee Year, Cooch Behar, 1995.
21. Saha, Narayan Chandra : op. cit., p. 235.
22. Das, Kamalesh Chandra : Modernisation of A Princely State : Cooch Behar under Maharaja Nripendranarayan, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, N. B.U., 1989, p. 155.
23. Majumdar, Durgadas : op. cit., pp. 80-88.

24. *ibid*, pp. 30, 90.
25. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-13, Cooch Behar State Press, 1913, pp. 15-16.
26. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1891-92, Cooch Behar State Press, 1892, p. 3.
27. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1912-13, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
28. *ibid*, p. 16.
29. Dasgupta, Asruman : 'Krishak Samaj O Riner Daye', Cooch Behar Darpan, 1345 B.S., 1st Edition, p. 15.
30. *ibid*, p. 15.
31. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1914-15, general, p. 5.
32. *ibid*, p. 6.
33. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1918-19, chapter-II, p. 2.
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35. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1921-22, Financial II, pp. 5-6.
36. *ibid*, p. 6.
37. A Petition dated the 7th June, 1938, from the President, Land holder's Association, Cooch Behar to the Vice-President, the State Council, Cooch Behar State. CBDRR
38. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1930-31, Financial Report submitted by the Audit Officer of the State, p. 1.
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47. *ibid*.
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49. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, general, p. 1.
50. Extract from the Confidential diary dated 30-6-1942 of S.I. R.P. Biswas, Collection No. 20. Batch No. 126, the State Council, Cooch Behar. CBDRR
51. Memo No. 910-11 / 1-42, District Intelligence Branch, Cooch Behar, Dated the 3rd July, 1942 : *op. cit.*
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54. D.O. No. W. 3-66 / 43-6250-75 dated Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta, the 29th May, 1943 from C. P. Hancock Secretary to the Resident, Eastern States Agency to the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, Cooch Behar State, State Council, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 17, File No. 107 A, 1943-44. CBDRR
55. Confidential D.O. No. 679 / D, dated 13.6.1943 from Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, Cooch Behar State to L.

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56. No. 876 / 15-4, dated 29.6.1943, from Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, Cooch Behar State, to L. G. Coke Wallis, I.C.S., op. cit.
 57. D.O. No. 946/15-4, dated 6.7.1943 from Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan to Lt. Colonel C.P. Hancock, C.I.E. etc. Resident for the Eastern States, op. cit.
 58. D.O. No. W. 3-66/7802, dated, Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta, the 28th June, 1943 from the Resident (illegible) to Maharaja Jagaddipendra narayan, op. cit.
 59. D.O. No. 946/15-14, dated 6.7.1943 from Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan to Lt. Col. C.P. Hancock, op. cit.
 60. D.O. No. W. 3-66/8548, dated Hanstings House -, Alipore, Calcutta, the 14th July, 1943, from C.P. Hancock, Secretary to the Resident, to the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan. op. cit.
 61. No. 4366/17-1, dated the 15th October, 1943, from the Civil Defence Commissioner, Cooch Behar to the Naib Ahilkar, Dinhata, Collection No. 31, File No. 58, No. in File, 1, Diary No. 2849, Batch No. 53(ORD) and No. 1570/-29-10 dated the 21st October, 1943 from the Naib Ahilkar, Dinhata to the Civil Defence Commissioner, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 31, File No. 58, No in File 3, Diary No. 3032, State Council, Cooch Behar.
 62. Confidential, No. 455 dated 29.8.1943 from Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar to the Chief Minister of the State and No. 2090/9-1 dated the 8th September, 1943 from the Civil Defence Commissioner, Cooch Behar State to the Vice- Chairman, Town Committee, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 31, File No. 48, No. in file 5, Diary No. 250, State Council, Cooch Behar.
 63. Confidential No. 4367/31-48, dated 3.9.1943 from Registrar, State Council to the Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 31, File No. 48, No. in file 3, Batch No. 53 (ORD), State Council, Cooch Behar.
 64. Confidential No. 1569/10-6, dated the 10th November, 1943, from Superintendent of Police, Cooch Behar to the Chief Minister, Cooch Behar State, Collection No. 31, File No. 48, No. in File 4, Diary No. 3074, State Council, Cooch Behar.
 65. No. 2005/9-1, dated the 31st August, 1943 from the Civil Defence Commissioner, Cooch Behar to H.H. the President, State Council, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 31, File No. 53, No in File 1, Diary No. 2352, State Council, Cooch Behar.
 66. Letter dated the 5th January, 1943 from the Chief Minister of Cooch Behar State, State Council Department to the Secretary to the Resident for the Eastern States, Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta. CBDRR
 67. D. O. Letter No. R.1-15/42-397 dated the 20th January, 1943 from Secretary to the Resident, Eastern States Agency, Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta to the Chief Minister, Cooch Behar State, Collection No. 20, File No. 14, Chief Minister's Office, Cooch Behar State. CBDRR
 68. Letter No. R-1-15/42-44, dated the 4th January, 1943 from Captain D. G. Harrington Howes, Political Agent, Bengal States, Hastings House, Alipore, Calcutta to the Chief Minister, Cooch Behar State, op. cit.
 69. Letter dated the 4th November, 1942 from Secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Cooch Behar to His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur, President, State Council, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 20, File No. 14, Diary No. 3640. CBDRR
 - 69*. Bhattacharyya, P. K. : 'Unnoticed Paper Currency (Decorated) of Cooch Behar : A North-East State of India', in Enamul Haque (ed.), Journal of Bengal Art, Vol. 6, Dhaka, 2001, p. 226. It may be mentioned here that in earlier times the coins of Cooch Behar royal dynasty are mostly made of silver, sometimes also in gold. The Copper Narayani coins are scarce, but paper currency is conspicuous by its absence in Cooch Behar. - Loc. cit.

70. Report on the Proceedings of the Post War Reconstruction Conference, held at the Lansdowne Hall at 12 Noon, on the 25th and 26th February, 1944. It was signed by Chief Minister R. Subbayya, the President and D.M. Sen, Assistant State Engineer, the Secretary of the Conference. pp. 1-2 Collection No. 17, File No. 40, Batch No. 185. CBDRR
71. *ibid*, pp. 3-4.
72. Ramusack, Barbara N : Indian Princes and their States, Cambridge University Press, First Published 2004, First South Asian Edition 2005, p. 187.
73. Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.
74. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1941-42, Revenue Department, pp. 1-2.
75. *ibid*.
76. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, Chapter II, p. 7.
77. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1941-42, Revenue Department, p. 2.
78. Tables of the Agricultural Statistics of Cooch Behar State for the year ending 13th April, 1940, p. 11. CBDRR
79. Tables of the Agricultural Statistics of Cooch Behar State for the ending the 13th April, 1943. pp. 10-11.
80. Cooch Behar States Gazetteers, 1944-45, p. 73. NBSL
81. *ibid*, p. 74.
82. Letter dated 8th July, 1939 from the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to the Chancellor, Chamber of Princes, Council Office, New Delhi, Collection 17, File No. 4, of File No. 29. CBDRR
83. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1890-91, (Appendix), p. IX, Quoted in Das, Kamalesh : *op. cit.*, p. 173.
84. Ganguli, K. C. : Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations, 1913-1927, Cooch Behar State Press, 1930, p. 56.
85. Brochure of Cooch Behar State, 1936-39, published by Vice-President, State Council, Cooch behar, 1939,p. 11.
86. Express Letter No. V/216, dated 13th March, 1939 from Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar to the Secretary to the Resident for the Eastern States, Collection No. 17, File No. 1, Batch No. 89. CBDRR
87. The Brochure of Cooch Behar State, 1936-39, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12.
88. Brochure of Cooch Behar State, 1942, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
89. *ibid*, 1936-39, p. 12.
90. Choudhuri, H. N : *op. cit.*, pp. 374-375. Formerly, the excise revenue used to be derived from two sources : i) Akbari Mehals and ii) Mushkarat Mehals. The Akbari Mehals included all rights connected with the Manufacture and sale of country spirits, while the Mushkarat Mehals had reference to the sale of opium and Ganja. These mehals used to be farmed out by the Dewan to the highest bidder. The purchaser of the Akbari Mehals enjoyed a monopoly for the whole State, and he and his sub-leasees could open shops wherever they pleased and brew liquor of any strength they liked. *ibid*, p. 372.
91. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1910-11, Excise Revenue, p. 10. NBSL
92. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1940-41, Chapter V, p. 25.
93. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, Chapter III, p. 15.
94. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 24.
95. Excise Manuals, 1891, Cooch Behar, p. 47.
96. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 26.
97. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1940-41, chapter 5, p. 25.
98. Letter No. 1097/12-13 dated 11th July, 1937 from Karali Charan Ganguli Bahadur, Revenue Officer, Cooch Behar

State to H.H. the President, State Council, C.B., Collection No. 8, File No. 4, No. in File 1, Diary No. 582, C.B.D.R.R.

99. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 13.
100. *ibid*, p. 27.
101. Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit*, pp. 375-376.
102. *ibid.*, p. 377.
103. *ibid*, p. 378.
104. A.A.R.C.B.S.; 1890-91, General Paragraph 14.
105. Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit.*, p. 378.
106. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1941-42, Stamp Department, p. 1.
107. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1910-11, Revenue Department, p. 11.
108. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1941-42, Stamp Department, p. 17.
109. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, Stamp Department, p. 17.
110. A. A. R. C.B.S., 1889-90, Paragraph 72.
111. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1941-42, Income Tax Department, p. 1.
112. *ibid.*, p. 7.
113. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 30.
114. Reply from Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar, dated 31.8.1943 to the Questionnaire-9 appended with the copy of Chamber of Princes' Circular No. 87/VII-232, D/-12.8.1943 regarding levy of Income Tax in Cooch Behar State. Collection No. 34, File 34, Batch 53 (ORD). (Preserved in Cooch Behar District Record Room), pp. 1-2.
115. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, p. 17.
116. A Petition dated the 16th January, 1942 from the Secretary, Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce to His Highness, the President, State Council, C. B. State, Collection No. 20, File No. 35, No. in File I, Diary No. 4293, Batch No. 126, 1942-43, State Council, Cooch Behar, pp. 10-11, C.B.D.R.R.
117. Ramusack, Barbara N : The Indian Princes and Their States, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-196.
118. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1893-1894, pp. 12-13, 22.
119. Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit.*, p. 194.
120. Turner, Samuel : *op. cit*, p. 9.
121. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1893-94, p. 13.
122. Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit*, p. 194.
123. Saha, Narayan Chandra : *op. cit*, p. 285.
124. A Short Historical Sketch of Cooch Behar (Manuscript), State Council, Cooch Behar, 1936; Letter No. 2932, dated 17th March, 1945 from Audit and Finance Officer, Cooch Behar to the Secretary, State Council, Cooch Behar, *op. cit*.
125. Revised Schedule A to the Agreement dated 25th February, 1907 between the Secretary of State for India in Council and His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar for the working of the Cooch Behar State Railway by the Eastern Bengal Railway administration. — Letter No. 1920, dated the 21st March, 1923 from Sites Chandra Sanyal, Registrar, S. C., Cooch Behar to the Vice-President, S. C., in the General Dept. of the State, Collection No. 26, File No. 10, No. in File 9, Diary No. 4111.
126. Letter No. 386 dated 1st August, 1941 from the Agricultural Officer, Cooch Behar State to the Education and Development Minister of the State, the Agricultural Department, Cooch Behar Collection No. 20, File No. 26, Batch No. 130. CBDRR

127. The Brochure of Cooch Behar State, op. cit., p. 12. It should be mentioned here that the Export Duty Department had been working on a temporary basis since 1941 but under orders of His Highness in Council it had been placed on a permanent basis during the year 1944-45. The Staff of the Department shared in the general increment of pay allowed in all ministerial staff of the State. The sanctioned strength of the staff consisted of 5 Export Duty Inspectors, 30 Deputy Collectors, 70 Chowkidars and Peons While the Office Staff consisted of 1 Head Clerk and 2 Clerks. Subsequently one post of Leave Reserve Duty Collector was sanctioned by the State Council. The Number of Chowkies during 1944-45 was 30. —A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, p. 16.
128. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 28.
129. *ibid.*
130. Reply from Controller of Separate Revenue and Export Duty Officer, Cooch Behar dated 31.8.1943 to the Questionnaire under Serial - 9, appended to the Copy of 'Chamber of Princes' Circular No. 87/VII - 232 D/12-8. 1943 regarding levy of custom duties - internal or maritime. Collection No. 34, File No. 34, Batch No. 53 (ORD), State Council, Cooch Behar. CBDRR
131. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1942-43, p. 28.
132. *ibid.*
133. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, p. 16.
134. On the recommendation of the Controller of Central Excise, Calcutta, the Tobacco Excise Department of the State was reorganised with the following staff : i) one Superintendent, ii) four Deputy Superintendents, two of them were in charge of two different circles and one each held the charge of intelligent and preventive work, iii) 30 Range Inspectors, iv) 18 Assistant Range Inspectors, and v) 11 Clerks. Besides these, 3 additional Clerks for the Sub-divisional Treasuries and one additional Clerk for the Sadar Treasury. —A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, p. 15.
135. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, pp. 15-16.
136. *ibid.*, p. 16.
137. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, chapter II, p. 8.
138. *ibid.*, chapter III, p. 16.
139. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1944-45, chapter V, p. 31.
140. *ibid.*, p. 32.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The reigns of the last three rulers of the Native State of Cooch Behar (1911 - 1949 A.D.) formed the most volatile and crucial period in modern Indian history. The year 1911 A.D. is memorable in the history of Cooch Behar State because of the death of Nripendranarayan whose reign witnessed the climax of Anglo-Cooch Behar relationship as well as colonial modernisation of the State administration. The years following 1911 A.D. saw the rise of national upsurge in the country against foreign domination, ushering in an era of freedom and democracy for India. Its repercussions were strongly felt in the Native States like Cooch Behar, thereby giving rise to people's movement under the leadership of the AISPC for the democratic system of government there. Within a short period of two and half years following India's independence, the odd 552 Native States whose separate existence posed a great threat to the unity of the post-partition India, were integrated with the Indian Union within the year 1949. Some historians like R. C. Majumder has described the integration of the states as a 'great ... revolution.'¹ The Princely States had become 'an anachronistic counter-weight against nationalism'² and their demise naturally followed the withdrawal of the Imperial Power which had protected them amidst 'all hostile trends and ideals of the age'.³ Therefore, 'The abolition of the feudal states, which constituted a reactionary social force and which was artificially perpetuated by the British for political strategic reasons, was a progressive measure resulting in a uniform political pattern of India.'⁴

In spite of the anti-nationalistic stand adopted by the Koch rulers, there gradually emerged a powerful anti-monarchy movement in Cooch Behar in favour of independence and democracy as well as the merger with the Indian Dominion and later with the Province of West Bengal under the umbrella of the Praja Mandal Samity and other nationalist and leftist groups. Apart from this, the period under study also witnessed some significant developments in the domains of administrative, socio-economic, cultural and religious affairs in Cooch Behar. Thus the penultimate stage of the Koch Raj and the enchanting drama associated with it formed a grand theme that had been unfolded with the help of latest known documents specially from different archives scattered in different parts of India.

Maharaja Nripendranarayan (1863 - 1911 A.D.) the father of Raj Rajendranarayan, as a loyal native chief played the role of a collaborator with the British Government not only in the field of war but also in the arena of politics. Nripendranarayan believed that the British Government was for the good of India and expressed his strong dissatisfaction with the middle class-led nationalist movement in India. He also made it clear that he would take drastic measures against any nationalist activities in Cooch Behar.⁵ This pro-British and anti-nationalist stance taken by Nripendranarayan was practically pursued by his successors, i.e., Raj Rajendranarayan, Jitendranarayan and Jagaddipendranarayan during the period of our study.

Following in the foot steps of his illustrious father, Raj Rajendranarayan (1911 - 1913 A.D.) did his best to discharge his duties. He issued a proclamation in which he announced his intention to continue the present system of administration with such modification as, from time to time, he might consider necessary for the welfare of his people, to extend the principle of representation in the Legislative Council which was established during the reign of his father, and to espouse the cause of education, specially the cause of primary and secondary education. In spite of the very short period of his reign, he evinced a dynamic attitude towards the administration and 'constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects'. Raj Rajendranarayan attended the Imperial Durbar held at Delhi in December, 1911 to celebrate the Coronation of King George V, Emperor of India and Queen Mary. He played the key role for the reception of the King Emperor and Queen Empress in Calcutta and it was a grand success. Like his father, Raj Rajendranarayan was also opposed to the revolutionary movement. In 1909, he participated in a meeting held at Caxton Hall in London in protest against the assassination of Curzon Wylie by Madanlal Dhingra.

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar and the Maharaja of Tripura enjoyed a salute of 13 guns and were entitled to be received by the Viceroy, but not a return visit from His Excellency. Raj Rajendranarayan addressed the Government of India on the subject and requested that the honour might be extended to him. Eventually the Government of India sanctioned the privilege of a return visit from the Viceroy to the next Maharaja Jitendranarayan as Raj Rajendranarayan had already met a premature death. Raj Rajendranarayan also raised the question of the appointment of a Political Agent for Cooch Behar and sought the sanction of the Government of Bengal. But the Government of Bengal did not comply with the Maharaja's proposal. Some boundary disputes were settled amicably between the Cooch Behar State on the one hand and the districts of Goalpara and Rangpur on the other hand during his reign. At the beginning of his reign, the Commissioner of Bhagalpur was ex-officio Political Agent for the State in respect of extradition cases and later the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division became ex-officio Political Agent for the State for the same purpose. It is during the time of Raj Rajendranarayan Lord Carmichael, the Governor of Bengal, visited Cooch Behar, in April, 1930. Sunity Devi, the mother of the Maharaja, mentioned in her Autobiography that Raj Rajendranarayan was influenced by the advice of Lord Carmichael who had always been their best friend. The Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement under the leadership of Thakur Panchanan Barma also made headway in the Cooch Behar State during the reign of Raj Rajendranarayan. 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 of caste in the census operations of 1911 and submitted their memorials to the authorities. But their request could not be granted by the State authorities.⁶

At the outbreak of the First World War, Jitendranarayan, the next Maharaja of Cooch Behar (1913-1922 A.D.), conveyed his 'deep and steadfast loyalty to the Throne and Person of the King Emperor and placed his own personal services and those of his two brothers and also the resources of his State at the disposal of the Government

of India. In recognition of his assistance and Co-operation during the World War, The Maharaja was invested with the insignia of the knight Commander of the most exalted order of the Star of India in January, 1917.⁷ During the war time the minority issue also became a focal point of discussion and the role of Jitendranarayan must be recognised in this regard. It has been pointed out that the Political Officers had used minority periods to remove long standing abuses and improved the finance of the States, but also their methods had shaken the adherence of the people to their traditional customs and ways. In order to remove the suspicion in the minds of the Princes, the Viceroy Hardinge appointed a Committee consisting of certain Rulers and Political Officers. The Committee recorded their recommendations in a Memorandum and the most important recommendation was that any measure introduced during a minority 'will be liable to revocation by the minor ruler at any time after he obtains his full powers.' The minority issue was also the main subject of discussion at a Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs held at Delhi and it was attended by Maharaja Jitendranarayan and other rulers. Jitendranarayan participated in the deliberations of the minority issue and expressed his considered opinion. Finally this Conference unanimously endorsed the recent memorandum on the subject.⁸ The Chamber of Princes, a consultative and advisory body, was brought into being by a Royal proclamation in February, 1921 and Maharaja Jitendranarayan attended the inauguration ceremony of the Chamber of Princes held at Delhi. As the Cooch Behar State enjoyed dynastic salutes of 13 guns, it was one of 108 rulers who were members of the Chamber in their own right. It has been pointed out that the British had created the Chamber of Princes with a view to making Princes a separate political force to stem the tide of growing national awakening.

Indian nationalism had spread from British India to the Princely States and gradually created an environment for launching the national struggle there. The Non-cooperation movement from 1920 penetrated into the territory of Cooch Behar and stirred all the sections of its people, thereby becoming a concern to the State Authority.⁹ In order to stamp out the movement, the activities of the political volunteers, viz, publicity of the use of swadeshi goods, picketing, no revenue, no rent programmes etc. were declared illegal in Cooch Behar territory. Despite the repressive arrangements and orders, the movement spread into the rural areas and the hats were the centres where from Gandhiji's message spread into the interior region. In spite of State's prohibitory orders, Political meetings were held in the countryside and political activists were arrested by the State Police. The movement gripped the areas such as Sitai, Pundibari and Dinhat and there were several incidents of clashes between violent mob and the armed police, resulting in the death of several men. Ultimately the Maharaja succeeded in crushing the movement by resorting to repressive measures.

The revolutionary movement also made headway in the Cooch Behar State and many cadres of the revolutionary groups took shelter there. Maharaja Jitendranarayan having no sympathy with the revolutionaries, announced that he would do everything in his power to stamp out sedition in the State. In fact, participation in politics in Cooch Behar invariably meant banishment from the state. Despite the repressive measures adopted by the State Government, some physical cultural clubs known as akhras and some libraries like the Patakura Adarsha Pathagar

were established which facilitated the purpose of the revolutionaries. The Dacca Anushilon Samity had established its branch in Cooch Behar¹⁰ and succeeded in enlisting members there. The Victoria College of Cooch Behar had attracted numerous students from Eastern Districts of Bengal and many of them had revolutionary leanings. Some of the revolutionaries who were involved the Dharail Dacoity in the Nator Police Station in Rajshahi district in February, 1915 and also in the Raja Bazar Bomb Case had connection with the Cooch Behar State.¹¹

Jitendranarayan was succeeded by his eldest son Jagaddipendranarayan during whose minority period (1923 - 1936 A.D.) the administration of the State was carried on by the Council of Regency with the Queen Dowager Indira Devi, daughter of Sayaji Rao Gaikwar of Baroda State, as Regent and President of the Council. The approval of the Government of India to the constitution of the Regency Council during the minority was conveyed in May, 1923 and Regency Council assumed office in the same month, 1923. Maharani Indira Devi's administrative training had been remarkably good. Besides the Government of India also did their best to help Indira Devi run the administration by sending the best available men as Vice Presidents of the Regency Council. The Cooch Behar State had been placed in direct political relations with the Government of India in November, 1922 and by this arrangement the Governor of Bengal acted as Agent to the Governor-General for the Cooch Behar State and performed exactly the same functions as hitherto been performed by the local Government or the Governor-in-Council referring to the Government of India, only in matters which, under the existing practice, required such references.

A significant development during the period of the Regency Council was that Thakur Panchanan Barman, the undisputed leader of the Rajbansi community, was banished from Cooch Behar State for a period of 5 years. A petition which was signed by numerous inhabitants of Cooch Behar and addressed to the Governor-General of India, solicited his intervention in respect of certain allegations made therein against the Maharani Indira Devi and Nawab Khasru Jung, a guardian of the minor princes.¹² The petition mentioned that a number of shameful allegations were being circulated and therefore, Nawab Khasru Jung and Nawab Zada Karim, the two officers of the State should be removed from Cooch Behar. But the Regency Council thought that this 'forged' petition was got up by Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman with a malicious and mischievous intent. Hence, the Regency Council issued a statement in September, 1926 prohibiting Panchanan Barman from entering the state for a period of 5 years.¹³ The banishment of Panchanan Barman by the Regency Council had raised some questions. Though the allegations in the petition were serious and had agitated the people of the State, the Government of India had maintained silence about the matter. Besides, Panchanan Barman had been deported from the State without full trial.

The Regency Council had always taken an anti-nationalist, anti-revolutionary stand as its predecessor had done before. The Disobedience Movement of 1930s could not make a headway in Cooch Behar State as because earlier the Non-cooperation Movement was suppressed with an iron hand. Besides, by the application of the deportation

law, the State Government could banish any person from the State engaged in anti-government activities. Despite such repressive measures the Bengal revolutionaries had connection with Cooch Behar State during the period of Regency Council. The joint effort of the Bengal Police and the State Police initiated during the reign of Jitendranarayan could not curb the revolutionary activities which were carried on in Cooch Behar State in the subsequent period. On a confidential enquiry in February, 1927 it was found out that a number of revolutionaries formed a party in the State and they were all practically the students of the Victoria College of the State and some of them hailed from Barishal district. It had also been revealed that two revolutionaries organisations, namely, Tarun Association and the Cooch Behar Anushilan Party operated in the State and the latter was connected with the Rajshahi Anushilan Party. The DIB Officers of all the North Bengal Districts including the Cooch Behar State who had met in a Conference in Cooch Behar in April, 1936, were cautioned to be particularly on the look out of the Anushilan activity as this party working very secretly in North Bengal and Assam.¹⁴

Cooch Behar State witnessed peasant unrest in some places, particularly in the Sub-division of Mathabhanga during the rule of the Regency Council. The World-wide trade depression of 1930-31 and consequent fall of the prices of agricultural products affected badly the people of the State. The extension of time for payment of Kists and also remissions of revenue granted by the state produced no desired results and defaulting jotes were made khas. There was a large scale of land alienation, as a result of which the cultivators had been degraded into the position of adhiaars. Thakur Panchanan Barman, a native jotedar of Mathabhanga Sub-division and also an elected Member of Bengal Legislative Council, had already made a petition to the Regency Council criticising its settlement policy and its consequent enhancement of land revenue. His activities provided a source of inspiration to the peasant unrest mentioned above, though it did not take the form of a peasant movement. Apart from this, various retrenchments in the administration had to be effected by the Regency Council owing to the financial stringency prevailing in the State. The policy of retrenchment was also applied to the allowance of an influential member of the royal family. A proposal was made in January, 1934 at the instance of Maharani Indira Devi to reduce the allowance of Maharaj Kumar Victor Nityendranarayan, the surviving uncle of the present Maharaja. The Maharani felt the allowance of Rs. 39,000 per annum payable to Victor Nityendranarayan was too great a burden for the resources of the State. Finally she recommended that allowance of Rs. 2,000 a month be granted henceforth to him and the Government of Bengal approved the Maharani's proposal in October, 1934.¹⁵

Cooch Behar being a member State of the Chamber of Princes, the Regency Council maintained regular correspondence with that all-India Princes' organisation and also made yearly contribution (Rs. 800) towards it. Some boundary questions regarding adjustment of boundary between the Cooch Behar State and the districts of Goalpara and Rangpur arose during the period of the Regency Council. As regards the demarcation of the boundary between Cooch Behar State and the district of Goalpara in November, 1923, the Assam Government accepted the proposal of

the Regency Council regarding the claim of the State to village Baniaguri and also directed that the matter be left over till the Maharaja attained his majority. With regard to the demarcation of the Cooch Behar-Rangpur boundary, a Commission was appointed during the year 1933-34 for the purpose. The demarcation of this boundary was completed in 1934 and also the demarcation of Cooch Behar enclaves in the Rangpur district and of the Rangpur enclaves in the Cooch Behar State was completed during the year 1934-35. The complete report submitted by the Boundary Commissioners was adopted by the Cooch Behar State and the Government of Bengal in the year 1935-36.

Following in the foot steps of its predecessors, the Regency Council had always remained steadfast in loyalty and allegiance to His Majesty's Government. Thus the Regency Government made a contribution of Rs. 1,000 to the Viceroy's All India Thanks Giving Fund started in connection with H.M. the King Emperor George V's recovery from a serious and protracted illness. Besides, the Silver Jubilee of H.M. the King Emperor's accession in 1935 was celebrated in the State in a befitting manner. On this occasion, the Maharani Regent of Cooch Behar wrote to the Viceroy and Governor-General of India 'to assure him that her son, like his father and forefathers, would ever remain steadfast in loyalty and devotion to the Throne and Person of His Imperial Majesty'.¹⁶

The rule of Regency Council came to an end with the assumption of ruling power by Maharaja Jagadipendranarayan whose reign (1936-1949) was full of historic events and marked a new era in the history of Cooch Behar. Since the year 1922, direct political relations were of Cooch Behar State were established with the Government of India, who acted through the Government of Bengal and the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, who was also the Political Agent for the State. But the channel for the conduct of those relations was transferred by the Government of India from the Government of Bengal to the Eastern States Agency in December, 1936 and henceforth Cooch Behar was placed under the charge of the Agent to the Governor-General, Eastern States Agency. In December, 1936 the Agent to the Governor General, Eastern States Council, informed the Bengal Government that the Governor-General might entrust the Ruler of Cooch Behar with the executive functions of the proposed Federation under the Government of India Act, 1935 and sought their opinion whether the administration of State was of such quality as to admit of this delegation being made to him. In reply, the Bengal Government said that the standard of administration in the State was sufficiently high to justify the delegation to him of executive function of the Federation. As a basis for their accession to the Federation, the Cooch Behar Durbar also framed a revised draft of the Instrument as per recommendations by the Constitutional Committee of the Chamber of Princes.¹⁷ However, the federal scheme of the Government of India Act, 1935 had not come into being.

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar, being invited, attended the Coronation Ceremony of H.M. the King Emperor held in May, 1937 and was accorded the privileges of attending all the principal functions, including Abbey Ceremony. The Maharaja Jagadipendranarayan attended regularly the meetings of the Chamber of Princes held in New Delhi and

other places between 1937 and 1942. The Maharaja became a co-opted Member of Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes thereby resuming great responsibilities both in the interest of his State and of the order of Princes. As a co-opted Member of the Standing Committee, he took an active part in the deliberations of the Chamber. Besides, Dewan Bahadur R. Subbaya Naidu, Chief Minister of the State was nominated on the Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes in October, 1940 in place of Rai K. C. Ganguli Bahadur, acting Vice-President of the State Council of Cooch Behar.¹⁸

Like his predecessors Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan offered to His Majesty's Government his personal services and the resources of his State at the outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939. The Viceroy's appeals for contributions to various war funds were given wide publicity in the State. The Sub-Committees were formed in all Sub-divisions for the purpose of raising subscriptions for the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund. The Village Defence Parties were organised for the civil defence of the whole State. The 'Cooch Behar Darpan', the semi-official vernacular newspaper, published regularly authenticated war news contradicting false rumours and promoting war propaganda. In other words, the State resolved to concentrate all resources to fight against Nazism. After the fall of Singapore in February, 1942 and consequent Japanese advance into Burma, Cooch Behar was quite close to the war zone. The National War Front movement was inaugurated in the State by the Maharaja himself, and sub-leaders and lecturers of the movement visited the interior parts of the state to allay panic created by the World War and counteract false rumours. Elaborate arrangements were taken up by the Durbar to give effect to immediate A.R.P. measures during the year 1942-43. A huge American army base was installed in Cooch Behar State. At the crucial hour of the war, the Maharaja himself joined the Indian army as an Honorary Lt. Colonel and successfully acted as a liaison officer at headquarters in Burma.¹⁹

In the midst of the Second World War, the Quit India Movement penetrated into the Cooch Behar State and made a deep impact there. Following in the foot steps of his predecessors, Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan introduced repressive measures to stem the tide of the Quit India Movement in the State. Maharaja in his speeches at several meetings held in July and August, 1942, exhorted the citizens to fight the menace of mass civil disobedience by the Congress.²⁰ The Officers of the Civil Defence Department visited the Sub-divisions of the State and appealed to the people not to place any faith on the Congress propoganda for mass civil disobedience. Despite such stern attitude by the State Authorities, the Quit India Movement had a headway in Cooch Behar and created great excitement among the students and youth who were determined to express their solidarity with the movement. The State Police became aware of this anti-British activities, made raids into several houses of Cooch Behar town and arrested the student activists and later expelled them from the state by issuing '24 Hours Notice' of banishment. Besides, during the Quit India Movement many Congress activists coming from neighbouring districts organised meetings in several places in the State and some of them were jailed on various periods of terms. It should be noted here that the political activities

as well as political organisations were declared unlawful in Cooch Behar. Besides such repressive measures adopted by the State Authorities, the prevailing political awareness among the state people was very low. These factors stood in the way of organising any powerful political movement in the State and hence, Quit India Movement remained mainly confined to the students community.

In August, 1945 the military assault on the students of the Victoria College of Cooch Behar gave rise to a powerful agitation against the State Authorities. The students community and the residents of Cooch Behar Town launched a powerful agitation against the military outrage and demanded for the open trial and punishment of the guilty military men and called a general strike in Cooch Behar town for the first time in the State. This movement crossed the boundaries of the State and created a strong agitation among the people, specially the students community of Bengal. The then and banned Communist Party played a key role in organising this people's agitation.²¹ In the face of wide spread public agitation, the state authorities had been compelled to constitute a Tribunal where the guilty military men were tried and punished on various periods of terms. It was regarded as the first triumph of the mass agitation against the monarchy. This agitation was gradually converted into a movement of civil rights thereby perparing the ground for a greater movement in favour of democracy and merger in Cooch Behar State in the penultimate years.

With the attainment of India's freedom, the Indian States were free to accede to either of the two Dominions and the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapsed. Since Paramountcy was not transferred to the new Dominions, technically the States were independent on the 15th August, 1947 and the danger of further balkanisation of post-partition India loomed large. To tackle this gigantic problem the State Department came into being with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the Minister-in-Charge and V. P. Menon as the Secretary. It had been proposed to ask for the accession of the States to the Indian Union in respect of three subjects : defence, external affairs, communications which the Cabinet Mission Plan had assigned to the Central Government. Sardar Patel, V. P. Menon and Lord Mountbatten played the most inportant parts in the formulation and implementation of this policy.

Sardar Patel issued a conciliatory statement on the 5th July, 1947 making a fervent appeal to the Princes not to utilize their freedom from Paramountcy in a manner which was injurious to the common interest of India. He asked for their accession on the three subjects and also appealed to the Princes to come to the Constituent Assembly. He assured the Princes that their rights and privileges would be fully protected. In the same vein, the Viceroy Lord Mountbatten addressed the Princes in a special session of the Chamber of the Princes on the 25th July, 1947 and appealed to them to join either Union before August 15, 1947. The impact of Sardar Patel's statement and Lord Mountbatten's address was so decisive that all the states geographically contiguous to India, with the exception of Junagarh, Hyderabad and Kashmir, had signed the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill Agreement by August 15, 1947.

The Maharaja of Cooch Behar also decided to join the Indian Dominion and sent his cordial greetings to Sardar Patel on the historic day of Indian Independence in a letter dated the 12th August, 1947.²² In reply, Sardar Patel thanked the Maharaja for his letter of greetings and good wishes on Independence day and also thanked the Maharaja 'for so readily agreeing to accede to the Indian Dominion'.²³ Besides, The Maharaja of Cooch Behar had also decided to take their seat in the Constituent Assembly. The Maharaja had selected his Chief Minister Mr. Himmat Singh K. Maheswari as the State's representative for the Constituent Assembly.²⁴

Even after India's attainment of freedom, political parties were not allowed to function in the State. The dismissal of a Professor of the Victoria College for taking part in active politics in October, 1947 gave rise to a wide-spread students' agitation which, with the support of all parties, soon developed into a mass movement raising demands for civil liberties, liberation of all the political prisoners, end of exploitation of the peasants and so on. Besides, the Cooch Behar State witnessed a peasant movement at Uchhal Pukuri and Dhulia region in the Sub-division of Mekligang under the impact of the Tebhaga movement which was raging the districts of North Bengal. The peasants of Cooch Behar agitated against the exploitation of the Jotedars and took their lands forcefully and established an independent government. The movement was suppressed by the State by resorting to police action and the ring leaders of the movement had been arrested who were known as the Communists.

Excepting the Hitasadhani Sabha, the only State-patronised organisation, there were no other organised political groups in the State. As political activities were strictly prohibited in the State, political parties had to carry on their activities secretly there. Since early 1940's the Communists infiltrated into Cooch Behar and formed a party cell there (1944). There were also other political groups such as the Forward Bloc, the Congress Socialist Party etc. in the State. The Indian National Congress did not open its branch in Cooch Behar in pre-independence day. But the Praja Mondal Samity (the States People's Conference) was founded in 1946 in the state on the pattern of the Congress-sponsored programmes such as independence and democracy. In fact, the Proja Mandal Samity was a platform of various political groups among which the Communists were predominant. The Proja Mandal leaders and followers demanded the establishment of responsible government in the State and supported the merger of Cooch Behar with the Indian Union.

On the other hand, after the formation of the Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha in May, 1947 it led a movement directed against the bhatias or outsiders who were none but the Bengalees coming from East and South Bengal in the State. When this conflict between the Cooch Beharis and Non-Cooch Beharis was vitiating the social atmosphere of Cooch Behar State, the Ministers of the State who were also the Hitasadhani leaders had introduced several communal and repressive measures against the non-Cooch Beharis in the field of service, education and land distribution.²⁵ It has been pointed that the royalist Hitasadhani Sabha endeavoured to divert the attention of the people from anti-

monarchy movement to Cooch Behar non-Cooch Behar conflict. The State Proja Mandal Samiti led predominantly by the left leaders cautioned the people about the dangerous communal politics of the Hitasadhani Sabha and also alleged that the Maharaja of Cooch Behar thought that he could still play the same reactionary role as was done previously during the British era in collusion with his Muslim pro-league and scheduled caste ministers and the Hitasadhani Sabha had been formed to serve his own personal purpose of ruling the people to the detriment of the safety of the Indian Union and therefore, urged the Indian Government to merge the State with the Province of West Bengal.²⁶

Amidst such reports of alleged anti-Indian activities which had been going on in Cooch Behar, the Bengalee leaders like Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Premier of West Bengal, Sarat Chandra Bose etc. and various parties and organisations drew the attention of the Ministry of States, Government of India to this politically volatile situation in Cooch Behar and sought their immediate intervention to stop such obnoxious activities there. The members of the Cooch Behar State Congress Committee submitted a memorandum in March, 1949 to the Governor of Assam who was also the Dominion Agent of the Cooch Behar State, pointing out that 'the speaking language of Cooch Behar State was Bengali and the Court language as well as the medium of education was also Bengali and not a single Cooch Behar people would understand Assami language in any form.' So they requested that Cooch Behar should be merged with the Province of West Bengal.²⁷ The Cooch Behar People's Association, a social organisation formed in Calcutta, fervently supported the urgency of the merger of Cooch Behar with the Indian Union and later played a leading part in the movement in favour of merger of the State with West Bengal.

On the other hand, the eminent leaders of Assam like Gopinath Bordoloi, the Premier of Assam, Nilmony Phukan, Sarat Chandra Sinha and others countered the arguments of the West Bengal leaders by pointing out that the linguistic, cultural, ethnological and religious affinity between Cooch Behar people and Assamese people. They argued that the people of Cooch Behar and of Assam belonged to the same kingdom till very recently and to merge Cooch Behar with West Bengal would be against her past history, culture and tradition. So they demanded the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam without any delay.²⁸ The tone of arguments of the Hitasadhani Sabha leaders of Cooch Behar were the same as those of the Assamese leaders. The Hitasadhani leaders pointed out that 'the people of Cooch Behar unlike the Bengalis have got peculiar characteristics of their own. The spoken language is quite different from Bengali having greater affinities with Assamese' and also 'the manners and customs are quite different from Bengalis and are similar to those of Assamese.' They also added that 'the entire people of Cooch Behar are against the merger of State with West Bengal.'²⁹ Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan also tilted towards favouring the cause of Assam.

At this stage while the political situation was becoming very much volatile in Cooch Behar, the Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru announced at a public meeting in Calcutta in July, 1949 that the question of merger of Cooch Behar should be settled by a plebiscite as there was division among the people of the State. This announcement naturally evoked mixed responses. While Assam political leaders and organisations gave thanks to Nehru for his announcement of a plebiscite, it was strongly resented by the pro-Bengal movement makers who pointed out that the question of plebiscite was superfluous and raised the demand for Cooch Behar's merger with West Bengal on the grounds of its geographical contiguity and cultural and linguistic affinity.³⁰

Thus Cooch Behar's merger issue not only became a heated controversy both in Bengal and Assam but it also made the political situation in Cooch Behar a more complicated one. Sardar Patel conveyed this to both Bengalee and Assamese leaders through his correspondence. While he told the Bengalee leaders like Bidhan Chandra Roy and Sarat Chandra Bose that Cooch Behar problem was not easy of solution, but at the same time assured them that there was no question under consideration of its merger with Assam. On the other hand, Sardar Patel informed Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam and also in charge of Cooch Behar State that his own tentative view was that 'if merger has to come about, it has to be with West Bengal.' But he wanted to leave the State alone for the time being.³¹

Some reports regarding Cooch Behar's topsy-turvy political development had alarmed the Ministry of States, the Government of India. The results of the controversial election to the Cooch Behar Legislative Council held in May, 1949 showed that the Hitasadhani Sabha captured 24 seats out of total 25 seats. The Adviser to the Governor of Assam told the Ministry of States that the State Congress had complained that elections to the State Assembly were being manoeuvred by the Chief Minister so that a majority of his Party (Hitasadhani Sabha) was returned. As it was expected, all the elected Hitasadhani members who met in Cooch Behar on the 15th June, 1949 passed a resolution announcing that 'Cooch Behar people were against the State's merger with West Bengal.' Besides, one I.B. report dated 24th June, 1949 had informed the Ministry of the States that the Revenue Minister and the Chief Secretary, who were Muslims, were practically running the State administration with other Muslim officials of the State and the Muslims taking advantage of their position in the State were instigating the local people against the enlightened Hindus who were domiciled Bengalees. It was further reported that the Muslim immigrants were entertained and Hindu refugees of Eastern Pakistan were not allowed to own any land in Cooch Behar State. Since the partition, the Muslims had been persistently trying to establish Muslim majority in the State.³² From these reports it would appear to the Ministry of States that the situation in Cooch Behar was becoming more difficult. The situation was further being complicated by the Chief Minister of the State tendering his resignation letter to Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan on the 9th July, 1949.³³

In view of the grave situation, the Ministry of the States took up the case of Cooch Behar to settle its future. Accordingly Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan along with his Chief Minister was summoned to Delhi for a discussion

on the 26th July, 1949. After a prolonged discussion, an agreement was finally signed on the 28th August, 1949, between C. Raja Gopalachari, the Governor-General of India and Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan, which came to be known as the Cooch Behar Merger Agreement.³⁴ In pursuance of this agreement, the administration of Cooch Behar State was taken over by V.I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner, on behalf of the Government of India, on the 12th September, 1949. While the Hitasadhani leaders had been dejected at the decision of the Government of India to take over and administer the state centrally because the liquidation of the ruler would affect the loyalty of the native people upon which the Hitasadhani Sabha was banking for so long, the Bengalees in the State were partially satisfied over the taking over of the State by the Central Government as they regarded it as a prelude to a merger with West Bengal.

Soon after the integration of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union, political leaders of West Bengal and Assam once again tried hard to merge Cooch Behar in their respective provinces. The claim of West Bengal over Cooch Behar received adequate support from various political, social and business organisations such as the Cooch Behar State Congress, the States People's Conference, the Communists and other left groups, the Cooch Behar People's Association, the Marwari Association, the Bengal Trade Association etc. On the other hand, Hitasadhani Sabha and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar as well as the Assam Pradesh Congress Party, Assam Parliamentary Party, Assam Jatiya Mahasabha etc. opposed Cooch Behar's merger with West Bengal and supported its merger with Assam.

It should be mentioned here that the leading leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha participated in a Conference of All India Gorkha League held at Darjeeling Town in October, 1949 with the object of working for the formation of Uttar Khand Pradesh comprising Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Sikkim and Jalpaiguri.³⁵ Having noticed such activities of the Hitasadhani leaders, Sardar Patel wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru that the Government of India 'should do nothing to encourage this kind of organisation in its mischievous tendencies.'

At this juncture, V.P. Menon suggested to the Ministry of the States on the 1st December, 1949 that the time was ripe to consider the question of Cooch Behar's merger with West Bengal. He also mentioned that V.I. Nanjappa, the Chief Commissioner of Cooch Behar, was of opinion that Cooch Behar should be merged in West Bengal. Sardar Patel held a discussion on the proposed merger on the 3rd December, 1949 where it was decided that Cooch Behar would be merged with West Bengal on the 1st January, 1950.³⁶ The Central Cabinet met on the 28th December, 1949 and approved the merger of Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Accordingly the Government of India issued a Press Note on the 28th December, 1949. On the 1st January, 1950 Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Premier of West Bengal, formally announced the merger of Cooch Behar with West Bengal at a public meeting held in Cooch Behar town.³⁷ The people of Cooch Behar as a whole acquiesced to Cooch Behar's merger with West Bengal which was perhaps a logical conclusion of history.

The constitutional and administrative set up of the Cooch Behar State as laid down by Maharaja Nripendranarayan was practically followed by the next two rulers, Raj Rajendranarayan (1911-1913 A.D.) and Jitendranarayan (1913-1922 A.D.). The king was generally assisted in dealing with the State affairs by two nominated bodies, i.e., the State Executive Council and the State Legislative Council. However, the reign of Jagaddipendranarayan (1922 - 1949), the last ruler of the State, witnessed some significant changes in the constitution and function of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council as a result of which a dyarchical form of Government was established in the State. A momentous step was taken in 1939 when a new full Member known as Fourth Member of the State Executive Council took office in March 1939 and assumed the charge of various departments like Education, Agriculture, Industries etc. He had been elected by the non-official members of the Legislative Council and was responsible to, and dependent on the confidence on those members in respect of those transferred subjects.³⁸ A scheme of direct election which provided adequate representation of all classes of interests amongst the people of the State was introduced in 1942. On the other hand, the constitution of the Executive Council underwent a change with the appointment of the Dewan Bahadur R. S. Naidu as Chief Minister of the State in August, 1940. With this appointment the designation of the three Members of the Council was changed into Ministers. It has been pointed out in an official gazette of the State that like H.M. the King Emperor, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar 'did not in practice exercise his sovereign power in administrative matters without first consulting the members of his Council. In other words, the Maharaja was a constitutional monarch.'³⁹ As regards the judicial system of the State, the constitution of the High Court, dissociated from any executive control, was materialised in June 1941 when Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan established a High Court of judicature for the whole of Cooch Behar. The subordinate civil and criminal courts of the State were organised as a whole on the same lines as the corresponding courts in the neighbouring British districts and they administered practically the same code of law and procedure in the Cooch Behar State.

As regards the local self-government, the Cooch Behar Town Committee Act of 1885 was extended to the Sub-divisional Towns of Dinhata and Mathabhanga and to the Bundar at Haldibari (1897). This Act which governed the conduct of all municipalities of the State was amended on the lines of the Bengal Municipality Act of 1932 and was also extended to Mekligang (1932) and Tufangang (1939), thus making a total of 6 municipalities in the State. The percentage of urban population to total population in the state was only 4.18 in the year 1941 and compared with other parts of Bengal, Cooch Behar state was very rural in character.⁴⁰ As regards the rural administration of the State, a village choukidary system on the pattern prevailing in the neighbouring districts of Rangpur and Jalpaiguri was introduced in the State and the Cooch Behar Village Choukidary Act of 1893 was passed to place the villages under a regular contribution and also to provide for Choukidary Unions and for one Panchayet in each Union to be a collecting Panchayet. During the period of the Regency Council, steps were taken to introduce a system of payment to the Choukidars of their salaries at the Thanas once a quarter. The State also felt the necessity for reforming the Choukidary

system prevailing in the State and passed the Cooch Behar Village Choukidary Amended Act in 1941. As regards the duties of the Panchayets, they were now similar to what were in force in Bengal. However, it should be mentioned that the development of the representative institutions in the Princely States as a whole did not approximate to the growth of self-governing institutions in the British Indian Provinces during the period of our study⁴¹.

Cooch Behar being purely an agricultural State, the largest number of its people were agriculturists and lived in villages. All other occupations or professions were pursued in addition and were supplementary to agriculture. According to the Census Report of 1921, of the total population of the State 88.7 per cent were supported by agriculture, 2.6 per cent by industries, 4.4 per cent by commerce, 0.1 per cent by professions and 3.3 per cent by other occupations. The methods as well as implements of cultivation were old and primitive. The abundant and generally seasonal rainfall enabled the cultivators to cultivate their lands without irrigation. Paddy, jute, tobacco and mustard were the principal crops of the State while jute and tobacco were paying crops. But there had been considerable fall in the prices of all agricultural crops owing to the economic depression and the economic condition of the people was not good. Consequently, many jotes became khas due to non-payment of the revenue and many cultivators turned into landless cultivators due to non-payment of rent. In order to improve the agriculture and to cope with the economic depression, the State Government opened an Agricultural Department and initiated various welfare measures. Nevertheless, the yield rates of the major crops of the State such as paddy, jute and tobacco were not noticeably high for the period 1871-72 to 1949-50. Rather, the yield rates of paddy and jute declined in the stated period. A large number of landless cultivators or agricultural labourers emerged in Cooch Behar State as a result of large eviction of cultivators or adhiars during 1930s and 1940s.⁴² This was an important factor that paved the way of the peasant as well as adhiar movement in some pockets of the State and this was the manifestation of the prevailing social tensions arising out of the oppressive jotedary system.

Cooch Behar State did not occupy a prominent position in the sphere of industry, trade and commerce. Before long the people of Cooch Behar was self-contained as regards their cloth and other simple necessities of life. The people used to wear home made cloth in Cooch Behar as in other parts of India. For instance, cotton cloth called phota and very fine mekhli woven from the thread of jute were manufactured by handloom in almost every village home, besides fine endi woven out of thread of wild silk for family use and sale. The import of mill-made cloth had however served to practically extinguish this important native industry. Similarly, there were cottage ghanis in almost every important villages of the State. By unequal competition of the mill oil, this cottage ghanis had been compelled to cease their works.⁴³ Want of necessary finance and organisation, import of mill-made products such as cloth, oil etc. and want of market were some of the many causes of the decay of the cottage industries in the State. Despite the State Government's efforts such as the establishment of the Department of Industries, the industrial advancement or revival of cottage industries had not been materialised and the State remained backward in industry as well.

On the other hand, nearly all the trade and commerce of the State was in the hands of foreigners and most of them were Marwari traders or the up-country shop-keepers. The local people had got no interest or enterprise in any commercial activity and they had lost practically all hold on the trade and industry of the State. The opening of railways into the State did much to develop the resources of the State and greatly facilitated the disposal of the produce of all kinds.⁴⁴ The trade of Cooch Behar consisted mainly of the export of agricultural products and the import of manufactured goods and other necessities of life. Consecutive three historical events badly affected the economy of the State. First, the outbreak of the First World War (1914-18) had caused dislocation and disrupted economic life of the State. Secondly, the trade and commerce was also seriously were affected by the world-wide economic depression of 1930s. Thirdly, the State passed through a distinct economic crisis as a result of the Second World War (1939-45). After the declaration of war by Japan, there had been a deadlock in trade and commerce especially in Bengal and Cooch Behar. As regards the economic scenario of the State, the Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce observed in 1942 that 'as the purchasing power of the people was very limited and as there was nothing like Tea plantations and other concerns providing employment to a large number of men and requiring supplies of various materials, the trade and commerce in the State was not expanding and was not in a flourishing condition.'⁴⁵ In this context, the role of the colonial policy should also be brought into focus. Because the British policy bound India's economy to the heels of the British economy and the process of de-industrialisation commenced and gradually India was converted into a centre for the supply of raw materials for the British industries and a market for the import of British manufactured products. As a consequence, India ceased to be a manufacturing country and agriculture became the only source of nation's subsistence.⁴⁶ As a part of India, Cooch Behar could not escape this disastrous impact of the colonial economy.

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Appendix A

Political and Constitutional Developments in India vis-a-vis the Role of the Regency Council (1923 - 1936)

The political and constitutional developments in India during the Regency period form a grand and important theme. These happenings played a vital role not only in shaping the destinies of the British-administered Provinces but also in determining the fate of the Indian States including Cooch Behar. According to Prof. Copland's opinion that at the end of the First World War, The Indian rulers were at the peak of their power safe under the military umbrella of a British Raj, venerated by an overwhelming majority of their subjects, and admired even by many nationalists. The 'darbars' came more and more to dominate His Majesty's Government's strategic thinking about the subcontinent.¹ Therefore it will not be out of context now to give a brief discussion of what happened in British India in general and Princely India in particular.

In 1923, following the suspension of the Non Co-operation Movement and the arrest of Gandhiji, a group of Congressmen led by Chittaranjan Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru formed within the Congress the Swarajist Party with a view to wrecking the legislatures, both Central and Provincial, from within. This party won considerable success in the general elections of that year. In the Central Legislative Assembly the Swarajists put forward a demand for the immediate grant of Dominion Status.²

In the course of debate in that assembly Sir Malcolm Hailey, the Home Minister, asked the Swarajists whether they proposed to extend Dominion Status to the Indian States and whether the States were agreeable to it. Pandit Motilal Nehru replied that they were most welcome to share that status with British India but there should be no compulsion.³ The Swarajists leader's announcement was in consonance with the Congress policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of the states as laid down in the Nagpur session of December, 1920. In January 1925, Gandhiji declared that 'just as the National Congress cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian states and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffectual as to the relations between the Indian States and their subjects.' The Congress did not want to wage a fight on two fronts. Besides, it had no organisation worth mentioning in the States.⁴

Lord Irwin who was appointed as Viceroy in April, 1926, felt that the political situation in the country demanded some gesture on the part of Great Britain. His Majesty's Government accepted his view and in March, 1927 they announced their decision to appoint an Indian Statutory Commission to enquire into the working of the Government of India Act of 1919 and to make recommendations regarding further constitutional progress of India. The members of the Commission and its terms of reference were announced in November, 1927. The Commission was popularly known as the Simon Commission after its chairman Sir John Simon.⁵

In the meantime, certain published correspondence which had passed between the Viceroy Lord Reading and the Nizam Mir Usman Ali Khan of Hyderabad relating to Berar, created serious doubts in the minds of the rulers about their real position in relation to the British paramount power. As for example, Lord Reading, in his letter to the Nizam dated 27th March, 1926, clearly repudiated the Princes' claim that they could "negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing." He also contended that the right to intervene in the internal affairs of the States was inherent in the Paramountry of the British Crown and could be exercised solely at its discretion.⁶ In November, 1926 the Maharaja of Patiala made a statement on behalf of the rulers that they had 'perused with deep concern certain phrases employed and doctrines enunciated in that correspondence. The Princes accordingly requested the Viceroy at a conference at Simla in May, 1927 to appoint an expert body to give its considered opinion on the issue.⁷ Like Irwin, the British Government found it hard to refuse the request of their loyal allies. They conceded that something needed to be done, 'merely for the sake of the Princes' peace of mind.'⁸ Accordingly, the Secretary of the State for India, Lord Birkenhead, on December 26th, 1927 appointed an Indian States Enquiries Committee of three members headed by Sir Harcourt Butler, 'to report on the relationship between the paramount power and the Indian States' and 'to inquire into the financial and economic relations between British India and the States and to make any recommendations for their more satisfactory adjustment.' The other two members of the Committee were Hon'ble Sidney Peel and Prof. W.S. Holdsworth. The Committee did not include any member of the Indian States or any one representing British Indian people or any representative of the people of the States.¹⁰

The constitution of the Indian States Committee commonly known as the Butler Committee after its chairman Sir Harcourt Butler created a positive impression among the rulers of the Princely States since Sir Harcourt Butler was very much familiar to most of the major Princely States both as a compassionate friend and as an experienced professional with a long successful career in British India. Sir Butler was a retired Governor of the United Provinces while he was invited to head this Committee. In fact majority of the members of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes received the nomination of Butler Committee with jubilation. Since Maharaja Jey Singh of Jaipur had welcome such nomination, H.H. Indira Devi, the Regent of the Cooch Behar State had sent message welcoming the formation of such Committee and the nomination of Butler as its head.¹¹

It may be noted here that after the establishment of the Chamber of Princes in 1921 representing the Indian rulers,¹² the need for an all-India organisation representing the States' people had been felt. The need for such organisation assumed considerable urgency following the announcement of the Butler Committee's appointment in 1927. Thanks to the untiring efforts of persons like Professor G. R. Abhyankar, N. C. Kelkar, Balwantray Mehta and Manilal Kothari, the All-India States' People's Conference (AISPC) was founded in Bombay on the 7th December, 1927. The Conference, attended by more than 700 delegates hailing from different states and provinces, declared that the aim and objective of the AISPC was to influence the Governments of the States as a whole "to initiate the necessary reforms in the

administration by the force of collective opinion of the people of the States."¹³ The Conference at this session called for a federal arrangement between the two parts of India, an amalgamation of smaller states into politically and economically viable units, political reforms such as an independent judiciary and responsible government within the States, and various social and educational reforms.¹⁴

Sir Harcourt Butler and his two colleagues came to India in January, 1928 and visited sixteen of the States. The proceedings of the Committee were held in camera. The purpose of the Committee was objective and specific. It did not consult the representatives of the States' people on the plea that it was outside their terms of reference.¹⁵ The procedure adopted by the Committee had caused considerable disappointment to the people of the States. The AISPC held that the terms of reference of the Butler Committee were narrow and were not sufficiently explicit. The Conference protested against the view of the Committee excluding public bodies and private individuals from this inquiry under the terms of reference and stated that as the terms of inquiry included the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States and as the States included both Princes and people of these States, the people of the Indian States had every right to state their views in so far as they were relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee.¹⁶ Although the Committee refused to give an oral hearing but it received memorandum from the AISPC. This memorandum recorded that the AISPC passed a resolution to the effect "that for a speedy attainment of Swarajya for India as a whole, the states should be brought into constitutional relations with British India, and that the people of the States should be assigned a definite place and an effective voice, in all matters of common concern, in any new constitution that may be devised for the whole of India." Memorandum stated that the question of the future relations of British India and the states can only be solved properly in the manner suggested in the resolution referred to above. In spite of these efforts of the AISPC, not much attention was paid to its proposals in official circles. In fact, the Butler Committee presented no proposals at all for the political advancement of the States' people.

The bulk of the Committee's work in hearing the case for the rulers was done in England. The rulers had engaged distinguished British lawyers headed by Sir Leslie Scott to argue their case and put forward their claims based on treaty rights. As a matter of fact, the most important among the memoranda submitted to the Butler Committee was the Joint Opinion prepared by Sir Leslie Scott and four other constitutional lawyers of the U. K. on behalf of the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes. Apart from this, Sir Leslie Scott prepared five massive volumes listing cases of encroachment on the rights of the states during the past 75 years. He also gave oral evidence on behalf the Princes in England.¹⁷

The Butler Committee submitted its report on 4th February, 1929 and it was presented to the British Parliament on 16th April, 1929.¹⁸ On the question of Paramountcy, the Committee disagreed with the views of Sir Leslie Scott that the powers of Paramountcy were defined by what was said in the treaties. The Committee refused

to define paramountcy but asserted that "Paramountcy must remain paramount; it must fulfil its obligations defining or adopting itself according to the shifting necessities of the time and the progressive development of the States." On the issue of the sovereignty of the States, the Committee held that "it is not in accordance with the historical fact when the Indian States came into contact with the British power they were independent, each possessed of the full sovereignty... nearly all of them [States] were subordinate or tributary to the Moghul Empire, the Maratha supremacy or the Sikh Kingdom and dependent on them. Some were rescued, others were created, by the British."¹⁹

However, the Committee endorsed Sir Leslie Scott's assertion that the State's relations were with the Crown, not with the Government of India, and therefore the rulers should not be transferred without their consent to "a new Government in British India responsible to an Indian legislature." The Committee rejected the federal scheme stating that it was at the premature stage. It recorded that the Viceroy, not the Governor-General in Council, should be the Agent of the Crown in all dealings with the States. The Committee also recommended that "important matters of dispute between the States themselves, between the States and the Paramount Power and between the States and British India should be referred to independent bodies for advice."²⁰ With regard to financial and economic relations between British India and the States, the Committee merely expressed some pious platitudes and broke no new grounds.²¹ It recommended for the appointment of an expert body to settle the financial questions between the Imperial Government and the States.²²

The findings of the Butler Committee came as a nasty shock to the Indian rulers. The reaction of the Princes to the Butler report was expressed at the General Conference of the Chamber held in June, 1929 at Bombay, and later at the formal session of the Chamber in February, 1930.²³ Although the rulers were relieved thinking that status quo was to be maintained and there was to be no immediate danger to their position, but they were disappointed since their main hope of being freed from unfettered discretion of the Political Department to intervene in their internal affairs remained unfulfilled.²⁴ They also argued that the Committee's assertion of the irrevocability of treaties between the British Government and Indian states, and its concept of Paramountcy were a contradiction in terms. According to them, while the one recognised the equal status of both the parties, the other implied a relationship between that of a master and a subordinate.^{24*} The Princes now felt that inquiry conducted by the Butler Committee had been a Pandora's box instead of a solution to longstanding problems. 'It seemed to render them more vulnerable than ever before to interference by the Government and opened new fronts for attack by the emerging states' subjects' groups.'^{24**} It has also been pointed out that the Butler Committee consolidated the position of the Indian States as the pillars and props of the British empire, while further eroding their status vis-a-vis the paramount power.²⁵ Therefore, the Indian princes went on raising issues about them.

Nationalist leadership viewed the recommendations of the Butler Committee with grave apprehension. The

Nehru Committee which had been appointed by the All parties' Conference in 1928 to frame a Dominion Constitution for India, declared that 'an attempt is being made to convert the Indian States into an Indian 'Ulster' by pressing constitutional theories into service.' It uttered the warning that 'it is inconceivable that the people of the States who are fired by the same ambitions and aspirations as the people of British India will quietly submit to existing conditions forever or that the people of British India bound by the closest ties of family, race and religion to their brethren on the other side of an imaginary line will never make common cause with them. The Nehru Committee also endorsed the idea of an all-India federation. This Committee, besides inviting the States to join such a federation, assured the States that their privileges and prerogatives would be fully protected.²⁶ The Nehru Committee proposed that the whole issue should have been discussed at a round table conference consisting of the representatives of the British Government, the rulers, their subjects and the people of British India.²⁷ However, the Princes viewed the Nehru Report as a premeditated attack on their constitutional position since it denied their privileged relationship with the Crown.^{27*}

In the meantime, the Indian Statutory Commission popularly known as the Simon Commission was carrying on its enquiry. Sir John Simon, who visited India twice with his colleagues, once in February, 1928 and again from October 11, 1928 to April 13, 1929 was encountered with hostile demonstrations all over the country.²⁸ All the leading Indian political parties had decided to boycott the Commission since not a single Indian had been included in it. The Central Legislature Assembly refused to appoint a committee to assist it.²⁹

At this stage, the Viceroy Lord Irwin realised that only a bold initiative would prevent Congress from its intention, outlined at its Calcutta session of December, 1928, to launch a campaign of civil disobedience if India was not granted 'Dominion Status' within the year.³⁰ He left for England in June, 1929 to confer with the British Government. A Labour Government had already come into power in Britain in May, 1929 with Ramsay Macdonald as Prime Minister. After consultations with the new ministry, Lord Irwin, on his return, announced on October 31, 1929 that 'he had been authorised on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that in their judgement it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.³¹ He also announced that a Round Table Conference would be held as soon as the Simon Commission submitted its report.³²

The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes greeted the Viceroy's announcement which gave them the chance of another hearing at the highest political level on their claims of autonomy.³³ In its session of February, 1930 the Chamber of Princes formally approved of the idea of a tripartite conference, comprising the representatives of the States, British India and His Majesty's Government.^{33*} For the first time the princes were invited to participate with British Indian leaders in discussion on future constitutional reforms of India. To ensure their co-operation, the British Government denied the request of States' people for representation.³⁴

The Simon Commission submitted its report in May, 1930. The Commission agreed with the recommendation of the Butler Committee that the exercises of paramountcy should be in the hands of Viceroy as distinguished from Governor-General.³⁵ The Commission asserted that although the British-governed Provinces and the areas controlled by the Princes were called 'two Indias', 'it would be more true to say that there is really only one India.'³⁶ It recommended for a serious effort to draw up a list of those matters of common concern between British India and the States, and suggested the setting up of a standing consultative body consisting of representatives from both British India and the States, to be called the Council of Greater India, with powers of discussions on 'matter of common concern.' The Council was to be a beginning which might one day lead to Indian federation. However, the Simon Commission's recommendations utterly failed to evoke enthusiasm in Indian political circles.³⁷

As already noted, the Congress, at its session of December, 1928, announced its intension to start a campaign of Civil Disobedience if India was not granted with Dominion Status by the end of 1929. In December, 1929 The Viceroy Lord Irwin himself told Gandhiji that he was not in a position to comply the Congress demands. Thus the stage of confrontation became inevitable.³⁸ At Lahore session of December 1929 the Congress decided to withdraw from the constitutional process and start a campaign of Civil Disobedience against the Raj to force it to concede 'Purna Swaraj' or complete independence.³⁹ In April, 1930, the Congress, under the leadership of Gandhiji, had launched a mass movement of civil disobedience through the initiation of the Salt Satyagraha. The Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-31 marked an important stage in the progress of the anti-imperialist struggle.⁴⁰

The Congress also decided at the Calcutta Congress (1928) that it would extend sympathy and support to democratic movements within the states, implying thereby that the Congress by itself would not initiate or organise any movement within the states.⁴¹ In 1929, Jawaharlal Nehru in his presidential address to the Lahore Congress declared that 'the Indian States cannot live apart from the rest of India...the only people who have a right to determine the future of the States must be the people of the States.'⁴² In fact, Gandhiji argued that there were few people in the Indian States who were fully prepared to do Satyagraha.⁴³ He adduced another reason for the Congress policy; 'agitations against princely rulers would result in support being given to them by the Government of India, thus strengthening their rule, whereas the establishment of a national government would automatically result in a qualitative transformation in the character of the rulers.'⁴⁴ Gandhiji explicitly declared that Swaraj as conceived by him did not mean the end of kingship.⁴⁵

At this stage, the anti-imperialist element dominated in the Indian national movement to the virtual exclusion of the anti-feudal element. This was amply demonstrated in the tactics actually adopted during the civil disobedience movement. For instance, Vallabh Bhai Patel declared that the States' people should not participate in any aspect of civil disobedience excepting boycott of foreign cloth and liquor.⁴⁶

Despite the reluctance of the Congress to initiate a campaign, the events in the British India inevitably sparked off small fires of popular protests in the princely India. In almost all the States, the people's movement began to grow and gather momentum, though not on the same intense scale as in British India. These movements took various forms-picketing of foreign cloth shops, liquor shops and of schools and college and even in few cases holding of no-tax campaign. Most state governments adopted repressive measures to put down these popular movements. Even some of the rulers like the Maharaja of Kapurthala offered material help to the government of India to counteract the movement in British India, on the plea that the movement in British India,⁴⁷ was also affecting the people in the Indian States. The civil disobedience movement penetrated into the Cooch Behar State as well. The State Government introduced the repressive measures to check the growth of the movement. The 'Deportation Law of the State acted as an effective tool in the hands of the State Government providing for banishment of any person from the State engaged in anti-Government activities.⁴⁸ Ramnath Biswas, the globe Trotter, while visiting Cooch Behar in 1934, said in his accounts that the subjects of the Cooch Behar State lived amidst great fear of Governmental coercion.⁴⁹

However, the movement in the Indian States was only a muted echo of what was happening in British India and that was partly because the leaders of the newly emerging political organisation in the States were also active members of the Congress. The people's democratic movements of the States which arose spontaneously from the internal dynamics of the Princely India's politics lay yet in the future.⁵⁰

It was against the background of an India seething with discontent that the Round Table Conference was held in London. It may be noted here that just before the holding of the Round Table Conference an informal meeting of the Princes in Delhi in March, 1930 decided that all the ruling Princes should be requested to contribute at the rate of ½ percent of their gross revenue for two years towards the expenses involved, in preparation of the Princes' case to be presented at the Round Table Conference. In this connection, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes appealed to the Maharani Indira Devi, Regent, the Council of Regency of the Cooch Behar State, to make a generous contribution and to stand by the Princes' order.⁵¹ The Chancellor further informed the Maharani Regent that the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes mentioned to the Viceroy the desirability of minority states like Cooch Behar contributing towards the common fund of the Chamber of the Princes. In this context, The Government of India replied that 'in view of the special circumstances of the present year the Government of India have no objection to the Chancellor approaching minority administrations for reasonable subscriptions.'⁵²

The formal opening of the First Round Table Conference by the British King took place in London on the 12th November, 1930. Sixteen delegates of the three British political parties, fifty-seven political leaders from British India and sixteen delegates from the States participated in the Conference and the Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald presided. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, one of the leading delegates from British India to this Conference, declared himself

for a federal system of government at the Centre and invited the rulers to agree to the creation of an all-India federation with the object of starting the process of national unification. The Muslim League represented by Sir Muhammad Shafi and M.A. Jinnah also welcomed the federal scheme. The Maharaja of Bikaner Ganga Singh and the Nawab of Bhopal, Hamidullah Khan asserted that the rulers would support the scheme of an all-India federation provided their rights were guaranteed. The impact of the civil disobedience movement in the States, the impression of some leading rulers of the Chamber of Princes that their States would derive financial benefits by joining the federation and a Labour Government in power in Britain were some important factors which prompted this response from the rulers.⁵³ To many of the princes federation seemed to be a device which would reduce the power of the Political Department in States which were federal Units and consequently were enjoying direct access to the Central executive and legislative.⁵⁴ However, another group of rulers led by the Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh, regarded a confederation of States as a necessary preliminary to any association with British India. Particularly the smaller states supported this scheme in the hope that it would help them avoid federal control in their internal affairs.⁵⁵

A Federal Structure Committee was appointed by the First Round Table Conference with Lord Sankey, the Lord Chancellor, as Chairman and representatives both from the States and British India. This Committee, which was attended by Mahatma Gandhi as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress, met on 7th September, 1931, prior to the Second Round Table Conference. It advocated for an all-India federation consisting of the Indian States and the British-administered Provinces and also certain agreed safeguards for a transitional period. The bi-cameral federal legislature would include the members from British India and representatives from the States nominated by the rulers. The Sankey report also stated that there would be only limited responsibility at the Centre for the transitional period. Besides, The Conference appointed the Minorities Committee chaired by Ramsay MacDonald. For the future of a united India, this Committee could only agree that the rights of minorities should be protected.⁵⁶

At the First Round Table Conference it was strongly felt that a constitutional discussion to which the Congress was not a party was a meaningless exercise. Soon after the adjournment of the First Round Table Conference an olive branch from the part of the Government of India to the Congress became imperative. The Viceroy Lord Irwin ordered an unconditional release of Gandhiji and all other members of the Congress Working Committee. Ultimately an understanding was reached between the Congress and the Government. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact as it was called was signed on the 5th March, 1931 which was described as a truce or provisional settlement. By this pact the Government agreed to release all the political prisoners and to concede the right to make salt along the coast for consumption. The Congress agreed to discontinue the Civil Disobedience Movement and to participate in the next Round Table Conference.⁵⁷

The Second Round Table Conference began on the 7th September, 1931 and lasted till the 1st December,

1931.⁵⁸ This session included, besides Gandhiji, new comers like Pandit Madan Mohan Malavia, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Muhammad Iqbal. Most of the leading personalities of the first session were back in their places and the British delegates were mostly the same as before. In October 1931 a general election took place in Britain and the Labour Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald headed a conservative-dominated Cabinet with the reactionary Samuel Hoare as the Secretary of State for India.⁵⁹

The Second Conference was dominated by Gandhiji who was not opposed to the federal scheme. He insisted that the full responsible Government at the Centre must be established at once. The British Government did not accept Gandhiji's demand. Moreover, this session was overshadowed by the communal problem. In spite of his sincere effort, Gandhiji failed to secure an agreed solution towards the communal problem.⁶⁰ Gandhiji returned to India empty handed and the Congress resumed the Civil Disobedience Movement.⁶¹

There were divisions among the rulers too, with regard to representation of the states in the federal legislature and the financial liabilities of the federating states. As regards representation, the major states like Hyderabad, Mysore and Baroda demanded representation in proportion to their importance and population. The Maharaja of Bikaner favoured an upper house of the federal legislature of 250, with 50 percent representation for the states, so that all the members of the Chamber of Princes might have a seat. The Maharaja of Patiala continued to advocate for a confederation of the States as a first step towards federation. As regards finance, The Federal Structure Sub-Committee's report frustrated any hope of the rulers that they could gain any financial profit by joining the federation. The apprehensions that the states might have to contribute more towards all-India expenditure, that federal agencies might function in the States and the federal Supreme Court might extend its jurisdiction over the States' people disillusioned the rulers. At the same time, many of the princes started bargaining with the Viceroy, putting forward extravagant demands in return for their entry into the federation. In fact, the rulers began turning their backs on federation.⁶²

The third and last Round Table Conference began on the 7th November, 1932 and continued upto the 24th December, 1932 with only forty six delegates attending.⁶³ None of the important Indian rulers were present there, the opposition British Labour party refused to participate. The absence of the Congress was the serious gap at the Conference, for the Congress had in the meantime, embarked on another campaign of civil disobedience. The composition of the Federal legislature was the important question which was discussed at this Conference. The form of states' instrument of accession to the federation was also considered. Anxiety was expressed by the British Indian delegates at the delay in deciding the terms on which the States would join the federation. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru observed a marked coolness on the part of the princes towards federation and asked them whether they were still interested in coming in if their rights were protected. Sir Akbar Hydari, representative of Hyderabad, assured him on behalf of the rulers that, despite great difficulties, they would join an all-Indian Federation. However, this Conference

gave the unmistakable impression that the enthusiasm of 1930 had waned and that the rulers were now marking time.⁶⁴

Like the Butler Committee, the organisers of the First Round Table Conference in London did not consider it necessary to consult the States' people's representatives. But some British Indian delegates who went there to attend the Conference, such as C. Y. Chintamani, V.S. Srinivasa.⁶⁵ Rama Chandra Rao and N. C. Kelkar were sympathetic to States' people's groups. Rama Chandra Rao and N. C. Kelkar argued the case of 'submerged humanity' of the Indian States during the deliberations. A well documented memorandum was presented by the AISPC to the Congress in March 1931, hoping that it might represent the States' people's view before the Second Round Table Conference. The Memorandum maintained that a standard of government in the States should be on a par with that prevailing in British India. The memorandum conceded that federation was the most suitable device for bringing British-administered Provinces and Indian States together. It also demanded that the federal legislature and executive should have only the elected representatives from the States, not the Princes' nominees. Gandhiji who attended the Second Round Table Conference in London in 1931 advised the Princes to become the trustees of their people and to grant fundamental rights to them. At the same time he reiterated his view that the Congress should not interfere in the internal affairs of the states and leave their reformation to the voluntary will of the rulers.⁶⁶

While the Third Round Table Conference further elaborated the structure of a Federal Government of India, it failed to bring federation closer to reality.⁶⁷ This Conference could not settle the size of the federal chamber; the proportion and the allocation of States' representation and the allocation of States' seats. Therefore, the Viceroy was requested by the Secretary of State to bring about an agreement on these matters and to give adequate explanation of the federal scheme to individual rulers. The Viceroy, besides consulting some leading rulers and leaders of non-Congress parties, convened a Conference of Political Officers in Delhi on the 7th March, 1933. These Officers who were briefed on the proposed constitutional changes, were to explain the implications and the advantages of an all-india federation to individual rulers and to ascertain their views. The Chamber of Princes met about the same time and asked for a number of safeguards as a precondition for their joining the federation. They demanded that their treaty rights should be protected; that there should be no interference in their internal affairs and that a provision should be made for the States joining the federation collectively through a confederation.⁶⁸

The British Government now published their scheme for an Indian constitution as a White Paper on the 19th March, 1933,⁶⁹ in the light of the three Round Table Conferences and subsequent negotiations. In April, 1933 a Joint Committee of both houses of Parliament was formed under the Chairmanship of Lord Linlithgow, who was later to succeed Lord Willingdown as Viceroy, to examine the provisions of this constitution. The Committee was authorised to consult delegates from British India and the States. The Congress was still in the wilderness and did not participate

in these discussions. In October, 1934 the Joint Committee submitted its report which endorsed most recommendations of the White Paper. The Government of India Bill based on the Joint Committee's report was introduced in the Parliament in December 1934.⁷⁰

The Government of India Bill did not evoke enthusiasm of the Princes. The Chamber of Princes appointed a Committee of fifteen States' Ministers with Sir Akbar Hydari as Chairman to examine the Government of India Bill. The Committee noted that 'in some important respects the Bill departs from the agreed position arrived at during the meetings of the States representatives with His Majesty's Government.' It suggested a number of amendments and alterations without which it would not be possible for them to recommend to the rulers the acceptance of the proposed Bill. Another Conference of Rulers and States' Ministers was held in Bombay on 25th February, 1935, when it was resolved that 'the Bill and the Instrument of Accession do not secure those vital interests and fundamental requisites of the States on which they have throughout laid great emphasis.' The resolution further stated that 'in their present form and without satisfactory modifications of, and alteration to, the fundamental points the Bill and the Instrument of Accession cannot be regarded as acceptable to the Indian States.' The rulers of Patiala and Bikaner presented a note to the Viceroy detailing certain amendments. The Secretary of State gave careful consideration of the views of the princes and circulated a memorandum examining the specific points raised.⁷¹

The debate on the Government of India Bill lasted for forty-three days in the House of Commons and for thirteen days in the House of Lords. Its passage was resisted by diehard Conservatives like Winston Churchill in the House of Commons and Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords,⁷² who were against any changes at the Centre and ready to scuttle the India Bill. Despite this opposition, the Government of India Bill passed into law with a handsome majority in the House of Commons on the 4th June, 1935. It received the royal assent on the second August 1935.⁷³ The Government of India Act of 1935 provided for an all-India federation consisting of the Indian States and British India. The federal Legislature was to be bicameral, i.e., The Council of States, the upper chamber and the Federal Assembly, the lower chamber. A special feature of the Act was that whereas the accession of the Provinces to the federation was to be automatic, the States' accession was to be voluntary. A State was considered to have acceded when its ruler executed an Instrument of Accession and after it was accepted by His Majesty.⁷⁴ Under the terms of the Act, the federal part of the new constitution could not be inaugurated until the rulers of the States representing not less than half the total population of princely India and entitled to not less than half the numbers of seats to be given to the States in the federal upper chamber signed the Instrument of Accession.⁷⁵ The relationship of the Rulers with the Paramount Power was safeguarded by creating a Crown Representative in addition to the Governor-General. In the conduct of their affairs as members of the federation, the States were to deal with the Governor-General as head of the Federal Government but in their relations with the Paramount Power, they were to deal with the Crown Representative. The Act permitted the same individual to hold both offices and actually the same person was so appointed with the

style and title of 'Viceroy', but he had different secretarial and other agencies for his dual functions. The Government of India Act of 1935 excepting the federal part, came into force on the 1st April, 1937. From that date, the functions of the Crown in its relations with the States, were entrusted to the Crown Representative and these functions included negotiations with the rulers for their accession to the federation.⁷⁶

The British Government was, thus, able to provide a federal constitution for India States and British India. In fact, the Government of India Act, for the first time in India's constitutional history, opened the way for the States to be brought into the federal structure. But there were conflicting interests as regards the concepts of federations as envisaged by the Indian Princes, British Indian politicians and British bureaucrats. Both British India and the Princes professed belief in an all-India federation. But, while British Indian Politicians desired a strong democratic Centre with responsible government in the federating units, the Princes envisaged a federal union guaranteeing to them full protection to their authority and rights from the growing encroachments of British Paramountcy and the possible interference of democratic forces within their States. Again, 'both the Princes and the British bureaucrats were interested in counter-balancing nationalist forces in the new constitutional set up. However, while the Indian Princes wanted the scope of the Paramountcy of the Crown to be clearly defined within the framework of treaty rights and obligations, the British bureaucrats upheld the doctrine of the unquestioned supremacy of the Paramount Power.'⁷⁷

It has been pointed out that the Indian States were given a decisive role to check the nationalists in the federal legislature. They were given 104 out of 260 seats in the Council of State and 125 out of 375 seats in the Federal Assembly. These were 40 percent and 33 percent respectively. The Muslims had 49 seats in the Council and 82 seats in the Federal Assembly. In combination, these two elements enjoyed a majority in both the Houses; a union among them would frustrate the nationalists in carrying out any policy which was opposed by both these elements. Lord Irwin's policy that he would manage India with the help of these elements, was being fulfilled.⁷⁸ Ian Copland held the same view that the British attempts in 1930s to rope the Indian States into an all-India federation were intended to act as a counter-point to the electoral power of the Indian National Congress. As allies and clients of the British, the Princes were the significant players in that frantic contest between the 'old' world of the States and the 'new' nationalist world of Provinces which historians have called the end game of the empire⁷⁹

However, the Princes were the Principal party in preventing the establishment of an all-India Federation. After an initial attraction to federation, the Princes who would have gained positive guarantees so generously extended to them under such a scheme, ultimately came to reject it. There had been much talk about the need for joint co-operation with British India even before the Round Table Conferences, but there was no disciplined thinking among the Princes about what would be demanded of them in any co-operative arrangement. The closer relations with the British India were seen by the Princes as a one-way street bringing benefits to them and asking nothing in return. After the

blow to their illusions by the Butler Committee's Report, many Princes were ready to negotiate a pact with any party to reduce the British interference in their affairs. Most of the Princes in London who were agreeable to the federal scheme had little understanding of the demands likely to be made on federating units. Having accustomed to limited internal autonomy protected by the British treaty system for more than a century, the Princes found it difficult to establish themselves as viable political leaders on an all-India scene or to participate effectively in constitutional negotiations. They were handicapped by personal habits and institutional structure. Decades of arbitrary rules and extravagant deference shaped their responses, concern about their izzat, their long standing rivalries and personal ambitions disrupted unified reaction when they would have been most useful.⁸⁰

Therefore, the rulers were responsible for their utter failure to rise to the occasion. They must bear a large amount of share of responsibility for the collapse of the princely order.⁸¹ During the 1920s and 1930s growing numbers of politically aware Indians had come to criticise severely or to reject British policies in India. But the Princes were one of the few groups within the Empire who continued to identify their goals with those of the British. 'Their failure to evaluate the rising power of the Indian nationalists and the declining vigor of their British overlord tragically undermined the efforts of Indian princes to obtain security by acting as politicians on the all-India scene'.⁸² At the same time it is also true that the rulers were not the only ones responsible for this debacle. Because their British patron increasingly manipulated them for short term objectives and many British Indian politicians were not willing to share any further devolutions of power with them. 'Not realizing the limited political options open to them', Barbara N. Ramusack has pointed out, 'the Princes failed to maximize the limited advantages the Civil Disobedience Movement or the Round Table Conferences offered them.'⁸³

Notes and References :

1. Copland, Ian, the Princes of India in the End Game of Empire (1917 - 1947), Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.2.
2. Menon, V. P., the Story of the Integration of the Indian States, Orient Longmans, the 3rd Edition, 1961, p.20.
3. Kulkarni, V. B., Princely India and Lapses of British Paramountey, Jaico publishing House, Delhi, the Second Edition 1994, p.150.
4. Menon, V. P., op. cit, p.21.
5. Loc cit.
6. Phadnis, Urmila : Towards the Integration of Indian States, 1917 - 1947, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968, p.43. Confer also Kulkarni, V. B, op. cit, pp. 131-132. The Nizam, reviving his demand for the retrocession of Berar, wrote a letter to the Viceroy Lord Reading in September 1925 in which he asserted that "save and except matters relating to foreign powers and policies the Nizams of Hyderabad have been independent in the internal affairs of their State, just as much as the British Government in British India..., two governments that stand in the same plane without any limitation of subordination of one to the other". Replying to the Nizam's letter Lord Reading wrote a letter in March 1926 in which he made it clear that "The sovereignty of the British Crown is supreme in India and therefore no ruler of an Indian State can justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing. Its paramountcy is not based only upon them, and quite apart from its prerogatives in matters relating to foreign powers and policies, it is the right and duty of the British Government, while scrupulously respecting all treaties and engagements with the Indian States, to preserve peace and good order throughout India". Mankekar, D. R, op. cit, p.15.
7. Menon, V. P, op. cit, p.21.
8. Copland, Ian : op. cit, p.15.
9. Report of the Indian States Committees, 1928 - 29, pp.1,4. NAI. Sir Harcourt Butler was the Governor of Burma when he was invited to head this committee. Mr. Sydney Peel was an expert on financial and economic questions and Mr. W. S. Holdsworth was an eminent Professor of Law and Legal History - Chudgar, P. L : Indian Princes under British Protection, Sameer Prakashan, Chandigarh, First Indian Reprint, 1976, p.104.
10. Memorandum of the Indian States, 1928-29, p.4 (National Archives of India). Also see Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.44.
11. Foreign and Political Department, File No. 70, Part-VII, Serial No. 1/2, p.7, NAI. Copland Ian : op. cit, p.65.
12. Report of the Indian States' Committee, 1928-29, p.18, NAI.
13. Kulkarni, V. B : op. cit, pp. 156-157.
14. Indian States People's Conference, Report of the Bombay Session : 17, 18, December, 1927 (Bombay, 1928). Also See Memorandum of the Indian States People's Conference, 1928, pp. 14-15, NAI.
15. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.85. Confer also Menon, V. P : op. cit, pp.21-22.
16. Memorandum of the All India States' Peoples' Conference, 1928-29, pp.3-4, 23-24, NAI.
17. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, pp.45,89, Confer also Mankekar, D. R, op. cit., p.15 Accession to Extinction, the Story of Indian Princes, Vikash Publishing House PVT. Ltd., Delhi, 1974, p.15. The important States like Hyderabad, Mysore and Baroda declined to be represented by Sir Leslie Scott and preferred to present their own case in written replies to the the questionnaire. Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-29, p.3, NAI.
18. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.46.
19. Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-29 (National Archieves of India), pp.31,22.

20. *ibid*, pp. 55-56, 32,36. This laid the formation of a Policy whereby, in later years, a wedge, was to be effectively driven between the States and British India, Menon, V. P, *op. cit*, p.23.
21. Menon, V. P. : *op. cit*, pp. 23-24.
22. Report of the Indian States Committee, 1928-29, pp.45-46. Though Sir Scott's declaration that the Butler Committee's proceedings had been a farce sounds like the "whinge of a loser", there is some substance in the claim. The special organisation (a new full-time body created by the Chamber of Princes in February, 1928) was refused permission to consult records kept in the Political Department and Scott was denied to some confidential documents and was also refused leave to cross-examine witnesses. Besides, it has been pointed out that the Butler Committee was carefully primed by the Political Department to return a favourable report-Birkenhead to Iwrin, 15th December, 1927, Irwin Collections, 2, quoted in Ian Copland, *op. cit*, p.70.
23. Copland, Ian : *op. cit*, p.70. Also confer Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit*, p.49.
24. Menon, V. P. : *op. cit*. p.24.
- 24*. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit*, p.50.
- 24**. Ramusack, Barbara N : The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire : Dissolution of a Patron-Client System, 1914-1939, The Ohio State University Press, Columbus, 1978, 9. 151.
25. Mankekar, D. R. : *op. cit*, p.16.
26. The Nehru Committee on Indians states, in Indian Constitutional Documents, 1757-1939 edited by A. C. Banerjee, Vol. III, pp.321-322.
27. Indian Quarterly Register, 1928, Vol. I, p.40.
- 27*. Ramusack, Barbara N : *op. cit*, p. 191.
28. Kulkarni, V. B. : *op. cit*, p.122.
29. Menon, V. P. : *op. cit*, p.25.
30. Copland, Ian : *op. cit*, p.72.
31. Kulkarni, V. B. : *op. cit*, p.121. Also see Menon, V. P. : *op. cit*, p.26.
32. Copland, Ian, *co. cit.*, p.72.
33. *Loc. cit*.
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40. Chandra, Bipan; Mukherjee, Mridula and others, *op. cit*, pp.272,282.
41. Sudhir, P. : 'The Indian States and the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31', in Indian History Congress Proceedings, PPn 27th - 37th, sessions, Calicut, 1970, p.364.
42. Jawaharlal Nehru, Collected Writings, Vol. 4, pp.192-193.
43. Navajivan, 20 October, 1929, Collected Works, Vol. 42, pp.223-24.

44. Hindi Navajivan, 28 November, 1929, Collected Works, Vol. 42, pp.223-224.
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51. Letter No. 597 dated Chancellor Secretariat, Narendra Mandal, Solon, 18th June, 1930 from Secretary to Chancellor, Chamber of Princes to the Dewan, Cooch Behar. (Cooch Behar District Record Room).
52. Letter dated Regency Council, Cooch Behar 27th June, 1930 from the Dewan to the Maharani Sahiba of Cooch Behar, Woodlands, 8 Alipore Road, Calcutta. CBDRR
53. Menon, V. P. : op. cit, pp.27-28. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.57. Phadnis wrote that the work of First Round Conference (plenary session) began on 17th November, 1930, with an opening address by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. *ibid.*
54. Ramusack, Barbara N., 'The Civil Disobedience Movement and the Round Table Conferences. The Princes' Response', in Essays in Modern Indian History, edited by B. R. Nanda, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1980, p.128.
55. Menon, V. P. : op. cit, p.28. It should be stated that the Maharajas of Patiala and Dholpur met the Rulers of Panna and Jhalawar at Bombay on August 9, 1931 and evolved an agreed scheme which came to be known as Dholpur-Patiala Scheme. This scheme envisaged a federation constituted by British India and "Confederation of States", i.e. "the Indian States collectively", as federating units. The revised scheme accepted an all-India federation for "the purpose of specified matters of common interests only," and accepted the Confederation of States as a medium for their entering into all-India federation with British India. But while Dholpur-Patiala group favoured joining federation through confederation, another group of the Princes known as the Bikaner - Bhopal group favoured joining the federation directly. This was largely a reflection of the conflict between the interests of the smaller States and those of the bigger ones. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, pp.61, 63-64.
56. *ibid.*, p.29. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.64. Confer also Ramusack, Barbara N : The Princes of India in the Twilight of Empire, op. cit, p. 203.
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59. Menon, V. P. : op. cit, p.26.
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63. Kulkarni, V. B. : op. cit, p.125.
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65. Ramusack, Barbara N. : 'Congress and the People's Movement in Princely India : Ambivalence in Strategy and

Organisation', op. cit, p.386.

66. Kulkarni, V. B. : op. cit, pp.160-161; Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.91. In a correspondence with Mr. N. C. Kelkar, the President of the AISPC, Gandhiji maintained that the policy of non-interference in the States was both "wise and sound". The States under British Law, he pointed out, were independent entities and the Congress, therefore, could not interfere in their internal affairs,. Mahatmaji believed that, in any event, a movement started from without could not be successful and wanted the people of the States to stand on their own legs. As late as 1935, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution reiterating its policy of non-interference relating to the States. Gandhi, M. K. : Indian States' Problem, Ahmedabad, Navjivan Press, 1941, pp.64-65. Also confer Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, p.93.
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71. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit, pp.72,76-78; Menon, V.P. : op. cit, pp.32-33.
72. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.33.
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75. Kulkarni, V. B.: op. cit, pp.124-125.
76. Menon, V. P. : op. cit, p.35. The Government of India Act of 1935 paved the way for an All-India Federation; but it did not bring the federation into being. Copland, Ian : op. cit. p.141.
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Appendix B

The End of the Raj : A Historical Review of the Relationship between the Paramount Power, Princely States and Indian National Congress

The Federal Scheme embodied in the Govt. of India Act, 1935 was the first endeavour to set up the constitutional relationship between the Indian States and British India. However, the Federation of India could be established only when the Rulers of States, representing not less than half the aggregate population of the States and entitled to not less than half the seats to be allocated to the States in the Federal Upper Chamber, signified their desire to accede to it. Urmila Phadnis has rightly remarked that the disparate nature of the federating units (Provinces and States), the difference in the scope of powers of the Central authority in the executive, legislative and judicial fields with respect of States and Provinces as well as the peculiar position of the Crown, specially in its relationship with the States, gave the Federation a character which was without precedent anywhere in the world.¹

So far as British India was concerned the 1935 Act attempted to impose a quasi-federal system of Government on a previously existing unitary state. The total population of British India according to the 1941 census was 386,666,623 of which the Muslim community constituted twenty four percent. There were in addition some 660 (or 562) Indian States with a total population of 90,857,901 and a Muslim percentage of 13.3. The latter was provided almost entirely by the states situated in the extreme north-west of the country. Therefore the 1935 Act purported to solve the problem of the governance of a country with upwards of 400 million inhabitants divided into a multiplicity of linguistic groups and including a religious minority of no less than 90 million souls.²

Under the 1935 Act, federal relationship between the Provinces and the Centre could be established irrespectively of the States' accession, but the introduction of responsible government at the Centre was dependent on the inauguration of the Federation of India, for which the accession of a large number of states was necessary. Again, while the whole of British India was to form part of the federation, only 250 out of 562 States were given the option to join it. From all this, it becomes clear that the form of the Federation embodied in the Act was no doubt unique in many respects owing to the existence of federal units with variations of powers in the federal field as well as the emergence of the Paramountcy as the super-power so far as the States were concerned. This made Lord Meston think that the federal scheme was like "mixing of oil with water".³ Besides, while the Princes were given many concessions, some times even at the sacrifice of the federal principles and at the cost of fair deal of British India, no attempt was made to guarantee to their people the enjoyment of civil liberties or even rights of representation in the Federal legislature.⁴

H. V. Hodson has observed that the provisions of the Act appeared so strikingly favourable to the States that

it seems astonishing that the princes and their advisers should not have seized the opportunity of taking their part in an Indian Dominion. A conference of the Rulers and States' representatives held in Bombay in February, 1935 showed that the princes generally had not yet accepted a limitation of powers of the federating units involving a permanent resignation of part of their internal sovereignty to the federation. The Bombay meeting demanded that "treaties" of accession between His Majesty's Government and the States should lay up on the former a counter-obligation 'to preserve and safeguard the whole of their sovereignty and internal autonomy ... from any encroachment in future?' However, the Secretary of State refused to extend the debate with the princes beyond the limited problem of their place in the projected federation.⁵

As has been noted earlier, the Government of India Act of 1935, excepting the part relating to federation, came into force on the 1st April, 1937. From that time the functions of the Crown in its relations with the States were entrusted to the Crown Representative and these functions included negotiations with the Princes for their accession to the federation.⁶

The Viceroy Lord Willingdon was succeeded in 1936 by the Marquess of Linlithgow, who had been the Chairman of the Joint Select Committee on the Government of India Bill. He came to India fired with the ambition to inaugurate the federation during his tenure of office. In the course of his first address to the Central Legislature on the 21st September, 1936, he stated that "the interval between Provincial Autonomy and Federation must inevitably be a very short one."⁷ The princes were already supplied with the draft Instrument of Accession. The Viceroy thought that a direct personal approach to the rulers would induce many of them to accept it. His plan was to send his own personal emissaries to the various states to clear the rulers' doubts and the emissaries he chose were Sir Courtenay Latimer, Sir Francis Wylie and Sir Arthur Lothian, all high officials of the Political Service. Initially the Secretary of State viewed this procedure with a certain amount of misgiving but finally he agreed to the Viceroy's proposal.⁸

The three emissaries toured the principal States in the winter of 1936-37 and explained to the rulers and their advisers the effect of federation and of the terms of accession, embodied in a draft instrument. 'This procedure H. V. Hodson remarked, 'though having obvious merit, had also certain disadvantages. Faced with this concentrated high-level pressure, the rulers and their dewans enlisted constitutional experts from England and the United States to advise them. The result was that the broad policy tended to become lost in detailed legal controversy.' The three emissaries' report which were submitted to the Crown Representative early in 1937, showed two common factors throughout Princely India; a strong reluctance to federate under the Act, and a determination to bargain for every possible concession as the price of overcoming that reluctance.⁹ 'The rulers', in V. P. Menon's Words, 'made it clear that in their case the urge to unity was not dominant.... The question that agitated them was not whether federation would enable them to contribute to the benefit of India as a whole, but whether their own position would be better and

safer inside the federation than outside it.¹⁰ They shrank from committing themselves to a national system of government under democratic forces hostile to their personal power. They also demanded that the offset be a limitation of the paramountcy that they resented, and a guarantee of the sovereignty that they claimed. When it came to particular terms, the States wished to exact mostly financial Concessions, including permanent guarantees of the revenue enjoyed by some of them from sources that would become federal subjects such as customs and excise, salt tax or the match monopoly.¹¹ The emissaries in their reports also suggested many far-reaching concessions to induce the princes to join the federation.¹²

Concessions of this sort would have involved statutory amendment of the aforesaid Government of India Act. But the Secretary of State, Lord Zetland, opposed the Viceroy's wish to grant enough favours of this order to induce some leading states such as Kashmir, Baroda and the Kathiawar States to agree to enter the federation and thus to encourage others by their example. Lord Zetland feared that every concession gained by one state would be demanded by all.¹³ Such concessions were also incompatible with the general scheme of federation. He disliked the method of individual and piecemeal negotiation. Nor was he prepared to move such amendments of the Act unless he could be assured that, if made they would bring in the rulers. He held that no amendment of the Act could maintain the states in an unduly preferential position in the federation indefinitely. Besides, in May, 1937 Lord Zetland had informal talks with a number of rulers who happened to be in England. It was his impression that the rulers generally were unwilling to enter the federation; that the Viceroy was "dealing with unwilling sellers and was tempted to put his offers high".¹⁴

The Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, on the other hand, was most keen that no slackness in the negotiations should be allowed to creep in. He felt that the issue of federation could be kept alive only by keeping up the momentum of the parleys with the princes. His correspondence with the Secretary of State shows clearly his uninterupted effort to induce the States to make federation a reality. His attitude was considerably influenced by that of the Political Department and its officers, who had close relations with the several States and were experts on the States' special interests, which were often different from those of British India and especially of its advancing political democracy. As agents for the Viceroy in negotiating with the States they could not be expected to become lord bargainers on behalf of all - India, against the rulers whom they had advised and protected.¹⁵ Instead of putting a brake on the never-ceasing demands of the rulers, the Political Department showed 'a tendency to give in to the rulers all along the line.'¹⁶

The princes and their ministers met in conference at Bombay in November, 1938. While reiterating their faith in the idea of an all-India federation, they expressed their keen desire for effective safe guards for them and their successors. Otherwise, they would find themselves unable to duly discharge their duties to the Crown, to their dynasties and to their people.¹⁷

The Viceroy at last decided to confront the rulers with a comprehensive effort to bring matters to a head. In January, 1939 he addressed a circular letter to the rulers of all salute states, enclosing the revised draft of the Instrument of Accession along with the schedules and the draft acceptance of His Majesty. The letter emphasised that 'there was no prospect of any substantial variation of the terms indicated in the direction of allowing a lesser measure of accession than that which was shown therein, or modifying or adding to the limitations specified.' The rulers were asked to inform the Viceroy within six months whether they would be prepared to accept the Instrument of Accession within those terms.¹⁸

In order to examine the revised draft proposals, the Chamber of Princes appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Akbar Hydari. The Hydari Committee submitted its report in April, 1939 and maintained that the revised draft of the Instrument of Accession and the connected papers were not satisfactory and therefore, could not be acceptable in their present form. Ultimately, a Conference of rulers and their ministers held in Bombay on April 13-14, 1939¹⁹ passed the following resolution :

"The Conference ...having considered the revised draft of the Instrument of Accession and connected papers, resolves that the terms on the basis of which accession is offered are fundamentally unsatisfactory in the directions indicated in the report of the Hydari Committee ... and are therefore unacceptable. At the same time, the Conference records its belief that it could not be the intention of His Majesty's Government to close the door on all-India federation."

Hence the States proceeded to express this 'facing-both-ways' resolution by Resuming their pressure for concessions. After the Bombay Conference, the states' representatives followed their usual tactics. Federation was still as distant as ever. The rulers were adamant in not accepting the revised draft as final. Such was the position towards the beginning of August, 1939.²⁰

In the meantime, the provincial part of the Govt. of India Act of 1935 came into force and elections to the provincial legislatures had been held in February, 1937. The Congress won an overwhelming victory in six provinces and in July of that year had formed ministries. Sometime later, with the support of a few independent members, Congress ministries were also formed in two other provinces, viz, Assam and the North-West Frontier Province.²¹

It may be mentioned here that the Congress had traditionally ignored the States as a field of activity, implicitly recognising the rulers' right to make decisions about the welfare of their subjects. But this laissez-faire stance began to be modified in the 1930s as the party saw the threat of a federal scheme designed to 'hold India to the Empire.' Failing to stop the Round Table Conference process by direct action, the Congress decided after 1936, to accept the provincial parts of the Govt. of India Act and to contest the elections under the Act as a means of highlighting their popularity in the Country.²²

After the general elections in British India in 1937 had placed the Congress Government in office in eight provinces, the situation developed further. These Governments tolerated and in fact connived at agitation in neighbouring states conducted from bases in the provinces. Individual Congress leaders took part in subversive state politics. In several States, Congress Committees were formed. Non-intervention, though reiterated as Congress policy in 1938, became a formality rather than a fact.²³

The overwhelming success of the Congress, no doubt, encouraged States' subjects to agitate for civil liberties and responsible Government. There was unrest in Mysore, Travancore, Kashmir, Hyderabad, Jaipur and other States. In the Orissa States, there was an outbreak of lawlessness and in Kanpur the Political Agent, Major Bazalgette, was murdered. In Mysore, the agitation reached a high pitch. In October, 1937 the All India Congress Committee, meeting at Calcutta, adopted the resolution protesting the measures of the Mysore Government and appealing to the people of British India and Indian States "to give all support and encouragement to the people of Mysore in the struggle against the State for the right of self determination." But Gandhiji criticised it on the ground that the resolution was contrary to the Congress Policy of non-intervention towards the States.²⁴

The Congress' earlier policy of non-intervention was explained and justified in the resolution adopted at the Haripura session of the Congress in February, 1938. This resolution on the Indian States maintained that the Congress was not prepared to accept any kind of federation unless the States participated in it as "free units, enjoying the same measure of democratic freedom as the rest of India".²⁵ The Congress, the resolution continued, was not yet able to obtain the liberation of the States' subjects by itself operating within their borders. In the existing conditions, 'the burden of carrying on the struggle for freedom must fall on the people of the States.' The Congress as an organisation could only offer moral support and sympathy. Individual Congressmen would be free to render further assistance in their individual capacities, but the Congress Committees which had been formed in the States 'must submit to the control of the Working Committee and must not engage in politics under the Congress name'.²⁶

The Haripura resolution was intended to soft-pedal the agitation in the States. But it was not easy even for Gandhiji to keep the States aloof from the general mass awakening. A radical left wing had, meanwhile, developed within the Congress and it pleaded for a revolutionary policy towards the States. Individual Congressmen by this time started leading the agitation in the States themselves. The All India Congress Committee meeting in Delhi in September, 1938 condemned the repression in Travancore, Hyderabad, Kashmir and the Orissa States. The Congress Ministries of provinces adjoining States refused to use their Statutory powers to prevent agitation being organised within their provinces and launched beyond them.²⁷

The popular agitation in many States not only exerted a profound influence on the Congress leaders but

also had their active participation in some of the States. Particularly Mahatma Gandhiji attitude towards the States now began to change. In an article in Harijan in December, 1938 Gandhi's acclaimed the simultaneous awakening in the States as due to the 'time spirit'. Regarding the non-interventionist policy of the Congress, he held that "It is impossible for me to defend it in face of injustice perpetrated in the States. If the Congress feels that it has the power to offer effective interference, it will be bound to do so when the call comes."²⁸ He further said, "There is no half-way house between total extinction of the States and the princes making their people responsible for the administration of their States and themselves becoming trustees for the people, taking an earned commission for their labours."²⁹ Hence Gandhiji gave warning that the Congress policy of non-interference might be abandoned and he advised the rulers to cultivate friendly relations 'with an organization which bids fair in the future, not very distant, to replace the paramount power-let me hope, by friendly arrangement.'³⁰

In an interview published in the Times of India on the 25th January, 1939 Gandhiji also maintained that "the policy of non-intervention by the Congress was, in my opinion, a perfect piece of statesmanship when the people of the States were not awakened. That policy would be cowardice when there is all-round awakening among the people of the States and a determination to go through a long course of suffering for the vindication of their just rights. If once this is recognised, the struggle for liberty, wherever it takes place, is the struggle for all India. Whenever the Congress thinks it can usefully intervene, it must intervene."³¹

It was against this background that the Congress met at Tripuri (Jubbulpore) during the 10th-12th March, 1939. The Congress President Subhas Chandra Bose in his address praised the "unprecedented awakening" of the people in the States. "I am definitely of the view", continued Mr. Bose, "that we should revise our attitude towards the States as defined by the Haripura Congress resolution.... Since Haripura much has happened... In such circumstances should we of Congress not draw closer to the people of the States?" Accordingly, the Congress resolution repeated that its sympathies lay with the people and advised the princes to march with the times. This resolution further said, "This policy [of non-intervention] was dictated by circumstances and by a recognition of the limitations inherent in the circumstances, but it was never conceived as an obligation." But the Congress had always reserved to itself "great awakening that is taking place among the people of the States may lead to a relaxation or to a complete removal of the restraint which the Congress imposed upon itself, thus resulting in an ever-increasing identification of the Congress with the States' people". It was decided that the Congress Committee would meet the Standing Committee of the All India States' people's Conference (AISPC) to devise ways and means of bringing about closer co-operation among the people of the Indian States and British India.³² The AISPC, on its part, in its Ludhiana session had already resolved that the people's struggle should be in close co-operation and under the guidance of the Congress.³³

The princes were shocked and dismayed by the sudden turn around in the attitude of the Congress. They

were even more traumatised by the agitation which erupted in the wake of the Haripura decision. Mass demonstrations and peaceful hartals quickly escalated into open defiance of authority and acts of indiscriminate violence, particularly, in the smaller states. Although the agitation was for the most part organised by the local Praja Mandals, literally tens of thousands of outsiders also took part.³⁴ A number of States, heeding the demands of their subjects and the warnings of Congress had already started to implement piecemeal reforms. Some of them had made concessions in the area of civil rights whereas others had established or added to representative bodies. Even some states such as Mysore, Cochin, Gwalior, Aundh, Sangli had allocated ministerial portfolios to elected members of legislative Councils in imitation of the dyarchy system introduced in the provinces before 1937.³⁵ Cooch Behar State also introduced this dyarchy system during 1939-40. Most of these reforms would not have taken place if the princes had not come under pressure from the Congress and AISPC. It was also true as the nationalists again and again pointed out that they fell a long way short of democracy. Robin Jeffrey had rightly mentioned, "But in not a single State by 1930s had there been transfers of powers comparable to those in British India."³⁶

In this volatile political situation, Lord Linlithgow realised that unless some radical reforms were brought about in the States, they would inevitably succumb to the Congress agitation. He felt that the policy of non-interference pursued by the British Government for some years should be abandoned and active pressure should be brought to bear on these states to effect administrative reforms. On the constitutional level, Lord Linlithgow wanted to bring stronger pressure on the rulers than had hitherto been the case in the matter of sponsoring representative institutions and establishing constitutional government. But these proposals were not to the taste of the Political Department. They were against the rulers being hustled in the matter of constitutional advance and were of the opinion that the question should be left to the Chamber of Princes. The Secretary of State was in agreement with Lord Linlithgow's proposals as regards administrative reforms. But on the issue of constitutional advance he considered that the initiative and onus of responsibility must continue to rest with the rulers themselves.³⁷

In reply to a question in the British Parliament on 16th December, 1938, the Under-Secretary of State for India, declared that it would rest with the rulers to decide what form of government they should adopt in the diverse condition of India. The British Government, he said, would neither obstruct constitutional advance which a ruler proposed to initiate in his State, nor force any ruler to introduce such reforms in his State. The obligations of the Paramount Power, he maintained, would "extend to protecting rulers against violence and disorder and to advising and assisting rulers in remedying such legitimate grievances of their subjects as may be found to exist."³⁸

On the other hand, in a meeting with the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes on 21st August, 1939, the Viceroy clarified certain points with regard to the Instrument of Accession and refuted the allegations of some of the princes that some officials of the Foreign and Political Department were putting pressure upon the

Princes to join the Federation. He made it clear that "the choice is the free choice of each individual ruler and it is for him alone to make up his mind as to what decision he wishes to take." He further said that the scope of any modification in the revised draft was very limited. However, it was clear that the possibility of a federation becoming a reality was as distant as ever. The rulers were not at all inclined to agree to accept the revised draft as final.³⁹ Under these circumstances, the Government thought of clarifying its position by issuing a White Paper on federation. Accordingly, in August, 1939, letters were written to various states intimating to them the intention of His Majesty's Government to prepare a White Paper on the subject. However, the outbreak of the Second World War in September, 1939 made the British Government give up the idea of issuing such a White Paper.⁴⁰

The Second World War broke out on the 1st September, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France were forced to go to Poland's aid and declare war on Germany on the 3rd September, 1939. By this time, not a single Princely State had come forward to join the federation. The British Government needed the help of the Princes in 'Men, money and material'. 'It was not the time to rub them the wrong way'. On 11th September, 1939 Lord Linlithgow announced in his address to central legislature that, while federation remained as before the objective of His Majesty's Government, 'the Compulsion of the present international situation and the fact that, given the necessity for concentrating on the emergency that confronts us, we have no choice but to hold in suspense the work in connection with preparations for federation'.⁴¹ This was, H.V. Hodson remarked, the death-knell of federation under the 1935 Act.⁴² According to E.W.R. Lumby, '... The suspension of the negotiations with the Princes on September 11, 1939 marks the beginning of a decline in the importance of the States in British thinking on the future of India.... The crucial negotiations soon came to be conducted by three parties only, the British, the Congress and the Muslim League.'⁴³

The failure of the federal scheme may be attributed to the unyielding attitude of the rulers as well as of the major political parties in British India. The Congress and the Muslim League were opposed to the federal scheme for different reasons. The Congress wanted radical changes to be made in the scheme of the Act. For example, it was dissatisfied with the degree of the responsible Government at the centre and it demanded that the States' representatives in the federal legislature should be elected and not nominated.⁴⁴ It has also been alleged that it was principally due to the dilatory methods pursued by Lord Linlithgow that an Indian federation in terms of the 1935 Act, was not created before the outbreak of the Second World War.⁴⁵

R. J. Moore is of the opinion that after 1937, the Congress sought to awaken national feeling in the States' peoples and clamoured at the princes's gates for reforms. But the political geography created by the 1935 Act made partition a strong possibility, as the extension to the Princes of a veto on Indian constitutional progress gave them little incentive to emulate in the states the liberality of a formerly autocratic Raj in the provinces. The Princes were

encouraged by the 1935 Act to believe that they could keep British India at arm's length. 'The British Policy', R. J. Moore further said, 'was to grant freedom with safeguard upon the creation of unity through the federation of autonomous provinces and principalities. The objective was freedom with unity but on terms dictated by Britain. Between 1937 and 1939 the design was frustrated by the success of the Congress in the provinces and its subsequent attempt to resolve the dualities of the Indian problem by direct confrontation with the Muslims and the Princes. The Congress' purpose was to create a defacto unitary government and proclaim its freedom. The process of devolution defeated both the British objective and the Congress' purpose.'⁴⁶

The non-accession of the princes to the federation, M.S. Jain thinks, was an event of momentous significance in the political and constitutional development of India. It was the severest jolt to the British imperialists who had been grooming the Indian princes as a reinsurance of their imperial interests. The accession of the Princely order to the federation had been devised by the British as a protection of their interests. The most significant change in British policy pertained to the Indian States whose dependability and reliability in carrying out subtle imperial objectives nose-dived. The British policy framers gradually eliminated the 'princely factor' from the Indian stage and reduced the rectangle to a triangle (the Congress, the Muslim League and the British). The princes were soon made irrelevant to the solution of the Indian problem and the counter-weight built up during 1926-35, had become burdensome and was unloaded systematically.⁴⁷ This event was significant enough to make the Muslim leaders feel insecure and to lead it to put forward the demand for partition as a solution of its insecurity and to make British imperialists feel shaky, about their capacity to control the nationalists, and to lead them to concede the partition demand by stages. The British began by granting a constitutional veto to the Muslim minority, in August, 1940 and the partition of the country was conceded in stages.⁴⁸

On the 3rd September, 1939 Lorth Linlithgow, the Viceroy, unilaterally associated India with Britain's declaration of War with Germany without consulting the Provincial Ministries or any Indian leader. On the 17th October, 1939 the Viceroy issued a statement repeating old offers of Dominion Status for India, promising post-war consultations with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India and with the rulers' to modify the 1935 Act, and the setting-up for the present of a purely Consultative Group of Indian politicians and princely representatives. It, thus, became clear that the British Government had no intention of loosening their hold on India during or after the war. 'Linlithgow's attitude was a part', Sumit Sarkar said; 'of a general British policy to take advantage of the war to regain for the White-dominated Central Government and the ground lost to the Congress from 1937.' British Indian reactionary policies also received support and encouragement from Winston Churchill, who soon took over as the Prime Minister of a National Coalition in Great Britain.⁴⁹

The Congress Working Committee, meeting on the 23rd October, 1939, rejected the Viceregal statement

as a reiteration of the old imperialist policy, decided not to support the war and called upon the Congress Ministries to resign as a protest.⁵⁰ The Congress Ministries had resigned on the 29th - 30th October, 1939.⁵¹

On the other hand, The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes held a discussion with the Viceroy regarding the implications of the Viceroy's statement of 17th October 1939 on the states. The Princes demanded that no commitment affecting their rights should be made without their consent. Lord Linlithgow undertook to honour fully the treaty obligations of His Majesty's Government. Subsequently, at a meeting of the Chamber of Princes held in March, 1940, the Princes declared their complete approval of the war aims of the Allies and their determination to render every possible assistance to His Majesty's Government in the prosecution of the war. At the same time they demanded the preservation of their autonomy and the protection of their rights in any future constitution of India.⁵² However, the people of the States were not wholly with the princes in their stand. For they agreed with the Congress that "if they [Princes] must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad... their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own states in which undiluted autocracy reigns supreme."⁵³

Meanwhile, the communal situation deteriorated in the country. In January, 1940, Jinnah declared that the Hindus and the Muslims formed two separate nations and thereby both must share the governance of their common motherland.⁵⁴ On 23rd March, 1940, at the Lahore session of the Muslim League the famous resolution of Pakistan was adopted.⁵⁵ M. S. Jain thought that with the non-accession of Indian states to the federation, the Muslim leadership felt that the Muslims would remain in the position of a minority. The absence of feudal representatives of Indian states led the Muslim feudal leadership to advocate the creation of a separate state for Muslim Indians... The effort during 1937-39 was concentrated on maligning and defaming Congress rule as Hindu rule in which Muslims were not safe. The insecurity of the Muslims was so much propagated that the mass of the community fell in line. It has, thus, been argued that the demand for partition of India was put forward after the failure of the federal scheme.⁵⁶

The War entered its critical phase with the fall of France. After the resignation of Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill formed a National Coalition Government and L.S. Amery became the Secretary of State for India. On the 8th August, 1940 Lord Linlithgow advanced some new proposals. He offered a certain number of seats in the Governor-General's Executive Council to include more Indians and proposed that a War Council should be established containing the representatives of the States and of British India. He also promised that a post-war body representative of the 'Principal elements in India's national life' would be called upon to devise a constitution. At the same time he declared that "His Majesty's Government could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibility to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life". Both the Congress and the Muslim League rejected the 'August offer'. Nevertheless, on the 22nd July, 1941, the Viceroy's Executive was enlarged to give British Indian Politicians a majority for the first time (8 out of 12) and a National

Defence Council consisting of 22 members from British India and 9 representatives of the states was set up with purely advisory functions.⁵⁷

'Linlithgow's 'August offer', Sumit Sarkar said, 'consequently was little more than a repetition of his 17 October, 1939 statement'. Apart from this, 'encouragement of the Muslim League claims formed an increasingly important part of War-time imperialist strategy. Hence the August offer was an indication of British helplessness and they granted a kind of veto to the Muslim League on future constitutional changes.⁵⁸

Towards the close of 1941, two world developments transformed the Indian situation. Hitler's invasion of Russia and Japan's entry into the war in December, 1941 and its remarkable success against the Allies in South-East Asia brought India direct into the Zone of war. From December, 1941 the dramatic Japanese drive swept the British out from Malaya, Singapore and Burma and threatened to bring its Indian empire to a sudden end. As the war daily came nearer India (Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15 February, 1942, Rangoon on 8 March, the Andaman islands on 23 March), the British Government at long last felt obliged to make some gestures to win over Indian public opinion.⁵⁹

Burke and Quraishi have argued that 'the relations between the princes and the British Government remained sympathetic while the Congress was their common adversary'. But a change was discernible as soon as Britain began to think in terms of granting freedom to India. This was to be done in a way which would assure friendly relations with the successor Governments in which Congress was expected to be the predominant, if not the sole, participant. 'It was not the containment but the conciliation of the Congress that now became the prime objective of British Policy'.⁶⁰

It was against this background that Mr. Churchill, on 11th March, 1942, announced the decision of the War Cabinet to send Sir Stafford Cripps, then Lord Privy Seal, with a set of proposals for India's attainment of self-government after the war. A week after his arrival in India, Cripps announced his proposals at a Press conference on 29th March, 1942.⁶¹ The Draft Declaration consisted of two parts—a long-term offer and a short term offer. The long term offer was that 'immediately after the cessation of hostilities a constitution making body would be set up to frame a new constitution with dominion status with right of secession. This body would be elected by provincial legislatures. This constitution would be framed subject only to two conditions, namely, that a province or provinces had the right to secede from the Indian Union and to frame a constitution of their own, and secondly, that a treaty would be signed between the British Government and the constitution making body to cover "all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands." Under the short-term offer, it was maintained that, until the new constitution was framed, the British Government 'invited the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the Principal sections of the Indian people in the Councils of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the

United Nations for the defence of India and the prosecution of the World War effort as a whole".⁶²

The Cripps' declaration with regard to the States was very brief. The Indian States were not mentioned in the short term as they were already co-operating with the British Government. In the long term offer, however, the Draft Declaration announced "whether or not an individual state elects to adhere to the constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation". The States to appoint representatives to the constitution making body in the same proportion to their total population as in the case of representatives of British India as a whole. The States would be free to adhere or not to the new constitution.⁶³

In his Press Conference on 31st March, 1942, Cripps made it clear that there was 'no contemplation' of any dominion being set up which consisted solely of Indian States.⁶⁴ However, a Princes' delegation met Cripps on 2nd April, 1942 and in this meeting the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, then Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, maintained that although the States would like to co-operate and participate in the Indian Union, provision was necessary for "non-adhering States or group of States" to 'have the right to form and negotiate for a Union of their own with full sovereign States.' Sir Stafford Cripps told the Chancellor that he would urge it on behalf of the Princes before His Majesty's Government. Regarding the question of Paramountcy, Cripps clarified that, while in the case of the adhering States to the Union, Paramountcy would be 'automatically dissolved' and with regard to non-adhering States, Paramountcy would continue to be in force.⁶⁵

Sir Stafford Cripps suggested the extension of joint co-operative grouping scheme to wider units. Otherwise, they could have separate Unions instead of a single Union and suffered 'inconveniences involved'. Answering the question of the revision of treaties, Cripps assured the Princes that the 'intention was to revise the treaties only so far as might be required in the new situation'. The Lord Privy Seal also advised the Princes to establish contacts with political parties in British India so that a final decision on the future constitutional changes might be facilitated.⁶⁶ Finally, Cripps explicitly explained to the Princes that the acceding States would have to delegate some of their rights to the Union but also warned them of the disadvantages of non-acceding.⁶⁷

By talking with the Princes Conrad Confield learned that the impression they got from Cripps was that the British Government was only interested in a settlement with British India, and the States would have to do their best to fit into whatever settlement was made.⁶⁸ Cripps had also told the Maharaja of Kashmir that the future of the States lay with India, and no Prince should harbour the illusion that the British Crown would come to his help if he decided to opt out.⁶⁹ Menon also wrote that 'the Cripps Mission brought home to the rulers the discomfiting realization that if the interests of British India and the states come into conflict His Majesty's Government would almost certainly let down the states'.⁷⁰ The Cripps' mission was a failure as its proposals were rejected by both the Congress and the Muslim

League on the 10th April, 1942. The rulers heaved a sigh of relief.⁷¹ The Congress, apart from other points such as defence, rejected the Cripps offer on the plea that 90 million of States' people had no representation in this offer and the principle of non-accession might lead to the balkanisation of India in many states.⁷² The Princes did not also seem to have favoured the Cripps offer. Some of its proposals created anxiety and suspicion in the minds of the Princes regarding the future policy of the British Government towards them. In a letter dated the 15th June, 1942 the Chancellor complained that Sir Stafford Cripps, in his discussion on defence matters, had ignored the States completely. 'Various important references, made in connection with Cripps Mission both in India and in the House of Commons, were confined to British India only as if the Indian states did not matter'. Besides, "Sir Stafford Cripps received a British Indian as a representative of the so-called States People's Conference which is an adjunct of Congress".⁷³ In another letter of January, 1943, the Chancellor further objected to Sir Stafford Cripps' suggestion for 'establishing an effective machinery in the States for ventilating the grievances of the people on the plea that it was in direct contravention to the British Government's policy of leaving the responsibility as well as the decision to the rulers'. The Political Department in this context replied that the British Government endorsed Sir Stafford Cripps' suggestion primarily "in the interests of the rulers themselves". "But it was for the latter to devise the precise form of machinery best suited" to them.⁷⁴

At this time much adverse criticism also appeared in a section of the Indian Press about the demand of the rulers that the non-acceding States should be allowed to form a Union of their own. 'It was alleged that the rulers had been instigated to make this demand by the Political Department with the connivance of the Viceroy. When the matter came up for consideration, the Secretary of State felt....that the rulers' suggestion deserved sympathetic consideration.' However, H. V. Hodson, the Reforms Commissioner and later his successor V. P. Menon opposed this proposal. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy accepted their advice and informed the Secretary of State that a separate Union of States was not only practical politics but it was also not a worth subject for consideration. He held emphatically that the States should not be encouraged to go on thinking along those lines.⁷⁵

Shortly afterwards, the Congress had passed the 'Quit India' resolution on the 8th August, 1942 and thereby the Quit India movement was launched in the Country. As a consequence, the Congress had been outlawed. During the Quit India movement it was made clear that 'there was no distinction to be made between the people of British India and the States : every Indian was to participate'. The meeting of the AISPC was held along with the All India Congress Committee session at Bombay that announced the commencement of struggle. Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru both addressed the AISPC Standing Committee, and Gandhiji himself explained the implications of the Quit India movement. He told the Standing Committee that henceforth there would be one movement. The movement in the States was now to be not just for responsible government but for the independence of India and integration of the States with British India.⁷⁶

In the Country-wide disturbances which occurred in August, 1942, the States people did not participate in an organised manner as their compatriots in several provinces had done. The AISPC did not directly involve itself in the struggle but it never prevented the State Governments from using the repressive laws in their armoury against public agitations of all kinds. In their attempt to demonstrate their loyalty to the British, some of the States resorted to oppressive laws even more vigorously than had been done in British India. In Patiala, Jhabua and some Kathiawar and Rajashthan States tillers' agitation for agrarian reforms was suppressed in a manner as if it was a political move to spread disaffection against the ruler.⁷⁷

The convulsions wrought by the Pacific War are rightly considered by historians to have been instrumental in the collapse of European colonialism in Asia. But in the short term the outbreak of war, in India, had the effect of reinforcing the imperial presence, strengthening the colonial government's control over public life and temporarily halting moves to devolve power through constitutional change. While the Congress languished in opposition, other groups such as the Muslim League and the princes flourished in the political vacuum created by the Congress' resignation from the provincial ministries.

The Second World War was kind to the rulers in several ways. It generated a martial, authoritarian culture in India which was congenial to their talents and traditions as blue-blooded Kshatriyas. Some younger rulers such as the Maharaja of Bundi, and the Maharaja of Cooch Behar distinguished themselves on active service; while older members of the order such as Ganga Singh of Bikaner and Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal took a prominent part in the planning and promotion of the war effort. Apart from this, 'the resignation of the Congress' Governments, the introduction of authoritarian war time measures such as the Defence of India Rules and the jailing in August 1942 of the greater part of the Congress leadership made life much easier for the Princes who remained at home.⁷⁸

The war allowed the princes to dramatise their loyalty to the Crown. It also allowed the princes partially to redeem themselves with the British for their failure to deliver the goods on federation. Travancore, Bhopal, Kashmir, Hyderabad and other States directly or indirectly contributed to the war-effort. As has been stated in the previous chapters Cooch Behar was also no exception. Altogether, the cost of war materials provided by the States down to 1945 exceeded £5 million. In addition, the States made numerous direct grants of cash and gave generously of their land, buildings and work forces for war purposes. Again, the darbars made an important indirect contribution to the war effort by actively promoting it among their subjects. 'By the end of 1944 over 3,00,000 men from 59 States had signed up for military service and 15,000 more for war-related jobs in industry — a higher per-capita response than that of any of the provinces except for the Punjab — while some Rs. 180 million had been contributed by the states' people in subscription to Government War Bonds and securities and through donations to the Viceroy's War Purposes Fund.⁷⁹

Finally, the Princes aided the British by suppressing the internal disturbances during the Quit India movement of 1942-43, thereby freeing up thousands of police and troops for deployment in the troublespots of Bengal, Bombay and North-West Frontier Province. Hence The Viceroy Lord Linlithgow praised the darbars' response as 'astoundingly helpful and reassuring.'⁸⁰ 'Comment in London, where former conservative party rebel Winston Churchill had already taken over the prime ministership from Neville Chamberlain and the romantically minded Leo Amery had replaced Zetland at the India Office, was just as laudatory.' 'By the end of Lord Linlithgow's six-year term in 1943', Copland said, "the good will generated in London and New Delhi by virtue of the States' war services had gone a very long way to repairing the damage done to the special relationship between the Rulers and the Crown by the federation debacle".⁸¹ It is also fair to say that the aid generously rendered by the States carried with it firm expectations of political rewards when the imperial cause prevailed. Lord Linlithgow retired on the 24th October, 1943 and Lord Wavell came in his place.⁸² Lord Wavell was a good-hearted but blunt military man with very little knowledge of the States.⁸³

By the end of 1944 some historically significant events had taken place. 'The epic defence of Stalingrad had halted Hitler' and German armies were fought on the defensive. Japan had been effectively checked. Victory for the Allied Powers seemed to be only a question of time. 'About this time the Nawab of Bhopal was elected Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He infused new life into the Chamber by forging that body into an effective instrument for developing the rulers into a 'Third Force' in Indian Politics. He also hoped that with the Congress and the Muslim League pitted against each other, the States would occupy a key position and hold the balance. Besides, he started taking vigorous steps with the Political Department to safeguard the position of the States in any future constitutional changes. At a meeting of the Standing Committee held on the 18th September, 1944 the Chancellor expressed his intention to move the following resolution at the next session of the Chamber to be held early in December, 1944.⁸⁴

"The Chamber of Princes considers it necessary to reiterate in the most unequivocal and emphatic terms that the Crown's relationship with States and the Crown's power in respect of the States cannot and should not be transferred to any third party or other authority without the consent of the States concerned. The Chamber requests His Excellency the Crown Representative to be pleased to convey to His Majesty's Government the grave misgivings and apprehensions aroused in the States, by the recent tendency to alter the States' relationship with the Crown... by the unilateral action without the consent of the states, notwithstanding the solemn Royal pronouncements that these Treaty Rights shall be maintained impaired, and the recent assurance conveyed to the Indian princes by His Majesty's Government that the fulfilment of the fundamental obligations arising out of their treaties and sanads remains an integral part of His Majesty's Government's policy."

On the 26th November, 1944, the Viceroy Lord Wavell, as the President of the Chamber, disallowed this resolution on the plea that it would be undesirable to ventilate in public such delicate issues at a time when the matter

had already come under discussion between the Rulers and the Viceroy. The Viceroy's such reply gave dissatisfaction to the Standing Committee of the Chamber. Early in December, 1944 they resigned in a body as a protest against the 'gradual deterioration of the position of the states and the disregard of their legitimate interests'. On the 4th December, 1944 eighty Rulers met at Delhi under the chairmanship of the Maharaja of Gwalior endorsing the stand taken by the Standing Committee. Lord Wavell, who was anxious to placate the Rulers, had long discussions with the Chancellor. Ultimately, on the 25th June, 1945, Lord Wavell gave an assurance that there would be no future transfer of relationship of the states with the Crown to any other authority without their consent, provided that the rulers would assure the Government of their consent to any changes arising out of negotiations. Accordingly, the Chancellor declared that the rulers would not withhold their consent to any constitutional rearrangement which 'we consider reasonable in the wider interests of India'. Finally, the Standing Committee decided to withdraw their resignation.⁸⁵

By the end of 1942, the British Government had come out victorious in their immediate confrontation with Indian nationalism. The remaining two and a half years of the war passed without facing any serious political challenge in the country. Yet the 'victory' had been possible only in war conditions that had allowed in fact ruthless use of force. The British would never risk such a confrontation again and the decision in 1945 to try for a negotiated settlement was not just a gift of the new Labour Government. This is amply indicated by the attitude of the new Viceroy Lord Wavell. In a letter to the British Prime Minister Churchill dated the 24th October, 1944, Lord Wavell maintained that 'it would be impossible to hold India by force after the war, given the likely state of world opinion and British popular or even army attitudes (as well as the economic exhaustion of Britain, he might have added)'.⁸⁶

In March, 1945 Lord Wavell flew to London for consultations with the British Government. He returned at the end of May, 1945. In the meantime, a series of momentous events that rocked the World, had taken place. On the 1st May, 1945 the Hamburg Radio announced the death of Adolf Hitler and within a week Germany surrendered unconditionally. On the eve of Lord Wavell's departure from England, the Secretary of State informed the House of Commons that the British Government had empowered Lord Wavell to make new proposals on the composition of an interim Government. In a broadcast on the 15th June, 1945 Lord Wavell disclosed a fresh plan designed to 'ease the present political situation and to advance India towards her goal of self-government'.⁸⁷ The Viceroy proposed talks to set up a new Executive Council which would be entirely Indian except for the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief. 'Caste Hindus' and Muslims would have equal representation and the Executive would work within the existing constitution (i.e., it would not be responsible to the Central Assembly).⁸⁸ The measures proposed by the Viceroy were provisional and were intended to mobilize the forces of India against Japan and to draft a new constitution. Meanwhile, the Cripps offer, it was stated, remained in the field. At the same time, Lord Wavell invited the leaders of the Congress and of the Muslim League, as well as others to Simla for further discussions. The members of the Congress Working Committee were released to participate in the talks. That marked the end of the phase of confrontation that had

existed since August, 1942. The Simla Conference met on the 30th June, 1945 but failed to reach agreement. The negotiations broke down finally on the 14th July, 1945.⁸⁹

In the meantime, the Nawab of Bhopal, the then Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, convened a meeting of a special Committee of Rulers and Ministers in Bombay in April-May, 1945. This Committee examined the question of the political adjustment between the States and British India. In another Joint Conference of Rulers and Ministers held in June, 1945, a resolution adopted reviewed the position of the Princes in the new political situation and felt that the Cripps offer and the recent developments had already indicated that India might be a Dominion without the adherence of the States. The resolution further emphasised that the war efforts of the States were not likely to make up, for the purposes of negotiation, the loss in the position which the States once enjoyed. Besides, "the British Government will not be in a position in a Dominion India effectively to fulfil its obligations of defence or to safeguard the non-acceding states against economic strangulation or discrimination by the Dominion Government."⁹⁰

The Joint Conference also appointed a Constitutional Advisory Committee to prepare "the case of states for use at appropriate places." The first meeting of the Committee was held in July, 1945, to consider the proposals for an interim Government as given in a broadcast of Lord Wavell in June, 1945. It recommended the setting up of a suitable machinery for regular consultations between the representatives of British India and representatives of the states with regard to matters of common concern during the interim period. The Committee unanimously endorsed the importance of progressive reforms in the States and expected the rulers to introduce them as soon as possible.⁹¹

After a massive victory in the general election in July, 1945 in Great Britain, the Labour Party formed a new government under Clement Attlee as the Prime Minister and Lord Pethick Lawrence became the Secretary of State for India. Soon afterwards, what was changing fast was the total objective situation, world wide, as well as Indian. Nazi Germany had been destroyed, Japan surrendered after Hiroshima in August, 1945, socially-radical regimes with communist leadership were emerging in Eastern Europe, the Chinese revolution was forging ahead, and a tremendous anti-imperialist wave was sweeping through South-East Asia. 'With a war-weary army and people and a ravaged economy, Britain would have had to retreat; the Labour Victory only quickened the process somewhat.'⁹²

In September, 1945 Lord Wavell, the Viceroy went again to England and on his return announced his second plan. He reaffirmed the Government's determination to do their utmost to promote the early realization of full self-government for India and expressed the hope that Indian political leaders would assume ministerial responsibility in all the provinces after the elections which had already been announced. He declared that the British Government intended to convene as soon as possible a constitution making body to draft the future constitution of India and for this purpose, he had been authorised to consult the representatives of the provincial assemblies to modify the Cripps'

proposals. Discussions will also be held with the representatives of the Indian States to enable them to participate in the constitution-making body.⁹³

The Princes welcomed Lord Wavell's second plan and were prepared to take the opportunity of participating with the representatives of British India in the task of framing of a constitution for the country. They, however, made it clear that any such constitution would be subject to ratification by the princes; that the monarchical form of government in the states should in no way be discussed by them; and that their existing treaties and sanads would not be altered unilaterally without their consent.⁹⁴

The annual session of the Chamber of Princes was held in January, 1946 under the chairmanship of Lord Wavell. The Viceroy in his address assured the princes that no change in their relationship with the Crown or the rights guaranteed to them by treaties and engagements would be initiated. He expressed his confidence that the states would take their active part in the future constitutional discussions as well as in the proposed constitution-making body. He also emphasised the necessity of placing their administration on modern lines for the welfare of their subject.⁹⁵ In reply, the Chamber of Princes in a resolution adopted at this session asserted that 'the States fully shared the general desire of the country for the immediate attainment of its political stature and their intention to make every possible contribution towards the settlement of the constitutional problem.' It further declared that it was the policy of the Chamber that the fundamental principles of sound administration should be followed in every state and that "there shall be popular institutions with elected majorities to ensure close and effective association of the people with the governance of the States."⁹⁶ The princes' resolution with regard to constitutional reforms was a step in the right direction but actual steps were too slow to keep pace with the rapidly changing situation. The Princes failed to comprehend the growing aspirations of the people of Indian States and therefore, could not carry their people with them on the question regarding the position of the States in the future political set up.

The Labour Government's attitude of Great Britain was influenced by what the Government of India was saying about the political imperative of economic development. The advice from the Indian Government was that the States were on the whole, too small to stand on their own feet, represented barriers to trade and communications and were likely to present a serious impediment to rational economic planning. It seemed clear to Attlee, Cripps, and the other members of the Cabinet's India and Burma Committee, that a prolongation of the monarchical system was incompatible with the goal of a free, prosperous India.⁹⁷

However, the main reason that drove the Labour Government to pull the plug was the knowledge that the princely partnership had become insupportable. While the Whitehall saw insurmountable obstacles to maintaining a diplomatic link with the States, after independence, they could see no way of fulfilling their obligation to protect them.

Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State, thus explained to the Cabinet on the 9th October, 1945. "...The question therefore arises whether Crown will have in India British troops under its sole command and, if so, whether any treaty provision could be made which would secure free passage for them to any non-adhering State in which their use was required... I fear that the answer to both questions may be in the negative".⁹⁸ He also observed in a memorandum for Attlee dated the 21st December, 1946, that it was not really "a possible solution to maintain British troops in States... to resist infiltration from British India' when the Congress, which encouraged such action, was in office with our approval."⁹⁹ Therefore, the Labour Government came to the conclusion that Britain's pledges to the States would have to be repudiated.

The British Government had now ample time to take stock of the Indian situation, since it had been in power for eight months. The British Cabinet had already appointed a British delegation to India on the 28th November, 1945¹⁰⁰ to meet leading political personalities and to learn their views. So the Government had the benefit of the views of this delegation which had toured the country. On the 19th February, 1946, Attlee announced the much more significant decision to send a Cabinet Mission to negotiate with Indian leaders for achieving "early realisation of full self-government in India." While speaking in Parliament on the 15th March, 1946, he expressed the hope that Princely India and British India would co-operate with each other.¹⁰¹ From 24th March to June 1946, three members of the Cabinet Mission Secretary of State Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and First Lord of the Admiralty A. V. Alexander carried on together with Wavell long and very tortuous negotiations with Indian leaders on the two issues of an interim Government and principles and procedures for framing a new constitution giving India freedom.¹⁰²

The Cabinet Mission arrived in New Delhi on the 24th March, 1946 and the Secretary of State Lord Pethick Lawrence at a press conference held the next day, expressed the hope that the Mission would enable Indians to set up a machinery for producing a constitutional structure for India as a whole. He also made it clear that in its negotiations the Mission would adhere to the earlier precedents and would consult only the Rulers.¹⁰³ This disappointed the AISPC which had all along demanded that States' people's opinion should also be taken into account. Authorised by the Standing Committee of the AISPC, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to the Mission insisting that it should meet the representatives of the AISPC. In this letter, Mr. Nehru emphasised that "independence conferred upon India would not be complete unless it applied to States' subjects too."¹⁰⁴

Following the policy stated by Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Cabinet Mission met the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, rulers of Bikaner, Patiala, Gwalior and Nawanagar who were the members of the Standing Committee and represented the interests of the middle-sized states as well as rulers of Bilaspur and Dungarpur representing smaller states. The views of Hyderabad and Travancore were placed before the Commission by their respective representatives, viz., the Nawab of Chhattari and Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Aiyer. Sir Mirza Ismail

represented the Rajputana States.¹⁰⁵

In their talks with Mission, the members of the Chamber of Princes, specially the Chancellor, made it clear that the States wished to retain the maximum degree of sovereignty. They desired no interference in their internal affairs by British India. None of the rulers wanted a constitutional set-up as envisaged in the Act of 1935 but they were in favour of a 'loose federation' at the Centre. The rulers argued that if there could be two Indias there was no reason why a third India composed of states should not be recognised. The Chancellor suggested the formation of a Privy Council of the States and British India as proposed in the Simon Commission Report. Lastly, he pleaded that Paramountcy should not be transferred to an Indian Government.¹⁰⁶ The bigger States like Hyderabad and Travancore also agreed with the Chancellor on these issues.¹⁰⁷ However, the rulers of Dungarpur and Bilaspur were divided in their views. While the Maharaja of Dungarpur believed that, except six bigger States, the Smaller States should group themselves into larger units "by pooling sovereignty on a regional and linguistic basis", the Raja of Bilaspur did not agree with the idea of grouping and wanted each state to be sovereign and to be left to itself to do as it wanted after Paramountcy lapsed.¹⁰⁸

Broadly, the position taken up by the rulers was that "Paramountcy should not be transferred to a successor Government, but that it should lapse; that the States should not be forced to join any Union or Unions; that there should be prima facie no objection to the formation of a confederation of States if the rulers so desired; and that there should be no interference in their internal affairs By British India".¹⁰⁹

Meanwhile, the Cabinet Mission had also met the leaders of Indian political parties and communal groups. The Mission and the Viceroy also held a tripartite conference on the 27th April, 1946, with the delegates of the Congress and the Muslim League at Simla. The Mission met the Nawab of Bhopal again on the 9th May, 1946 and clarified some of his doubts.¹¹⁰

On the 16th May, 1946 the Cabinet Mission after the conclusion of its discussion with Indian leaders, issued a statement embodying their own suggestions and recommendations towards a solution of the Indian problem. This was subsequently known as the 'Cabinet Mission Plan'.¹¹¹ Referring to the States, the Plan made it clear that, after India gained freedoms the relationship which had existed hitherto between the States and British India would no longer be possible. "Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government. The representatives of the States have assured the Cabinet Delegation that they are ready and willing to co-operate in the new development of India, but the precise form which their co-operation will take must be a matter for negotiation, and the outcome of that negotiation may not prove to be identical for all the states."¹¹²

The Cabinet Mission Plan recommended that the states would "retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union", namely, Defence, Communications and Foreign Affairs. During the interim period, the States would be represented in the Constituent Assembly by a Negotiating Committee. In the final Constituent Assembly, the method of selecting the states' representatives whose number was not to exceed 93 was to be finalised in consultation with the parties concerned. Then the representatives of the three sections of the Constituent Assembly and of the Indian States could prepare the constitution for India. In his broadcast on the 16th May and at the Press Conference the next day, the Secretary of State for India, Lord Pethick Lawrence raised no new points and clarified none except that Paramountcy was to lapse after India had gained independence and that the future relationship between the States and British India was to be decided by the parties themselves through negotiation.¹¹³

The Mission also prepared a Memorandum entitled "A Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy" and forwarded it to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the 12th May, 1946. But the Memorandum was published on the 22nd May, 1946. "During the interim period", stated the Memorandum, "Paramountcy will remain in operation. But the British Government could not and will not in any circumstances transfer Paramountcy to an Indian Government". Paramountcy would lapse and all the rights surrendered by the States to the Paramount Power would return to the States. Political arrangement between the Crown and the States would be brought to an end. This void would "have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor government or Governments in British India or failing this, entering into particular political arrangements with it or them."¹¹⁴ It was also stated that during the interim period it would be necessary for the States to conduct negotiations with British India in regard to future relations in matters of common concern, specially in the economic and financial fields.¹¹⁵

The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes adopted the resolution on the 10th June, 1946 expressing the view that "the Cabinet Mission Plan provided the necessary machinery for the attainment by India of independence, as well as a fair basis for further negotiations. This Committee welcomed the declaration of the Mission with regard to Paramountcy, though maintained that certain adjustments during the interim period were necessary. The Standing Committee also accepted the invitation of the Viceroy to set up a Negotiating Committee for consultations with its counterpart in British India so as to determine the method of selecting the representatives of Indian States in the Constituent Assembly."¹¹⁶ This Committee included the Princes and their Ministers, and the States' people had no place in it.¹¹⁷

On the other hand, the General Council of the AISPC met in Delhi during the 8th - 11th June, 1946 to discuss the Cabinet Mission Plan. Nearly 200 delegates from all over India participated in it. Referring to the explosive background in the Indian States, Pandit Nehru, in his presidential address, expressed the view that the immediate problems with which the States' people were faced were : (1) making of an Indian constitution; (2) arrangements for

the interim period; (3) democratisation of the States to bring them up to a common level with the rest of India. He further maintained that Paramountcy should rest in the Union Federal Government and also deplored the fact that the Cabinet Mission had completely ignored the States' people in its deliberations.¹¹⁸ The General Council of the AISPC in its resolution welcomed the declaration of the Princes that they stood for "a free and united India." At the same time, it regretted the way the States' people had been bypassed and ignored by the Cabinet Mission. It complained that the Mission made no reference at all to the internal structure of the States. The General Council also suggested that, in the Constituent Assembly, people's elected representatives and not nominated members should participate.¹¹⁹

The Congress was also critical of the absence of any provision for elected members from the Princely States in the proposed Constituent Assembly. Soon after the publication of the Cabinet Mission Plan, 'the Congress resolved that the Constituent Assembly could not be formed of two conflicting elements and that the manner of appointing the States' representatives for the Constituent Assembly must approximate, so far as possible, to the method adopted in the Provinces'.¹²⁰

In June, 1946 both the Congress and the Muslim League agreed to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan. Hence, both the major parties agreed to participate in the Constituent Assembly to be convened for the framing of a new constitution. But this agreement was bound to be short-lived, since it was based on mutually opposed interpretations of the Plan. The Muslim League reiterated that the attainment of a sovereign Pakistan still remained its unalterable objective and finally withdrew its earlier acceptance of the plan on 29-30th July, 1946. Meanwhile, Lord Wavell set up a Caretaker Government of officials alone on 4th July, 1946.¹²¹ On 12th August, 1946 the Viceroy invited the Congress President Nehru to form an interim Government which did on 2nd September, 1946. On 15th October, the league representatives also joined this Government.¹²²

In the meantime, elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Mission Plan. The Members of the Muslim League who were elected to that body refused to join it. However, the Constituent Assembly with other members met, for the first time, on the 9th December, 1946. It elected Dr. Rajendra Prasad as the President and appointed several committees to draft the different sections of the constitution. On the 21st December, 1946 the Constituent Assembly passed a resolution appointing a Negotiating Committee to negotiate with its counterpart of the Chamber of Princes, regarding the representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly.¹²³

The Muslim League's decision to stay out of the Constituent Assembly 'tended to unsettle the princes' decision also. The Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, was of the opinion that in the absence of agreement between the parties in British India, the Princes should not join the Constituent Assembly. He also held that in order to play the role

of an effective "Third Power" in Indian politics, the rulers should not join the Constituent Assembly immediately but should join it only after had taken a unanimous decision regarding the conditions precedent to their entry to that body.¹²⁴ For this purpose, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes drew up a lengthy resolution which was adopted at a Conference of Rulers at Delhi on the 29th January, 1947. This emphasised certain fundamental propositions, which formed the basis of the States' acceptance of the Mission Plan. The entry of the States into the Union, the resolution stated, should be subject to the prior acceptance by the Assembly Negotiating Committee of certain 'sine qua nons', namely, the preservation of the system of monarchy, right of secession if India became a republic, and recognition of all existing State boundaries.¹²⁵ Some rulers also publicly announced that if these fundamental propositions were not accepted by the Congress, they would boycott the Constituent Assembly. But there was a small group of rulers which did not support the resolution passed at the Delhi Conference. The Ruler of Baroda, for instance, decided to join the Constituent Assembly.¹²⁶

The Negotiating Committee of the Chamber of Princes met the British Indian counterpart for the first time on the 8th February, 1947. But this joint meeting ended without any positive result owing to material differences regarding the scope of the discussions which manifested themselves at the outset. Particularly the Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, insisted that before the talks could proceed, the Assembly would have to accept the terms enshrined in the princes' resolution of 29th January. On the 9th February, 1947 the second joint meeting was convened, where the Chancellor repeated his previous day's stand that 'the Chamber of Princes had laid down certain fundamental propositions on which they wanted satisfactory assurances before they could enter the Constituent Assembly. This time Nehru, on behalf of the Congress, made a conciliatory approach to the rulers. He made it clear that they would not come in the way of the monarchical form of government in the States. The Congress had no idea of changing the States' boundaries. Such change must have the consent of the parties and would not be forced on them. He added that the scheme under the Mission Plan was a voluntary one and there would be no compulsion at any stage. Nehru's statement satisfied the rulers and then the meeting considered the question of filling the 93 seats allotted to the States. It was decided that the method of distribution should be worked out jointly by the Secretaries of the Constituent Assembly and of the Chamber of Princes and the Meeting adjourned till the 1st March, 1947.¹²⁷

Meanwhile, open dissension between the Congress and the Muslim League members in the Interim Government had come to a head. In February, 1947 the League's refusal to join the Constituent Assembly and co-operate in the Cabinet functioning led to a major political crisis. The Congress also demanded resignation of the League ministers and threatened to withdraw its own nominees from the interim government if its demands were not met. This was the immediate context of the Prime Minister Attlee's famous declaration in the House of Commons on the 20th February, 1947. It set a date not later than June 1948 by which Britain would transfer power to responsible Indian hands. It also announced that Viscount Mountbatten of Burma would replace Lord Wavell as Viceroy. With

regard to the States the declaration stated :

"As was explicitly stated by the Cabinet Mission, His Majesty's Government do not intend to hand over their powers and obligations under Paramountcy to any Government of British India. It is not intended to bring Paramountcy, as a system, to a conclusion earlier than the date of the final transfer of power, but it is contemplated that for the intervening period the relations of the Crown with individual States may be adjusted by agreement".¹²⁸

This declaration had a considerable influence on the two Negotiating Committees when they met on the 1st March, 1947. Pandit Nehru argued that Attlee's declaration had introduced an additional element of urgency and it would be a great advantage of the States if their representatives could join the Constituent Assembly during the April session. This joint meeting approved the distribution of seats among the States by the two secretariats and then turned to the method of selecting representatives. A Sub-committee was appointed to consider the question. The general proposition was accepted that fifty percent of the States' representative would be elected and that the Darbars would endeavour to increase the elected quota as much as possible. Nehru also invited the States' representatives to work on the committees set up by the Constituent Assembly.¹²⁹

Lord Mountbatten, the new Viceroy, arrived in India on the 22nd March, 1947 and took charge two days later. As a man of royal blood, cousin no less than to the King-Emperor George the Sixth, already well-known to the Princes from his time as supreme commander and counted a close personal friend by Bikaner, Bhopal and Rampur. Mountbatten appeared tailor-made to guide the States through a period of crisis.¹³⁰ Mountbatten interpreted his mission as one to get the Princes somehow or other into one dominion or other. Unlike his cousin, he did not have much time or admiration for the Indian Princes, whom he regarded as 'semi-enlightened autocrats at their best and squalid degenerates at their worst.' He called them a "bunch of nitwits."¹³¹

Mountbatten proved more decisive and quick in taking decisions than previous Viceroys like Wavell. This was possible because he had been informally given much greater powers to decide things on the spot by the British Government than his predecessors. Apart from this, the formula of freedom-with-Partition was coming to be widely accepted well before Mountbatten took over charge.¹³² Nevertheless, his earnest determination to transfer power by June, 1948 to Indian hands created a deep impression.

The general conference of the rulers was convened at Bombay in the first week of April, 1947. The Chancellor, the Nawab of Bhopal, again reiterated his old stand in a memorandum, stating that the propositions contained in the resolution of 19th January should be taken as a condition precedent to the States' entry to the Constituent Assembly. Sadul Singh, the Maharaja of Bikaner, was opposed to the policy pursued by the Chancellor. In a statement the Maharaja of Bikaner emphasised that "the united front which was required to be put by the States could not be

attained by a policy of 'wait and see' but co-operation with the Constituent Assembly." Besides, this 'wait and see' policy, he held, would give "a loophole to the interested parties to make mischief in every possible way." Yadavindra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala, in another statement, voiced the same views of the Maharaja of Bikaner and deprecated the "sitting on the fence"¹³³ policy of certain rulers. By this time, it became clear that Patiala-Bikaner group had finally made up its mind to join the Constituent Assembly in contravention to the policy of the Chancellor in this matter.

However a formal split was averted by a last minute compromise formula prepared by the Maharaja of Gwalior. A resolution embodying the formula stated that the question of entry to the Constituent Assembly should be a matter for the discretion of individual States after the Assembly had ratified the agreement between the Negotiating Committees of the Chamber and of the Assembly. This resolution was adopted unanimously first by the Conference of the Rulers and later at a joint Conference of Rulers and States Ministers on the 2nd April, 1947. Meanwhile, some rulers accepted Pandit Nehru's invitation to work on the different committees of the Constituent Assembly. The Nawab of Bhopal still tried to persuade the progressive group of Princes not to join the Assembly, but he did not succeed.¹³⁴ This was evident when, on the 28th April, 1947, the representatives of Cochin, Patiala, Baroda, Jaipur, Rewa, Jodhpur and Bikaner took their seats in the Constituent Assembly. With the public defection of these seven important states, the united front of the princely order was, thus, broken up and hence forward the other States gradually followed the suit and joined the Assembly. It has rightly been said that the Bombay Conference 'marked the end to the domination of the Nawab of Bhopal'.¹³⁵

The AISPC met at Gwalior on the 17th and 18th April, 1947. The purpose of the Conference was to pass judgement on the agreement arrived at between the Negotiating Committees for the States' entry to the Constituent Assembly. Finally a resolution endorsing the agreement was passed. In his address to the Conference, Pandit Nehru accused the rulers of having a 'shop-keeper mentality' and declared that any state which did not join the Constituent Assembly would be treated by the country as a hostile State and such a State would have to bear the consequences of being so treated. "Our aim", he added, "at present is to liberate as much of India as we can — half or three fourths and then to deal with the question of independence for the rest."¹³⁶ Lord Mountbatten privately rebuked Nehru both for the substance of his opinion and also for his demagoguery, especially as a Member of the Interim Government who ought not to speak in such terms without Cabinet approval. But Nehru explained that he was speaking in a personal capacity as President of the States People's Conference.¹³⁷ The Muslim League also took strong exception to Pandit Nehru's speech. Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, the Leader of the Muslim League in the Central Executive, declared that the States were perfectly entitled to refuse to have anything to do with the Constituent Assembly. He also declared that "the Congress had no right to coerce the States" and called upon the States "to disregard the idle threat" in Pandit Nehru's speech.¹³⁸

At this juncture, another development with regard to smaller states may be noted. The Attachment Act of 1944 had already integrated a large number of petty Kathiawar estates and jagirs with some big states in the interests of administrative efficiency. Though the enactment of this Act was a right step, yet due to the Princes' opposition, it had left untouched many other smaller states in other regions.¹³⁹ Their grouping in sizable units became once again necessary for the purposes of their representation in the Constituent Assembly and their accession to the Indian Federation. The initiative in the formation of Union of States was first taken by some of the Deccan States in May, 1946 to form a Union of Deccan states. This was followed by a conference of 26 rulers of Eastern India States who met in Calcutta and decided to form a union. The Union of the Deccan states came into being in early 1947. The Smaller states of other regions also followed the suit and began to prepare the draft schemes. However, except for the short lived Unions of the Deccan States, the Simla Hill States and the Eastern States, none of these schemes ever came into existence.¹⁴⁰

Both the Congress and the All India States People's Conference favoured the formation of the Union of states, provided that power was delegated to the people. A Committee appointed by them had recommended the formation of sub-federations of Kerala, Karnatak, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rewa State with all the States of Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand, Malwa States including Gwalior, Sikh States of Punjab and Rajputana States with Ajmer Merwara. As regards the smaller States adjoining the provinces such as Manipur, Tripura and Cooch Behar, it recommended their amalgamation with the provinces. These recommendations were endorsed by the States People's Conference in its Gwalior Conference.¹⁴¹

Meanwhile, the Political Department was busy devising measures for its own liquidation. As a first step, a Conference of Residents and Political Officers was held in the second week of April, 1947, to consider steps for the contraction of Paramountcy and its eventual lapse. Lord Mountbatten inaugurated the meeting and stressed the need for speed. The programme of the Conference was to withdraw Political Agents by the Autumn and Residents by the end of 1947, while the main duties of the Political Department were to be wound up by the end of March, 1948.¹⁴² Besides, one of the steps proposed by the Political Department was to hand over the Crown Representative's forces to the various States.¹⁴³

After a rapid series of interviews with political leaders between 24th March and 6th May, 1947, Mountbatten decided that the Cabinet Mission Plan had become untenable, and announced his revised Plan, on the 3rd June, 1947; which was approved by the British Government on the 31st May and was accepted by the Congress, League and Sikh leaders on the 2nd June, 1947.¹⁴⁴ According to the Plan of 3rd June, the British Government would relinquish power to Governments of India and Pakistan on the basis of Dominion Status, and this relinquishment of power would take place much earlier than June, 1948. In regard to the States, the Plan laid down that 'the policy of His Majesty's

Government towards the Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission memorandum of 12 May, 1946 remained unchanged.¹⁴⁵

On the 3rd June evening, Lord Mountbatten met the Members of the States' Negotiating Committee and explained the Plan to them. He advised the rulers that 'in coming to their decisions, the rulers should cast their minds forward ten years and consider what the situation in the country, and in the world as a whole, was likely to be then'. The princes and their representatives finally accepted the plan. On the 4th June, 1947, Lord Mountbatten also elucidated the plan at a press conference. Replying to a question, he said that it was not the intention of His Majesty's Government to offer dominion status on any State which declared it self-independent. At this conference he also gave the first indication that the date of 'the transfer of power could be about 15 August, 1947.'¹⁴⁶ It is important to note that Mountbatten had already warned the British Government in May, 1947 that "if we admit that the Indian States or even some of them can be admitted as separate Dominions into the Commonwealth we shall be charged with disintegrating India and Congress is likely to withdraw its application for Dominion Status. The solution seems to be to take the line that we cannot accept as members of the Commonwealth any of the Indian States unless they first associate themselves with one of the two Dominions of British India. In that case their relation with the Crown could be through one of the Governor-Generals..."¹⁴⁷

With the announcement of the Plan, the Nawab of Bhopal resigned the Chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes on the 3rd June, 1947. He said in his letter of resignation that "as soon as Paramountcy is withdrawn, the Bhopal State would be assuming an independent status. Another reason was that the Chamber as now constituted, formed part of a constitutional machinery which, in my opinion, will now become *functus officio*."¹⁴⁸ Yadavindra Singh, the Maharaja of Patiala, then Pro-Chancellor, took over the chancellorship. The Chamber lingered on under his token leadership until the 14th August, 1947, but after April it steadily lost members and prestige. The Standing Committee later adopted a resolution to the effect that, with the lapse of paramountcy, the Chamber of Princes would cease to exist. In June, 1947 the chamber started to 'wind down its operations and dispose of its assets. The Chamber, with one exception, did not meet again as a body.'¹⁴⁹

The Political Department had always been distrusted by the Congress leaders. They regarded it as a buttress and an instrument of British Power in Princely India and as being hostile to democracy in the States, especially to the Congress-organised States People's Conference. In the new phase they also believed the Political Department to be working for an independent future for the States, which they could not accept. Lord Mountbatten shared these latter's suspicions.¹⁵⁰ His Political Adviser, Sir Conrad Corfield was known as a Princes' man. While Corfield first encountered the States as a junior member of Reading's viceregal touring party in 1921, he became an ardent believer in the myth of the 'real India' and a life long admirer of darbari culture. He devoted his final phase of his

career to seeing that the Princes were given a fighting chance to retain their patrimony.¹⁵¹ In the circumstances of 1946 this meant convincing Wavell and through him the Labour Government that the British had an obligation to arrange "reasonable terms for accession to the new Federation" for those which wished to join, and to lend recognition and assistance to those which didn't."¹⁵² Not long after the 3rd June Plan Lord Mountbatten was led to believe that he and his Political Adviser Corfield were pulling in different directions, and relations between the two men were gradually strained. Thereafter, he largely ignored the Political Department in his plans and efforts for the constitutional future of the States.

Meanwhile, it had been reported that the Political Department was destroying all records, winding up residencies and handing over cantonment areas and the Crown forces to various States. These reports alarmed the Congress leaders like Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel. On the 11th June, 1947 the Standing Committee of the All-India States People's Conference passed a resolution demanding that either the Political Department and its agencies should be handed over to the new Government of India or a new Central Department should be created immediately to discharge the functions of the Political Department.¹⁵³

Against this Background a meeting was held on the 13th June, 1947 at the Viceroy's House over which Mountbatten presided and Nehru, Jinnah, Baldev Singh, Conrad Corfield were among those present. Mountbatten in his inaugural speech said that Paramountcy should lapse as soon as the transfer of power took place. The lapse of Paramountcy would automatically involve the closing down of the Political Department. At this meeting it was agreed that a States Department should be set up to deal with the questions of common interest between the States and the successor governments in British India. The new department would consist of two sections, ready for the partition of the country. As regards the destruction of state records and documents, it was further agreed that while ephemeral records and documents might be destroyed by the residents, the Crown Representative's records might be weeded and sorted out with the assistance of experts appointed for the purpose by the Member for Education in the Interim Government.¹⁵⁴

The rulers generally wanted to make the best of the bargaining position in which the lapse of paramountcy placed them. "The decision therefore", Menon said, "that with the withdrawal of the British, the Indian states comprising two fifth of the land must return to a state of complete political isolation was fraught with the gravest danger to the integrity of the country."¹⁵⁵ The very concept of the lapse of paramountcy was, however, inadmissible to both the Congress and the AISPC. The Congress became particularly repugnant after some States like Bhopal, Hyderabad and Travancore declared that after the lapse of Paramountcy, their States would be independent and sovereign. These states were dreaming of their independence without bothering about geographical and economic compulsions and implications of such a move. Besides, many states still hoped to form a Third State - a Statistan.¹⁵⁶ The Maharawal of

Dungarpur "had hoped that after the creation of Pakistan, the states might have been allowed to form an independent union of their own - a statistan, a third dominion."¹⁵⁷

Provoked by these statements, Jawaharlal Nehru declared at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee on the 15th June, 1947 that, 'there is a certain inherent Paramountcy in the Government of India which cannot lapse - an inherent Paramountcy in the dominant State in India which must remain because of the very reasons of geography, history, defence etc.'¹⁵⁸ He also maintained that the independence of any such State was not to be recognised by India and that the recognition of such independence by any foreign power would be considered an unfriendly act".¹⁵⁹ At the same meeting, Gandhiji said, "They (the princes) must recognize the Paramountcy of the Indian people as they had accepted the Paramountcy of the British Power".¹⁶⁰ The All-India Congress Committee, at the same meetings, passed a lengthy resolution repudiating the claim of any State to declare independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India.¹⁶¹

Likewise, after the acceptance of the 3rd June Plan, the Standing Committee of the States People's Conference, at a meeting on the 11th and 12th June, 1947 resolved that the conception that any State was free to go out of the Union of India would reduce India to anarchy. None of the States was completely independent at the time of the advent of British Power - in some way or other they had all recognized and submitted to the suzerainty of the Mughal Empire, the Maratha Supremacy, the Sikh Kingdom or later, the British Power. It had to be recognised that on the lapse of Paramountcy, sovereignty would reside in the people of the States. If any State refused to join the Constituent Assembly of India, the Constituent Assembly should allow the people of that State to elect their own representatives.¹⁶²

Jinnah, however, contested the views of Nehru and the All-India Congress Committee. His view was legalistic. In a statement issued on the 17th June, 1947 he said that the choice of the States was not limited to joining one or other Constituent Assembly; they were free to remain independent if they so desired. According to him, the States would be independent sovereign States on the termination of Paramountcy.¹⁶³

The proposal to create a States Department to deal with the States was formally approved by the Interim Government at its meeting held on 15th June, 1947. On 27th June a press communique was issued allotting this Department to Sardar Patel and V.P. Menon was to be the Secretary.¹⁶⁴ Mountbatten was much relieved when Nehru asked Patel to take charge of the new department. "I am glad", he wrote in his Personal Report on 27th June, "that Nehru has not been put in charge of the new States Department. Patel...is essentially a realist and very sensible. ... Even better news is that V. P. Menon is to be the Secretary".¹⁶⁵ It became evident that a sense of conflicting loyalties, interests and policies strained the relations between the States Department and the Political Department during the

seven weeks of their joint existence.

V. P. Menon held a position of extraordinary influence at this time. While he assumed the secretaryship of the States Department on 5th July, 1947, he remained Constitutional Adviser to the Viceroy and was one of the latter's principal consultants on the drafting of the Indian Independence Bill. Menon had earned the complete confidence both of Lord Mountbatten and of Sardar Patel. Though his relations with Jawahar Nehru were less intimate, he had been brought into close contact with the Prime Minister in the negotiations over the new plan for the transfer of power, and in that quarter also he was a valuable mediator.

Menon realised that the prospect of some States striving for an independent existence would balkanise India and the situation had to be carefully handled. Of the 565 States, only 14, including Kashmir, were contiguous with Pakistan.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the problem was of far greater magnitude for India than it was for Pakistan. Menon drew up two standard documents - an Instrument of Accession for Defence, External Affairs and Communications and a Standstill Agreement to continue arrangements in matters of common concern such as customs, currency, railways, irrigation, electric power and high ways during the interim period.¹⁶⁷ Even before he took charge of the secretaryship of the States Department on 5th July, 1947, he had persuaded Patel that Mountbatten's co-operation should be enlisted to solve the problem because 'apart from his position, his grace and his gifts, his relationship to the Royal Family was bound to influence the rulers'. Accordingly, Menon asked Mountbatten for his help in getting the States to accede on three subjects. After thinking the matter over, Mountbatten gave his consent.¹⁶⁸ Mountbatten had already got the British Prime Minister Attlee's directive that he should 'aid and assist the States in coming to fair and just arrangements with the leaders of British India as to their future relationships'.¹⁶⁹

According to Copland, 'the main thing which changed Mountbatten's mind about the importance of the States was the realisation that they held the key to a negotiated settlement with the Congress'.¹⁷⁰ Early in May, 1947, Reform Commissioner V. P. Menon informed him that the accession of the States - whose combined area and population nearly matched that of the districts claimed by the League for Pakistan — might help to reconcile the still edgy Congress to the necessity of partition. Convinced by this argument¹⁷¹ the Viceroy at once tried it out on Nehru and Patel.¹⁷² Mountbatten found the Congress leaders much more amenable to his proposal for an early transfer of power on the basis of dominion status, once he made clear to them that he would not support any continuing relationship between Great Britain and the non-acceding States.¹⁷³ In this way the rulers became unwittingly entangled in a game played for bigger stakes : preservation of the Empire-Commonwealth.¹⁷⁴

From the beginning of July, 1947 the Viceroy made the States his "primary consideration".¹⁷⁵ "As soon as I turned my attention to the problem of the States", he wrote later, "it became evident to me that their independence

... would not be worth a moment's purchase unless they had the support of one or other of the Dominions."¹⁷⁶ The solution to the states' problem became now obvious to him. He had to devise such a form of accession which was to satisfy both the Congress and the Princes. And it was provided by Menon's three subjects accession plan.

On the day the States Department was formally inaugurated, i.e., 5th July, 1947, Sardar Patel issued an important statement, defining the policy of the Government of India towards the States. The statement appealed to the rulers to accede on three subjects, "in which the common interests of the country are involved" and explained that the states would have "an autonomous existence" in the Indian Union. It continued, "... I should like to make it clear that it is not the desire of the Congress to interfere in any manner whatever with the domestic affairs of the States. They are not enemies of the Princely order but, on the other hand, wish them and their people, under their aegis, all prosperity, contentment and happiness. Nor would it be my policy to conduct the relations of the new Department with the States in any manner which savours of domination of one over the other.... I hope the Indian States will bear in mind that the alternative to co-operation in the general interest is anarchy and chaos which will overwhelm great and small in common ruin if we are unable to act together in the minimum of common tasks."¹⁷⁷ According to Hodson, this conciliatory statement displayed Sardar Patel's "realism and statesmanship, qualities desperately needed in India's crisis and too often missing".¹⁷⁸

On 16th July, 1947, during the debate on the Indian Independence Bill in the House of Lords, Listowel, the Secretary of State for India, said, "We do not of course, propose to recognise any states as separate international entities".¹⁷⁹ This authoritative declaration by the Secretary of State virtually shut the door to independence for every state in India. For it gave the States notice that since the British Government would not recognize their independence, no other Government in the world was likely to do so and thus they would have to opt for either India or Pakistan.

The position, as it stood when the States Department came into existence, was that the Political Department had already sent to the rulers a draft Standstill Agreement and it was proposed to call a conference of rulers to finalise the Agreement. But having regard to the paramount necessity of the establishment of a constitutional relationship between the States and the Dominion, the Government of India felt that a Standstill Agreement would not provide any kind of answer to the problem that confronted them at the time. It was, therefore, decided that the States Department, and not the Political Department, should take the charge of the negotiations with the rulers and that the accession of the States on the three subjects of Defence, External Affairs and Communications should be included in the agenda of the proposed conference. Besides, the task of conducting negotiations with the Princes was entrusted by the Indian Government to Lord Mountbatten, who was then the Crown Representative.¹⁸⁰

Against this background, Lord Mountbatten called a special full meeting of the Chamber of Princes on 25th

July, 1947. He addressed the Chamber of Princes with the object of persuading as many states as possible to accede to one dominion or the other before 15th August, 1947. His speech, which was made without notes, was described by V. P. Menon as "the apogee of persuasion". Mountbatten advised the states to accede on Defence, External affairs and Communications. Defence was 'a matter that a state could not conduct for itself' and 'if you do not link up with one or the other of the Dominions, you will be cut off from any source of supplies of up-to-date arms or weapons'; 'External Affairs is inextricably linked up with Defence'; and 'Communications is really a means of maintaining the life-blood of the whole sub-continent'.

Lord Mountbatten assured the rulers that their accession on the three subjects would involve no financial liability and that in other matters there would be no encroachment on their internal sovereignty. This would be "a tremendous achievement for the States. But I must make it clear that I have still to persuade the Government of India to accept it. If all of you would co-operate with me and are ready to accede, I am confident that I can succeed in my efforts.... If you are prepared to come, you must come before 15th August."¹⁸¹

The States Department had already formulated a draft Instrument of Accession and revised the original draft of the Standstill Agreement prepared by the Political Department. These two drafts were circulated to the rulers at the afore-said meeting held on 25th July. Lord Mountbatten addressed the Chamber of Princes for the first and last time in his capacity as Crown Representative. For the creation of machinery for negotiation, Mountbatten announced the personnel of the Negotiating Committee, consisting of ten rulers and twelve ministers. The Negotiating Committee was split into two sub-committees, one to deal with the Instrument of Accession and the other with the Standstill Agreement. These sub-committees held separate meetings daily at Bikaner House in Delhi between 26th and 31st July, 1947. The drafts of the Instrument of Accession and the Standstill agreement were agreed, with amendments, by the States Negotiating Committee by 31st July, 1947.¹⁸²

The Instrument of Accession took three forms, according to the existing status and powers of the various states. For 140 states with full powers the Instrument caused them to accede to the Dominion of India only for defence, external affairs and communications, without any financial liability. The three subjects were defined in the same terms as in the schedule to the Government of India Act, 1935 listing the matters exclusively reserved for the Federation that was to be set up under the Act. For about seventy states in Kathiawar, Central India and the Simla Hills which had never exercised full powers the standard Instrument of Accession was such as to restrict their future powers to those they already possessed. Finally, for over 300 estates and talukas in Kathiawar and Gujarat, which were not in any proper sense States though ranking as such and being no part of British India, an Instrument was devised on the lines of the common-form accession but reserving all residuary powers and jurisdiction to the Central Government.¹⁸³

In all three cases, the Standstill Agreement was common. It laid down that all agreements and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern specified in the schedule then existing between the Crown and the States should continue until new arrangements were made.¹⁸⁴

On the evening of 28th July, 1947, Mountbatten held a reception for over fifty ruling Princes and a hundred States Representatives, which, Menon said, was "in the nature of a last minute canvassing of voters near the polling booth".¹⁸⁵ "Those of their Highnesses" wrote Campbell-Johnson, "who had not already signified their intention of signing the Instrument of Accession were duly shepherded by the ADCs one by one for a friendly talk with Mountbatten. He in his turn passed them on in the full view of the company to V. P.[Menon], who conducted them across the room to see Patel. There were Maharajas three deep in a semicircle watching this process."¹⁸⁶

The Viceroy also gave a luncheon to several of the leading Princes for the same purpose on 1st August, 1947. "After paying their bread-and-butter respects to Their Excellencies, they [the guests] ran the gauntlet of the ADCs, who helped to form virtual 'Aye' and 'No' lobbies of the rulers on their attitude to Accession".¹⁸⁷ The "No" lobby consisted of "last-ditchers" who wanted to execute Standstill Agreements but wanted to mark time so far as the Instrument of Accession was concerned. To deal with them, the Government of India announced that Standstill Agreements would be entered into only with those rulers who executed the Instrument of Accession. "The process of getting Instruments of Accession signed", Menon said, "involved considerable persuasion, strain and anxiety".¹⁸⁸

Lord Mountbatten's technique for inducing the princes to sign instruments of accession may have been too drastic for some people in London, and was certainly not to the likes of his political adviser, Sir Conrad Corfield; 'but he had been given maximum discretion in carrying out the relaxation of Paramountcy, and so had his own way'. According to E.W.R. Lumby, "The solution which Lord Mountbatten so persuasively urged upon the rulers was in the nature of a compromise between those who claimed that on August 15, 1947 the states would become completely independent and those who contended that Paramountcy must pass to the successor governments".¹⁸⁹

A Foreign Office Circular of 6th August, 1947, which was issued for the chiefs of British diplomatic missions pointed out that since the British Government did not propose to recognise any Indian State as a separate international entity, 'it would be most unfortunate if any power gave such recognition to any state at this stage as this would prejudice the negotiations now in progress between the Indian States and the new dominions'. The United States Government had received reports that certain Arab States may be contemplating diplomatic recognition of certain Indian States after 15th August, 1947. The State Department had accordingly instructed their diplomatic official in Egypt and the Middle East to inform those Governments that the United States shared the opinion of the British Government that Indian States should associate themselves with one or other of the new Dominions, and that the

United States had no intention of according any Indian State diplomatic recognition.¹⁹⁰ Significantly Lord Mountbatten wrote to Listowel on 8th August, 1947 that he could not help feeling that things were moving so fast in India that "the India Office have been unable to keep abreast of them." He argued that the promise of independence to the States based on the Cabinet Mission's memorandum 'would not be worth a moment's purchase' unless they had the support of one of the new dominions, principally "because of the wide gap that prevails between the rulers and the ruled". He reiterated his already well-remembered admonition that it was paramount importance to secure the good-will of independent India. "The Indian Dominion", he went on, "consisting nearly of three fourths of India, and with its immense resources and its important strategic position in the Indian Ocean, is a Dominion which we cannot afford to estrange for the sake of the so-called independence of the States. I have no doubt that you will agree with me that we should leave no stone unturned to convince the Indian Dominion that although we had to agree to the plan of partition, we had no intention to leave it balkanised or to weaken it both internally and externally".¹⁹¹

In the meantime, Bhopal-Indore group did attempt to negotiate with foreign powers with a view to getting international recognition to their States as independent and sovereign States. But soon they realised that they would not survive for long outside the new Dominions, especially after the accession of Travancore along with many States and in view of the strong public reaction to their declaration. Bhopal ultimately acceded to India. Gradually, even the "last-ditchers" like Dholpur, Indore, Bharatpur, Bilaspur and Nabha signed the Instrument of Accession with the Indian Union.¹⁹² Thus, by 15th August, 1947, apart from the few states which clearly had to accede to Pakistan Dominion, all the states except Junagarh, two small states under the Muslim rulers of Kathiawar, Kashmir and Hyderabad, had acceded to Indian Dominion. In spite of the major success of the States Department under the leadership of Sardar Patel in acceding nearly four hundred forty states with India before 15th August, 1947, at least two largest states Kashmir and Hyderabad, exercised their legal right under the Indian Independence Act and opted for autonomy. Protracted negotiations had been on to bring all those states strategically important and non-important within the fold of Indian Dominion.¹⁹³

On the other hand, there had also been so many other occurrences taken place in different parts of the country relating to the Princely resistance movement against the accession. During 1949-50 urgent measures and hectic efforts were under-taken to bring the different princely states under the fold of the Government of India. For instance, some states like Punjab Hill States, Bilaspur, Tripura, Manipur, Cooch Behar etc. were integrated with India as Commissioner's Provinces, and some small states or estates of Southern and Eastern part of India had been viewed as isolated states and were merged with bigger States like Madras, East Punjab, United Provinces, Assam etc.¹⁹⁴ In order to occupy the vacuum left by the departing British, the Indian Government had already sent regional commissioners to Rajkot, Kolhapur, Rajputana, Central India, Baghelkhand, Bundelkhand and the Eastern states.¹⁹⁵ Besides, The States Department had to be much more cautious owing to the continuous discontent among the rulers

of the States like Hyderabad, Baroda, and Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁹⁶ By November, 1949, only six out of 552 states that had acceded to India, viz, Hyderabad, Mysore, Bhopal, Tripura, Manipur and Cooch Behar remained as separate entities within their old boundaries.¹⁹⁷

The policy of integration pursued by the Government of India had made further progress. As a result, the Princely states, numbering 552, were integrated with the Dominion of India by 1950. There were three major forms in which all those States had been integrated with the Dominion of India. Each of these forms had been adopted according to size, geography and other factors relating to each state or group of states. By 1950, as a result of the application of the three fold integration scheme, (a) 216 States covering an area of 108,739 square miles with a population of 19.158 millions had been merged in British Indian Provinces; (b) 61 States covering an area of 63,704 square miles with a population of 6.925 millions had been converted into seven Centrally administered areas such as Himachal Pradesh, Kutch, Bilaspur, Bhopal, Tripura, Manipur and Vindya Pradesh and (c) 275 States covering an area of 215,450 square miles with a population of 34.7 million had been integrated to create five Unions of States, viz., Saurashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Bharat, Patiala and East Punjab States Union (PEPSU) and Travancore-Cochin. This brought the total number of states affected by integration scheme to 552 covering an area of 387,893 square miles with a population of 60.783 millions.¹⁹⁸ It may be added here that Cooch Behar having an area of 1,321 square miles with a population of 6,41,000 was first taken over as the Chief Commissioner's Province on 12th September, 1949 and finally was merged in the Province of West Bengal on 1st January, 1950.

Some scholars like Philip Ziegler have called Mountbatten's coup in getting the States to accede an 'astounding' accomplishment.¹⁹⁹ E.W.R. Lumby has opined that 'Lord Mountbatten's policy achieved its objects of effecting a graceful demission of the obligations of Paramountcy and avoiding accusations of betrayal by the Princes. More important, it soon became clear that he had contributed to preventing the emergence of more than two successor States; Hyderabad was unable to hold out for long; Kashmir had to accept de facto partition in accordance with the geographical compulsions which he had emphasized'.²⁰⁰ While it was undoubtedly a considerable feat, it had also drawbacks. Most importantly, the scheme of three subject accession was inherently flawed, for while it met then the Government's most urgent need to prevent the balkanisation of the country, it failed to address the on-going concern of the Congress about the viability of the States and the future of the monarchical system. 'In this respect', Copland maintained that, "the real architects of the final solution to the problem of the States ... were not Mountbatten and Attlee but V. P. [Menon] himself and his boss at the States Department, Vallabhbai Patel".²⁰¹ James Manor also expressed the same view that 'there can be no doubt that within a few months of the transfer of power Patel and Menon had succeeded in imposing the centre as a Paramount Power over the States'.²⁰²

On the other hand, Vanaja Rangaswami has argued that the story of integration of the States was not the

mere result of a 'tour de force' of Vallabhbhai Patel and V. P. Menon or the result of the naive outpourings of a Nehru as the President of the AISPC, but it was the fruit of Gandhian 'real politic' whose figure alone stands out as a colossus in his clear manipulation of the States people's movement as a force towards his main objective on integration. In this Vallabhbhai Patel with a quick appreciation of underlying motives helped him ably to wipe out the six hundred and odd States with their "petty princelings, and their courts and their privileges, and their pomp, and their armed forces and their pedigree and all".^{202*}

Thus, between 1947 and 1949 all 552-odd ruling Princes in India were pensioned off and their so-called princely States, varying in size from 84,471 square miles (Kashmir) to 0.29 square miles (Vejonness), were submerged in the body politic of the Indian Union. As a practical system of governance, monarchy in India disappeared. By any standards 'integration' represented a major watershed. Some Indian historians like R. C. Majumdar have rightly called the 'integration' of the states a 'great ... revolution'.²⁰³

Many scholars agree that the position of the princes was so weak that their demise had been long on the cards. By guaranteeing them protection against external aggression as well as internal revolt, the British Government had secured their dependence on itself. As a result, after 1857 Indian princes had lost their militancy and were duly perpetuated by the British Government for its own strategic reason as a social support to its rule. But this policy weakened the sense of responsibility and moral fibre of the rulers. They were generally a decadent class more interested in a life of luxury for themselves than in the welfare of their subjects. The standard of civil liberties in the States was low and the people of the States could not remain unaffected by the wind of change blowing in British India.

The Princely States had different level of institutional developments, particularly they had no experience with political parties, representative institutions, democratic elections and other attributes of modern state politics. On the other hand, the British Provinces had been acquainted with all these experiences. Moreover, the Princely States displayed different level of socio-economic development, and specialized and diversified experience of society, economy and polity formation. Thus the Princely States were generally looked upon as backward compared to the advanced level of development in British India.

During the debate on the Indian Independence Bill in the House of Commons on 10th July, 1947, Lester Hutchinson, one member, said that the Indian States were 'remarkable examples of the survival of the unfittest. They would not have existed without the might of the Paramount Power behind them'. Woodrow Wyatt thought that 'the worst thing' which the British Government ever did in India was to take away from the people of the States the ultimate sanction of revolt and rebellion against a bad ruler.²⁰⁴ Before the States Department was set up, Sardal Patel had told

Lord Mountbatten not to bother about the States because after the transfer of power the people of the States would rise, depose their rulers and throw in their lot with the Congress.²⁰⁵ L. M. Bhatia has rightly said, "They [the Princes] had become an anachronistic counter - weight to nationalism".²⁰⁶ James Manor also said, "Long before 1947", further said "princely India had become a hopeless anachronism, a British piece on a chessboard, to be sacrificed when the game was up. Patel and Menon deserve not the wrath of the British but rather their gratitude for allowing a graceful exit from an unhappy predicament".²⁰⁷

We must also recognise the considerable role played by the potential presence of mass pressures in the rapid integration of the States. Thus recalcitrant Princes were forced to form the Eastern States Union in December, 1947 in the face of powerful Praja Mandal agitations in Orissa States. Muslim ruler of Junagarh who tried to join Pakistan was brought to heel by a combination of popular agitation with Indian police action. The Mysore State Congress launched a powerful 'Mysore Chalo' agitation in September, 1947 which led the State substantially towards a democratic direction in October, 1947. V. P. Menon persuaded the Travancore Dewan C. P. Ramaswami Iyer to give up his dream of continuing his personal power through the 'American Model' by pointing to the 'Communist menace'. The Telengana armed struggle weakened the Nizam and also provided one important reason for military intervention in Hyderabad.²⁰⁸

On the other hand, some authors like A. R. Desai have pointed out that 'the elimination of the States brought about through the policy of negotiation and bargain between the Princes and the Government of the Indian Union and not by means of the plebiscites of the people of the States had some undesirable consequences. It created among other things the problem of Kashmir which loomed large on the Indian political scenario'.²⁰⁹

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12. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.36.
13. Hodson, H. V. : op. cit., p.55.
14. Menon, V. P. : op. cit., pp.37-38.
15. Hodson, H. V. : op. cit., p.55.
16. Menon, V. P. : op. cit., p.39.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*, p.40.
19. Phadnis, Urmila; op. cit., pp.108-109.
20. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.40-41.
21. *ibid.*, p.41.
22. Copland, Ian : The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1927-1947, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.156.
23. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., p.52.
24. Menon, V.P. ; op. cit., pp.41-42.
25. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.125.
26. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.42.
27. *ibid.*, pp.42-43.
28. Gandhi, M.K. : The Indian States' Problem, Ahmedabad, Navajivan Press, 1941, p.104.
29. *ibid.*, p.101.
30. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.43.
31. Times of India, Bombay, 25 January, 1939.
32. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., pp.127-128.
33. The States People, Vol.1, No. 6, March 1939, p.12.

34. Copland, Ian : op. cit., pp.168-170.
35. *ibid.*, p.173.
36. Jeffrey, Robin (ed) : People, Princes and Paramount Power - Society and Politics in the Indian Princely States, Introduction, Oxford University Press, 1978, p.22.
37. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.43-44.
38. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.124.
39. *ibid.*, p.110.
40. *ibid.*, pp.110-111.
41. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.44.
42. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., p.56.
43. Lumby, E.W.R. : 'British Policy Towards the Indian States, 1940-47', in Philips, C.H. and Wainwright, M.D. (eds.), op. cit., pp.96, 102. Confer also Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.44.
44. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.44. The Hindu Mahasabha was the only political organization which had all along supported the federal scheme. Loc. cit.
45. Wylie, Sir Francis : op. cit., p.517.
46. Moore, R. J. : The Crisis of Indian Unity, 1917-1940, Oxford University Press, 1974, p.316.
47. Jain, M.S. : 'Reduction of a Rectangle to a Triangle : New Perspective on the Partition of India.' in Ramakant and Rajan Mahan (eds.) : India's Partition : Preludes and Legacies, Rawat Publications, Jaipur & New Delhi, 1998, pp.332, 334.
48. *ibid.*, pp.323-324.
49. Sarkar, Sumit; Modern India, 1885-1947, Macmillan, First Published 1983, Reprint 2000, pp.375-376.
50. Chandra, Bipan and et al : India's Struggle For Independence, Penguin Books, 1989, p.450.
51. Sarkar, Sumit : op. cit., p.375.
52. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.45-46.
53. The Indian National Congress, 1939-40, being the resolutions passed by the Congress, the All India Congress Committee and the Working Committee during the period between March, 1939 to January, 1940. The evidence is cited in Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.135.
54. *ibid.*, p.46.
55. Sumit Sarkar held this view that in the Lahore resolution of 23 March, 1940 'neither Pakistan nor Partition were explicitly mentioned'; - Sarkar, Sumit : Modern India, op. cit., p.379.
56. Jain, M.S. : op. cit., p.337.
57. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.46.
58. Sarkar, Sumit : op. cit., pp.377-378.
59. *ibid.*, pp.384-385.
60. Burke, Samuel Martin and Quraishi, S.A. : The British Raj in India : An Historical Review, Karchi, Oxford University Press, 1995, p.565.
61. However, a copy of Draft Declaration was already being supplied to the Princes and Political parties in India. - Coupland, R : The Cripps Mission, Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1942, P.29. The evidence is cited in Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.135.
62. Loc. cit.
63. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.48.

64. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : Constitutional Relations between Britain and India : Transfer of India : 1942-47, the Cripps Mission, Vol.1. London, 1970, p.575.
65. *ibid.*, pp.48-49. This Princes' delegation consisted of the Chancellor (the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar), the pro-Chancellor (the Maharaja of Bikaner) and the Maharaja of Patiala. The Nawab of Chhattari represent the Nizam - Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.136.
66. Menon, V.P. : pp.49-50.
67. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.137.
68. Corfield, Conrad : The Princely India I Knew, Madras, 1975, p.126. Corfield a member of the Indian Political Service, retired after rising to the post of Political Adviser to the Crown Representative.
69. *ibid.*, p.366.
70. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.52.
71. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.51.
72. In a statement dated April 13, 1942, Gandhiji while commenting on the Cripps' proposals as 'ill-fated' maintained that "the proposals contemplated the splitting up of India into three parts, each having different ideas of Governance". Quoted in Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.138.
73. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.139.
74. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.52.
75. *ibid.*, p.53.
76. Chandra, Bipan, and et al : India's Struggle For Independence, *op. cit.*, pp.369-370.
77. Handa, R.L. : History of Freedom Struggle in Princely States, Central News Agency, New Delhi, 1968, p.209.
78. Copland, Ian : *op. cit.* p.183.
79. *ibid.*, p.185.
80. Linlithgow to Amery, 24 August, 1942, Transfer of Power, Vol.II, *op. cit.*, p.814.
81. Copland, Ian : *op. cit.*, pp.186-187.
82. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.55.
83. Copland, Ian : *op. cit.*, p.197.
84. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.55.
85. *ibid.*, p.56.
86. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, p.404.
87. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.* pp.56-57.
88. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, p.416.
89. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.57.
90. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, pp.145-146.
91. *ibid.*, pp.146-147.
92. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, pp.417-418.
93. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.57.
94. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, pp.152-153.
95. Menon, V.P. : pp.57-58.
96. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.147.
97. Copland, Ian : *op. cit.*, p.218.
98. Mansergh, Nicholas (edi.), *op. cit.*, London, 1970-83, Vol. VI, p.328.

99. *ibid*, Vol. IX, 1980, p.400.
100. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, p.422.
101. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.58.
102. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, p.428.
103. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, pp.58-59.
104. *The Hindu*, April 10, 1946, It is quoted in Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.154.
105. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.154. It should be noted that the author here mentioned that that policy was stated by Sir Stafford Cripps, but according to the Menon, it was stated by Lord Pethick Lawrence.
106. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.59. On the 2nd April, 1946, Lord Pethick Lawrence declared that if British India became independent, Paramountcy would come to an end and the British Government would not keep any troops in India for internal order. Therefore, as the Crown would become unable to carry out its part of the treaty obligations the States would naturally be released from their obligations under those treaties. - *ibid*, pp.59-60.
107. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.155.
108. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.61.
109. *ibid*, p.62.
110. *ibid*, pp.62-63.
111. The Cabinet Mission Plan confronted Jinnah with a choice between a 'moth - eaten' Pakistan and a loose, three-tire confederal structure in which Muslims would dominate the N.W. and N.E. province of a still-united country. According to the Mission, a full-fledged Pakistan was impossible, since it would include a very large number of Non-Muslims (48.3% in Bengal and Assam, for instance). 'The alternative suggested was a weak centre controlling only foreign affairs, defence and communication with the existing provincial assemblies being grouped into three sections while electing the Constituent Assembly. The sections would have the power to set up intermediate level executives and legislatures of their own- Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, pp.429-430.
112. Cabinet Mission : Statement, 16 May, 1946. It has been quoted in Mansergh, Nicholas : The Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, *op. cit.*, p.585.
113. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, pp.63-64.
114. Papers relating to the Cabinet Mission to India, 1946, Delhi, Government of India Press, 1946, pp.31-32. Confer also Ian Copland, *op. cit.*, p.222
115. *ibid.*, pp.19, 31.
116. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.67.
117. Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.164. The Negotiating Committee consisted of the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor, the Maharaja of Patiala, the pro-Chancellor, Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, Maharaja of Dungarpur, Sir. Mirza Ismail (Hyderabad), Sir. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Mysore), Sir. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyer (travancore), Sir. Sultan Ahmad. (Constitutional Adviser to the Chancellor) and Sardar K. M. Panikhar (Bikaner). *Loc. cit.*
118. Mitra, N,N, : The Indian Annual register, Vol.I, 1946, (Calcutta, Annual Register Office, n.d.) p.213.
119. *ibid*, p.214.
120. Indian National Congress : Being the resolutions passed by the Congress. The All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee during March, 1940 to September, 1946. (Allahabad, AICC, n.d.) p.159. It is quoted in Phadnis, Urmila : *op. cit.*, p.161.
121. Sarkar, Sumit : *op. cit.*, pp.430-431.
122. Menon, V.P. : *op. cit.*, p.68.

123. Loc. cit.
124. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., pp.164-165.
125. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.241.
126. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.69-70.
127. *ibid.*, pp.70-71.
128. *ibid.*, p.71.
129. *ibid.*, pp.71-72.
130. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.246.
131. Mosley, Leonard : The Last Days of the British Raj, Bombay, First Jaico Edition in India, 1961, p.178.
132. Sarkar, Sumit : op. cit., p.447.
133. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.72-73, and Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.170.
134. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., pp.170-171.
135. Copland, Ian : op. cit., pp.247-248.
136. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.172.
137. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., pp.358-359.
138. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.76.
139. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.176. It should be noted here that the British Government submitted the Attachment Bill to the Parliament and it became an Act in early 1944. As a consequence, all the estates and taluks of Gujarat and Western India were merged with the neighbouring States. Collectively this area covered about 7,000 square miles with a population of 8 lakhs and an annual revenue of about Rs. 70 lakhs. - *ibid.*, p.141. Confer also Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.55.
140. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.177. Confer also Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.76-77.
141. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.177.
142. Corfield, Sir Conrad : op. cit., p.151.
143. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.77.
144. Sarkar, Sumit : op. cit., p.448. In this connection Conrad Corfield said that, "Lord Mountbatten was carrying out his 'Dutch Auction' with the Indian Politicians. Jinnah's price included partition and an independent Pakistan. The Congress had to pay his price in order to obtain an early transfer of power. So Lord Wavell's refusal to bisect India was jettisoned." - Corfield, Conrad : op. cit., p.151.
145. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.77-78.
146. *ibid.*, pp.78, 81.
147. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : Transfer of Power, Vol. X, op. cit., p.970.
148. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.81-82.
149. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.246.
150. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., p.359.
151. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.216. Copland also expressed the view that Conrad Corfield 'generally has had a bad press from historians, but much of what has been said about him is inaccurate. Wylie, whose ideological outlook was quite different, described him as 'a Resident of real quality who misses very little and on whose percipience and judgement His Excellency can, I think, rely absolutely.' Besides, while old-fashioned and conservative, Corfield was never a defender of Princely oppression or an apologist for naked autocracy. He supported fully his predecessor's rough stand against Rewa. Loc. cit.

152. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : The Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, op. cit., p.1229.
153. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.83.
154. *ibid*, pp.83-87. During the proceedings Nehru and Jinnah had sharply differed on the constitutional status of the States. Jinnah asserted that 'every Indian State was a sovereign state for every purpose except in so far as they had entered into treaties with the Crown.' Nehru said he 'differed altogether'. What were the tests of sovereignty'; he asked. ' One was the capacity for international relations. The states had no such capacity. Another was the capacity for declaring war. The States had no such capacity.' -Loc. cit.
155. *ibid*, p.88.
156. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., pp.179, 183. It may be mentioned here that the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar through his confederation scheme wanted to form such a Third State. *ibid*, p.179.
157. Ashton, Steven R. : British Policy Towards the Indian States, 1905-1939, London, 1982, p.207.
158. Brecher, Michael : Nehru, p.345.
159. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.
160. Pyarelal, Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. II, the Last Phase, p.341.
161. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.87-88.
162. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XI, op. cit., p.283.
163. *ibid*, p.438. In this context, Hodson said that 'For the States indubitably destined for association with Pakistan were very few, and the main object of Jinnah's policy in this sphere was, on the face of it, to secure leverage for Pakistan and embarrass India. Not least was this so in regard to Hyderabad, like Bhopal a Hindu-majority state they therefore supported. Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state with a Hindu ruler, was not a conspicuous bone of contention at this time, Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., pp.360-361.
164. White Paper on Indian States, op. cit., p.33.
165. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., pp.364-366. Abdur Rab Nishtar was appointed to look after the new department for Pakistan, with Mr. Ikramullah as Secretary.
166. Burke, S. M. and Quraishi, S.A. : op. cit., p.570.
167. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XII, op. cit., pp.468-473.
168. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.94.
169. Burke, S.M. and Quraishi, S.A. : op. cit., p.570.
170. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.253.
171. Mosley, Leonard : op. cit., p.192.
172. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XII, op. cit., p.584.
173. *ibid*, Vol. X, p.533.
174. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.254.
175. Mansergh, Nicholas (ed.) : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XIII, op. cit., p.36
176. *ibid*, p.585.
177. *ibid*, Vol. XI, op. cit., p.929. The Statement of 5th July, 1947 had been drafted by V.P. Menon for Sardar Patel. - Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.95
178. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., p.369.
179. Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, Sessions 1946-1947 (10 and 11 Geo. VI), p.814. This is quoted in Burke, S.M. and Quraishi; S.A. : op. cit., p.568.

180. White Paper on Indian States, op. cit., pp.34-35.
181. Mansergh, Nicholas : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XII, op. cit., pp.347-52 (For text of Mountbatten's address).
182. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.104-105.
183. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., pp.370-371.
184. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.106-107.
185. *ibid*, p.113.
186. Campbell-Johnson, Alan : Mission with Mountbatten, Robert Hale Limited, London, First Published 1951, Reprinted 1952, p.144.
187. *ibid*, p.147.
188. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., pp.109-110.
189. Lumby, E.W.R. : op. cit., pp.96,102.
190. Burke, S.M. and Quraishi, S.A. : op. cit., p.574.
191. Mansergh, Nicholas : The Transfer of Power, Vol. XII, op. cit., p.584.
192. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.195.
193. White Paper on Indian States, op. cit., pp.38-39.
194. Chakrabarty, Biman : Political History of Merger of the Princely States : A study of Cooch Behar, Unpublished ph.D. Thesis, the University of North Bengal, 2001, p.28.
195. Phadnis, Urmila : op. cit., p.197.
196. Menon, V.P. : op. cit., p.455. The Privy Purses survived until 1971, when the Government of Mrs. Indira Gandhi stripped the Princes of the titles, privy purses and regal privileges through a constitutional amendment passed in the same year. While moving the constitutional amendment in the Lok Sabha on 1st Sept. 1970 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared, "We are convinced that the indefinite continuance of hereditary titles and customary rights, special privileges and privy purses without any relatable functions and responsibilities, is incompatible with our democratic constitution, the spirit of the times..." — The Years of Endeavour, Selected Speeches of Indira Gandhi, 1969-1972, New Delhi, Publication Divisions, Government of India, 1975, p.63. Confer also, Ramusack, Barbara, N : The Indian Princes and their States, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.278.
197. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.263, Hari Singh, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, acceded to India after raiders from Pakistan invaded the State in October, 1947. Jammu and Kashmir still existed as a separate entity, but after the tribal invasion of October, 1947 and the consequent border war between India and Pakistan it became effectively a partitioned State.
198. White Paper on Indian States, op. cit., pp.39, 58. However, V.P. Menon maintained that by the partition India had lost an area of 364,737 square miles and a population of 81½ millions. But by the integration of the states, India brought in an area of nearly 500,000 square miles with a population of 86½ millions (not including Jammu and Kashmir). — Menon, V.P., op. cit, p.468. (A Consolidated Statement in this Regard has been appended at the end; vide Appendix D - x)
199. Zeigler, Philip : Mountbatten, London, 1985, p.414.
200. Lumby, E.W.R. : op. cit., p.103.
201. Copland, Ian : op. cit., p.261.
202. Manor, James : 'The Demise of the Princely Order - A Reassessment', in Robin Jeffrey (ed.) : People, Princes and the Paramount Power, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1978, p.322.
- 202* Rangaswami, Vanaja : The Story of Integration : New Interpretation, Manohar, New Delhi, First Published, 1981, p.246

203. Majumdar, R.C. : Struggle For Freedom, Bombay, 1969, p.784.
204. Burke, S.M. and Quraishi, S.A. : op. cit., p.574.
205. Hodson, H.V. : op. cit., p.367.
206. Bhatia, L.M. : 'The End of the Princely System', Indo-British Review, A Journal of History, Vol. XV No. 2 December, 1988, p.141.
207. Manor, James : op. cit., p.323.
208. Sarkar, Sumit : op. cit., pp.451-452.
209. Desai, A.R. : Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism, Popular Prakashan Private Limited, Bombay, First Published 1960. Reprinted 1998. p.66.

Appendix C

The Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement under the Leadership of Thakur Pachanan Barman and its Impact

In dealing with the socio-political stirrings of the period under study it is important to take account of a movement that emerged and spread among the Rajbansi Hindus of the Princely State of Cooch Behar and also other districts of North Bengal, particularly Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Dinajpur and Goalpara district in Assam. The movement came to be called the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement by its leaders and participants.¹ This lower caste agitation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries has been considered as 'manifestation of protest against a dominant system of social organisation that imposed disabilities and inflicted deprivation on a subordinate group.'² Social mobility was not a rare phenomenon in British or pre-British India. At different points of times, individuals and groups belonging to the lower castes (jatis) had acquired economic, political and social power. The rise of these people created acute incongruity in the society because their position in the caste hierarchy became utterly incompatible with the eminence they had earned. Such incongruities generated serious social tensions. However, the caste society had developed provisions for accommodating the aspirations of those ambitious individuals and groups and ultimately put them in a higher position as a new caste with higher ritual status. "It is due to the relative flexibility of the caste system," Hitesranjan Sanyal wrote, "that social tensions arising from the rise of people from lower rungs were channelized through movements for upward social mobility and were ultimately neutralized by promotion to higher position within the hierarchy of caste."³

Social mobility became much more pervasive under the British rule which not only altered the political base of the caste system but also struck at the economic foundations of the traditional hierarchical social relationships. But the caste system still prevailed as an important determinant of social behaviour of the Hindus. Those people from lower castes who had improved their economic position taking advantage of the new economic opportunities, demanded a corresponding higher rank in caste hierarchy and organised caste agitations in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. 'Such movements were possible,' according to Sekhar Bandopadhyay, 'because this limited mobility generated greater desire for social upliftment among the lower caste masses and perhaps a greater urge for social equality.'⁴

The background to Rajbansi Kshatriya movement was broadly provided by the social, political and economic changes that occurred under British rule. Over several centuries social mobility involving various autochthonous groups of North Bengal, particularly the Rajbansis and Koches, had been taking place. The British rule brought about major dislocation in the socio-economic life of the rural population resulting in narrowing down of opportunities and increased pressure on available resources.⁵ The British rule also bolstered upper-caste dominance in land and administration.

The introduction of Zamindari and Mouzaduri tenures, English education and berths in administration helped to establish upper-caste cultural and social hegemony over the Koch-Rajbanshis. This also initiated the process of destitution and cultural disintegration among these people.⁶ Services and professions came to be monopolised by upper caste Hindus. At the same time, new opportunities for social mobility were opened up through commercialization of agriculture, improvement of communications and spread of education, though to a very limited extent. These contrary processes generated new social tensions and strivings which partly found expression through the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement.⁷ The movement essentially challenged this hegemony of the upper-castes.⁸ Besides, the colonial government's census operations since 1891 tried to classify each Hindu social group or caste on the basis of social hierarchy recognised by Hindu public opinion also directly contributed to the growth of the movement.

The colonial rulers considered the Rajbansis an uncivilized people. Writing in the early nineteenth century Buchanan-Hamilton observed that the Rajbansis, Koches etc. were 'generally looked upon as low and impure.'⁹ And in the 1870s W.W. Hunter, the colonial scholar - administrator, referred to them as 'semi-aboriginal tribes.'¹⁰ Not merely the British rulers but the high caste Hindus too treated the Rajbansis contemptuously. As it is learnt from the District Census Report for Jalpaiguri for 1891 that the social status of the Rajbansis 'was extremely low, and no high caste Hindu could be induced to take cooked food from their hands or smoke in their 'hookas'.'¹¹

The Rajbansis have, no doubt, a rich and complex history, but it is yet to be written properly. Their history includes the history of the people of Cooch Behar State and other North Bengal districts mentioned above and also of part of Assam. They were once a regionally dominant political power and founded several powerful kingdoms. But their precise origin, status and folk history remain in obscurity. From various accounts mostly left by the colonial administrators and ethnographers, it appears that when the British defeated the Rajbansis they belonged to a semi-tribal community who for a considerable period were settled agriculturists, with regional diversities. Even at that juncture the Rajbansis formed a considerably differentiated peasant society.¹²

The Rajbansis lived in a geographically contiguous region. It is important to note that in 1921 more than 88 percent of their population lived in the princely state of Cooch Behar and the districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri.¹³ As a matter of fact, the Rajbansis were a dominant peasant caste in northern Bengal. In 1911, 89 percent of the Rajbansis who had any occupation were "cultivators." Among 'the cultivators,' though many were share croppers or adhiaars, a substantial section had become rich peasants, enjoying various grades of tenurial rights as Jotedars and Chukanidars. The process of reclamation of the jungle areas in northern Bengal had been the major source of their economic mobility and this resulted in the establishment of some big zamindari houses by the Rajbansis. Later on some of them also took to trade, education and various professions, resulting in an upwardly mobile section among the Rajbansis. Consequently, the Rajbansi community became much less homogeneous.¹⁴

The Cooch Behar society was composed of heterogenous people. The people were, as of now, generally composed of two elements : the Hindus and Musalmans. Amongst them the Rajbansis constituted the most numerous ethnic group in Cooch Behar State. There were also other small tribes like Koch, Mech, Garo residing in Cooch Behar State.¹⁵ The following table shows their number during the period between 1872 to 1931 :¹⁶

	Year						
	1872	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Rajbansis	1,11,125	2,99,458	3,52,409	3,38,299	3,38,623	3,29,268	3,18,846
Koch	-	-	-	-	1317	1261	1230
Mech	-	-	3778	-	-	-	-
Tiyar	-	54152	7	14	4	-	-
Garo	-	-	1261	-	-	-	-

The following tabular statement shows the percentage of the Rajbansis to the Hindu population of the Princely State of Cooch Behar and other four districts of Northern Bengal from 1872 to 1931.¹⁷

Percentage of the Rajbansis to the Hindu population

State or Districts	years					
	1872	1881	1891	1911	1921	1931
Cooch Behar state	86	85	90	85	80	80
Jalpaiguri	70	60	3	58	60	50
Darjeeling	50	25	6	15	12	14
Dinajpur	12	55	8.5	55	52	45
Rangpur	33	50	62	-	58	60

Another table given below shows the percentage of the Rajbansis to the total population of the princely state of Cooch Behar and other four districts of Northern Bengal from 1872 to 1931.¹⁸

Percentage of the Rajbansis to the Population

State or Districts	years					
	1872	1881	1891	1911	1921	1931
Cooch Behar State	20	50	55	56	52	55
Jalpaiguri	33	35	2.5	33	30	33
Darjeeling	24	20	4.5	12	9	9

State or Districts	years					
	1872	1881	1891	1911	1921	1931
Dinajpur	6	25	4.5	24	25	20
Rangpur	5	22	22	–	18	13

From the foregoing tables it is clear that the most predominating component in the population of Cooch Behar State was composed of the Rajbansis. Not only that, the Rajbansis also constituted the most numerous group among the autochthons in the districts of North Bengal. They also constituted the single largest Hinduized social group in the princely state of Cooch Behar and other districts of North Bengal such as Jalpaiguri, Rangpur and Dinajpur. The Rajbansis along with the Paliyas, Deshis and Koches were almost entirely found in the wide stretch of the country extending from the districts of Malda and Purnea to Goalpara in Assam. They as well as the Muslims of North Bengal origin, the majority of whom were most probably 'Islamized' Rajbansis or Koches¹⁹ spoke, a dialect which, according to Grierson, 'is called Rajbansis, and while undoubtedly belonging to the eastern branch [of Bengali language], has still points of difference which entitle it to be called as a separate dialect.'²⁰

The Rajbansis formed a loosely differentiated and amorphous community with very loose adherence to Puranic Hindu faith. Over several centuries, particularly since about the late fifteen century, they were increasingly being exposed to Brahmanical religion. For a quite long time they had been claiming that they represented the traditional Kshatriya caste and they came to be recognised as a distinct Hindu caste or jati by the late nineteenth century. But as a matter of fact, the impact of orthodox religion and of caste-based social practices and rituals upon the Rajbansi community remained very much partial and in many respects superficial even in the early twentieth century. The religious beliefs and practices of the Rajbansis were non-Brahmanical to a great extent. By the late nineteenth century, a sort of sycretism between non-Brahmanical faith and Puranic Hindu faith seems to have been taking place. However, their religious beliefs and rituals, marriage customs, funeral ceremonies and various social practices show that the process of Hinduization was marked by considerable tension and even conflict.²¹

In spite of a long-standing sanskritizing process, Rajbansis' religion is a curious blend of nature worship, Saktism, Vaishnavism, Tantricism and even Sufism. While the Hindu gods and goddesses such as Siva, Vishnu, Kali and Durga were worshipped, a major and significant element in their worship was that of the Pre-sanskritic gods and goddesses. Much of their worship was associated with agricultural operations and the warding off of evil spirits.²² The worship of Balaram and Bishohari (The goddess of snake) was very popular among the Rajbansis. However, Bura Thakur, Bura Thakurani, Dangdhara, Suvachani, Madan-kam (the god of love), and the like, were deities peculiar to this people.²³ Almost all of the these gods and goddesses were non-vedic, non-Smriti and non-Brahman in origin. Offerings were made to Muslim saints like Satya Pir. Many of the ceremonies like Hudum deo puja were magico-

religious in nature.²⁴ Most of the pujas were performed by non-Brahmans, that is, Rajbansi priests called Adhikaris. Ojhas or exorcists belonging to Rajbansi community performed rituals to appease or ward off evil spirits.²⁵ All this shows that the Rajbansis while being drawn into the Hindu fold, continued to retain many non-Bramanical practices and rituals.

There were several types of marriages widely prevalent among the Rajbansi Hindus till the early twentieth century and even much later, which were not permissible in orthodox Hindu house. Divorce was allowed and a loose form of widow remarriage took place. In many cases marriage was merely a matter of mutual consent to live together as man and wife as because the Rajbansi people did not always consider the marriage tie as sacred and inviolable as it should be. Bride price still remained the norm among the Rajbansis. The Union between a widow and a man among the Rajbansis was no marriage at all in the strictest sense of the term and no ceremony was performed on the occasion. When a widow accepted a man to live with him, she, in the vocabulary of the people, was said to do gao gach, and was known as the panchhua wife of the man, who, in his turn, was called her sangna. When a man took possession of a widow apparently by force, the latter was called the dangua wife, but in reality no forcible means had ever to be adopted, and such connections were entered into always by mutual consent. In like manner, when a widow of her own accord entered the house of a man and lived with him, she was called the dhoka (entered) wife.²⁶ From such marriage customs prevalent among the Rajbansis it is apparent that Rajbansis were not by any means fully integrated into Hindu caste society in spite of centuries of sanskritization.

Buchanon - Hamilton who visited Eastern India in the early nineteenth century observed that the Rajbansis were the 'aboriginals of Kamrup and be strongly characterized by their features as belonging to the great eastern race of mankind.' He also noticed that they were called indiscriminately Koch and Rajbansi, although they had introduced numerous distinctions amongst themselves. At that time they appeared to have been recognised as true Sudras by Maithili and Kamrupi Brahmins but not by the Bengali Brahmins.²⁷

There is divergence of opinions among the scholars on the ethnic origin of the Rajbansis. However, most scholars are of the opinion that 'the Rajbansis, the most dominant ethnic group of Cooch Behar State had their origin in the Bodo stock which in its course reflected Austro-Mongoloid tradition The Bodo stock gave birth to different tribal formations such as Koch, Mech, Rava, Tharu and other sub-tribal formations. The Rajbansis of Cooch Behar had their origin in Koch tribal formations. In the process of civil formation the Rajbansis of the State got sanskritized and this dominant ethnic group had experienced a closer touch with two distinctive alien culture sets like Hinduization and Islamization resulting into a cultural mix giving birth to a distinctive mixed variety of cultural fusion.'²⁸ Ranajit Das gupta has pointed out that 'as the ethnic origin of the Koches and Rajbansis is somewhat uncertain, it may be tentatively observed that these groups can be considered as an extension of the Bodo race of Assam and East

Bengal. They were subject to a process of Hinduization and claimed themselves to be Rajbansis, that is, kindred of the royal family.²⁹

However, Rajbansi intelligentsia by and large strongly disagreed with what had been stated above and emphatically denied any affinity between the Rajbansis on the one hand and the Koches, Paliyas and Bodos on the other. Among the Rajbansi scholars the eminent one was Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman who held that Rajbansis and Koches were different communities. Monomohan Roy, Hara Kishor Adhikari, Upendra Nath Barman, Hemanta Barman, Maniram Kabya Bhusan, and many others of the Rajbansi literati also held the same view. They argued that the Rajbansis and Koches formed entirely distinct castes and asserted the Rajbansis' 'mythico-historical claim of a Kshatriya origin'.³⁰

In the early social setting of the North Bengal districts including the Princely State of Cooch Behar, the social status or position of the Rajbansis was not challenged until the influx of a large number of caste Hindu immigrants in the region from other parts of the country. Those Hindu people with a strong sense to casteism started interacting with the indigenous Rajbansis in differential terms.³¹ The immigrant upper caste gentry treated the Rajbansis as 'backward, uncultured and even 'antyaaj''. They used to refer to the Rajbansis as 'bahe', implying their cultural inferiority. The Rajbansis were also regarded as 'ajalchal' and they were not allowed to touch wells of the upper castes. They were not allowed to enter the places of worship or to enter the kitchen in the upper caste households. On the other hand, the Rajbansis used to refer to the outsiders as 'bhatia', meaning an outsider to their land.^{31*} The Rajbansis were not regarded as pure Hindus. The Hindus of Lower Bengal residing in Cooch Behar did not drink water touched by a Rajbansi. In fact, the upper-caste Hindus considered the Rajbansis impure. As a consequence, the position of a Rajbansi had been 'below the Navasaks such as Kamar, Kumar, Goala etc.' Besides, the use of pork and the countenance of a form of widow marriage among the Rajbansis were the most objectionable practices from a Puranic Hindu point of view.³²

The higher caste people particularly the Brahmins were willing to accept the Rajbansis only as belonging to very low caste and naturally they had to suffer all the evils of the caste system.³³ The stigma of untouchability often put some of the well-placed educated members of the Rajbansi community in uncomfortable situation.³⁴ Thus being Hindus, the Rajbansis had ultimately sank to the level of lower castes and got tied to the shackles of the caste system.³⁵ In such a precarious social situation some Rajbansis of the region were going out of the Hindu fold and started embracing other faiths. In order to protest social humiliation, unjust and discrimination against them; and to desist their people from leaving the Hindu fold, a section of educated Rajbansis launched the Kshatriya movement.³⁶ In other words, the movement was born of a protest mentality or an 'attitude of defiance' on the part of the Rajbansis to the social authority of the higher castes who had been instrumental to the functioning of the caste system.³⁷

It should be mentioned here that a Rajbansi bhadralok class was emerged by the late nineteenth century. This Rajbansi elite class was basically an extension of the big landholders class and as such they had strong mooring in their rural society, and their main source of income was earning from land. They assumed the social leadership of their community because of the higher status added by their education and profession. They had the qualification necessary to articulate and represent the cause of their community to the British Government. This elite class also felt more strongly than their rural counterparts the disadvantages and disabilities due to their low caste status assigned by the Hindu society. In schools, colleges, hostels, offices and bar they felt the odium of the caste Hindus. They were outnumbered by the upper caste group in the urban centres and the discriminatory treatment they received made them champion of the social reform movement.³⁸ It is important to note that as early as the nineteenth century, the Rajbanshi leaders basing themselves on Hindu scriptures and epics were setting up their claim to be considered as Kshatriya. Their arguments were that in the hoary past they were known as Haihaya Kshatriyas who being attacked by Parasuram, the Brahman Warrior and Sagar of the Bhrigu dynasty, fled to distant places outside the Aryan territories to escape annihilation (according to some accounts, to Paundra Desh in Bengal and Bihar and, according to other accounts, Kamrup), took shelter among the non-Aryans, remained in cognito and in the course of time lost their Kshatriya characteristics and identity.³⁹ Hence they claimed the title of Bhanga Kshatriyas, which mean, fallen or degenerate Kshatriyas.⁴⁰ The claim received a fillip in subsequent years, particularly in the early decades of the twentieth century and came to be associated with a social reform movement.

In the early nineteenth century, Buchanan Hamilton had noticed the prevalence of legends associating the Rajbansis of North Bengal with the Kshatriyas of the classical age. He also witnessed the beginning of a social movement among the Rajbansis, under the leadership of certain important zamindars such as Mahiram Choudhuri.⁴¹ They had started claiming Bratya Kshatriya status. But there is no account to inform us about what happened to earlier Rajbansi claim to Kshatriyahood.⁴² However, the claim that the Rajbansi Hindus were kshatriyas of Aryan origin, began to take the shape of a movement at the time of the Census of 1891.⁴³ The Census authority gave instructions to the effect that 'the Rajbansi is the same as Koch.' The three groups of people - Rajbansi, Poliya and Koch - were returned under the single ethnic name of Koch. Several leading Rajbansi Zamindars and Jotedars of Rangpur took initiative in voicing protest against this and in forming a 'Rangpur Bratya Kshatriya Jatir Unnati Bidhayani Sabha' in 1891. Harmohan Khajanchi was one such influential Zamindar of Shyampukur in Rangpur district and one of the Rajbansi employees in the Rangpur Collectorate and became the President of that organization.⁴⁴ In 1891, the Rajbansi leaders described themselves as Bratya / Bhanga (fallen) Kshatriyas. They also started demanding official recognition of their new caste name.⁴⁵ They urged F.M. Skrine, then District Magistrate of Rangpur, to recognise Rajbansis as a caste separate from the Koch and to allow them to be enumerated as Kshatriyas in the Census. Mr. Skrine sought the opinion of the 'Rangpur Dharma Sabha', an association of Brahman Pundits. The Dharma Sabha in

its turn, according to Upendranath Barman, the Rajbansi scholar, after consultation with representatives of different schools of Pandit Samaj, important personalities of Hindu society and prominent 'Rajbansi Kshatriyas', gave the opinion that the Rajbansis and the Koches were two entirely different castes, that the former were of Kshatriya origin and that they had been degraded to a Bratya state due to non-observance of Vedic practices. They might be recognized as Bratya Kshatriyas or members of the warrior caste who had temporarily fallen from their high caste. F.M. Skrine made a recommendation to the Census Superintendent to allow Rajbansis to be enrolled as Bratya Kshatriyas against their cast status and also issued a general circular to the effect that the Rajbansis might write their caste as Bratya Kshatriya in all official correspondence. This pacified the Rajbansis and for the time being the movement subsided.⁴⁶

The Kshatriya movement gathered momentum again during the Census operations of 1901. Following the recommendation made by Mr. Skrine, the Rajbansis had expected that their Kshatriya status would be recorded in the census report and that they would be returned as a caste separate from the Koch. But they were greatly disappointed when they found that they were returned under the general head, Koch, a term very much despised by the Rajbansis claiming Kshatriya status, implying that they were the same as Koch. It was also learnt by them that in the 1901 census operations then going on they were to be enrolled as mere Rajbansi and not as Rajbansi Kshatriya. This gave birth to considerable discontent and they urged the concerned authority to accord them the status of Kshatriya caste. But their demand failed to get any positive response and in the 1901 Census the Rajbansis were once more bracketed with the Koch.⁴⁷ Some writers opine that opposition from sections of high caste Hindus was probably an important factor behind the rejection of the demand.⁴⁸ This caused much resentment as well as despair among the Rajbansis.⁴⁹

It was in this background that Rai Saheb Panchanan Barman (1845-1935) assumed the leadership of the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement which gradually spread throughout North Bengal including the Princely State of Cooch Behar.⁵⁰ Needless to mention that Panchanan Barman belonged to the Rajbansi ethnic group. He was originally an inhabitant of the Cooch Behar State. He was born to a Jotedar family in 1272 B.S. (c. 1865) at village Khalisamari, located under Mathabhanga sub-division in the State. His father was Shri Khosal Sarkar, a respectable land holding middle class farmer. Having completed his bachelor's degree from the Victoria College (now called Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal College) situated in Cooch Behar capital town, Panchanan Barman obtained the Master's degree in Sanskrit from the Government Sanskrit College, Calcutta and the degree of Law from Calcutta University in 1898. It deserves mention that he was the first post-graduate (in Sanskrit literature) and the first law graduate amongst the people belonging to the Rajbansi community not only of Cooch Behar State but also of undivided Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Nepal.⁵¹

Panchanan Barman expected an honorable post in the Cooch Behar State administration commensurate

with his academic qualification. But his expectation was belied and he was given the post of Superintendent of the Rajgun Boarding attached to Jenkins School, Cooch Behar. Having realised that no better position would be offered to him in the State, he consequently left for Rangpur, the nearby district and joined the Rangpur Bar and started a career there as a law practitioner in 1901.⁵² He spent the rest of his life at Rangpur dedicating himself to the social upliftment movement of his community - the prime mission in his life. It was through his leadership and best endeavours that the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement succeeded and reached a new height.⁵³

The late nineteenth century and the early decades of twentieth century constituted a period of change and social tension. The socio-economic backwardness of the Rajbansi Hindus and the repeated refusal to accord Kshatriya status to them hurt Panchanan Barman. Even after Panchanan established himself as a highly qualified lawyer, he himself had to suffer humiliating treatment from upper caste Hindus. Thus once while going from the Bar Library to a Court in Rangpur he, by mistake, took the toga (hat) of a Brahman lawyer. Later on after realizing his mistake he wanted to return it, but the Brahman lawyer threw it away and burst out, 'I hate to use a toga used by a Rajbansi.' There were also instances of discrimination being practised by caste Hindus with regard to Rajbansi students staying in hostels.⁵⁴

In this critical background, Panchanan Barman took the initiative in mobilizing the Rajbansi community in striving for a proud Kshatriya identity. Already jealous attempts were being made by some Rajbansi scholars and pandits to compile materials of history, folk tales and folk songs, proverbs and sayings to establish the claim to Kshatriya status. Basing themselves on the Hindu scriptures and Puranas they sought to strengthen their claim.⁵⁵ At the same time, Panchanan Barman put emphasis on the need for social reform. Among the measures emphasized by Panchanan Barman and other Rajbansi leaders were the wearing of the sacred thread, reduction of the days of mourning on the death of either parent from thirty days to twelve days which was the mourning period for high cast Hindus, and change of surname from Das to Barman, Singha and Roy.⁵⁶ Panchanan Barman wrote 'Bratya Mochan Paddhati,' 'Kshatriyopanayam Byabastha' with a view to create more consciousness among the Rajbansis about their kshatriya status.⁵⁷ For his role in awakening the Rajbansis, Panchanan Barman emerged as the most popular and respected leader of his community.

It was under the leadership of Panchanan Barman that prior to the 1911 Census the kshatriya movement gathered momentum. In May, 1910 several hundred Rajbansis, mostly landholders, Jotedars and substantial peasants from different districts of North Bengal, Cooch Behar State and Goalpara in Assam assembled in a conference in Rangpur town. As a result from this conference, the Kshatriya Samiti, an organization of Rajbansi Kshatriyas was formed with Madhusudan Roy, a Lawyer from Jalpaiguri, as President and Panchanan Barman as Secretary. The Conference formulated the aims and objectives of the Samity and laid down the organizational structure.⁵⁸ This

structure consisted of (i) an Executive Committee which was to formulate and implement the Samiti's policies, (ii) a Finance Committee which was to look after the financial matters, and (iii) a Publication and Publicity Committee. The constitution provided for members of three categories : (i) Sadharan or ordinary members, (ii) Pracharak or ganya (distinguished) members, the members who would devote all their time for the work of the Samiti, and (iii) Manya or respectable members.⁵⁹

The immediate objective of the Kshatriya Samiti was to force upon the Census authority their claim of Kshatriya caste status. In its first session in 1910 the members present passed two resolutions reiterating the earlier statements : the Koch and the Rajbansi were different people and decided to communicate it to the Government so that the Rajbansis be enumerated separately and be returned as Kshatriya.⁶⁰ Deputations were sent to the Lieutenant Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam at Dacca and the District Magistrates of Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur with representations supported by the Vyavasthas (sanction) of large number of pundits of Kamrup, Nabadwip, Mithila and Cooch Behar.⁶¹ They also pressed the Superintendent of the 1911 Census operation in Bengal to enumerate the Rajbansis separately from the Koch and to recognize them as Kshatriyas in the Census.⁶² The former request was granted by the census authority without hesitation, 'as there is no doubt,' according to them, 'that at the present day, irrespective of any question of origin, the Rajbansi and Koch are separate castes. But the other request was turned down by them with the remark that 'it was out of question to allow them to be returned by the generic and archaic name of Kshatriya.'⁶³

Following the establishment of the Kshatriya Samiti, in the words of L.S.S. O'Malley, the Superintendent of the 1911 Census operations in Bengal, 'a most persistent agitation was carried on by the Rajbansis of Northern Bengal with the object of being recognized as Kshatriyas by descent. They desired not only to be recorded separately from the Koch, but also to be distinguished by the name of Kshatriya. The Census Superintendent further observed that no part of the 1911 Census aroused so much excitement as the return of castes. There was a general idea that 'the object of the Census is not to show the number of persons belonging to each caste, but to fix the relative status of different caste and to deal with questions of social superiority.' Some frankly regarded the Census as an opportunity that might be taken to obliterate caste distinctions. The feeling on the subject was very largely the result of castes having been classified in the last Census Report (1901) in order of social precedence. This "warrant of precedence" gave rise to considerable agitation. Hundreds of petitions were received from different castes requesting that they might be known by new names, be placed higher in social hierarchy, be recognized as Kshatriyas, Vaisyas etc. The Census authority also pointed out that many castes were aggrieved at the position assigned for them, and complained that it lowered them in public estimation while others thought it a suitable opportunity to advance new names.⁶⁴

It is also learnt from the Census Report of 1911 that the Rajbansis of Northern Bengal and Eastern Bengal

claimed to be entered as Kshatriya, Rajbansi Kshatriya, Kshatriya Rajbansi, Bratya Kshatriya, Patit Kshatriya and Bhanga Kshatriya. The Rajbansis dwelling in the Princely State of Cooch Behar claimed to be returned as Kshatriya Rajbansi and Rajbansi Kshatriya while the Rajbansis in Purnea claimed to be recorded as Bhanga Kshatriya.⁶⁵ However, in the final report of 1911 Census, they were listed as a separate Hindu caste, 'Rajbansi', with 'Kshatriya' in brackets.^{65*} It was pointed out that a comparatively modern symptom of this anxiety for the improvement of social status was the growth of the Caste Samiti or Sabha. Most of these bodies had come into existence since the 1901 Census and especially since the partition of Bengal in 1905. Their main object was, no doubt, to improve the social position of the caste.⁶⁶

The excitement and tension rose to its highest pitch on the eve of the Census operations of 1911, threatening disturbance of peace in different quarters.⁶⁷ At the local level, the movements of the lower castes "sometimes involved hostility against the higher castes and sometimes the action of the lower caste leader ... led to annoyance and opposition on the part of higher castes. The divisive forces had thus been effectively let loose. At that point of time it seemed that Hindu society was almost on the verge of being torn apart."⁶⁸ "We have enough of unrest in these troubled time," the Bengalee noted with alarm, "Let nothing be done to add to its volume, by riding rough-shod over the cherished caste sentiments of important groups of the Hindu Community." "An awakened and new born sense of self respect is at the bottom of the feeling ..." observed the Bengalee before the Census operations of 1911. "There is a wide-spread desire to level upwards ; and this is a feeling with which all Englishmen will readily sympathise, ... The action of the Government in granting the prayers of these cases will add to their contentment and enhance their self-respect ; and their claims seem to be founded on well-considered grounds."⁶⁹ In the report of the 1921 Census of India the authority mentioned the various types of Kshatriya claims by different social groups.⁷⁰ The Rajbansis were recognised as Rajbanshi Kshatriyas in the 1921 Census. It was also mentioned in the Census report that many of the Rajbansis were prepared to use force in support of their claim. Thus, after a decade of representation and persuasion, the Kshatriya Samiti succeeded in getting official recognition of the desired caste status of Kshatriya.⁷¹ Henceforth a large number of Rajbansis recorded themselves only as Kshatriyas (dropping the caste name) in the subsequent Censuses after taking of the sacred thread. So a fall in number of Rajbansis was noticed in some districts of Northern Bengal.⁷²

The leaders of the Kshatriya movement also made similar appeal to the Cooch Behar State administration to record the Rajbansis of the State as Kshatriyas in the Census. Initially the Royal Government of Cooch Behar did not incline to respond to this appeal positively, but later on they conceded to the demand for the recognition of Kshatriya status.⁷³ It is interesting to observe that the Rulers of Cooch Behar State (who are believed to have been sprung from the same community) did not incline to favour the Kshatriya movement led by Panchanan Barman.⁷⁴ It is learnt from the Administrative Report of the State that the Rajbansis in Cooch Behar were anxious to have themselves

entered as Kshatriya in the column for caste in the Census schedule and they held meetings at different places for the purpose of considering how this object could be attained. They subsequently submitted memorials to the authorities. But the State Government rejected their claim for Kshatriya status on two grounds : (i) the object of the Census was to record things as they existed, and (ii) titles of honour were to be conferred by His Highness, and the State could not ordinarily recognise titles assumed by the people themselves. However, in the column for name in the Census schedule, the Rajbansis affixed to their names titles used by the Kshatriyas. But from the Census point of view this was considered immaterial, because no notice of the names is taken in preparing the returns.⁷⁵ It is learnt from Panchanan Barman's letter written in September, 1921 to the Government of Bengal that the Kshatriya Samiti as an association representing about 22 lakhs of souls belonging to Kshatriya community, inhabiting the districts of Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and other neighbouring districts and the State of Cooch Behar.⁷⁶

But mere claim to a higher category did not necessarily serve to elevate its status in social hierarchy at the local level. Castes wanting to raise themselves socially changed their customs and practices and tried to reorient pattern of their relationships with other Hindu castes. Thus the Kshatriya Samiti became seriously engaged in the task of giving up non-kshatriya rituals, customs and manners in favour of those practised and followed by superior caste groups. The first step to this reform was the ritual purification or Suddhi from Vratya status by donning sacred thread. The Kshatriya Samiti organised the first mass investiture ceremony (upanayana) at Perolbari on the bank of Karatoya, a river sacred to the Rajbansis, near Debiganj Railway Station in Jalpaiguri district on 27th Magha, 1319 B.S. (c. 9th February, 1912), where several thousand Rajbansis took sacred thread.⁷⁷ Panchanan Barman himself took sacred thread and adopted the surname of Barman in lieu of Sarkar. Such places of investiture were known as Milan Kshetra (Meeting place). The Brahman Pandits from Mithila, Kamrup and Nabadwip were present there to preside over the ceremony.⁷⁸ The next ritual practice the Rajbansis adopted was to shorten the asauch period to twelve days for kshatriya caste.⁷⁹ The community members were asked to follow Dashakarma or ten sacraments from birth onwards and other rituals of the twice-born castes, and to use the service of 'pure' Brahmans, and select proper Guru (preceptor) for them. They were also urged to take gotra name of the Brahmanical system.⁸⁰

As a matter of fact, emphasis on ritual emulation reached a feverish activity during the second decade of the twentieth century. As a further step towards Sanskritisation, the Rajbansi leaders began to boast of a pure Kshatriya origin from 1911 and secured Vyavasthas from the pandits of various places like Nabadwip to validate that claim. At the same time, the sacred thread for Rajbansis became a symbol for social mobilization. Since 1912 a number of mass thread wearing ceremonies were organized in different districts, where lakhs of Rajbansis went through the ceremony of ritual rebirth and began to don the sacred thread as a mark of their kshatriya status.⁸¹ As varna Hindu sacred thread sellers refused to sell sacred threads, the Kshatriya Samiti asked the women to learn spinning for upabit and started selling this from its office. With a view to build up proper character, Vrahmacharya Asram was set

up at various places where Rajbanshi youths were trained properly through ritual education. Two such Asramas were set up in Cooch Behar State, one at Gadaikhola and the other at Gitaldah.⁸²

An organisational structure was evolved to carry on socio-ritual activities of the Kshatriya Samiti. Besides the head-quarters of the Samiti at Rangpur, units were established at village level to introduce socio-ritual reform among the rural masses. The lowest village level unit was Mandali. The Kshatriya Samiti decided in its fourth annual conference in 1913 to set up mandali samitis in every village. From 1916 onwards, under the initiative of its volunteers, such samities began to come up slowly.⁸³ Each Rajbanshi Kshatriya by virtue of his social origin became automatically a member of the mandali. Several Mandalis constituted one Antar Mandali which was below the apex body, i.e., the Kshatriya Samiti. The constitution provided for two types of special membership : Ganya membership by paying rupees two within the first half of the year, and Manya membership by paying rupees one hundred or more at a time. By 1926, the number of such mandalis were as follows : 144 in Rangpur, 81 in Dinajpur, 34 in Cooch Behar State and one in Bogra, and total number of special members were only 100.⁸⁴ Provision for paid Pracharak or preacher was arranged who would travel village to village to organise Mandalis. One such earnestly devoted Pracharak was Jogendra Nath Deb Barma Sarkar of Sukhandanga Baghmara village in Mathabhanga sub-division of Cooch Behar State where he settled after his duty as Pracharak. He wrote many short family histories highlighting the past glory of the Rajbanshi Kshatriyas some of which were published in a Calcutta based Bengali monthly. Questions had been raised as to what extent this Mandalis were participated by the community members but there was no denying that Mandalis became the focal point of the social movement at the grass-root level.⁸⁵

Along with emulation of rituals of higher caste people, the Rajbanshis were asked to replace their non-Kshatriya social customs, manners and habits by those followed by the higher caste people. The kshatriya Samiti instructed its members to change their non-Kshatriya customs and manners by curbing the women's liberty, lowering marriageable age of the girls, prohibiting widow remarriage and informal connubal relations, giving up phota or patni for saris by women, tabooing drinking spirituous liquor and eating fowl and pork etc. The Kshatriya Samiti acted as a social guardian of the community 'by prescribing 'do' and 'don't' commandments and punishing the offenders according to nature and degree of offence by fines and other measures including ostracism.⁸⁶

Consequently as a further step towards Kshatriyaisation, the Rajbanshis began to adopt Kshatriya surnames, some of them arranged early marriages for their daughters and some began to confine their women behind the purdah. The practices of informal connubial relations, polygamy and widow remarriage were also given up by a section of Rajbanshis. Some Rajbanshis left their traditional community priest called Adhikari (who were also Rajbanshis) and established Jajmani relations with the immigrant Srotriya Brahmans. And then in order to forge a greater pan-Indian horizontal unity, their leaders in 1920 established links with the 'Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasbha'.⁸⁷ and Kshatriya

Samiti became a branch of that organization.⁸⁸ It should be noted that in 1922 Panchanan Barman was elected the Vice-President of the Bengal Branch of the Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha, known as the Bengal Prantik Sabha.^{88*} Panchanan Barman was addressed as Thakur in the All India Kshatriya Mahasabha, held at Alwar under the Presidentship of the Maharaja of Alwar in 1924 and since then he was also known as Thakur Panchanan Barman.⁸⁹

The leaders of Kshatriya Samiti realised the backward state of education among the community members. Especially Panchanan Barman laid importance on mass education among the Rajbansis as he believed that education was the key to all-round progress of an individual, society and nation. Infact, he played the role of a forceful propagator of education among the rural people. "Many people have the wrong notion,' in the words of Panchanan Barman, 'that those who have land and property need not concentrate more on education of their children. They think that since looking after the property could be enough for livelihood why at all to waste money on education?' he urged the Rajbansi people to come out of the false notion and acquire maximum education at any cost.⁹⁰ Another factor for the educational backwardness of the Rajbansis was the lack of accommodation for students in district and sub-divisional towns where English education was available. In the hostels attached to these institutions prejudices of the caste Hindu students would not allow the Rajbansi students to stay. To facilitate the education of the Rajbansi students new hostels were set up with the help of donations from the community members and contribution from the Government.⁹¹ Kshatriya Samiti also offered scholarships for the education of the poor Rajbansis students and by 1925 it had spent about Rs. 10,000 for the education of 70 such students. Request was made to wealthy Rajbansi jotedars to open schools in the rural areas for spread of education. A student wing of the Kshatriya Samiti, 'Kshatra Chhatra Samaj,' was set up in 1324 B.S. (1917 A.D.) in Rangpur to organise the students section. The members of 'Chhatra Samaj' were asked to repay their social debt by participating in welfare activities to help the poor members of their community. In order to spread the ideal of the Samiti, raise social consciousness and communicate and coordinate geographically scattered members, a monthly journal, 'Kshatriya,' had started publishing from 1327 B.S. (1921 A.D.).⁹² This journal also dealt with various socio-economic problems facing the Rajbansis and published several booklets on Hindu Shastras. Regarding the prevalent educational system, Panchanan Barman as Secretary of Kshatriya Samiti wrote a letter on the 5th November, 1917 to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal expressing his view that 'the system of education be so modified that every community may develop its own religious, social and moral ideas and that impetus be given to the industrial education and enterprise.'⁹³

Immediately after his arrival at Rangpur Panchanan Barman established the Uttarbanga Sahitya Parishad, as he believed that it were the cultural and philosophical foundations which made the social life sound and goal-oriented. He also took the responsibility of becoming the founder-editor of the journal published by the Rangpur Sahitya Parishad. He undertook the task of writing research-oriented articles on the land and culture of the Rajbansis in the Rajbansi language. As a very effective writer he used his pen as an weapon for social mobilization as he brought

out the state of discrimination, evils of untouchability, racial intolerance etc in his writings. Not only his writings achieved the goal of awakening the people to a great extent, but also his works received appreciation from the intellectuals and scholars from all quarters. Renowned scholar Nagendra Nath Bose, while appreciating the works of Panchanan Barman, remarked, "Panchanan Barman's scholarly pursuit is like a bright flame and his work on language provided me with more of research materials."⁹⁴

Panchanan Barman worked for women's education in general and believed in a complete protection of respect of women. He formed Nari Raksha Sebak Dal also nicknamed Sebak Dal to protect the women from the clutches of the gundas and the anti-socials. He engaged this Sebak Dal in resuming the honour of women and even planned rehabilitation of victims. In order to prevent the unfortunate incidents against the modesty of the women, he arranged to provide arms training to the women for their self-defence. Considering the prevalent practice of Jahar, practice of suicide of traditional Kshatriya women to save their modesty, this was perhaps the most pioneering Kshatriya-like step taken by Panchanan Barman.⁹⁵ In the background of the women's distress and dishonour prevalent then in North Bengal districts, he wrote a famous poem, entitled "Dangdhari Mao".⁹⁶ At one time, in fact, "Dangdhari Mao", the club wielding mother, had become the rallying cry of the Rajbansis obviously to protect the honour of their women.⁹⁷ It may be noted here that in September, 1921, a resolution on women's suffrage was raised in the Bengal Legislative Council. But Panchanan Barman opposed the resolution on the ground that "if we allow women to come out and vote publicly like males, the result will be that they will be quarrelsome, their household duties will be neglected and they will not attend to their home duties where alone their greatness lies." Ultimately the resolution was rejected by 56 - 37 votes.⁹⁸

Besides the Upanayana or the Thread Ceremony of the Rajbansi youth, Panchanan Barman and other Rajbansi leaders insisted on arousing positive vigour and courage among them. They introduced a regular training programmes on physical exercise and martial arts and arms like Jathis, swords, bow and arrow etc. for the men and women alike and gradually formed a Mahila Bahini extended for women. The outbreak of the First World War (1914-18) prompted the Kshatriya Samiti leaders to give a call to the young men of the community to show their Kshatriya, that is, martial abilities by joining the British army and issued appeal to the Government for raising two battalions composed exclusively of Rajbansis. Responding to the call several hundred Rajbansi youth from the North Bengal districts and Goalpara joined the army and went to the war front. The outstanding performance of the Rajbansi Youth in the war can be learned from Panchanan Barman's report submitted in the 9th Annual conference of Kshatriya Samiti held at Domar in Rangpur District on 31 and 32 Ashar in 1325 B.S. (1918 A.D.). In appreciation of Rajbansi soldiers and the Rajbansis dwelling in Rangpur, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri and the State of Cooch Behar in general, the Superintendent of Bengal Regiment at Karachi remarked, "the men of this Kshatriya community make better soldiers than most of the others." Observing the vigour and valour of the Rajbansi Youth. Mr. F.J. Mohan offered to form

independent Rajbansi Kshatriya Company. On the 6th April, 1917, he wrote, "A separate Company composed of Rajbansi (Kshatriyas) of the upper and middle class might be formed if suitable candidates are available."⁹⁹

In fact, the enthusiasm, valour, team spirit and skill of the Rajbansi youths in the war drew attention of the high officials and the military commanders. They were full of praise for the Rajbansi war professionals. In the words of Captain O' Dolder, Commanding Officer of Karachi "with reference to the attached letter of the Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti, I write to say that it would be advantageous for recruitments if you could send the men mentioned in the above letter on recruiting duly as desired by the Secretary (Panchanan Barman). I understand that men of his community have turned out better soldiers than most of the others and it would be as well to recruit as large a number of them as possible. It will also help recruitment if all the men of this community can be formed into a separate Company to be known as the Kshatriya Company. Col. Bondler, my predecessor so promised the leader of the community that this should be done if it were practicable." This achievement, no doubt, created a sensation in the whole of Eastern India. The Kshatriya leaders, therefore, appealed to the Government of India to form a Rajbansi Kshatriya Regiment. Two fold benefits were contemplated by this proposal. First, the awakening of the spirit of valour, and secondly, to create a means of livelihood among the Rajbansi youth as of Gurkha and other community youth. Panchanan Barman formally put up the proposal to form a Kshatriya Regiment in the 11th Annual Kshatriya Samiti Conference held at Dhubri in Assam. Later on when the British decided to form the Indian Territorial Army, a large number of Rajbansis joined the force inspired by the social upliftment movement mobilized by Panchanan Barman. In recognition of the service rendered by Panchanan Barman in the war effort, he was conferred the titles 'Rai Saheb' and 'M.B.E.' (Member of the British Empire) by the Government in 1919.¹⁰⁰

The Kshatriya Samiti which included many jotedars and prosperous peasants raised community funds for providing loans to Rajbansi agriculturists, urged the latter to improve their agricultural practices and called upon them to organize co-operative credit societies.¹⁰¹ It deserves particular mention that the Government was urged to pay more attention to the development of agriculture and to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act in order to make the peasants the owners of the land. Such demands featured regularly in the pages of Kshatriya, the monthly journal of Kshatriya Samiti, and were raised on the floor of the Bengal Legislative Council.¹⁰² In order to ease out the difficulties of the farmers, Panchanan Barman established Kshatriya Bank, perhaps the first of its kind in the North-Eastern India. As a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, he contributed greatly for the amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act for the benefit of the cultivators of all communities. The Tenancy Act established the ownership right of the farmer over the land that they used to till. As a member of the Board of Economic Enquiry, he also tried to improve the economic condition of the depressed classes, particularly educationally backward classes. In 1929-31 when severe economic depression occurred in the whole world Panchanan Barman wrote to the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division to review the revenue policy of Bengal so that the large section of the common people and farmers were relieved. He

continued to pursue the matter with Mr. Rabson, the President, Eastern States Agency and Mr. Baslow, the Secretary of the Eastern States Agency till he got the policy amended.¹⁰³ Panchanan Barman also sent appeals to the government for the abolition of the oppressive ijaradari system in the Cooch Behar State or for allocation of more grants for the rural health centers.¹⁰⁴

Panchanan Barman was the visionary who could foresee that only through dependence on agriculture a community could not prosper. Thus he made efforts to encourage education in the Rajbansi Community as noted above and endeavoured to make them eligible for governmental job. That was the time when following the historic Poona Pact signed between Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mr. M.K. Gandhi some provisions were made at the national level for reservation of jobs for the depressed classes. Panchanan Barman single-handedly made an effort to change the definition and obtained the nomenclature, "those are educationally and economically backward." By this he made the Rajbansi community eligible to obtain the benefit in educational, political and economic fields. In order to achieve the mission of uplifting the Rajbansis he adopted the means of kshatriyaisation to begin with, but later adopted the movement of Dr. Ambedkar and brought the Rajbansis to the category of Depressed class without inhibition. Some members of the Kshatriya Samiti were initially opposed to the Rajbansis being branded as a Scheduled Caste (depressed classes' later being called scheduled castes). But the dispute was later resolved through Panchanan Barman's persuasion and his careful exposition of the possible advantages of reservation.¹⁰⁵

The Kshatriya Samiti described itself as a non-political association aiming at the intellectual, social, moral and religious progress of the Rajbansi community.¹⁰⁶ However, it took a political stand on several occasions, which was definitely not apolitical. Some instances may be cited here. The fourth annual conference of Kshatriya Samiti held at Debiganj in June, 1913 declared that the Rajbansi Kshatriyas were 'loyal subjects' and expressed 'great indignation at the most heinous bomb-outrage upon Viceroy (Hardinge) at the time of his entry into the new capital of Delhi in December 1912. The tenth conference held in 1919 expressed great rejoicing at the British Victory in the War with loud cheers for the King Emperor.¹⁰⁷ While national agitation and activities for constitutional reforms were launched in the war years and immediate post-war years, in a representation to the Government of Bengal in November, 1917, the Kshatriya Samiti spoke of its 'apprehensions of tendencies ... of discontent and even disrespect for law and order, and urged the government for separate representation in future constitutional reforms.¹⁰⁸

As a matter of fact, the lower caste elites, whether Rajbansi or others, remained deprived of political power. The fact of under-representation especially in the Provincial legislature and other local bodies led to the growth of separatist tendencies among the lower caste elites. For instance, when the Montague - Chemsford Reform proposals were announced, the Namasudra elites of Eastern Bengal resolved at a Conference in Calcutta in 1917 that if any additional power was "vested in the hands of a few leaders without giving any share of power to us it will make the

future progress of the backward classes impossible."¹⁰⁹ A similar conference of next year unequivocally demanded "communal representation" to prevent "the oligarchy of a handful of limited castes." The resolution was endorsed by the Rajbansis.¹¹⁰ As a result of these demands, the Reform Act of 1919 provided for the nomination of one representative of the depressed classes to the Bengal Legislature. Apart from this lone member, such classes remained almost totally unrepresented and all the constituencies inhabited by them returned only caste Hindu candidates.¹¹¹

In this way, lower caste perception of history tended to be contrary to that of the nationalists. The colonial rule appeared to the former to be an improvement over the past. "There is no more the casteism and communalism of the middle ages," wrote Kshatriya in 1920, "God has dispensed even-handed justice by placing the Indians for their proper education in the hands of a noble nation from far off Britain".¹¹² Therefore, among the Rajbansi and other lower castes élites there grew a certain sense of loyalty to the colonial Government and at the same time, a suspicion about the nationalist politics which came to be identical as a high caste affair. Nationalism for these people had assumed a different connotation. The Bengali word 'Jati' for these people, had come to mean not 'nation', but only 'caste' and its upliftment became their 'sole objective'.¹¹³ Thus a rural Rajbansi poet wrote sometime in the early twentieth century "¹¹⁴

Mora chahina artha, chahina man

chahina bidya, chahina Jnan.

Mora chai shudhu Jatir pratistha.

Mora chai shudhu Jatir Pran.

(We do not want money, nor do we want prestige

We do not want education, nor do we want Knowledge.

We only want the recognition of our caste,

We only want our caste to come alive.)

In fact, there was strong disinclination to join the Congress in the case of local leaders of ritually lower castes like the Rajbansis and the Namasudras, and the political response from these two large peasant communities, which numbered next only to the Muslim and Mahishya communities, was weak because of their resentment of their low ritual rank.¹¹⁵ It is true that some lower caste leaders tried to maintain the link between their community and the nationalist mainstream. Such ambivalence was much more evident among the Rajbansi leaders. They were occasionally involved in nationalist mass protest, such as the Non-Cooperation movement. The Rajbansi community under the leadership of Panchanan Barman temporarily went over to the non-co-operators in July, 1921. Some other important personalities like Upendranath Barman were also deeply influenced by the nationalist fervour at different junctures. But despite all these, the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement on the whole remained loyal to the British and in its thirteenth

annual conference in 1926, the Samiti adopted a formal resolution expressing its "loyalty and obedience" to the Raj. The British Government also responded equally to win them and induced them to be dissociated from the caste Hindu group in order to curb their political base. As such the constitutional reform of 1919 provided for separate political representation for these backward communities.¹¹⁶

It is important to note that this Kshatriya movement had to face some opposition from certain sections within the community.¹¹⁷ Many bhatias or Bengali immigrants into North Bengal and caste Hindus opposed the move to obtain the Kshatriya status. The Koch Behar State Officials too, many of whom were immigrant upper caste Bengalis, tried to create difficulties in the way of the movement.¹¹⁸ Perhaps one major reason was the contempt with which the Rajbansi leaders viewed the Koch.¹¹⁹ The caste Hindu opinion in general did not accept the uplifted social position of the Rajbansis. From the beginning the caste Hindu zamindars and professionals protested strongly against the demand raised by the Rangpur Vratya Kshatriya Jatir Unnati Vidhyani Sabha to the District Magistrate of Rangpur, Mr. F.A. Skyne.¹²⁰ They protested against permitting the Rajbansis Bratya Kshatriya as caste. When the Rajbansis enmass donned sacred thread on 9th February, 1913 at Perolbari, Mr. J.S. Milligan, the then District Magistrate of Rangpur, remained present with a posse of armed constables lest the caste Hindu group attempted to create disturbance and frustrate the ceremony.¹²¹ The Rajbansis were not generally treated at par with the respectable caste groups of Hindus society. So even the adoption of sacred thread, symbolic justification for Kshatriya caste group, did not help the Rajbansis getting the service of those Brahmans who served the upper caste Hindus.¹²²

The native state of Cooch Behar failed to lead the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement owing to her political, administrative and psychological factors. To begin with, the internal communication of Cooch Behar State was in bad shape. For half the year various parts of the State remained separated from each other due to heavy rain. Roads were seasonal and became unfit for conveyance from May to October each year. This state of communication system hardly provided scope for organisation and coordination among the people of different parts of the State. Secondly, the entire administration from the top officials down to the clerical staff were imported from the British Bengal from the beginning and that practice continued later on. A hiatus was developed between the caste Hindu professionals and service holders and the local Rajbansi community due to a very low impression of the latter by the former. Thirdly, the princely family of Cooch Behar did not also encourage their subjects to demand the same social status which they thought was their exclusive privilege.¹²³ Lastly, the local Rajbansi community was afraid of the Maharaja's displeasure which might result in their expulsion from the State and confiscation of their property. The obstacles put by the Cooch Behar administration before the Kshatriya movement was mentioned by the Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti frequently in its proceedings of the annual conferences.¹²⁴

On the other hand, the centre of the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement was Rangpur as it had the necessary

social, economic and political environment for the leadership to this social upliftment movement. Developed communication system, presence of social infrastructure as well as a dynamic elite class, and democratic and liberal environment — all these objective and subjective factors created the rationale of the leading role taken by the Rangpur Rajbansis in the Kshatriya movement.¹²⁵ It should be stated here that Panchanan Barman had also chosen Rangpur for his new place of living when he left Cooch Behar in 1901. It was in this background that the Rangpur Rajbansi elite led by Panchanan Barman founded the Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti, the backbone of the Kshatriya movement, in 1910 A.D.

The Rajbansi caste movement was in fact a movement of a depressed community, the people of which wanted to raise their social rank by borrowing the upper caste rituals. The process they followed is called Sanskritisation or cultural adaptation by which some of the Rajbansis changed their customs, rituals, ideology and way of life in the direction of twice-born caste, and ultimately demanded kshatriya status. They obviously found Kshatriya model as much more elastic to accommodate their rank aspirations. The flexibility and diversity of the Kshatriya style of life encouraged the Rajbansis to claim Kshatriya status. Their aspirations did not require that they would abandon cultivation because their Kshatriya ideal was essentially based on control of land. It may be stated that 'under the Pax-Britannica, the warrior-ruler model of the Kshatriya remained the most popular and feasible model for social mobility and cultural assimilation for ambitious lower castes or tribals.' Through Sanskritization process the Rajbansis also wanted promotion from a lower to a higher berth in the local caste hierarchy. It has been argued by a scholar that 'from early parts of 20th century, the aims of Rajbansi leadership had been almost classically those of Sanskritization.'¹²⁶

But incidentally the question has been raised as to why did the Rajbansis follow the 'Sanskritization' model? It has been stated that this was due partly to the fact that as the avenues for change were limited and as caste was still the symbol of status and power so they took cultural adaptation as the means for upgrading their rank in the social hierarchy. As a matter of fact, the lower caste had nothing to get from the caste system. But in the absence of a tangible basis for a new identity on the one hand, and the upper castes' emphasis on ritual superiority on the other, caste identity thus became the most effective rallying point in the social and political movements of the lower castes.¹²⁷ They actually took cultural adaptation or Sanskritization as a camouflage to ventilate their grievances against the upper caste domination.¹²⁸ It has also been pointed out that the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement like other low caste movements 'indicated the lines of cleavage between respectable and peasant society and offered political challenges to the high caste, neo-Hindu culture of the educated Bengalis. Such movements of Sanskritization posed very real threats to the dominant high caste Bengali culture'.¹²⁹

It should also be noted that the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement was not without its limitations, anomalies and internal tension. It exhibited Sanskritizing tendencies with an assertion of Aryan origin and striving for the higher

social status of Kshatriyas by borrowing higher caste customs and rituals (like wearing of sacred thread, asauch ceremonies and ten sacraments or Dashakarma). Rajbansi leaders strongly rejected any suggestion to the effect that the Rajbansis and the Koches had a common tribal or semi-tribal past and totally dissociated themselves from the latter. Hence the movement was a conservative one with claim to a higher status within the existing caste hierarchy and there was no attack on or even a critique of the caste system.¹³⁰ While some of the lower caste movements with a radical potential such as the Satyashodak Samaj in Maharashtra¹³¹ rejected Brahman religious authority, the Rajbansi Kshatriya movement attempted to gain recognition from Brahman pandits and shastric sanction. Apart from this, the kshatriya movement kept away from the nationalist movement, sought opportunities for more jobs, education and political favours from the Government and looked forward to a period of benevolent rule of the British. The Rajbansi leaders passed resolutions in the annual conferences each year expressing their loyalty and allegiance to the Raj. During the late 19th and the early 20th centuries, caste was thus going through a process of politicisation, which was conditioned essentially by the colonial context. What developed through this process was a distinct 'depressed classes' politics which prevented, to some extent, a cross-caste political mobilization for our battle against colonial rule and ultimately weakened the nationalist movement in the same way, though less effectively, as the Muslim break-away politics.¹³²

Though the movement was supposed to embrace the entire Rajbansi community numbering 1.8 million souls, the coverage of social emulation was limited to the relatively well-to-do sections of the community. In the first decade of the movement, i.e. 1910-20, only 1.8 lakhs souls had donned sacred thread as Suddhi.¹³³ Considering the ratio of men and women and Suddhi performed by all adult male members, the number was about one tenth of the male population. It was evident that the Kshatriya movement did not encompass total mobility in community structure. Rather the movement was expressive of the aspirations of upper echelons of the Rajbansi community and the poorer sections were quite unaffected by the issues, and emulative practices remained exclusive to the wealthy.¹³⁴ Many economically backward and depressed Rajbansis were not very enthusiastic to respond favourably to the cultural reform movement called for by the Kshatriya Samiti. The common poor Rajbansis were not very happy as they had to incur substantial expenditure for undertaking the Brahmanic rites and rituals and as such Kshatriyaisation process was very slow. Not only this, most of the Rajbansi people preferred to retain their old rituals and practices and they were not deeply attached to the classical form of Hinduism. Besides, the Rajbansi leaders did not have any programme for the poor peasants and adhiaars who constituted the bulk of the Rajbansi Hindu peasantry and could not ultimately utilise the protest mentality of the masses to bring about any radical social change. The movement remained confined in the main among the large landholders, jotedars and better off peasants.¹³⁵ Thus it is important to note that while sociologists have tended to relate these caste movements to the upward mobility through 'Sanskritization' of particular jatis as a whole, other scholars like Gail Omvedt have sought to explain the movement as a 'distorted but important'

expression of socio-economic tensions and conflict.¹³⁶ In spite of such limitations of ideology or participation, the Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement, on the whole, represented an endeavour to find social identity and status for the Rajbansi Hindus and contained significant elements of dissent and opposition to upper caste domination. The Movement brought about the apparent caste solidarity among the Rajbansis in general and social awareness among the educated and well-to-do section of the community. This solidarity inculcated in them a sense of consciousness of nationality (Jati) and search for new identity separate from the general Hindu society. History was written by the community historians to establish link of the present with glorious past. Sanskrit scriptures were widely quoted, legends reinterpreted, folk songs and ballads discovered to build up the history and tradition. Among the Rajbanshi elite group a separatist tendency was developed which gradually increased their distance from the rest of the Bengali caste society. They mentioned varna Hindus as a separate caste (Bhinna Jati) and voice was raised to dissociate from them in every aspect of life.¹³⁷

The movement raised the caste consciousness among the members of the Rajbansi community and aspiration for the higher caste status. The community members showed mobility and self-confidence which was not observed before. The Rajbansis established now matrimonial relations on inter-district basis which was unthinkable before the movement began. Annual conferences were held at different places of North Bengal districts and Goalpara and these assemblages brought a horizontal solidarity among the community members spread over north-eastern India. The momentum of the movement was definitely noticed during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹³⁸

In this crucial period, The Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement led by Panchanan Barman for upgrading the Rajbansis into the status of Kshatriyas in society was not a religious movement in the contemporary background, and judging from the contemporary social view of point, it was rather a movement to bestow social status upon the depressed and backward community. And Panchanan Barman was the pioneer of this movement.¹³⁹ As a social reformer he devoted his life to the work of protecting his community from social exploitation and oppression, and this was his greatest achievement.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the Kshatriyaization movement Panchanan Barma emerged as the saviour of the community and very soon got the epithet 'Thakur' (God).¹⁴¹ He invested the Rajbansis with sacred thread and infused self-confidence in them.¹⁴² Hence the Kshatriya movement not only brought about the first awakening among the Rajbansi people¹⁴³ but also created a sense of solidarity and fraternity among them.¹⁴⁴ '27th Magha', the date on which the first mass investiture ceremony took place, is being still observed by the Rajbansis as the regeneration day.¹⁴⁵

Notes and References

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14. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Part I, p. 574 ; Vol. V, Part II, Appendix to Table XVI, Part II, p. 379 ; Upendranath Barman, Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jiban Charit, Jalpaiguri, 1387 B.S. p.9 ; Sugata Bose, Agrarian Bengal, Economy, Social Structure and Politics, 1919 - 1947, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 12 - 15. See also Sekhar Bandyopadhyay : *op.cit*, pp. 222-223.
15. Choudhuri, Harendra Narayan (H. N.) : The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar State Press, 1903, p. 118, 120.
16. Sanyal, Charu Chandra : The Rajbansis of North Bengal, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 15. See also Choudhuri, H. N. : *op. cit*, p. 120.
17. Sanyal,Charu Chandra :*op.cit.*, p.16. From this table it is clear that in 1891: There was a sudden fall in the percentage of the Rajbansis in almost all the districts of North Bengal excepting Cooch Behar, as a large number of Rajbansis were recorded as Bhanga Kshatriyas. *ibid*.
18. *Loc. cit*.
19. Dasgupta, Ranajit : *op. cit*. p. 12. The Rajbansis went through the parallel processes of Hinduization and Islamization. It is however curious that in most of the writings on the composition of population in Cooch Behar State and other North Bengal districts and also often in popular perception Rajbansis are usually only Hindus and by implication Muslims of local origin are non - Rajbansis. But the evidence clearly shows that the bulk of the local Muslims were converted Rajbansis. Hence the appropriate position is that there are Rajbansi Hindus and Rajbansi Muslims. *ibid*, pp. 12, 258 (Notes and References). It is also relevant to note that by far the majority of

the Muslims are Sheikhs, or, as they are popularly called, Nasyas. They are descended from the Hindu converts to Islam. The title Nasya is significant. It is generally believed to be the corrupted form of Nashta, which means fallen or degenerated. Hence this appears to be the most probable nickname which the Hindu subjects of a Hindu Principality would give to their converted co-religionists. — Choudhuri, H. N. : op.cit. p. 120.

20. Grierson, G. A. : Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. I, Part I. Introduction, 1927, Reprint, Motilal Banarasi Das, Delhi, 1967, p. 153.
21. Dasgupta, Ranjit : op. cit, p. 16.
22. Nandy, Vaskar and Raman, Vasanthi : op. cit, p. 454.
23. Choudhuri, H. N. : op. cit, p. 139.
24. Dasgupta, Ranjit : op.cit, pp. 16-17, Hudum deo Puja used to be performed in case of severe drought when the crops are suffering from this drought. It was a sort of fertility rite in which women of a village went into a distant paddy field during a dark night and stuck a plantain tree or young bamboo into the ground and danced in the nude round the mystic tree singing old songs and charms. No male was allowed to be present at the rite.—Choudhuri, H. N. : op. cit, p. 141.
25. Dasgupta, Ranjit : op. cit, p. 17.
26. Choudhuri, H. N. : op. cit, pp. 145-146.
27. 'Buchanan - Hamilton Account' in Jalpaiguri District Handbook, p. CXXXV. The evidence is quoted in Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit, p. 13.
28. Dasgupta, Biman Kumar, 'A note on the Rajbanshi of Eastern India', Bulletin of the Anthropological Survey of India, 48(I), 1-44, 1969.
29. Sanyal, Charu Chandra : op. cit, p. 13.
30. Basu, Swaraj : Dynamics of a Cast Movement: The Rajbansis of North Bengal, 1910-1947, Monohar, New Delhi, 2003, p. 29. Confer also Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : Ray Saheb Panchanan : Life and Times, All India Forum for Development of Rajbansis, New Delhi, First Published 2002, p. 20. It is interesting to note that the present day Rajbansi scholars, namely, Dr. Dwijendra Nath Bhakat opines that the Koches and Rajbansi Kshatriya are actually the same ethnic group. According to him, Rajbansis are Mongoloids and the original inhabitants of the North Eastern region of India. Dr. Ramen Adhikari of Assam also holds the similar view as that of Dr. Bhakat. — ibid.
31. Mukhopadhyay, Rajatubhra : 'Hinduisation of the Tribes in India : The Case of Rajbansis' , in P. K. Bhattacharyya(ed), The Kingdom of Kamata - Koch Behar in Historical Perspective, Ratna Prakashan in association with University of North Bengal, Calcutta, First Pulbished 2000, p. 111.
- 31*. Basu, Swaraj : op. cit., p. 63.
32. Choudhuri, H. N. : op. cit, p. 14.
33. Barma, Sukhbilas : ' Socio-Cultural Facets of the History of Kamata - Koch Behar,' in P. K. Bhattacharyya(ed); The Kingdom of Kamata-Koch Behar in Historical Perspective, op. cit, p. 96.
34. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jiban Charit, Jalpaiguri, 1387 B.S., p. 13.
35. Barrier, N. Gerald(ed) : The Census in British India, New Perspectives, New Delhi, Manohar, 1981, p. 80.
36. Sanyal, Charu Chandra : op. cit, p. 19.
37. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : Caste, Politics and the Raj, Bengal 1872-1937 : Calcutta, 1990, p. 98. It has also been pointed out that in north Bengal there was a fair representation of the Rajbansis among the jotedars who secured a dominant position in the local agrarian structure. But the situation began to change from the late nineteenth

century with the migration of upon caste Hindu gentry in this area. This led to large scale transfer of land from the hands of the Rajbansis to those of the non-Rajbansis. This brought about subsequent changes in the pattern of land control in North Bengal, with the result that the Rajbansis were gradually pushed out by the non-Rajbansi landholders from their position of eminence. In the State of Cooch Behar also, the people from outside who were in the state administration, grabbed a large number of jotes. By 1872 in Cooch Behar 54 percent of the revenue paying land had passed into the hands of the outsiders. This transfer of land from the Rajbansis to the non-Rajbansis became a common phenomenon all over North Bengal and in course of time it gave birth to a sense of grievances among the dispossessed Rajbansi gentry. — Swaraj Basu, Dynamics of a Caste Movement, op. cit., pp. 50-53.

38. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : 'Rungpur Kshatriya Samiti-History of A Caste Organisation', Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Rajshahi University, Vol. 17, 1994, pp. 126-27.
39. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, 3rd edition, Jalpaiguri, 1981, pp. 26-55 and Buchanan - Hamilton Account in Jalpaiguri District Handbook, p. CXXXV.
40. Choudhuri, H. N. : op. cit, pp. 126-127.
41. Martin, Montgomery R : History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India, Vol. II, London, 1838, p. 741.
42. Basu, Swaraj : 'The Rajbansis of North Bengal : A quest for Kshatriya Identity,' Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 56th Session, Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta, December 28-30, 1995.
43. Barman, Upendranath : Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, p. 56.
44. Loc. cit.
45. ibid, pp. 58-59.
46. ibid, pp. 56-59; Roy, A. K. : 'Some Notes on the Kshatriya Movement in North Bengal' in Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Vol. XX, No. I, pp. 49-57.
47. Barman, Upendranath : Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, pp. 59-60. E. A. Gait, Superintendent of Census Operations, Bengal for 1901 observed, "The Rajbansis of North Bengal wished to be styled Bhanga or Bratya Kshatriya and to be classed among the twice born castes." - Census of India, 1901 Report, Vol. 6, Part-I, p. 382, Para 617. In subsidiary Table II, Chapter XI, p. 460 of the Report population figure for Rajbansis with Koch in bracket is given.
48. Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit, p. 88.
49. Barman, Upendranath, Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, p. 12.
50. Barman, Upendranath, Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jiban Charit, op. cit.
51. Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, pp. 24-25. See also Barman, Upendranath, 'Brief life Sketch of Thakur Panchanan Barma', in Panchanan Smarak Patrika, 127th Birth Anniversary Number, 1993 (1399 B.S.), the Cooch Behar Kshatriya Society, pp. 1-2.
52. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti - History of A Caste Organisation, op. cit, pp. 129-30.
53. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barmar Jiban Charit, op. cit, p. 12.
54. ibid, pp. 13-14. Panchanan Barman also experienced caste hatred right in his childhood. Once in early childhood, he happened to touch the Gita of their family priest which the latter was on his visit to their house. He was shocked that even the conduct of an innocent child was grossly condemned through an alarm of hue and cry. He was cautioned that being a non-Brahman he had no privilege to touch a holy book that too written in Sanskrit, the Deva-Bhasa. - Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, p. 27.
55. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, pp. 4-24; Roy, A. K. : op. cit, pp. 54, 61-70.
56. Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit, p. 89.

57. Singha, Kshetra Mohan : Raj Saheb Panchanan Barman Jiban, Cooch Behar, 1939, p. 10.
58. Kshatriya Samiti Karya Bibarani (a compilation of proceedings of the annual conferences); Pratham Sammilanee, Rangpur, B.S. 1317 (1910); Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, pp. 14-16.
59. *ibid*, p. 55.
60. Singha, Kshetra Mohan : op. cit, pp. 11-13.
61. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, p. 131.
62. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, p. 67.
63. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Part - I, Report by L. S. S. O'Mally, Calcutta, 1913, p. 445.
64. *ibid*, p. 440.
65. *ibid*, p. 442.
- 65*. Basu, Swaraj : Dynamics of a Caste Movement, op. cit., p. 70.
66. *ibid*, p. 5.
67. Report of Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Part I, p. 440.
68. Proceedings of Government of India, Home (Political), April, 1911, No. 20.
69. Bengalee, 2 October, 1910.
70. The 1921 Census of India reported that Rajbansis, Kayasthas, Haji, Kamar, Kahar, Pod, Malo, Pundari, Koch - all claimed Kshatriya status. The Rajbansis claimed Kshatriya, Bratya Kshatriya and Varna Kshatriya status. - Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, p. 147 (F.N).
71. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, pp. 63-64.
72. Mukhopadhyay, Rajata Subhra : 'Uttarkhand Movement : A Sociological Analysis', (Centre for Himalayan Studies, Special Lecture VIII), University of North Bengal, April, 1987, p. 14.
73. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, p. 64.
74. Brahma, Kshetra Mohan : Cooch Beharer Bibaran, 1929, p. 62.
75. A.A.R.C.B.S., 1910-11, General, p. 6.
76. A letter dated the 5th September, 1921 from Panchanan Barman, Secretary of Kshatriya Samiti to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal. The evidence is cited in Barman, Kshitish Chandra : Thakur Panchanan Smarak, Kolkata, First published 2001, pp. 197-200.
77. Singha, Kshetra Mohan : op. cit, pp. 17-18.
78. Barman, Upendranath, Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, p. 20.
79. Barman, Upendranath : Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, p. 61.
80. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti - History of A Caste Organisation, op. cit, pp. 131-132.
81. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Part I, pp. 351-55; Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, pp. 21-25; Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Itihas, op. cit, pp. 50-66; Uttar Banglar Sekal O Amar Jiban Smriti, Jalpaiguri, 1392 B.S., pp. 46-47.
82. Kshatriya, the monthly Journal of Kshatriya Samiti, IV(1), Baishakh, 1331 B.S., pp. 9-10.
83. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : 'Protest and Accommodation', op. cit, p. 224.
84. Kshatriya, IV(1), P. 21, IV (3) Ashara 1331, p. 45.
85. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, pp. 132-133.
86. *ibid*, p. 133.
87. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : op. cit, p. 225; Mukhopadhyay, Rajatasubhra : 'Hinduisation of the Tribes in India : The Case of Rajbansis', op. cit, p. 112.

88. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, pp. 23-25.
- 88*. Basu, Swaraj : op. cit., p. 79.
89. Barman, Upendranath : 'Brief, Life Sketch of Thakur Panchanan Barman', op. cit, p. 3.
90. Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, p. 30.
91. Singha, Kshetranath : Rangpur Kshatriya Samitir Itihas, Gaibandha, 1346 B.S., pp. 19-21.
92. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, pp. 133-134.
93. Barman, Kshitish Chandra : Thakur Panchanan Smarak, Kolkata, First published 2001, pp. 197-200.
94. Barman, Upendranath : 'Brief life Sketch of Thakur Panchanan Barman', op. cit, pp. 1-2, Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, p. 29.
95. *ibid*, p. 3, Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : pp. 14-15.
96. Barman, Kshitish Chandra : Thakur Panchanan Smarak, op. cit., p. 189.
97. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jibancharit, op. cit, pp. 47-57.
98. Proceedings of Bengal Legislative Council, August 29 to September 6, 1921 (4th Session), Proceedings of Meeting held on 5.9.1921. The evidence is quoted in Barman, Kshitish Chandra : op. cit, pp. 201-203.
99. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, pp. 30-44, 86; Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, pp. 32-33.
100. Barman, Upendranath : 'Brief life Sketch of Thakur Panchanan Barman', op. cit, PP. 2-3; Mandal, Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, pp. 33-34.
101. See the Resolutions adopted at the different annual conferences of Kshatriya Samiti, and also Roy, A. K. : op. cit, pp. 57-58.
102. Kshatriya, Ashadh 1331 B.S.; Proceedings of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol - I, No. 6, 1 April, 1921.
103. Barman, Upendranath : 'Brief life Sketch of Thakur Panchanan Barman', op. cit, p. 3; Mandal Ranjit Kumar : op. cit, pp. 30-31.
104. Proceedings of Bengal Legislative Council, Vol. 36, No. 3, 27 March 1931, pp. 640-41.
105. Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, p. 63. Mandal, ranjit Kumar : op. cit, pp. 31, 37.
106. Memorandum on Constitutional Reforms submitted by the Kshatriya Samiti to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal in December, 1917, published in full in Kshatriya Samiti's Nineth Annual Proceedings.
107. Kshatriya Samitir Karya Bibaran, fourth Annual conference, 1320 B.S., p. 18.
108. Memorandum on Constitutional Reforms ..., op. cit.
109. Bengalee, 10 November, 1917.
110. The Statesman, 5 November, 1918.
111. Report of the Bengal Franchise Committee, Calcutta, 1932, pp. 23-24.
112. Kshatriya, Baisakh 1327 B.S.; Chaitra, 1332 B.S.
113. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : 'Protest and Accomodation', op. cit, p. 226.
114. Quoted in Barman, Upendranath : Thakur Panchanan Barman Jiban Charit, op. cit, p. 15.
115. IB 1921, 'Fortnightly Reports of the Government of Bengal on the Political Situation (1921-22)', Quoted in Ray, Rajat Kanta : Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal, 1875-1927, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 306.
116. Kshatriya, Baisakh, 1327 B.S.; Baisakh, Jaishtha 1331 B.S.; Jaishtha, Chaitra 1332; Ray, Rajat Kanta : op. cit, p. 306.
117. Kshatriya Samiti, Nineth Annual Circle Report, B.S. 1325.
118. Kshatriya Samitir Karyabibaran, eighteenth annual conference, 1335 B.S.

119. Dasgupta, Ranjit : op. cit, p. 91.
120. Barman, Upendranath : op. cit, p. 58.
121. Report on the Census of District of Jalpaiguri, 1891, p. 21. The leaders of the movement tried to explain this antagonistic attitude of the upper castes in terms of a fear-psychosis of the outsiders or bhatias. The upper caste Hindu gentry were opposing the social regeneration of the local people, they argued, because they felt that their dominance in local society would be undermined. 'If we, the Kshatriyas, raise our voice,' resolved the Kshatriya Samity, 'they would lose their domination over us. So being scared, they are not allowing us to unite and to awaken our Kshatriya spirit.— Kshatriya Samiti, 'Eighteenth Annual Conference, Report,' 1334 B.S, p. 58. The evidence is quoted in Swaraj Basu, op. cit., p. 81.
122. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, pp. 134-135.
123. Brahma, Kshetra Mohan : op. cit, p. 62; Mukherjee Sib Sankar : op. cit, p. 128.
124. Kshatriya Samitir Karya Bibarani, third year, 1319 B.S., PP. 36-37. It has given the details of obstruction created by the Cooch Behar State Administration.
125. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : op. cit, p. 129. The writer also analysed the various factors responsible for the failure of the Rajbansis of Goalpara and Jalpaiguri to take the lead in the Kshatriya movement. *ibid*, pp. 127-29.
126. Mukhopādhyay, Rajatubhira : 'Hinduisation of the Tribes in India : The Case of Rajbansis', op. cit, pp. 107-112.
127. Sanyal, Hitesranjan : op. cit, p. 32.
128. Basu, Swaraj : 'A Case Study of the Rajbansi Caste Movement in Northern Bengal in 1901-21', Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, 1986, p. 59.
129. Ray, Rajat Kanta : op. cit, p. 68.
130. Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit, p. 92.
131. O'Hanlon, Rosalind : Caste, Conflict and Ideology, Cambridge University Press, 1985.
132. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : Caste, Politics and the Raj, op. cit, pp. 14-15.
133. Report of the Census of India, 1931, p. 474.
134. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : 'The Social Role of A Caste Association', the Indian Economic and Social History Review, 31(1), 1994, p. 100.
135. Barma, Sukhbilas : op. cit, p. 97; Dasgupta, Ranajit, p. 92; Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : Caste, Politics and the Ray, op. cit, p. 14. It should be stated here that during the census of 1931 an investigation was made to trace the number of Saktas, Saivas and Vaisnavas residing in Cooch Behar State. It was found out that 7.9% were Saktas and 3.8% were Vaisnavas of the total Hindu population. The rest of the population had not expressed their opinion about the particular sects to which they belonged. This indifference to Puranic Hindu religion was seen among the Hindu people of the State to a greater extent than any other places in Bengal. — Datta, Jotindra Mohan : 'Cooch Behare Janatathya Sambandhe Kayekti Katha', Cooch Behar Darpan (Fortnightly Journal), 9th Year, No. X, Magh, 1353 B.S., p. 144.
136. Sarkar, Sumit : Modern India, 1885-1947, Macmillan, First Published 1983, reprinted 2000, p. 158.
137. Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : 'Rangpur Kshatriya Samiti - History of A Caste Organisation', op. cit, p. 137.
138. *ibid*, p. 140.
139. Extracts of Ex-Chief Minister Jyoti Basu's speech delivered on 24th September, 1981, quoted in Barman, Upendranath : Uttar Banglar Sekal O Amar Jibansmriti, 1392 B.S., p. 276.
140. Barman, Upendranath : op. cit, pp. 270-71; Basu, Jyoti : op. cit, p. 276.
141. Basu, Swaraj : Dynamics of a Caste Movement, op. cit, p. 114.
142. Barman, Upendranath : op. cit, p. 271.

143. Ahmed, Fayejuddin : 'Cooch Behar Palli', Paricharika (Bengali Journal), 6th year, Vol. II, p. 113; Singha, Kshetra Mohan : op. cit, p. 18; Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar : Caste, Politics and the Raj, op. cit, p. 129.
144. Ahmed, Fayejuddin : op. cit; Mukherjee, Sib Sankar : 'The Social Role of A Caste Association', op. cit, pp. 89-100.
145. Roy Sarkar, Sushil : 'Thakur Panchanan Barma : Karme O Manane', Madhuparni, (Bengali Journal), Cooch Behar Special Issue edited by Ananda Gopal Ghose, 1990, p. 381.

Appendix D

Position of Islam in Cooch Behar State and Issue of Hindu-Muslim Amity

Every missionary religion like Islam has to change its colour and creed according to the cultural condition of a country where it is established. Christianity has done so profoundly and so has done Buddhism. Even Hinduism, though not a missionary religion, underwent a lot of change when it spread over the lands like Java, Sumatra, Siam etc. Islam has also changed its colour, if not its formal official creed, in the various countries. But nowhere it was so amazingly changed as it did in India and in Bengal as well. The changes that took place in India and Bengal, are known by two names of Bidat (religious innovation) and 'Shirk' (polytheistic and idolatrous beliefs and practices) given by the orthodox Muslims. The phrase 'Popular Islam' indicates all the changes that have taken place in Islam from the earliest times up to the present.¹

Islam in traditional Bengal was particularly marked by its tendency towards convergence with and assimilation to the local cultural milieu. The locally acculturated form of Islam in Bengal was perceived as a form of "folk" or "popular" Islam. Islamization as a social and cultural process has operated in Bengal, 'where Islam is not a primary but a secondary culture, that is, exogenous and not endogenous to the particular region, and also where Islam is not a single or the only great tradition since it entered a land which was not culturally virgin, and confronted the long-established endogenous Hindu great tradition.'² These factors, inter alia, are significant considerations in an analysis of Islamic contact with and its position in Cooch Behar State in Bengal.

Bengal was under the Muslim rule for a period of five and a half centuries from the conquest of Bengal by Bakhtiar Khalji in 1203 A.D to the acquisition of Diwani by the English in 1765 A.D. It is needless to mention here that during this period, not only immigrant Muslims came into Bengal but also many local people were converted to the faith of Muhammad. However Dr. Atul Sur has classified the Bengali Muslims into three categories : (i) immigrant Muslims, (ii) converted Muslims and (iii) mixed Muslims originated from the above two categories. According to Dr. Sur, the first category comprised the descendants of those foreign Muslims who were brought here by the Muslim rulers and Pathan Sultans of Bengal for the appointment to higher administrative posts. The second category comprises the descendants of those Muslims who had voluntarily embraced Islamic religion. The third category comprises the descendants of those Muslims who were originated out of mixture of the first two categories. The Muslims, belonging to the second category are, no doubt, the most numerous.³

We are almost in the dark regarding the time and manner in which the Mohammedans first came to Cooch Behar. The first contact of the region with the Mohammedans is said to have been started at the beginning of the thirteenth century. When Bakhtiar Khalji advanced to attack Tibet through Kamatapur in 1205 A.D., he made friends

with a leader of the Koch or Mech tribe who embraced Islam and took the name of Ali Mech. Ali Mech may well have lived anywhere between Rangamati and Devkot.⁴ It is believed that the growth of the Mohameddan population in the Kamata-Koch kingdom had been increased through subsequent invasions by the Mohammedan rulers of Bengal and Delhi.⁵ During the war (1493) of Hussain Shah, the Sultan of Bengal, with Nilambara, the ruler of Kamata, a large number of Mohammedan soldiers settled in Kamata and infiltration of Musalmans continued for their settlement in the region.⁶ It was during the reign of Koch ruler Naranarayan that an amicable relation had been established with the Mughal Emperor Akbar. The favourable circumstances probably led the Musalmans to infiltrate into the region through trade and other relations.⁷ Musalmans' infiltration seems to have reached its zenith during the Mughal rule in the Koch-Hajo region (1613 - 1647 A.D.) The invasions of Kamata - Koch Kingdom by Mir Jumla in 1661 A.D. and Sayesta Khan in 1665 A.D. and others were no less significant in respect of Musalmans' settlement.⁷ In the subsequent period the treaty between Koch kings and Mughal rulers established a political relation between Koch dynasty and the Mughals, which no doubt, led to the establishment of peace and interaction between the Koch kings and the Muslims. The establishment of political relations of the Muslim rulers with the local Koch kings had facilitated many Muslim officials, intellectuals, military forces, traders, artisans and various other occupational groups to immigrate into this kingdom. Along with these Muslim groups, many Muslim saints or Sufis had also come to Cooch Behar and established Khanqahs or Astans (abode of a pir) to preach their religion along with spiritual teaching among the local population. These Sufis or Pirs played a very important role in propagation and expansion of Islam and Muslim population during the early period of Cooch Behar State.⁸

During the early period of the Koch kingdom, a fraction of the society was consisted of the Muslims. The contemporary literary sources like Vamsavali and Gurucharita refer to the "Turks or 'Turuks' and the 'Yavanas'. It is possible that both the terms refer to the Muslim community. While the term 'Turuk' implies the Turks, the term 'Yavana' indicates all groups of Muslims, Turko-Afghans and the Mughals.⁹ Darrang Raj Vamsavali mentions that the 'Yavanas' in the Koch Kingdom lived happily by freely reciting the Koranic verses.¹⁰ It is probable that the Muslims began pouring into the region since the time of Bakhtiar Khalji's invasion of Kamrupa in 1205 A.D. Their social status appears to be low. Any person accepting Islam on any pretext was made an outcaste in the Hindu society.¹¹ But Sankara Deva (1449 - 1568 A.D.), a preacher of neo-Vaishnavism, accepted the Muslims to his fold. Chandsai, a Muslim, was made his disciple and was placed on an equal footing along with his other disciples.¹² It is said that Chaitanyadeva came to Kamarupa at a time when Sankaradeva was preaching the doctrines of Vaisnavism there and Buddhist customs were still in vogue in the region.¹³

At the time when Islam emerged in this country, Buddhism and Hinduism were the two prominent religions of Bengal. But the moral and ethical degradation of Buddhism was at its zenith at this time. With the fall of the Palas and the rise of the Senas, Buddhism was fast waning and consequently it had to take shelter in the border regions of

Bengal. During these days of Buddhistic decline, there gradually sprang up many sects and sub-sects such as Natha, Sahajiya, Tantrika and others, which practically followed no strict code of any religion or morality. With regard to Hinduism, it was also not in its pristine glory. The Senas tried to revive it but miserably failed in this regard. Hinduism was then thoroughly steeped in superstitious beliefs and practices. Astrology of absurd nature occupied the place of true religion. Besides, a powerful influence of Tantras and many other indigenous cults and creeds sapped the pristine strength of Hindu religion. Shastras began to be created by the Brahmins whose orthodox, narrow and conservative views hampered the progress of the whole society and made it hopelessly stagnant. This state of affairs in the Hindu society contributed much to the caste hatred and racial tyranny of the Hindus.¹⁴

When such religions and social conditions were prevalent in Bengal, the Sufis came here carrying the message of Islam with them. Islam is ever famous for its strong monotheistic belief in god, and for its theoretical and practical teachings of universal brotherhood. A simple faith in one god, the loving and the merciful, combined with only a few easy practices and moral principles is another marked feature of Islam.¹⁵ Hence, from the doctrinal point of view, Islam, whether as a religious system or as a social formula, is in every respect the antithesis of Hinduism. It recognizes no priesthood nor acknowledges any caste differentiation based upon subtle distinctions of food, drink, dress, marriage and ceremonial usage.¹⁶ Islam sufficiently possesses those qualities which can easily satisfy spiritual cravings of the masses. By the continuous activities of the saintly preachers known as the Sufis, these inherent qualities of Islam were made familiar with the masses. They gathered round the Sufis and readily changed their old faith to the new one. Only the change of faith at once offered the masses an opportunity to raise their social status and satisfy their hearts by the adoption of a simple and easily understandable creed like Islam.¹⁷ Thus Islam emerged as the "religion of social liberation" to the people of the lower rungs of the Hindu society because they were suffering from the crushing burden of the oppressive high caste Hindus. They were converted to Islam enmasse as they were attracted by the liberating message of social equality of Islam as preached by the Sufis.¹⁸

It has rightly been pointed out that Islam spread in this country in the garb of Sufism. Sufis were the real precursors of Islam and the agents of its expansion. These Muslim preachers just came to Bengal in the wake of the Turki conquest. Gaur and Pandua (in the district of Maldah) were not only the metropolitan cities of Bengal from the 13th to the 15th centuries, but they were also centres of Muslim preachers generally known as Pirs, Darvishes or Fakirs who preached Islam and the doctrine of the Sufis in the surrounding tracts of Varendra.¹⁹ During this period, a number of Sufi orders were introduced into Bengal, of which the chief orders were the Suhrawardi, Chisti, Quadiri, Naqsh-bandi, Madari etc.²⁰

It is generally believed that the preaching of Islam had begun in Kamarupa at about the beginning of the 13th century A.D. In the early period, Muslim preachers must have been untiring in their efforts for Islam which became

widely disseminated in western Kamarupa. Some of them devoted themselves to meditation, others to preaching and establishing 'Dham' or 'Astana' commonly known as 'Dargas' in diverse places.²¹ For instance, The celebrated saint Giasuddin Aulia preached Islam in the beginning of the 16th century. He lies buried in Hajo in the district of Kamarupa where he established a Muslim colony and constructed a mosque named 'Poa-Makka Masjid'. Pir Shah Soltan of Balkh came to western Kamarupa where he lived and was buried in Mahasthangarh in Hijri 439 (1047 A.D.) Besides, Shah Madar came to Kamarupa to preach Islam.²²

The well-known 'Astanas' or 'Dargas' of Mohammedan Pirs in the capitals of Hindu Koch kings, viz, Kamatapur, Dhaliabari and Cooch Behar, suggest that the Pirs resided in those places receiving honour and practised their devotional exercises and preached their religion without fear of oppression.²³ Within the State, there existed quite a good number of sacred places known as Khangahs or Dargahs. The local Muslims were very closely associated with the Khangahs or Dargas for spiritual, ritual and cultural needs. The most important Dargahs in Cooch Behar were of Torsapir, Shah Fakir Sahib, Shah Garib Kamal, Paglapir, Satyapir etc.²⁴ The Dham of Torsapir at the outskirts of Cooch Behar town, is a well-known Dargah. It is said that many people were attracted to Islam through the influence of this Torsapir who flourished probably in the beginning of the 18th century. As he resided on the banks of the Torsa, he became known as the Torsapir. The Koch kings revered the Pir and money grants were conferred over a long period for offering 'Shirni' regularly in the 'Dargah'. Maharaja Harendranarayan granted seven bighas of land as 'Pirpal' for the Dargah.²⁵ In the ancient capital of Cooch Behar named Dhaliabari, there lies tomb of Shah Fakir. This 'Dargah' was so influential that the Cooch Behar Darbar had granted 77 bighas of land as 'Pirpal' to meet its expense. Shah Garib Kamal was buried outside the fort of Kamatapura south-west of the Baghduar. This Pir lived probably in the 17th century. In the settlement papers of 1872 a Hindu is recorded as the Sebait of this 'Dargah'. The history of Paglapir remains obscure. His influence has endured in the custom of erecting a bamboo in his name whenever dogs or Jackals become rabid. During this ceremony a Bhowria (in whom the spirit of the Pir is said to be transmitted) acts a madman and utters prophecies.²⁶

Satyapir is an emblem of Hindu Muslim unity. From various manuscripts it is assumed that Satyapir was originally a Hindu, but was converted to Islam and devoted his life to preaching. The popular belief is that Satyapir is a god or at least a godly person who can grant an all-round prosperity and success. He was unquestionably a religious power in Northern Bengal, and the influence of his name could be noticed even in the 20th century. The worship of Satyanarayan is prevalent in Hindu society. Satyapir has been Hinduized under the name of Satyanarayan. That Satyapir was identified with Satyanarayan is suggested in a manuscript of Satyapir, "He who is Satyanarayana, is also Satyapir. By his revelation worship from both sects (Hindu and Musalman) is rendered to him." In the Panchali of Satyanarayana, it is written, "The Musalmans should worship in the name of Satyapir, each according to his inclination." Satyapir's 'Shirni' or Satyanarayana's 'Prasad' was both uncooked and prepared without fish or meat.²⁷

Both Satyapir and Satyanarayana were worshipped without the use of any image.²⁸ A noted scholar is of the opinion that "Satyapir neither resembles the Pauranic Hindu god Narayana nor a real Darvish in any description. he is rather an idealized creation of Hindu and Muslim minds, which were eager to meet with each other on a common platform of cordiality and unity. Thus he was and is still an ideal deity venerated by both Hindus and Muslims of Bengal."²⁹ In addition to local Pirs, the Muslims of Cooch Behar are also influenced by the teachings and activities of some celebrated and popular Pirs of outside such as Nizamuddin Aulia of Delhi and Khwaja Mainuddin Chisty of Ajmir. Prof. Abdul Karim has rightly remarked that 'the Sufis and their Khanqahs and later their dargahs have played or are still playing the most important part in shaping and developing the Muslim society'. According to him, the most important element of the popular force in Islam was Pirism. The people considered the dargah of the Pir as a place of pilgrimage.³⁰ As a matter of fact, the belief of Pirism was not only shared by the Muslims, but also shared by Rajbansi Hindus and other communities,³⁰⁺ which had strengthened the inter-community relations in Cooch Behar.

The Muslims of Cooch Behar mostly belonged to the Sunni sect as it was the case in other parts of Bengal.³¹ Besides the Sunnis, there are very few Muslims of 'Shia' and 'Ahle-e-Hadish' or Wahabi sects. The Sunni Muslims of Cooch Behar are again divided into two sub-sects 'Barelvis' and 'Deobandis'. In Cooch Behar the Muslims are exclusively of Barelvi variety of Sunni sect and it is estimated that over 90 percent of the Muslims are of this category, who follow the theological school of Barelvi, Uttar Pradesh. The Sunni Barelvis tend to accept without much criticism the traditional social customs of the Muslims. Belief in spiritualism of Pirism is the typical feature of them. The Muslims of this category consist of both 'Nasyas' and 'Bhatia' Muslims (whose forefathers, time to time, migrated to this place from Eastern and Northern Bengal and Assam) and they are deeply integrated with the local society and culture. They are mainly the followers of 'Quadiri' and 'Chisti' orders. The Deobandis follow the logical school of Deoband, Uttar Pradesh, whose basic objective is to purify Islam. They are a puritan group and are less in number but more organized through their missionary organisation called Tabliq-e-Jamat. Pirism of hereditary nature is not acceptable to them.³²

Since the Muslims of Cooch Behar are predominantly of 'Sunni Barelvis', so the influence of Pirism in their socio-religious life is all-pervading. As time passed, 'Popular Islam' or 'Folk Islam' grew up in Cooch Behar as well as in other parts of Bengal. Absorption of Hindu and other indigenous beliefs and practices was the main feature of this "Popular Islam." The proselytising propaganda of the Pirs or Darvishes was chiefly responsible for the conventional conversion of the people of the region. Such conversions were generally incomplete in nature, showing only an outward acknowledgement of the creed. The converts retained many of their old religious, social and cultural beliefs and practices during their apostatic life. Besides, from the outset Islam had to live under the influence of Hindu environment. 'The new Muslims had to live amidst their Hindu relatives and neighbours and as such had to maintain an amicable and friendly relation with the people of the sister community. Out of these relations of the Muslims with

the Hindus gradually sprang up a mutual toleration and spirit of 'give-and-take'.³³ As a result of this, many Muslim beliefs and practices were modified by Hindu and other indigenous influence and the vice versa. Hence, under the influence of the doctrine of 'Guruvada', the doctrine of 'Pir-muridi' (i.e. of making disciples by the Pirs) grew up among the Muslims. The Muslims learned gradually to worship Pir and his grave (Dargah). As a matter of fact, these Pirs were and are still regarded as gods who could grant any boon to their devoted followers.³⁴ 'Urs' festivals are still observed annually in honour of departed Pirs.³⁵ The Muslims of Cooch Behar observe the Muharram and take out 'Taziahs'.³⁶ Although making of 'Taziahs', playing of music along with processions etc. are not recognized as Islamic.³⁷

The low-class Muslim masses of Cooch Behar stick to many polytheistic beliefs and perform many Hindu practices. These beliefs and practices speak of their Hindu origin. Though the Muslim masses changed their religion but could not clear off of old culture and faith. The Manasa cult is very popular in Bengal. Many Muslim make offerings through Hindu priests to Manasa known also as Bishohari, the goddess of snakes.³⁸ A large number of the Muslims of North and East Bengal actively take part in the 'Bhasan-Yatra' festival, which is held to commemorate the Behula legend.³⁹ Besides, most of the 'Ojhas' (exorcists) are Muslims. These Muslim exorcists often recite 'Mantras' or charms containing the names of Hindu gods and goddesses. The worship of Sitala or goddess of small pox is almost universal.⁴⁰ This deity is also worshipped by many superstitious Muslims when small pox breaks out in an epidemic form. In a similar way, 'Ola Bibi', goddess of cholera, is worshipped by the Muslims in an epidemic of cholera. The Muslim masses also believe in spirit in a purely local and non-Islamic sense of the term, which is Bhut, Pret, Deo or Pari.⁴¹

Many Hindu Social practices have been found among the Muslims of Cooch Behar like other parts of Bengal. Here Islamic practices of marriage have been so much altered that they have become un-Islamic to a great extent. 'Pana Pratha' or Dowry system, 'Kane dekha' or selection of bride, 'Halud Makhan' or washing of the bride by water mixed with turmeric, 'chailan bati' etc. have become part and parcel of the Muslim marriages. Their marriages are also celebrated with music, amusements and grand feasts.⁴² When a woman is generally on the seventh month of pregnancy, the Hindus of Bengal give a feast to which only women are invited to take part. This ceremony which is called 'Sadh Khaoya', is observed by many Muslims in Cooch Behar. Besides, some old practices are observed by the Cooch Behari Muslims in connection with death, Though they are not found in any religious code of Islam. For instance, the ceremony of the fortieth day known as 'Challisa' is observed after a man's death. On this day, a grand feast is served to the guests who are invited previously, and some religious functions are held for the benefit of the departed. This ceremony appears to be an imitation of the 'Sraddha' ceremony of the Hindus.⁴³

Such is the picture of 'Popular' or 'Folk' Islam that grew up in Cooch Behar with the rest of Bengal mainly through the untiring proselytising efforts of the Pirs or Darvishes. It is also a fact that Hindu and other indigenous

beliefs and practices surreptitiously crept into the fold of semitic Islam through the agency of the converts.⁴⁴ In the words of Rafiuddin Ahmed. 'The gods and goddesses, Pirs and their dargahs to whom the common man looked for immediate protection in times of trouble - were too near and dear to be discarded outright. In a sense, these elements of popular Islam were neither characteristically Hindu nor Muslim, nor even a product of syncretist rapprochement, but represented the folk religion of rural Bengal with its roots in a prehistoric past.⁴⁵ But Asim Roy has expressed the view that Pirs as a section of 'Cultural Mediators' were religious practioners and stood closer to the masses in their capacity as mystic religious guides and their command of the Bengali language. 'They showed courage and a creative dynamism in their syncretistic formulation of the Bengali Muslim identity , in defiance of the dominant 'ashraf' religious - cultural ethos.⁴⁶ 'Despite all the efforts of the reformers over the years', it was pointed out, 'the basic pattern condemned as heretical by the fundamentalist reformers a hundred years ago were found persisting at every level of Bengali Muslim society as late as the 1960s'.⁴⁷ There is nothing to indicate that things are any fundamentally different even today.

The population of Cooch Behar State is mainly consisted of two religious communities - the Hindus and Muslims during the period under study. The majority of the people of the State belonged to Hinduism and the Mohammedans formed the principal minority community. In the Census report of 1872, only the adult males of Cooch Behar were classified according to religion. Out of a total of 1,76,396 adult males, exactly one-third of the entire population of the State, 1,27,928 or 72 percent were Hindus; 48,086 or 27 percent were Mohammedans.⁴⁸ According to the Census of 1891, the Muslims were 1,70,746 in number out of a total of 5,78,868 and formed about 30 percent.⁴⁹ In the Census report of 1911, the Mohammedans were 1,82,556 out of a total of 5,92,952 and constituted about 31 percent of the population of the State. It is learnt from the Census report of 1941 that the Muslims were 2,42,684 out of a total population of 6,40,842 and formed almost 38 percent.⁵⁰ The following statement will show the percentage as well as the rate of increase of Muslim population of Cooch Behar during the sixty years from 1881 to 1941 A.D. It can be noticed from this statement that the ratio of Muslim population of the State has steadily increased from 28.96 percent to 37.86 percent during this period.⁵¹

	Percentage of the Muslims	Rate of increase in each decade	Total Increase
1881	28.96	....
1891	29.50	+0.58	1881-1941
1901	29.67	+0.17	+8.90
1911	30.79	+1.12	
1921	32.58	+1.79	
1931	35.34	+2.96	
1941	37.86	+2.52	

In terms of descent, the Muslims of the Cooch Behar State did not constitute a homogenous community. They had three segments : (a) The Muslims of three demoninations such as Mughals, Pathans and Sayyads were almost foreigners who enjoyed high status of 'Ashraf' (literally, the 'high' - or 'noble born') among the Mohammedan community. They were very negligible in number and resided mainly in towns of the State. It is also most probable that some of the Muslims of the State were a mixed group with converts and the immigrant Muslims, 'who came in the wake of the Pathan and Mughal conquest, living side by side and intermarrying.' (b) The local Muslims formed the majority of the total Muslim population, the bulk of whom was composed of converted lower class Hindus and aboriginal tribes such as Koches, Meches etc. They were generally known as Shaikhs or as popularly called 'Nasyas'. The title 'Nasyas' is significant." It is generally believed to be the corrupted form of 'Nashta', which means fallen or degenerated and thus appear to be the most probable nickname which the Hindu subjects of a Hindu principality would give to their converted co-religionists.⁵² The following table shows the number of different segments of the Muslim population of Cooch Behar in 1891.⁵³

Mughals	49
Pathans including Sayyads	1,146
Sheikhs including ' <u>Nasyas</u> '	1,69,551

Hence, it is clearly shown from this table that Shaikhs and Nasyas formed more than 99 percent of the Muslim population of the State. E.A. Gait wrote in the 1891 Census Report of Assam that the great majority of persons professing the Islamic faith in Assam were, as in Eastern Bengal, local converts from the lower castes and aboriginal tribes, who after conversion describe themselves as 'Shaikhs'.⁵⁴ Most of the Muslim population were of Sunni sect and there were no Faraizis and Wahabis.⁵⁵ F.C. Crunning stated in the Jalpaiguri District Gazetteer in 1911 that 'the Shaikhs and the Nasyas who composed the majority of the Muslims of the district were, in the main, natives of the district, and in their appearance, dress and customs differed very little from the Rajbansis.... They were very much the sons of the soil.'⁵⁶ The observation made by E.A. Gait and F.C. crunning on the descent of the Muslims of Assam and Jalpaiguri respectively were applicable to the Muslims of Cooch Behar State too. There were also a Muslim group known as the 'Bhatia' Muslims whose forefathers, time to time, migrated to Cooch Behar from Eastern and Northern Bengal and Assam, permanently settled and mixed up with the local population. They were invited to this place by the Koch Maharajas for their specialized services. They were primarily cultivators.⁵⁷ It is interesting to note here that the Baikunthapur Zamindars of Jalpaiguri district also encouraged migration of Muslims from nearby districts to facilitate extension of cultivation.⁵⁸ It is learnt from the Census of 1931 that the numbers of the Muslim population in Cooch Behar State were increasing for the same reason that sent Muslims from the predominantly Muslim district of Mymensingh into Assam where they went to take up the land which they could no longer find in their own district to support their increasing numbers.⁵⁹

It should be noted here that there were extraordinary variations in the figures for the Muslims in Bengal during this period. The ambition of numerous functional groups (such as Jolahas, Kulus etc.) and practically all lower Muslim classes was to be known as Sheikhs. Consequently, in the Census Report of 1911, the Sheikhs were nearly 23 millions in Bengal, where they accounted for 95 percent of the total Muslim population. In North and East Bengal they had increased by $2\frac{3}{4}$ millions owing mainly to the orders of the Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam that the lower Muslim classes might return as Shaikhs, Pathans etc. As a result of this, the 'Ajlaf' (literally, the commoners) or 'Atrap' (literally, the 'Wretches') had a loss of over two - thirds which was due to the term having lost popularity. For example, the Nasyas alone had lost 1,99,000. The Nasyas of North Bengal also took the opportunity to call themselves Shaikhs, their number falling from 1,99,727 in 1901 to 1,816 in 1911. In Jalpaiguri District, there were 63,884 Nasyas in 1901, but their number was reduced to only 36 in 1911.⁶⁰ Likewise, in Cooch Behar State the number of Sheikhs was 1,23,690 in 1901 and it rose to 1,75,657 in 1921 and thus formed about 92 percent of the total Muslim population. On the other hand, in Cooch Behar, the number of Nasyas was 42,607 in 1901, but there was no mention of Nasyas as a Muslim group in the Census of 1921.⁶¹ Hence Asim Roy has opined that the process of 'Ashrafisation' ran in tandem with the process of 'Sanskritisation' among Hindus, involving social emulation of the higher and the dominant castes by the lower.⁶²

Though in theory and in religious practices, no social distinction is made by the Muslims, yet in all social matters, such as marriage, feasts etc., the question of social status does receive prominence. The two general social divisions of the Bengali Muslims are the 'Ashrafs' and 'Atrafs', the former term indicating the "high castes" and the latter, "low castes". The Ashrafs claim descent from the immigrant Muslims and form the aristocracy. Although in blood, (as the foreign Muslims took wives from this land) they have no or little difference from the local people. The Ashrafs include the three classes, viz., Sayyad, Pathan and Mughal who are supposed to be the Muslims of high social status, just as the Dvijas include the three high castes, viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya of the Hindus. The Atrafs comprise the Sheikhs or Nasyas and other functional groups who are supposed to be the Muslims of low social status, just as the Shudras of the Hindus. In the words of Muhammad Enamul Haq, "Inter-marriage, inter-dinner, and other inter-social matters are commonly found among the Ashrafs only, but they are rare phenomena between the Ashrafs and the Atrafs."⁶³ Ranjit K. Bhattacharya in a research-paper has shown that 'the Muslim ethnic groups in rural Bengal seem to share some other caste-like features and frequently use them in determining their relative social standing. Some of these strikingly common Hindu caste-like features among the local Muslim ethnic groups are endogamy, restrictions on commensality and hereditary occupational specialization and the relative merit of the different occupations.'⁶⁴ It is learnt from the Census Report of 1921 that even 'a Shaikh will not marry a Kulu and in some parts one class of Muhammedans will not even feed with another.'⁶⁵

It has often been recognized that social structures of the Muslims are also organized according to caste principles.⁶⁶ In Cooch Behar State also, the Ashrafs include the Sayyads, Mughals and Pathans who claim their foreign descent. The Atrafs comprise the Sheikhs or Nasyas and the majority of Bhatia Muslims who were by far the majority of the Muslims in the State. They generally lived in rural areas, and the overwhelming majority of them belonged to a differentiated cultivating or peasant society, adhians forming a large proportion of that society. They were further segmented into various occupational groups, such as Jolahas (weavers), Kulus (oil-pressers), Behras and Nagarchis. These Muslim groups based originally either on descent or occupation persisted as social classes and were socially and culturilly significant. Thus a notion of social stratification among the Muslims was prevalent in Cooch Behar State.⁶⁷ The following table will show the overall social hierarchy of all Muslim ethnic groups in the State according to the Census of 1921 :⁶⁸

Social hierarchy of Muslim ethnic groups in Cooch Behar State and their number :

Muslim Ethnic groups	Social Status	Numbers
	<u>Ashraf</u> (Aristocracy)	
Sayyad		426
Mughal		not mentioned
Pathan		999
	<u>Atraf</u> (Commoner)	
Sheikh		1,75,657
<u>Nasya</u>		not mentioned
<u>Jolaha</u>		62
<u>Kulu</u>		3
<u>Nikari</u>		62
<u>Behras</u>		5

Theoretically the Muslims stand completely outside the fold of Hindu caste system. But the local traditional social system was far from considering Muslims as complete outsiders. Since the Koch rulers and local Jotedars invited many Muslims for their specialized services for the growth of this State, so they developed a system for dealing with them. Apart from this, many of the indigenous groups, as has been noted earlier, were converted to the fold of Islam. Thus considering the history, social position, political role and caste background of the Muslims, the local non-Muslims of Cooch Behar assigned them a position in the caste-ladder. The Muslims were placed in between pure and impure castes in local society. The high caste Hindus accorded lower rank to the Muslims, but placed them above the rank of unclean castes and tribes. The service-castes of Cooch Behar used to serve the Muslims as their patrons

through the relations of Jajmani type. Besides, the interaction between the high caste Hindus with high social Muslim groups and the same also between low Hindu castes with Muslim occupational groups was vogue in Cooch Behar.⁶⁹

The Rulers of Cooch Behar State, though professed Brahmanical religion, always patronized the Muslim community with the grant of stipends like Pirbhata and construction of mosque and the titles of distinctions. It may be explained with the useful roles played by the immigrant Muslim community in expansion of the cultivated lands, in reclamation of cultivatable land and in the application of better methods of cultivation in the State of Cooch Behar.⁷⁰ Their contributions to the improvement of Cooch Behar's agricultural crops, particularly, paddy, jute and tobacco were remarkable. Muslims of Dinhatia sub-division were and are still considered to be the best tobacco cultivators.⁷¹ It is also not unlikely that in the earlier period a certain number of Musalmans brought here in different capacities in the guild of masons and artisans whose functions were construction, decoration of walls and repair of buildings. It is probably due to this, Maharaja Pran Narayana is said to have brought Muslim masons in order to build temples in the Koch kingdom.⁷² The result was that some influence of Islamic art and architecture can be traced in some temples of Cooch Behar. The spacious building with rounded pillars, curved door shapes, windows, geometrical patterns and the domes are said to be some of the characteristics of (Persian) Muslim architecture.⁷³ We can trace some of these features in the temples built by the Koch Rulers in the precolonial period. Besides, most of the temples as well as the mosques are dome-shaped both in the inner and outside parts.⁷⁴

The Muslim community received social recognition during the rule of the Koch Maharajas and enjoyed the opportunities to hold high administrative positions in the State. Their economic, political and cultural contributions for the growth of Cooch Behar had been duly recognized. During the period under study, some instances may be mentioned here. Nawabzada Abdul Karim was appointed as Secretary to Maharaja Jitendranarayana as well as to Her Highness Regent Indira Devi. Nawab Khasru Jung was appointed as the Guardian of the young Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan and also took the charge of the Household Department of the Palace. Both of them were non-Cooch Behari Muslims.⁷⁵ Munshi Amanatulla Ahmed, a local Jotedar as well as a renowned scholar, was rewarded with the title 'Khan Choudhuri'; by the Maharaja Raj Rajendranarayan.⁷⁶ Later he was appointed the Revenue Minister in the State Council and the President of the Hitasadhani Sabha, the only State-recognized political organisation of the State. Ansaruddin Ahmed and Bazley Rahman were appointed as the Chief Secretary of the State and Fouzdari Ahilkar respectively.⁷⁷ Other remarkable Muslim personalities in the state administration as well as in other arenas were Ahmad Hossain Pradhan, B.L., Najib Ahilkar, Maulvi Fakiruddin Ahmad, B.L., Special Magistrate, Maulvi Sekh Dayal Mohammad, Assistant Inspector of Schools, Abbas Uddin Ahmed, the famous folk singer, Makbul Hossain, a noted pleader, Maziruddin Ahmad etc.⁷⁸

The Muslims lived in pluri-cultural society in Cooch Behar State and bulk of them differed little from the

Hindus and other indigenous communities (ethnic groups) in respect to language, dress, material culture, habits and customs. They even observed major and popular festivals of the locality as if their own. In many places even known Muslim customs have been turned into local one. What A.C. Hartley, the Rangpur Settlement Officer, wrote in 1932, was very much true for Cooch Behar State too. He said, "Ballads in honour of Bishohari and Satyapir (sometimes known as Satya Narayan) are preserved and sung by the people of both the faiths. The worship of Jakha, also a Rajbansi deity, was noted in some thanas and the use of a white flag on the burial ground is very reminiscent of the white canopy used by the Rajbansis on their cremation ground. The regular attendance of men of both the faiths at 'Jatra' and 'Kirtan' parties is common."⁷⁹ In many other aspects too important similarities between the local Muslims and Hindus can be found in their socio-cultural traditions and practices. Food habits were the same except that the Muslims did not take pork. Names of the local Muslims were often indistinguishable from those of the Rajbansi Hindus. Muslim women, generally speaking, did not use 'burkhas' and participated in agricultural operations.

In this context, it is worthwhile to elaborate the observation of Thakur Panchanan Barma, the most charismatic leader of the Rajbansi Kshatriya Movement, on the natural harmonious relationship between the Rajbansis and the local Muslims. Referring to the Muslims, Panchanan Barma held the view that 'it was not proper to differentiate between the Hindus and the Muslims, as their ancestors were the same. If due to certain circumstances they had adopted Islam, that should not overshadow the fact that every morning they met and ploughed the land together, did the marketing, shared the pleasures and problems and participated in the same social ceremonies. So, even though the Rajbansis had adopted the sacred thread, they should not think of their caste alone.'⁷⁹⁺

As a matter of fact, the Muslims were highly integrated with local traditions of Cooch Behar and the process of integration had been taken place slowly and gradually. The cultural continuity of the local converts had a great role in this process of integration. Most significantly, in the State of Cooch Behar the native Muslims were generally guided by the Hindu law in matters of succession and inheritance. Any Muslim who claimed to be governed by the Mohammedan law had to prove that he was foreigner and that the Mohammedan law of inheritance had always been followed in his family.⁸⁰ This clearly indicates the cultural roots of the Muslim converts in Cooch Behar. The Mohammedan Inheritance Act (Cooch Behar Act II) was passed in 1887, but till 1950 it was not much popularized among the Muslims.⁸¹

The interaction between the Hindus and Muslims in day-to-day life was very much in vogue. They were sympathetic and affectionate to each other in their joy's and sorrows. They carried on cultivation as well as trade and commerce living side by side. Hindus and Muslims addressed each other through certain kinship terms such as Dada, Aju, Kaka which indicated warm relationship.⁸² Interaction between Muslims and Hindus generated an atmosphere of veneration and attraction for each other's religion. In this context, the role of the Pirs or Darvishes cannot be overlooked. Unlike the professional missionaries like Ulema of their own faith, the Sufi saints or Pirs neither vilified the

ancient religions of this country, nor they unusually glorified their own. Instead, they preached the essence of Islamic religion without emphasizing its orthodox aspects. They only emphasized on spiritual, liberal and humanistic aspects of Islam. 'The preachings of liberal - humanistic aspects of Islam by these Muslim saints or Pirs made it possible for these two faiths - Islam and Hinduism to co-exist and to know each other' in this region.⁸³ Since at the level of the masses, there was neither comprehension of theological subtleties nor conflict of interest, there was syncretistic tradition emerging on the social scene.⁸⁴ All these factors together strengthened the communal bond and religious toleration among the two major religious communities in the State. In this vein, what Ranajit Dasgupta wrote about communal amity in his study of the district of Jalpaiguri was also true for the neighbouring Cooch Behar State. He said, "A significant feature of the social life was the absence of any tension and rivalry between Hinduized autochthons and Islamized autochthons. Thus a peaceful mingling and a cultural syncretization had been taking place."⁸⁵

The Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan in his speech delivered on the 27th June, 1947 in the Legislative Council referred to the cordial Hindu-Muslim relations prevailing in the State. The Maharaja said, "In Cooch Behar we are in a happy position to congratulate ourselves that not only no disturbance of any kinds has occurred but also that Hindus and Muslims have continued to live together in perfect peace and harmony as brothers and are determined not to be influenced by the poison of communal and communist forces that have been and are unfortunately still at work round about us. The credit of this remarkable achievement goes to the people themselves and to their elective representatives in this House."^{85*}

Our independence in August, 1947 brought simultaneously the partition of the country into India and Pakistan along religious lines. There were two partitions creating two huge borderlands - one between India and West Pakistan ('Partition-in-the-West') and another some 1,500 km to the east between India and East Pakistan/Bangladesh and Burma ('Partition-in-the-east').⁸⁶ In this context, Gayatri Devi, the princess of Cooch Behar royal family and the Maharani of Jaipur, wrote in her memoirs, "To me, brought up in Cooch Behar where 40 percent of the inhabitants were Muslim, it seemed terrible to rend India apart in this way when we knew from long experience that it was perfectly possible for Hindus and Muslims to live peaceably side by side."⁸⁷ However as a result of partition, Cooch Behar State came to be bordered on three sides by East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Amidst terrible bloodshed and suffering millions of refugees crossed the borders. Many refugees from East Pakistan also migrated to Cooch Behar. In this volatile situation, there was always the dark menace of Hindu-Muslim trouble. Because there was a sizeable part of the population was Muslim and there was also anxiety of Cooch Behar's being a border State. But the Maharaja of Cooch Behar rose to the occasion and used his personal authority to guarantee the safety of the Muslim minority. There was no outbreak of Hindu-Muslim trouble in the State.⁸⁸ It has been pointed out that compared to the eastern and other parts of Bengal, communal tension was rarely visible in the northern part of Bengal. As both the Rajbansi Hindus and the Muslim masses of North Bengal are believed to have been members of the same ethnic group having lots of similarities between them at

popular cultural level, religious loyalties did not come in the way of their peaceful relationship.⁸⁹

In fact, no major incident of communal disturbance had been recorded in Cooch Behar State during the period under study. This fact has been well expressed in a letter dated the 8th August, 1949 written by Amanatulla Ahmed and Satish Chandra Roy Singha of Cooch Behar to the Adviser, the States Ministry, the Government of India. They narrated in that letter that "by nature the people of the State are peace-loving. Communal harmony in the State is a feature which surprises the rest of India. Even when there were great killings in Bengal and elsewhere in India, there was not a single shutter in the calm and peaceful atmosphere of Cooch Behar. Peace and tranquility prevailed even at the greatest provocation. This peculiar and harmless nature of Cooch Beharis will merit always and anywhere exceptional treatment both politically and educationally."⁹⁰

Notes and References

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2. Roy, Asim : The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal, Princeton, First Published 1983, p. 4.
3. Sur, Dr. Atul : Bangalir Nritattvik Parichaya, (in Bengali), Calcutta, First Published 1977, Third Edition, 1986. Fourth Print 2000, p. 53.
4. Ghosal, S.C. : History of Cooch Behar, (Translated from original Bengali 'Koch Biharer Itihas' by Amanatullah Khan Choudhury Ahmed), Cooch Behar State Press, 1942, pp. 299, 301.
5. Hunter, W.W : Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and State of Kuch Bihar, London, 1876, Reprint, 1976, p. 359.
6. Ghosh, S.C. : op-cit, pp. 52, 57.
7. Saikia, Mohini Kumar : Assam-Muslim Relation and Its Cultural Significance, Gauhati, 1978, p. 133.
8. Mandal, Sekh Rahim : 'Muslim Minority of Cooch Behar : Their History and Culture' in P.K. Bhattacharyya (ed) : The Kingdom of Kamata-Koch Bihar in Historical Perspective, Calcutta, 2000, pp. 122, 124.
9. Nath, D : History of the Koch kingdom (1515 - 1615), Delhi, 1989, p. 134.
10. Darrang Raj Vamsavali, V., 563.
11. Nath, D : op.cit. p. 134.
12. Loc. cit. Also see Barman, Sivanath : An Unsung Colossus : An Introduction to the Life and Works of Sankaradeva, Forum For Sankaradeva Studies, Guwahati, First Published 1999, p. 79. In fact, Sankaradeva was a preacher of bhakti and ekasarana. The doors of his religion were open to each and every one - be he a Brahmin, or a Garo, a Kalita or a Kachara. Further, in the sattrā (an institution conceived by him), he maintained complete equality among his disciples. Thus his religion became a powerful catalyst or 'a cementing force in the process of acculturation of the different ethnic groups. Sankaradeva spent the last years of his life in the Koch kingdom where he maintained a very cordial relation with King Naranarayana and his brother Chilaraya (his actual name being Sukladhvaja). Barman, Sivanath : op.cit, pp. 72, 78, 79.
13. Ghosal, S. C. : op. cit, p. 77.
14. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit., pp. 265 - 266.
15. *ibid*, p. 266.
16. Ahmed, Rafiuddin : The Bengal Muslims : A Quest for Identity, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1981, p. 7.
17. Haq, Muhammad Enamul, op. cit, p. 266.
18. Choudhury, Sushil : Review Article of the Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier : 1204 - 1760 by Richard M. Eaton, the Indian Historical Review, I.C.H.R., Vol. XX, Nos. 1-2, July, 1993 & January, 1944, p. 155. However, Richard M. Eaton considers the 'Religion of social liberation' Theory inadequate. According to him, there is abundant evidence that Indian Communities, even after conversion, failed to improve their status in the social hierarchy of Islam. Moreover, in Bengal Muslim converts were drawn largely from Rajbanshi, Pod, Chandal, Koch and other indigenous groups that had been only lightly exposed to Brahmanical culture. Instead, Eaton elaborates his thesis which is entirely novel and based on solid evidence. According to him, deforestation and peasantisation as well as Islamization went hand in hand especially in eastern Bengal delta after the establishment of Mughal rule in Bengal. Islam in Bengal absorbed so much local culture and became so deeply identified with the long term process of agrarian growth there that in its formative years the peasant cultivators never seem to have regarded it as "foreign". *ibid*, pp. 154 - 155. Also see Eaton, Richard M.' Who Are the Bengal Muslims' ?

Conversion and Islamization in Bengal', in his edited Essays on Islam and Indian History, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p. 264.

19. Haq, Muhammad Enamul, op. cit, p. 159.
20. ibid, pp. 146 - 154.
21. Ghosal, S.C. : op.cit, p. 83.
22. ibid, pp. 86, 90.
23. ibid, pp. 84 - 85.
24. Mandal, Shekh Rahim : op. cit, p. 130.
25. Ghosal, S.C. : op. cit, pp. 84 - 85.
26. ibid, pp. 85 - 86.
27. ibid, P. 87; Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Bengal & Sikkim, Part-I, Report by L.S.S. O'Malley, Calcutta, 1913, p. 252.
28. Sarkar, Jagadish Narayan : Hindu-Muslim Relations in Bengal, Delhi, First Published 1985. p. 76. Confer also Ray, Girijasankar : Uttarbange Rajbanshi Kshatriya Jatir Puja-Parvana, N. L. Publishers, Dibrugarh, Assam, First Published 1970, Second Edition 1999, pp. 211-212.
29. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit, p. 292.
30. Karim, Abdul : Social History of the Muslims in Bengal, Jatiya Grantha Prakashan, Dhaka, Third Edition 2001, pp. 168, 229.
- 30*. Ray, Girija Shankar, op. cit, pp. 211, 213. According to the author, the worship of Satyapir, Khoyajpir, Pagelapir etc. came into vogue as a result of synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religions. — ibid, p. 219.
31. The two main sects of the Mohammedans of Bengal are the Sunnis and the Shias. The former accept the authority of all successors of Muhammad, whereas the Shias look upon the first three Abu Bakkar, Omar and Osman, as interlopers and regard Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, as the first true Khalifa. They also greatly reverence his martyred sons, Hasan and Hossain. Sect was not returned at the 1901 Census, but it is known that, with the exception of those of Mughal origin, the great majority of Bengal Muslims consider themselves Sunnis, although at the same time they exalt Hasan and Hossain and observe the Ramzan as strictly as the Shias. -Census Report of Bengal, 1901, Part - I, Chapter IV, p. 173. Also see Census Report of India, 1931, Vol. V, Bengal & Sikkim, Part-I, Chapter XI, p. 358.
32. Mandal, Sekh Rahim : op.cit, pp. 129 - 30.
33. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit. p. 318.
34. ibid, pp. 323, 154.
35. Mukhopadhyay, Bisnupada : 'Samprodayik Sampriti O Koch Bihar', in Pashchimbanga, Special Issue on Cooch Behar, Government of West Bengal, Kolkata, 2006, p. 93.
36. Majumdar, Durgadas : West Bengal District Gazetteers : Koch Bihar, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1977, p. 84.
37. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit. pp. 342 - 343.
38. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Bengal and Sikkim, op. cit., p. 252.
39. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit., pp. 350 - 51.
40. Census of India, 1931, Vol. V, Bengal & Sikkim, Part-I. Report by A. E. Porter, Calcutta, 1933, p. 390. In a work entitled Punthi Parichay edited by Panchanan Mandal, it has been found that some mantras (charms) contained the names of Islamic Allah, Khuda, Mukammad etc. besides the names of Hindu gods and goddesses. Such

mantras are another example of the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim cultures. — Ray, Girijashankar, op.cit, p. 219.

41. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Bengal & Sikkim, op. cit., p. 252.
42. *ibid*, pp. 131 - 132, Mukhopadhyay, Bishnupada : op. cit., p. 94.
43. Haq, Muhammad Enamul, op. cit., p. 365 - 366.
44. *ibid*, p. 367.
45. Ahmed, Rafiuddin : op. cit, p. 70.
46. Roy, Asim : 'Being and Becoming a Muslim : A Historiographic Perspective on the Search for Muslim Identity in Bengal,' in Sekhar Bandyopadhyaya(ed), Bengal : Rethinking History, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001., p. 118.
47. Ahmed, Rafiuddin : op. cit., p. 71.
48. Hunter, W.W. : op. cit., p. 358.
49. Choudhury, Harandra Narayan ; The Cooch Behar State and Its hand Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar State Press, 1903, p. 118.
50. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Bengal & Sikkim, Part - II, Calcutta, 1913, p. 444; Census of India, 1941, Vol. IV, Bengal, Government of India, Simla, 1942, pp. 71, 105.
51. Dutta, Jatindra Mohan : Koch Bihare Jana Jathya Sambandhe Kayekti Katha; Koch Bihar Darpan (in Bengali), A Fortnightly Journal, Cooch Behar State Press, 9th Year, No. X, Magh, 1353, B.S., p. 144.
52. Choudhury, H. N. : op. cit., p. 120. It is a fact that North Bengal was the home of the Mech and Koch tribes. In 1901, The nominal strength of these tribes was still nearly a million and a half despite the fact that a large number of them had embraced Mohammedanism :- Census Report of Bengal, 1901, Part - i, p. 15.
53. *Loc. cit.*, As a matter of fact, the Mohammedans of Eastern and Northern Bengal as class are more numerous, not only than in any other part of Bengal but than in any other part of India. The Mohammedans of Bengal who call themselves 'sheikhs' outnumber those who profess to be Pathans in the ratio of 50 to 1. The number of Mughals in this Province is quite insignificant. Many of these 'sheikhs', moreover, had recently begun to claim this appellation. They were formerly known as 'Atraf' in South Bengal and as 'Nasya' in North Bengal. The latter word is commonly used by outsiders, though the people concerned now prefer to describe themselves by a more pretentious name. - Census Report of Bengal, 1901, Part-I, Chapter IV, pp. 165 - 166.
54. This is quoted in P. K. Debnath : Religion and Religious Establishments of Kamata-Koch kingdom, Unpublished Ph.D thesis, the University of North Bengal, 1993, p. 133.
55. Hunter, W.W. : op. cit, p. 359.
56. Crunning, C. F. : Eastern Bengal and Assam Districts Gazetteers : Jalpaiguri, Allahabad, 1911. This is quoted in Bazley Rahaman, Mandal Kamishaner Report O Uttar Banger Muslim Samaj (in Bengali), 1996, p. 15. Besides, Buchanan Hamilton in his 'Statistical Account of Rangpur' stated that 'although the followers of the Koran form the largest proportion of the inhabitants of the district, there is little reason to believe that many of them are intruders. They seem, in general, from their countenances, to be descendants of the original inhabitants.' - It is quoted in the Census Report of Bengal, 1901, Part-I, Chapter IV, p. 167.
57. Mandal, Sekh Rahim : op. cit., p. 129.
58. Das Gupta, Ranajit : Economy, Society and Politics in Bengal : Jalpaiguri 1869 - 1947, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, p. 19.
59. Census of India, 1931, Vol. V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part I, Chapter XI, p. 358.
60. Census of India, 1911, Vol. V, Part-I, Report by L.S.S. O'Mally, Chapter XI, pp. 446, 508, 516.
61. Census of India, 1921, Vol. V, Bengal, Part - II, Report by W. H. Thompson, p. 175; Census of Bengal, 1901, Part

-B, Table XIII, p. 285. 'The acknowledged superiority of the Ashrafs' position had the most serious consequences for the Bengali Muslim identity. The commulative result of their social, economic, cultural and political dominance was their becoming 'the reference model' for the Bengal Muslim society. With supreme importance attached to the non-Indian extraction of the Ashraf, there was a natural tendency for the local-born aspirant to 'discover' for himself a foreign ancestry. Thus the late 19th and early 20th centuries Census records offer a picture of the galloping numbers of claimants to foreign extraction.' — Ahmed, Rafiuddin : op. cit, pp. 16 - 17.

62. Roy, Asim : 'Being and Becoming a Muslim'; op. cit, pp. 190, 218.
63. Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit., p. 358.
64. Bhattacharya, Ranjit K. : 'The Concept and Ideology of Caste among the Muslims of Rural West Bengal,' in Imtiaz Ahmad(ed.), Caste and Social Stratification Among the Muslims, Delhi, 1973, p. 123.
65. Census of India, 1921, Vol. V, Bengal, Part I, Report by W. H. Thompson, Calcutta, 1923, p. 349.
66. Ahmad, Imtiaz (ed.) Caste and Social Stratification Among the Muslims, Delhi, 1973, Introduction, p. VII.
67. Memo No. 3364 - 3503, C, dated the 20th November, 1930 of Superintendent of Census, Bengal, quoted in a letter No. 3499, dated the 9th March, 1931 from the Fouzdari Ahilkar to the Registrar, State council, Cooch Behar, Collection No. 20, File No. 6, Batch No. 303, Regency Council, Cooch Behar.
68. Census of Bengal, 1901, Part - II, Table - XIII, Caste, Part - B, pp. 276 - 288; Census of India, 1921, Vol. V, Bengal, Part - II, p. 175.
69. Mandal, Sekh Rahim : op. cit., p. 134.
70. Bhattacharyya, Pranab Kumar : Dainik Basumati, (Bengali Daily), March 25, 1993.
71. Nag, Hiten : 'Koch Biharer Musalman Samaj : Agragati O Bikash', in Madhuparni, Cooch Behar Special Number, edited by A. G. Ghose, 1990, pp. 141 - 142.
72. Ghosal, S. C. : op. cit., p. 226.
73. Chand, Tara : Influence of Islam on Indian Culture, Allahabad, 1946, pp. 242 - 243.
74. Debnath, Pabitra Kumar : Religion and Religious Establishment of Kamata-Koch kingdom, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of North Bengal, 1993, p. 136.
75. Cooch Behar Gazette, Extraordinary, May 25, 1923; Cooch Behar Gazette, June 4, 1923; See also Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Santha Rama : A Princess Remembers : Memoirs of the Maharani of Jaipur, Tarang Paperbacks, First Published 1976, Reprint 1988, p. 55.
76. Annual Administrative Report of Cooch Behar State, 1911 - 1912, General, p. 7. In this connection, it may be mentioned that Khan Choudhury Amanatulla Ahmed wrote an authoritative book on the early history of Cooch Behar State entitled "A History of Cooch Behar - Part-I" (in Bengali), published under authority of the Cooch Behar State in 1936.
77. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, Ministry of States, 'P' Branch Secret, File No. 15(8) - P/49, 1949, p. 54. NAI
78. Nag, Hiten : op. cit., pp. 135 - 136; Mandal, Sekh Rahim, op. cit., p. 125.
79. Hartley, A. C. : Rangpur S.S.R., P. 11. This is quoted in Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit., p. 20.
- 79*. Sarkar, D. N. : Raj Saheb Panchanan, (in Bengali), Rangpur, 1391 B.S. p. 2. 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. 106.
80. Mitra, A : West Bengal District Census Handbooks : Cooch Behar, 1951, Calcutta, 1953, pp. XLIV - XLV; Majumdar, Durgadas : op. cit., p. 57.

81. Mandal, Sekh Rahim : op. cit., p. 133.
82. Ahmed, Fayezuddin : 'Cooch Behar Palli', Paricharika, (Bengali Journal), 6th Year, Vol. II, No. 1, Jaishtha-Kartik, 1329 B.E., p. 61.
83. De, Amalendu : Islam in Modern India, Maya Prakashan, Calcutta, First Edition, 1982, pp. 4-5; Haq, Muhammad Enamul : op. cit., p. 262.
84. Engineer, Asgar Ali : Review Article of the book "The Islamic Syncretistic Tradition in Bengal" by Asim Roy, in Indian Historical Review, Vol. XVII, No. 1-2, July 1990 and January 1991, p. 263.
85. Dasgupta, Ranajit : op. cit., p. 21.
86. C.B.G., Extraordinary, June 28, 1947, p. 87
86. Schendel, Willem Van : The Bengal Borderland, Anthem Press, London, 2005, P. 28. According to the author, some basic misconceptions on 'Partition-in-the-east' are that it was essentially a question of establishing a North-South border through Bengal (ignoring the much longer border in the North and East, and the fact that Assam was also partitioned), that Bengal was cut in two halves (in reality it broke into 4 large parts and 197 minuscule parts or enclaves in northern Bengal), that East Pakistan was carved out of India (ignoring the simultaneous surgery creating a novel and isolated 'North-east India'), and that population dislocation in the east was primarily the flight of Hindus from East Pakistan to West Bengal (ignoring both the large flows of Muslim refugees coming into East Pakistan from West Bengal, Bihar and Assam, and the movement of refugees from East Pakistan to Tripura and Assam) — *ibid*, pp. 28, 43.
87. Devi, Gayatri and Rau, Santha Rama : op. cit., p. 205.
88. *ibid*, p. 211.
89. Basu, Swaraj : op. cit., pp. 105, 107.
90. Letter No. 110, dated the 8th August, 1949 from Amanatulla Ahmed and Satish Chandra Roy Singha of Cooch Behar to the Adviser, the States Ministry, Government of India, New Delhi, File No. 15(8) - P/49, 1949 (secret), pp. 158 - 160 NAI. It may be noted here that the Partition was a serious setback for the Muslims, particularly, the educated middle class Muslims in Cooch Behar. At the time of partition, mass-scale movement from both sides of the border was the order of the day. A large section of Bengali Hindus immigrated to Cooch Behar, whereas many Muslims also left Cooch Behar and went to East Pakistan for seeking shelter and occupation. The process of migration and immigration from, and to Cooch Behar went on simultaneously even after the merger of the State with West Bengal as a district in 1950. As a result of this, the percentage of the Muslims went down to a significant extent. The proportion of Muslim population decreased from 38 percent in 1941 to 29 percent in 1951, and it was further reduced to 24 percent in 1961 and to 21 percent in 1971. — Majumdar, Durgadas : op. cit., p. 50; Nag, Hiten : op. cit., pp. 139, 141.

Appendix E - i
COOCH BEHAR MERGER AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT MADE THIS twenty-eighth day of August 1949 between the Governor-General of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.

WHEREAS in the best interests of the State of Cooch Behar as well as of the Dominion of India it is desirable to provide for the administration of the said State by or under the authority of the Dominion Government;

IT IS HEREBY AGREED as follows :—

Article 1

His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar hereby cedes to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State and agrees to transfer the administration of the State to the Dominion Government on the 12th day of September 1949 (hereinafter referred to as "the said day").

As from the said day the Dominion Government will be competent to exercise the said powers, authority and jurisdiction in such manner and through such as it may think fit.

Article 2

His Highness the Maharaja shall continue to enjoy the same personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles which he would have enjoyed had this agreement not been made.

Article 3

His Highness the Maharaja shall with effect from the said day be entitled to receive for his life-time from the revenues of the State annually for his privy purse the sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand free of all taxes. After him the privy purse will be fixed at Rupees seven lakhs only. This amount is intended to cover all the expenses of the Ruler and his family, including expenses on account of his personal staff, maintenance of his residences, marriages and other ceremonies, etc., and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever.

The Government of India undertakes that the said sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand shall be paid to His Highness the Maharaja in four equal instalments in advance at the beginning of each quarter from the State Treasury or at such Treasury as may be specified by the Government of India.

Article 4

His Highness the Maharaja shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as distinct from State properties) belonging to him on the date of this agreement.

His Highness the Maharaja will furnish to the Dominion Government before the 15th September, 1949, an inventory of all the immovable property, securities and cash balances held by him as such private property.

If any dispute arises as to whether any item of property is the private property of His Highness the Maharaja or State property, it shall be referred to a judicial officer qualified to be appointed as a High Court Judge and the decision of that officer shall be final and binding on both parties.

Article 5

All the members of His Highness' family shall be entitled to all the personal privileges, dignities and titles enjoyed by them whether within or outside the territories of the State, immediately before the 15th day of August, 1947.

Article 6

The Dominion Government guarantees the succession, according to law and custom, to the gaddi of the State and to His Highness the Maharaja's personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles.

Article 7

No enquiry shall be made by or under the authority of the Government of India, and no proceedings shall lie in any Court in Cooch Behar, against His Highness the Maharaja, whether in a personal capacity or otherwise, in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by him or under his authority during the period of his administration of that State.

Article 8

(1) The Government of India hereby guarantees either the continuance in service of the permanent members of the Public Services of Cooch Behar on conditions which will be not less advantageous than those on which they were serving before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India or the payment of reasonable compensation.

(2) The Government of India further guarantees the continuance of pensions and leave salaries sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja to servants of the State who have retired or proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India.

Article 9

Except with the previous sanction of the Government of India no proceedings, civil and criminal, shall be instituted against any person in respect of any act done or purporting to be done in the execution of his duties as a servant of the State before the day on which the administration is made over to the Government of India.

In confirmation whereof Mr. Vapal Pangunni Menon, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of States has appended his signature on behalf and with the authority of the Governor General of India and Lieutenant Colonel His Highness Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan Bhuj Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar, has appended his signature on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.

JAGADDIPENDRA NARAYAN
Maharaja of Cooch Behar

V. P. MENON
Adviser to the Govt. of India
Ministry of States

Appendix E-ii

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

PRESS NOTE
COOCH BEHAR TO MERGE WITH WEST BENGAL

His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar executed an Agreement ceding full jurisdiction, powers and authority to the Government of India in relation to the governance of Cooch Behar State on August 28, 1949. In pursuance of this Agreement the administration of the State was taken over on September 12, 1949, and a Chief Commissioner was placed in charge of it. After careful consideration of all factors, the Government of India have now come to the conclusion that the best interests of the people of Cooch Behar and the country will be served by its integration in the Province of West Bengal. It has accordingly been decided to merge Cooch Behar with West Bengal with effect from January 1, 1950, and an Order under Section 290A of the Government of India Act, 1935, is under issue.

In deciding on this arrangement every care has been taken to ensure that the interests of the people of Cooch Behar are fully safeguarded. Provision will be made for its representation in the West Bengal Legislature. The cash balance and investments of the State will be earmarked for being spent on development schemes for the benefit of the people of Cooch Behar. All permanent employees of the State will, as far as possible, be absorbed in the service of the West Bengal Government and surplus staff will be paid reasonable compensation. Cooch Behar will be administered as a separate unit and for the time being the present Chief Commissioner, Mr. V. Nanjappa, I.C.S., will continue to be in charge of it under the West Bengal Government.

Ministry of States

New Delhi, December 28, 1949.

Source : Government of India, Ministry of States, Political Branch, 1949, Secret File No. 15 (59) - Political / 1949 (D/ 1825 P/49).

Appendix E-iii
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LAW
NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 31st December, 1949

No. S. O. 28. — The following Order made by the Governor-General is published for general information :—

THE STATES' MERGER (WEST BENGAL) ORDER 1949.

WHEREAS full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the Indian State of Cooch Behar are exercisable by the Dominion Government.

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to provide by Order made under section 290A of the Government of India Act, 1935, for the administration of the said State in all respects as if it formed part of the Province of West Bengal;

AND WHEREAS for the aforesaid purpose it is expedient further to amend the States' Merger (Governors' Provinces) Order, 1949;

AND WHEREAS the views of the Government of West Bengal have been ascertained both with respect to the proposal to make such an Order and with respect to the provisions to be inserted therein;

NOW, THEREFORE, in exercise of the powers conferred by the said section 290A and of all other powers enabling him in this behalf, the Governor-General is pleased to make the following Order :—

1. This Order may be cited as the States' Merger (West Bengal) Order, 1949.

2. In clause (b) of article 2 of the States' Merger (Governors' Provinces) Order, 1949 (hereinafter referred to as the Principal Order), after the word and figures "December, 1949" the words and figures "and in relation to the State specified in Schedule VIII, the first day of January, 1950" shall be inserted.

3. In clause (a) of paragraph 1 of Article 11 of the Principal Order, after the entry relating to the United Provinces, the following entry shall be inserted, namely :—

"West Bengal92."

4. After Article 12 of the Principal Order, the following Article shall be inserted, namely :—

"13. As from the appointed day, —

(a) the jurisdiction of the High Court at Calcutta shall extend to the whole of the merged State of Cooch Behar (hereinafter referred to as Cooch Behar) as it extends to the Province of West Bengal :

(b) the Bengal, Agra and Assam Civil Courts Act, 1887, shall extend to and be in force in, Cooch Behar as it extends to, and is in force in the Province of West Bengal;

(c) the High Court of Cooch Behar and the other Civil Courts in Cooch Behar (hereinafter referred to as "existing Civil Courts") shall cease to function, and are hereby abolished;

(d) every appeal, case and other proceeding, pending before the High Court of Cooch Behar immediately

before the appointed day shall stand transferred. —

- (i) If it is an appeal from a decree or order in a civil case where the amount or value of the subject-matter of the suit or other proceeding is not more than five thousand rupees, to the Court of the District Judge, Cooch Behar;
- (ii) if it is an appeal in a criminal proceeding and the sentence appealed against is a sentence of fine only or is a sentence of imprisonment for a period not exceeding four years, whether with or without fine, to the Court of the Sessions Judge Cooch Behar; and
- (iii) in any other case, to the High Court at Calcutta;

(e) every civil appeal suit or other proceeding pending, immediately before the appointed day, before any of the existing Civil Courts shall stand transferred to the lowest Court, established under the Bengal, Agra and Assam Civil Courts Act, 1887, as extended to Cooch Behar, which would have jurisdiction to try or dispose of such appeal, suit or proceeding;

(f) every criminal appeal, case or other proceeding pending, immediately before the appointed day, before the Civil and Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar, shall stand transferred to the Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar;

(g) every decree passed or order made before the appointed day by the High Court of Cooch Behar or by any of the existing Civil Courts, and every sentence or order passed in the exercise of criminal jurisdiction by the High Court of Cooch Behar or by the Civil and Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar, shall be deemed, for the purpose of execution, to have been passed or made by the corresponding court established under and in accordance with the provisions of this Article;

(h) where any existing Civil Court, by reason of its abolition under clause (c) of this Article, ceases to have jurisdiction with respect to any suit or proceeding, any proceeding in relation to that suit or proceeding which, if that Court had not ceased to have jurisdiction, might have been had therein, may be had in the Court to which the business of the former Court has been transferred under this Article;

(i) an appeal from a decree or order passed by an existing Civil Court, but not appealed against before the appointed day, shall, —

- (i) where such appeal would, before that day, have lain under the law in force in Cooch Behar to the High Court of Cooch Behar and the amount or value of the subject-matter of the suit or other proceeding is more than five thousand rupees, lie to the High Court at Calcutta; and
- (ii) where such appeal would, before that day, have lain under the law in force in Cooch Behar to the High Court of Cooch Behar or to the court of the Civil and Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar, and the amount or value of the subject-matter of the suit or other proceeding is not more than five thousand rupees, to the Court of the District Judge, Cooch Behar;

(j) an appeal from an order passed by a magistrate in a criminal case but not appealed against before the appointed day, shall, if the appeal would, before such day, have lain under the law in force in Cooch Behar to the High Court of Cooch Behar, lie to the Sessions Judge, Cooch Behar;

(k) an application for revision of an order passed by a magistrate in a criminal case shall, if such application would, under the law in force in Cooch Behar before the appointed day, have lain, but was not made, to the High Court of Cooch Behar, lie to the High Court at Calcutta;

(l) nothing contained in clauses (g) to (k) shall be construed to extend the period of limitation to which any such appeal, application or other proceeding may be subject on the day immediately before the appointed day;

(m) the abolition of the High Court of Cooch Behar or the existing Civil Courts under clause (c) of this article shall not prejudice or affect the continued operation of any notice served, injunction issued, direction made or proceedings taken before the appointed day by such High Court or Civil Court under the powers then conferred upon it;

(n) no proceedings taken, or jurisdiction exercised, by a single Judge of the High Court of Cooch Behar during the period from the 31st day of October, 1949, to the 31st day of December, 1949, shall be called in question on the ground that the Court was not properly constituted or that such proceedings could have been taken, or jurisdiction exercised, only by a bench of two Judges; and

(o) in so far as this Article makes no provision or insufficient provision, the High Court at Calcutta may make such order for the transfer of suits, cases or proceedings pending before the High Court of Cooch Behar or an existing Civil Court to itself or to any Court in Cooch Behar subordinate to it; and where any case, suit or proceeding is so transferred, the Court to which it is transferred shall hear and dispose of the same as if it had been a case, suit or proceeding transferred to it in accordance with the law for the time being in force.

Explanation. — In clause (g) the expression "corresponding Court" means a Court in which the case or proceeding in which the sentence or order was passed would have lain if the case or proceeding had been instituted after the appointed day."

5. In the Schedules to the Principal Order, the following Schedule shall be added at the end, namely :—

"SCHEDULE VIII
State merged in the Province of West Bengal

Name of State	Number of seats in the Legislative Assembly
Cooch Behar	2"

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI,
Governor-General

K.V.K. SUNDARAM,
Secretary.

Appendix E-iv

ADDRESS BY

The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy

Premier of West Bengal

on the occasion of the Merger of

The State of Cooch Behar

With WEST BENGAL

on January 1, 1950

CITIZENS OF COOCH BEHAR,

On the first day of the year in which the Indian Union is going to declare itself a Republic, I desire to convey to you a message of welcome on your admission into the Province of West Bengal as also into the constitutional set-up of the Indian Union.

Nineteen years ago, the Butler Commission reported that although geographically India was one and indivisible, yet politically there were two Indias—the British India governed by the Crown, according to the laws and statutes of the British Parliament and the enactments of the Indian Legislature, and another India composed of the Indian States which recognised the British Crown as the Paramount Power, though for the most part these States were under the personal rule of the Princes. The Butler Commission stated that "the principle of statesmanship is to hold the two together". The Commission could not realise that a time will soon come when the two could not only be held together but could be "integrated"—one into the other. The territories of Indian States are in many cases dovetailed into and are closely interwoven with those which are under the Indian Union. Ethnically, racially and linguistically the people of the States and those of the rest of India are closely linked, the main difference being that before August, 1947, while the Indian Union accepted a democratic constitution and a popular Government, the States were still enjoying a monarchical system of Government subject to the Paramount Power. In many cases the Indian States were under foreign subjugation not only in matters of external policy but were also under the control of the British Crown, even with regard to their internal administration.

In the early part of 1947, when the question of withdrawal of British authority from British India was being seriously discussed, it became evident that India was not only "one" from geographical and cultural points of view but it was so also from economic and political aspects. The real problem was to devise a plan by which all people,

whether in the States or in the Union, could work together for common weal and for joint endeavour to rise India to her fullest stature.

With the advent of Independence in India, on the 15th of August, 1947, the forces responsible for bringing this freedom travelled to and affected the people of the States. Fortunately, the Rulers, on their part, recognised the changes that were coming on and adjusted themselves to these forces. Therefore, we have witnessed the fact that within a few months of our Independence, smaller States have been consolidated into sizeable units and democratic institutions and responsible governments have been introduced in them. Thus it was possible for the Government of India to utilise those forces for purposes of integration and bring about a United India in which the Indian Union and the States and their respective citizens will have full scope to co-operate and develop the country as one unit.

The partition of India was regarded as a blow to the political and geographical integrity of India. The position of States, therefore under such circumstances was a problem which the Government of India felt they must solve. This necessarily meant that a common programme had to be adopted by which the entire country, including the States, could function in unison in matters of all-India concern.

On the 5th of July, 1947, the Hon'ble Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister of India, issued a statement on behalf of the States Ministry, asking the States to accede to the Indian Union with regard to three subjects — Defence, Foreign affairs and Communications as these matters were of common concern to the whole of India. The autonomous existence of the States was ensured and it was declared that there would be no domination of the Indian Union over the States.

This declaration of the States Ministry was very well-received by the Princely order, and all the States, except, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagarh, acceded, on its basis, to the Indian Union within a very short time. Thus it was that after hundreds of years India became welded into one unit, and this revolution was brought about without violence, bloodshed or coercion on either side.

Along with this accession, two other changes continued to operate—one was the consolidation of smaller States into big units and the other was the introduction of democratic institutions and responsible Government in the States so integrated. But it was soon found that this could not make many of the States viable, and so in December, 1947, after discussion with the Rulers of Orissa and Chattisgarh, it was decided to merge these States with the neighbouring Provinces in the interest of the Rulers and their subjects. In this process there is no doubt that the approach of the Rulers was very helpful. This was the first occasion when 39 States, with an area of 56000 square miles, a population of 7 millions and with a revenue of Rs. 2 crores merged into the neighbouring Provinces. Then came the merger of the Deccan and the Gujrat States with Bombay and some small States with East Punjab.

These smaller States were integrated into one viable and sizeable union having their own administration, while

bigger States were either merged into Provinces or remained under the direct control of the Centre. Cooch Behar has been one such unit. It was but natural that States in which Representative Government had been introduced would soon become part of the new set-up established by the Constitution which had been adopted by the Constituent Assembly. Under this arrangement this Union of States would be regarded as corresponding to the existing Provinces in the Indian Union.

We thus find that in place of 600 odd individual States there are now nearly 20 States or Unions of States. With the lapse of the paramountcy of the British Crown, every unit has fully functioning democratic administration where the powers have been or are about to be transferred to the people. Even Hyderabad has been no exception. We may thus call the Rulers co-architects in building India as a free and democratic State enjoying the fruits of freedom.

Cooch Behar covers an area of 1,318 square miles. The State of Cooch Behar lies in the plains at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. It has a border of 100 miles in contiguity with West Bengal and about 30 miles between the State and Assam, separated by the river Sankosh. The State was founded in the early part of the 16th century and at one time its suzerainty extended from Mahanand in the West to the middle of Assam in the East. Early in the 18th century, Bhutan began to interfere with the affairs of the State and by 1772, they had taken possession of the capital of Cooch Behar. The then Ruler, Raja Daridranarayan, sought British aid and signed a treaty with the East India Company in 1773, in which the following appears :—

"The Raja represented to the Hon'ble President and Council in Calcutta the present distressed condition of the country owing to its being harassed by the neighbouring independent Rajas who are in league to depose him. The Hon'ble President and the Council, from a love of justice and a desire of assisting the distressed, have agreed to send a force consisting of four companies of Sepoys and a field force for the protection of the said Raja on condition that the Raja will pay all expenses for this help and also will acknowledge subjection to the East India Company upon his country being cleared of his enemies and will allow the Cooch Behar country to be annexed to the Province of Bengal."

Today there is no question of annexation. It is a voluntary merging of the State of Cooch Behar with the Indian Union.

According to the latest census, the population of Cooch Behar is about 6,00,000. It has five subdivisions. The State, besides its indigenous population, has a good proportion of Bengalees, Beharis and Marwaris who have resided here for generations. The Court language of the State is Bengali. Socially and ethnologically the people of Cooch Behar have close affinities with the people of the Jalpaiguri area. The State had a Cabinet composed of a Chief Minister and three other members with a Chief Secretary, who practically ran the State. On the 12th of September last it ceased to be a separate State and became a centrally administered area.

On this occasion I am desired by the Government of India to make a few announcements :—

(1) That Cooch Behar would be maintained as a separate district with headquarters at Cooch Behar for historical as well as for sentimental reasons. Cooch Behar is a fairly compact area and is equal in size and population to one of the districts of West Bengal.

(2) That representation would be given to the people of Cooch Behar in the Provincial Legislature on the basis of population as soon as possible by means of nominations, which should be done in consultation with the Administrator of Cooch Behar.

(3) That all State servants in Cooch Behar would be absorbed in West Bengal Government Service on terms not less advantageous than those under the State regime. In case it is found necessary to discharge any person, adequate compensation will be paid to him.

(4) That the dearness allowance, interim and ad-interim relief of all State servants would be brought to the level of West Bengal with effect from the date of the merger. The question of revision of pay-scales of Government servants in Cooch Behar, so as to bring them in line with those prevailing in West Bengal, would also be taken up as early as possible.

(5) That the balance in the State Treasury on the date of merger would be retained by the Central Government to be spent by the Government of West Bengal on nation-building schemes for the benefit of the people of Cooch Behar.

We, on behalf of the West Bengal Government, assure you that we shall do all we can to ameliorate the condition of the people and bring about such improvements in the State as are found necessary and as are compatible with available funds.

Before I conclude, I desire to strike a personal note. For nearly 40 years, both as a medical practitioner and as a private individual, I have been closely associated with the Ruling Family of Cooch Behar, Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur and his family, his children and grandchildren, have been my friends, and I welcome this opportunity of acknowledging my intimate association with them. With your administration also, headed by Rai Kalika Das Dutt Bahadur onwards, I have had close association. I acknowledge my personal ties of friendship with them. Personally speaking, I appreciate this opportunity of welcoming you.

I welcome you, the people of Cooch Behar, once again, and ask you to join with the people of West Bengal and say —

JAI HIND!

Appendix E-v

COOCH BEHAR DYNASTY
A Scion of the Haihaya

*
*
Sumati
Bhadrajit
Bhadrasrava
↓
Vasudama
↓
Damambu
↓
Hari Dass Mandal

1.	Viswa Sing	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1496
2.	Nara Sing	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1533
3.	Nara Narayan	...	...	(Brother)	...	...	1533
4.	Lakshmi Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1587
5.	Vir Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1627
6.	Pran Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1632
7.	Mode Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1665
8.	Vasudeva Narayan	...	...	(Brother)	...	...	1680
9.	Mahendra Narayan*	...	...	(Kinsman)	...	...	1682
10.	Rupa Narayan	...	...	(Kinsman)	...	...	1704
11.	Upendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1714
12.	Devendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1763
13.	Dhairyendra Narayan	...	...	(Cousin)	...	...	1765
14.	Rajendra Narayan	...	...	(Brother)	...	...	1770
15.	Dharendra Narayan**	...	...	(Nephew)	...	...	1772
16.	Harendra Narayan	...	...	(Brother)	...	...	1783
17.	Shibendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1839
18.	Narendra Narayan	...	...	(Nephew & adopted son)	...	...	1847
19.	Nripendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1863
20.	Raj Rajendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1911
21.	Jitendra Narayan	...	...	(Brother)	...	...	1913
22.	Jagaddipendra Narayan	...	...	(Son)	...	...	1922

* After his death in 1693, there was an interregnum for about ten years due to anarchical conditions prevailing in the State.

** After his death, in 1775 his father Dhairyendra Narayan ruled again up to 1783.

GLOSSARY

Adhikari	: A priesthood, belonging to the Rajbansis.
Adhiyar	: A class of farm-servants who were remunerated by half the produce of the field.
Ahilkar	: A native officer (Magistrate).
Amlas	: Officials of higher rank.
Ashraf	: Aristocrats, The term used for the four Muslim groups of foreign origin, namely, Sayyad, Sheikh, Mughal and Pathan.
Atraf / Ajlaf	: Commoners, people of low origin, The term used for the converted Muslim groups.
Bandar	: Riverine trade centre.
Baul	: A sect of mendicant singer.
Bhatias	: The immigrant Bengalees coming from Eastern and Southern Bengal, that is, from the direction of 'Bhati' or ebb tide, came to be known in local population of Cooch Behar as 'Bhatias'.
Bigha	: An Unit of measurement of land. 1 bigha = 0.33 acre or 1 acre = 3 bighas.
Brahmottar	: Rent free lands granted to the Brahmanas.
Bratya / Bhanga	: Fallen or degenerate.
Chakla	: Administrative unit having several villages.
Chhits	: Detached tracts or enclaves.
Chowkidar	: A rural police or watchman.
Chukani	: The general name for an undertenure.
Chukanidar	: Under-tenant of a Jotedar.
Daffadar	: A rural officer for supervision of the work of Chowkidars.
Darchukanidar	: Under-tenant of a chukanidar.
Dargah	: Religious shrines of the Muslims.
Debottar	: Rent free land granted for the maintenance of temple or deity (<u>deva</u>).
Dewan / Dewan Deo	: The Chief Minister of an Indian Prince or Chief (Executive) Officer in charge of the Revenue Department. The post of Dewan Deo was hereditary in Koch Kingdom in early times.
Duars	: It refers to that tract of the country which offers gateways or <u>duars</u> to Bhutan from India, such as Buxa, Chamurchi etc.
Durbar	: The Executive Government of a Princely State and also a public audience or reception.
Fakir	: A Muslim mendicant or ascetic.

Fauzdari Ahilkar	: A native officer, who is invested with the ordinary powers of a magistrate in a British Indian district.
Ghani	: Cattle powered mill for the production of mustard oil.
Guddi	: Throne, literally the cushion of an Indian Prince.
Guru	: Religious preceptor.
Hastobund	: Investigation and survey, detailed inquiry.
Hat	: A Village market.
Izara	: Tax farming.
Izaradar	: Farmer.
Jaigir	: Service - lands, that is, grant of lands was ordinarily made by a Rajah in exchange for service.
Jaigirdar	: One who holds a jaigir.
Jotes	: The revenue-paying estates in Cooch Behar State were called 'Jotes'.
Jotedars	: Holders of the 'Jotes' were called Jotedars.
Kharita	: Letter, correspondence.
Khas	: The possession of an individual.
Khen	: A semi tribal community of Northern Bengal, belonging to the Indo-Mongoloids.
Kist	: An instalment for payment of revenue.
Koch	: Name of a race of people inhabiting a large tract in the north-east of Bengal.
Lakheraj	: Rent free holdings.
Mahajan	: Money-lender.
Mal-guzari Land	: Revenue paying Land.
Mouza	: Lowest unit of measuring the land. Formerly Cooch Behar State was parcelled out into Mouzas, closely resembling the modern Taluk.
Mech	: A Hinduised tribe.
Mohar	: A gold coin weighing a tola (10 grams); a seal.
Mokarari	: Permanently settled jotes and its revenue was fixed in perpetuity.
Mollah	: Literally a learned man, used to denote a practitioner of Islamic religious learning; often a man of Religion in villages.
Moulvi	: A Muslim religious scholar.
Naib	: Deputy; Agent.
Naib Ahilkar	: A native officer who occupied the rank of sub-divisional officer; Sub-divisional Magistrate.
Narayani	: The currency of Cooch Behar.

Nazir / Chhatra Nazir /

Nazir Deo	: Head of Military Affairs. This post was hereditary in the Koch Kingdom in early times.
Nasyas	: Rural Muslims in Cooch Behar State were popularly called Nasyas.
Nirikh nama	: Schedule of rate.
Ojhas	: Village quacks.
Pan	: Betel leaf.
Parganas	: Fiscal divisions. In Cooch Behar State there were six Parganas, Namely, Mekhligunj, Mathabhanga, Lalbazar, Dinhat, Cooch Behar and Tufangunj.
Pattah	: Lease, given to each Jotedar after the conclusion of the settlement.
Pir	: Muslim spiritual guide or saint; a person imbued with religious powers of a certain kind; the Sufis.
Pirpal	: Rent free land granted for the maintenance of a Muslim Pir or a mosque.
Pith	: Sacred tracts of old Kamarupa, such as Kamapith, Ratnapith etc.
Raikat	: At the coronation of Bisva Simha, Sisva Sinha, his brother held the royal umbrella over his head, and assumed a title of raikat. Later he settled in Baikunthapur in the district of Jalpaiguri.
Rajbansi	: The single largest (Hinduized) social group in the population of Cooch Behar State and other adjoining districts of northern Bengal.
Rajguru	: Spritual guide to the king or queen.
Rajsabha	: The Court in which the Rajah Presides, assisted by the Dewan.
Raiyat	: Peasant; subject.
Saivas	: Worshippers of Siva.
Saktas	: Worshippers of Sakti.
Sannad	: Official Title deed.
Sannyasis	: Hindu Mendicants or ascetics.
Sanskritization	: Process of cultural adaptation of twice - born castes by lower castes.
Sazawals	: Attaching or supervising officer employed by the state.
Shariat	: Religious code of conduct in Islam; Muslim religious law.
Shastra	: Hindu religious scripture.
Shia	: Sect faithful to Hazrat Ali.
Suddhi	: Religious purification movement.
Sunni	: Sect faithful to four Imans.
Taluk	: Small revenue unit.

- Tehsil : Centers for realisation of rents.
- Terij : It is the final record of the right of all landholders, from the jotedars down to the lowest under-tenant.
- Terije : Details of lands.
- Ulema : Scholars of Islam.
- Vaishnava : A particular religious order akin to Hinduism; worshippers of Vishnu.
- Yavana : Sanskrit word meaning an infidel; this term usually applied in this region to mean it Muslim invaders of medieval times.
- Zenana : Women residing in the restricted place of Palace.

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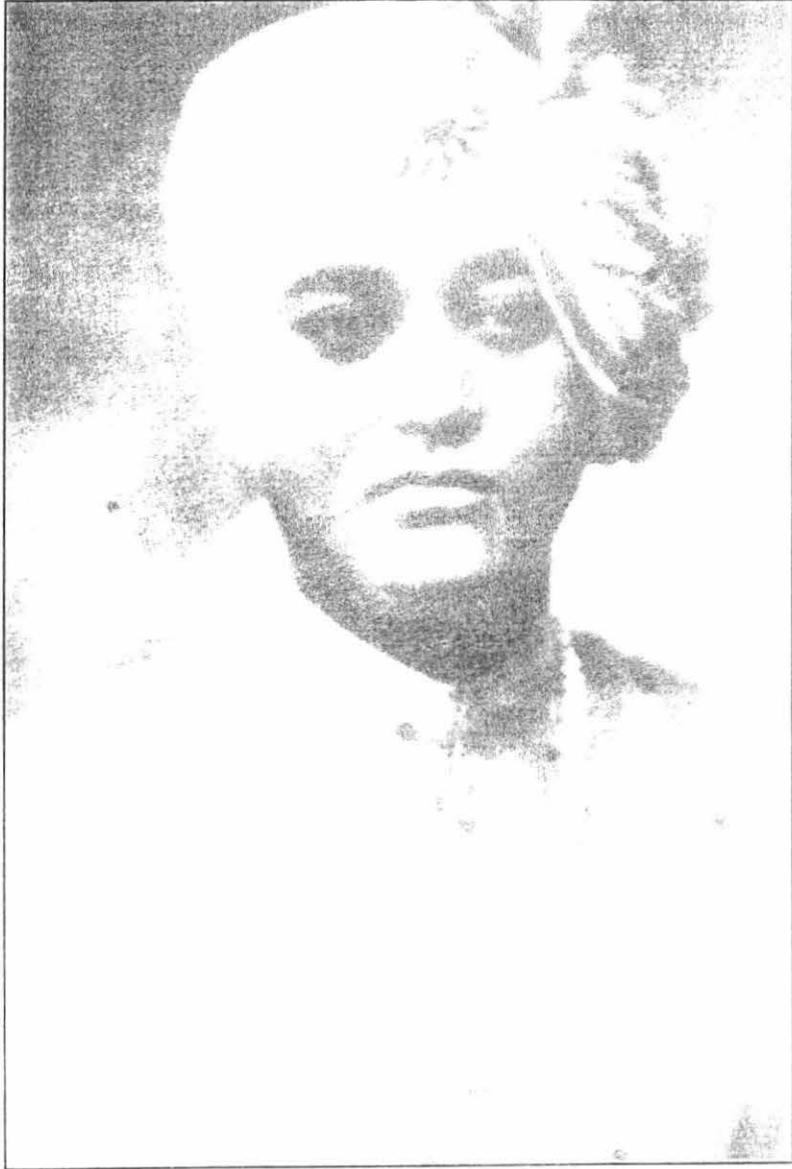
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ILLUSTRATIONS :

PLATE - A (i)



MAHARAJA RAJ RAJENDRANARAYAN BHUP BAHADUR
(ruling period - 1911 - 1913)

PLATE - A (ii)



MAHARAJA JITENDRANARAYAN BHUP BAHADUR, K.C.S.I.
(r p. 1913 - 1922)

PLATE - A (iii)



MAHARANI INDIRA DEVI
The Regent and President of the Regency Council, Cooch Behar
(r. p. 1923 - 1936)

PLATE - A (iv)



MAHARAJA JAGADDIPENDRANARAYAN BHUP BAHADUR, K.C.I.E.
(r. p. : 1936 - 1949)

PLATE - A (v)



THAKUR PANCHANAN BARMAN
(b. 13th February, 1866 - d. 9th September, 1935 A.D.)

PLATE - A (vi)



DR. BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY, THE PREMIER OF WEST BENGAL WAS RECEIVED BY
KUMAR GAUTAM NARAYAN (Right side) OF THE RAJ FAMILY
AT THE COOCH BEHAR AIR PORT ON THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1949
DR. ROY ARRIVED IN COOCH BEHAR TOWN TO TAKE OVER THE ADMINISTRATION OF
THE STATE ON BEHALF OF THE WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT
ON 1ST JANUARY, 1950

THE COINS OF THE LAST THREE RULERS OF COOCH BEHAR

MAHARAJA RAJ RAJENDRANARAYAN (1911-13)

PLATE - B (i) Obverse



1/2 Rupee

Arms of the State supported by lion and elephant

PLATE - B (ii) Reverse



Sri Sri Raja Rajendra Narayana
Bhup
Rajsaka 402

MAHARAJA JITENDRANARAYAN (1913-22)

PLATE - B (iii) Obverse



Gold Mohar

As above, same dies but higher relief

PLATE - B (iv) Reverse



Sri Sri Jitendra Narayana
Bhup
Rajsaka 404

MAHARAJA JAGADDIPENDRANARAYAN (1922-49)

PLATE - B (v) Obverse



1/2 Rupee

As above, same dies

PLATE - B (vi) Reverse



Sri Sri Jagaddipendra Narayana
Bhup
Rajsaka 413

PAPER COINS (DECORATED) OF COOCH BEHAR STATE

PLATE - B (vii) Obverse

(Size : 5.1 cm × 2.8 cm)



A decorative square with a bunch of lily flowers neatly bound with rope knot and shown above, monogram inside in capital letters CB (signifying 'Cooch Behar') embossed in a smaller square. The lower part of the elongated design is divided into three sections — all decorated — which give the illusion of the pendulum of a wall clock, but the decorated motif appearing on it, seems to have been adopted from western decorated porcelain.

PLATE - B (viii) Reverse



The legends within rectangular border are as follows :-

1. Good for payment
2. Till August, 1944.
3. Ek Ana (within a wavy circle in Bengali scripts similar to one anna metal piece)

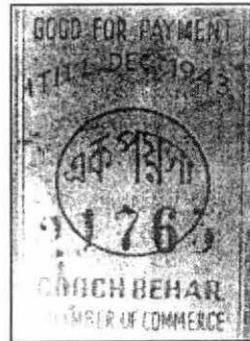
PLATE - B (ix) Obverse

(Size : 5.1 cm × 2.8 cm)



Same as above

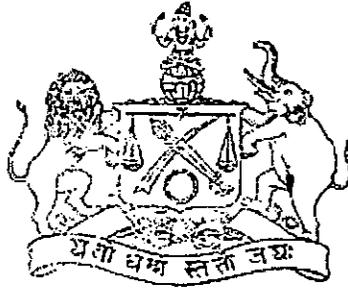
PLATE - B (x) Reverse



The legends within rectangular border are as follows :-

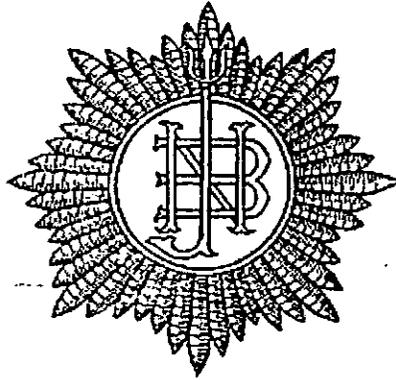
1. Good for payment
2. Till December, 1943
3. Ek Payasa (within a circle similar to metal payasa in Bengali scripts).
4. 31765 (punched number in bold type)
5. Cooch Behar.
6. Chamber of Commerce.

PLATE - C (i)



COAT OF ARMS OF COOCH BEHAR STATE

PLATE - C (ii)



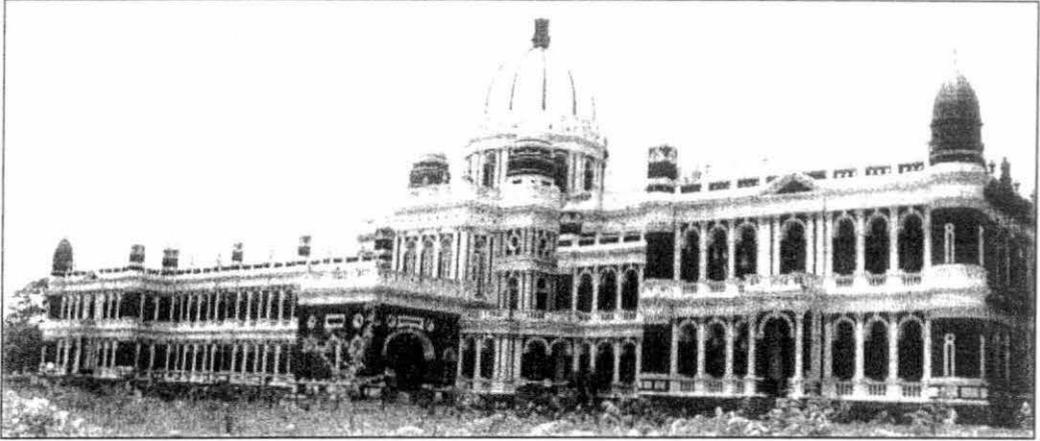
EMBLEM OF NARAYAN GUARDS OF COOCH BEHAR STATE

PLATE - C (iii)



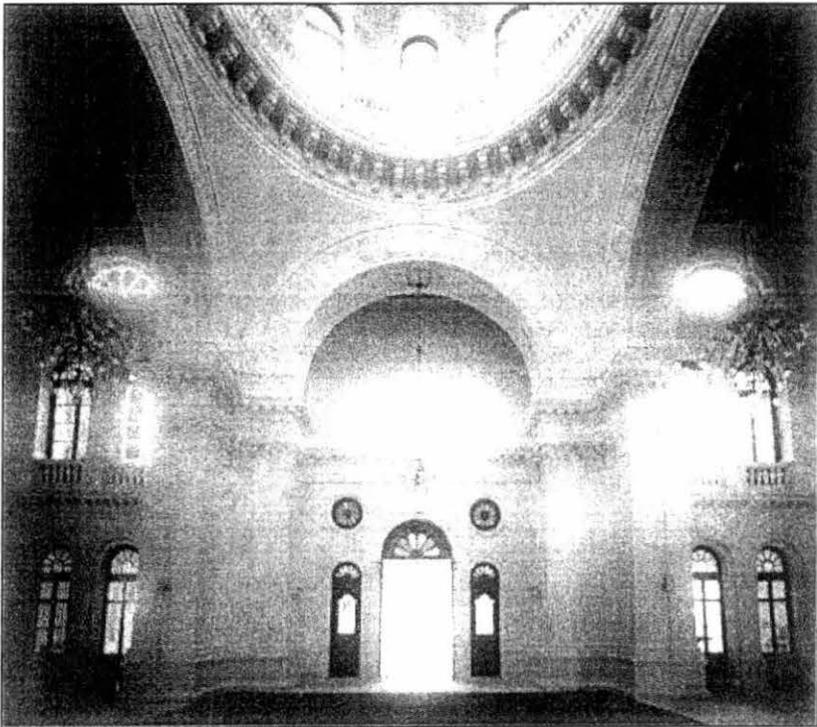
EMBLEM OF INFANTRY OF COOCH BEHAR STATE

PLATE - D (i)



COOCH BEHAR ROYAL PALACE

PLATE - D (iii)



DURBAR HALL OF THE PALACE

ADDENDUM / CORRIGENDUM

The thesis entitled "Twilight of the Raj : A Case Study of the History of Cooch Behar under Its Last Three Rulers" was written by me with original archival materials utilized for the first time. At the end of my thesis five Appendices are enclosed. These Appendices, though not directly related to the main thesis, are undoubtedly, I believe, rich additions to a work like the present one. Out of these Appendices, Appendix 'D' entitled 'Position of Islam in Cooch Behar State and Issue of Hindu-Muslim Communal Amity' is required a little more elaboration. Hence, addendum / corrigendum are being enclosed.

(A) As regards the fissiparous tendencies which were active at the time of merger of Cooch Behar, it is important to note that the Muslims constituted about 38% of the population, according to the Census Report of 1941, thereby forming the second largest community in the State. The local Muslims were led by some Muslim leaders who were strongly pro-Pakistani and desired an arrangement which would bring them the maximum possible political influence. These Muslim leaders first advised Maharaja to accede to Pakistan. Later on they wanted to maintain Cooch Behar as an independent entity either as a state or a centrally administered province. Besides, these Muslim leaders felt that they would receive a better deal from the Assam Government as the percentage of Muslims in Assam was higher than in West Bengal. Mr. Sadulla, ex-Prime Minister of Assam and Mr. Tyeb Ali, Minister of Assam, were in touch with Cooch Behari Muslim leaders and advised them to try for merger with Assam. By doing this, Sadulla wished to increase the influence of Muslim group and become the Premier of Assam. The Hitasadhani Sabha consisting of some Muslim leaders and a follower of Jogendra Nath Mandal, the Central Pakistan Minister¹ became the main organization of such fissiparous tendencies¹. It is also important to note that 'the influence of the belligerent Muslim League among the Muslims in Cooch Behar can be traced as early as 1941' from India Office Library documents². The Muslim League, as has been noted in my thesis, was styled in Cooch Behar as '*Sabuj Sangha*' and this association claimed that they had got more than 5000 able-bodied Muslim volunteers.

In order to explain those fissiparous tendencies among the Muslims of Cooch Behar we should find out what compulsive forces were at work during this period of turmoil. Let us first make an attempt to understand the Bengali Muslim psyche in the colonial period. Some scholars have pointed out that the process of Islamization was initiated among The Bengali Muslims by the *Faraizis-Wahhabis* by removing un-Islamic ways of life during the early period of the 19th century³. After the Census of 1872, a controversy arose about the origin and growth of the Bengali race. The Muslim elite were influenced by Khondkar Fuzli Rubees observation that Bengali Muslims came from abroad and therefore, they did not feel any social affinity with the lower orders of Muslims. There were differences between these two classes of Muslims-Urdu-speaking urban elite known as *Ashraf* and Bengali-speaking rural masses known as *Atraf*. The

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1. Menon, V.P.'s Secret Note dated 01.12.1949 on the Merger of Cooch Behar, Govt. of India, Ministry of States, Political Branch, Secret File No. 15(59) – Political / 1949, pp. 1 – 2
 2. Confidential; India Office Library, Acc. No. 356 R. No. 5; No. F. 1(3) – C/41 – 267 Eastern States Agency, Shillong.
 3. De, Amalendu, '*Roots of Separatism in the Nineteenth Century Bengal*', Rakta Karabee, Kolkata, Revised First Edition, 2008, pp. 33-34.

Ashraf were proud of their non-Bengali aristocratic background, showed no respect to Bengali language and culture, and maintained the splendid isolation from the common Muslim Masses¹. By the end of the 19th century, when the Muslims out-numbered the Hindus in Bengal, the Muslim theologians put more emphasis on the process of rapid Islamization. The practices observed by the *Pirs* or by their followers, such as, *urs*, *gi*, *shirni* etc., criticised by the Islamic revivalists as un-Islamic made the Muslim society divided in view of the respectable position of the *Pirs* among the Muslim masses. Again, *Islamic Puthis* and later Bengali literature centering round the Prophet's life had an important part in moulding the Muslim mind and also prepared the ground for the development of the 'Muslim Identity'.

Moreover, the Muslim elite, assisted by the 'Muslim Press', not only highlighted the economic backwardness of the Muslims but also pursued pro-British and anti-Congress policies. They were also attracted to Pan-Islamic concept and this Pan-Islamism gradually nourished separatism. The debates centering round the socio-religious issues brought to light the main cross-currents of conservatism and liberalism through which the Muslim society had to pass by the second half of the 19th Century². According to some scholars, though the Muslim mystics called Sufis 'generated the spirit of love and affection among the people' basing on the teachings of Islam, the *Mujaddidiya* strengthened the process of Islamization on orthodox lines. This conflict between orthodox and liberal trends in theological spheres continued in the colonial period³. In these circumstances, for want of properly setting and adjusting the 'Muslim identity' and the 'Bengali identity', the Bengali Muslim elite could not 'overcome their inherent contradictions. As a result of the controversies between the orthodox and liberal Muslims, the signs of the awakening among the Bengali Muslims were manifested depending mainly on the religious distinctness. In fact, the orthodox Muslim elite, Ulemas and the organizations like Jamaat-e-Islam strengthened the Muslim identity among the Bengali Muslims⁴. The Muslim elite of the Cooch Behar State also seemed to have fallen a prey to this prevalent psyche. P.K. Bhattacharyya held the view that 'it is not unlikely that the orthodox Muslim theologians infiltrated in Cooch Behar and tried to shape the Muslim psychology, perhaps, at the behest of the powerful Muslim lobby'⁵. Because it is learnt from the Fortnightly Report of Eastern States Agency for the second half of March, 1941 that one Moulana Abdul Hakim urged the 'Mohammedans to join the Muslim League' and expressing 'certain objectionable sentiments' in the Mathabhanga. Again, in May, 1941 a party of Mohammedans in a village of Mathabhanga Subdivision 'attacked and dispersed a *Samkirttan* party of Hindus.'⁶

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1. De, Dhurjati Prasad, *Bengal Muslims in Search of Social Identity, 1905-1947*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1998, pp. 10.
 2. De, Amalendu, 'The Social Thoughts and Consciousness of the Bengali Muslims in the Colonial Period', *Social Scientist*, Vol - 23, Nos. 4-6, April-June 1995, pp. 17, 25.
 3. De, Amalendu, 'Theological Discourses in Indian History, Presidential Address : 2003 - 2004, the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, pp. 7ff.
 4. De, Amalendu, 'The Social Thoughts, and Consciousness of the Bengali Muslims in the Colonial Period', op. cit, pp. 24-25, 32
 5. Bhattacharyya, Pranab Kumar, 'Merger of Cooch Behar: A Case Study of the Differences of Perspectives of the Governments of Assam and West Bengal.' *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Vol. XLVIII, No. 4, 2006, p. 12.
 6. Confidential, India Office Library, Acc. No. 356 R. No. 5; F. 1(3)-C/41-267 Eastern States Agency, Shillong. Also confer India Office Library, Acc. No. 356 R. No. 5; F.N.R. 1(3)-C/41-115 T Eastern States Agency, Shillong, 20 May, 1941. The evidence is quoted in P.K. Bhattacharyya, op. cit, pp. 16 - 17 ff

Apart from the religious sentiments of the Muslims, some other factors might have also contributed to the outlet of such fissiparous tendencies at the time of merger of Cooch Behar. It has been pointed out that owing to the feudal nature of its economy, land was the only source of production in Cooch Behar State. There was a fair representation of the Rajbansis among the jotedars who secured a dominant position in the local agrarian structure in the State. But the situation began to change from the late 19th century with the migration of upper caste Hindu gentry in the State. These migrated people who were in the state administration, grabbed a large number of jotes. By 1872, in Cooch Behar 54 per cent of the revenue-paying land had passed in the hands of the outsiders. This large scale transfer of land from the Rajbansis to the non-Rajbansis brought about subsequent changes in the pattern of land control in the State and the Rajbansis were gradually pushed out by the non-Rajbansis from their position of eminence. In course of time this phenomenon gave birth to a sense of grievances among the dispossessed Rajbansi gentry.¹ 'The majority of these marginalised Rajbansis,' according to a scholar, 'became shaky with the objective fear of losing their means of subsistence if they were to merge with Indian State'.² These Rajbansi elite, as noted in my original thesis, were in favour of continuing a separate Cooch Behar State at the time of merger.

Towards the end of the Koch Raj in 1949, when the attempt of making Cooch Behar a Centrally administered Province fell through, the Hitasadhani leaders comprising Rajbansi and Muslim elite favoured the merger of Cooch Behar with Assam, 'a province that shares the state's dislike of and apprehensions vis-à-vis the Bengali and with whose people they feel they can compete without fear and favour' 'It is the fear complex,' it has been pointed out, 'that predominates in the minds of Cooch Beharis' as a result of the growth of Bengali influence in the State.³ The Hitasadhani leaders also believed that 'the merger with Assam with large chunk of uncultivated land at its disposal and certain other factors which would be conducive for their settlement and dispel much of their anxiety for which they strongly protested the proposed merger with West Bengal. The Muslim leaders who had migrated to East Pakistan used to come to Cooch Behar off and on to rouse the Muslim community in their struggle for the merger with Assam.' According to P. K. Bhattacharyya, 'thus here also they used religion to mask an essentially economic problem, ...'⁴

As regards the various castes or groups among the Muslims of Cooch Behar State, we have already incorporated them in Appendix-D referred to above. On the other hand, the Muslim population of Bengal was divided into eighty larger and lesser castes in the

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1. Basu, Swaraj, *Dynamics of a Caste Movement : The Rajbansis of North Bengal*, Manohar, Delhi, 2003, pp. 50 – 53.
 2. Chakravarty, Biman, *Political History of Merger of the Princely States : A Study of Cooch Behar*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, North Bengal University, 2001, pp. 200-201
 3. Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Assam's confidential letter dated March 29, 1949 to Sardar B. Patel, Minister of States, Govt. of India, Secret File No. D/4585/1949, P. 2
 4. Bhattacharyya, Pranab Kumar, op. cit, pp.13-14

Census Report of 1911.¹ These castes have also been incorporated in the work of Nirmal Kumar Bose entitled *The Structure of Hindu Society* (New Delhi, 1975). Besides, a few more works came out where the various castes among the Muslims had been discussed and among them mention may be made of Muhammad Yakub Ali's *Musulmaner Jatibad* (Chatugang, 1927), Dhurjati Prasad De's *Bengal Muslims in Search of Social Identity* (Dhaka, 1998), Panchanan Saha's *Hindu – Muslim Samparka : Notun Bhabna* (Dhaka, 2007) But it should be noted here that during our survey all the castes or groups mentioned above could not be found among the Muslim Society of Cooch Behar.

(B) As regards the theoretical background of Islam, it may briefly be pointed out that Islam stands for complete submission to mono-god. The message of Islam is enshrined in the declaration of faith "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger."² The five pillars of orthodox Islam are *Iman* or belief, *Salat* or prayer, *Roza* or fasting, *Zakat* or compulsory poor tax and *Hajj* or pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. No priesthood was recognized in Islam. Not only Islam is known for its strong monotheistic belief in God, but also for its advocacy of equality and brotherhood of man and for its simplicity of belief and acts of devotion. After the demise of the prophet Hazrat Muhammad, revelations to him were collected and compiled in the holy *Quran*. After a long interval Muslims also formalized the sayings and deeds of the prophet and accepted the document as *Hadith* (tradition). *Shariah* (law) and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) are the original sources of Islamic regulation. In fact, Islamic laws are not distinct from religion, rather they are complementary to each other³. According to some scholars, it is an exaggeration that 'Islam was Arab', and 'the ideology of Islam was based on Arab traditions'. For the ideas of Judaism and Christianity which had earlier intruded into Arabia, definitely shaped the essential elements of the Islamic faith. Islam's link with both Judaism and Christianity is explicitly recognized in the *Quran*⁴.

After the death of the Prophet, the four pious Caliphs, namely, Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali successively controlled the power of the Muslim community. The majority of the Muslims accepted the validity of the succession of the first three pious Caliphs, but there were some who felt that the last pious caliph should have been chosen as Muhammad did designate Ali as his successor. The former was known as the Sunnis and the latter known as the Shias. Among the Sunni Muslims there are two groups in

-
1. These castes are as follows : (1) Abdal, (2) Ajlaf, (3) Akhunji, (4) Bediya, (5) Behara, (6) Beldar, (7) Bhat, (8) Bhatia, (9) Chatuwa, (10) Churihar, (11) Dafadar, (12) Dai, (13) Darji, (14) Dewan, (15) Dhawa, (16) Dhoba, (17) Dhunia or Dhukkar, (18) Fakir, (19) Gayin, (20) Hajjam, (21) Jola, (22) Kagaji, (23) Kalan, (24) Kan, (25) Kasbi, (26) Kasai, (27) Kaji, (28) Khan, (29) Khondkar, (30) Kolu, (31) Kumar, (32) Kunjra, (33) Lalbegi, (34) Mahiferush, (35) Mahimal, (36) Mallah, (37) Mallik, (38) Masalchi, (39) Mehtar, (40) Meer, (41) Mirja, (42) Muchi, (43) Moghul, (44) Nagarchi, (45) Naniya or Nanuwa, (46) Nasya, (47) Nat, (48) Nikari, (49) Pathan, (50) Pawariya, (51) Peer Kodali, (52) Rasuwa, (53) Saiyad, (54) Shaik, (55) Sonar, (56) Other Lesser Castes : (a) Afghan, (b) Ashraf, (c) Bakli, (d) Bakho, (e) Bari, (f) Bhuiyan, (g) Chaudhuri, (h) Chunari, (i) Dafali, (j) Gaddi, (k) Golam, (l) Halalkhor, (m) Hijra, (n) Hosseini, (o) Kharadi, (p) Koreshi, (q) Lahori, (r) Mangta, (s) Mohana, (t) Meerdeh, (u) Miriyasin, (v) Miyan, (w) Naomoslem, (x) Pateya, (y) Sunni. – Census Report of India, 1911, Table XIII, pp. 191 – 202.
 2. The Holy Quran, II : 136
 3. Islam, Md. Sirajul, 'Islam and Its Compatibility with Change : An Overview of Indian Perspective', in Sukharanjan Saha (ed.) *Religions of the People of India*, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, 2003, pp. 195-96
 4. Ali, M. Athar, 'The Islamic Background to Indian History : An Interpretation of the Islamic Past,' in Irfan Habib (ed), *Religion in Indian History*, Tulika Books, New Delhi, 1st Published 2007, 1st Reprint 2010, p. 136-137

matters of Islamic interpretation, one group laid emphasis on the immanence of God and the other gave stress on His transcendence. The Sufi tradition concentrates on the closeness of God to the individual believer and on the mystical or hidden meaning of the Quranic statements whereas the legislative *Ulema* places greater weight on divine transcendence and on the clear and visible meaning of the revelation. Later on, four Sunni schools of Islamic law such as *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, *Shafii* and *Hanbali* emerged as equally authoritative¹. Consequently, there was conflict between the four Sunni schools and frequent clash between the Shias and Sunnis, the major division within Islam. There was also the perennial difference between those known as "*Asharites*" who blindly followed authority (*taqlid*) and others known as *Mutazilites* who advocated the application of interpretation (*ijtihad*), or in other words, between faith and reason². As a result of such differences, Muslims are not able to unite all together in Islam. This is, in short, the theoretical background of Islam before its advent to Indian sub-continent.

Between the fourteenth (beginning of the rule of independent Sultans in Bengal) and eighteenth centuries (disintegration of the Mughal Empire) three distinct trends in Islamic thought emerged in India. The first trend was conservative as its upholders were the exponents of orthodox Islam and demanded strict adherence to the Islamic laws and institutions as propounded in the *Quran* and *Sunnah*. Its chief advocate was Shaikh Ahmed Sarhandi (1563–1625). He fiercely opposed any compromise with Hinduism. The second school of Islamic thought attempted to effect a compromise between Islam and Hinduism by practising toleration and maintaining a kind of peaceful co-existence. The policy of most Muslim rulers was guided by this school of thought. The third school was deeply influenced by the Sufi and Bhakti movements, and did not believe in the external formalities of religion. "For them the essential of religion lay in the love of God and man, devotion to Supreme Reality, search for perfection, master for self and inner illumination".³

The majority of the Bengali Muslims belonged to the Sunni section, which was further divided into two major subsections, i.e., Hanafi (named after Abu Hanafi) and Mohammadi. There was hardly any difference between Hanafis and Pirs. In fact, the *Pirs* often called themselves Hanafis and the Hanafis also did not discard Pirism altogether. The Mohammadis, on the other hand, were more fundamentalist. Like early *Ahle-Hadith*, they sought guidance in matters of religious faith and practice from the authentic *Hadith* and the *Quran* which, according to them, were the only dependable guide for the Muslims. They put emphasis in particular on the reassertion of *tawhid* or the unity of Allah on the one hand, and rejected the miraculous powers of the saints or *pirs* and the veneration paid to them on the other. The Mohammadis also wanted to eradicate customs that might be traced either to the innovation (*bida*) or to Hinduism, or other non-Islamic systems. For their reformist programmes, Mohammadis were often nicknamed as *Wahhabis* of Arabia. The Hanafi-Mohammadi conflict was the most striking feature of Bengali Muslims' socio-religious behaviour and thinking during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁴

The factors that succeeded in influencing the attitude of the Koch kings and his

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1. Islam, Md. Sirajul, op. cit., pp. 195-96
 2. Ahmed, A.F. Salahuddin, *History and Heritage*, University Press Limited, Dhaka, First Published 2007, p. 28
 3. ibid, pp. 26-27
 4. De, Dhurjati Prasad, op. cit., pp. 14 – 15.

subjects towards Islam, have more or less been discussed in Appendix-D noted above. It may, however, be added here that the Koch Maharajas earned fame for their catholicity in matters of religion and it was natural that throughout their rule they pursued a liberal policy towards other religions, particularly to Islam, the followers of which constituted 38% of the total population in the State as noted above. The Koch kings had reverence for the Muslim Pirs or saints, to whom money-grants or '*pir-bhata*' and land-grants or '*pirpal*' were given by them. Pirs were idolised not only by the Muslims, but also by the Rajbansi Hindus and other communities. In fact, their belief of *Pirism* strengthened the inter-community relations in Cooch Behar¹. The majority of local Muslims were the converted Muslims popularly known as '*Nasyas*,'² who belonged to the same racial stock as the Rajbansis. Again, Rajbansi Hindus claimed to be kindred of the royal family. Both the Rajbansis and Muslims held the Koch rulers in high esteem. The orthodox Islamic doctrines had little influence on the common Muslim masses of Cooch Behar during the period under our study. It is also not unlikely that Muslims were invited to Cooch Behar for their specialized services. The Koch royal family encouraged migration of Muslims to this State from nearby districts to facilitate extension of cultivation as they were primarily cultivators and applied better methods of cultivation.³ The Muslims received social recognition and enjoyed the opportunity to hold high administrative positions and titles of distinction during the rule of the Koch Maharajas. Their economic, cultural and political contributions were thus duly recognized for the growth of Cooch Behar.

(C) This thesis obviously has become a voluminous work in view of incorporation of a large number of unutilized archival materials which are copiously quoted for the purpose of illustrations in support of the points raised by me at different places. It is needless to say that at the time of publication the work may be condensed to make it more attractive even to the general readers.

(D) As regards 'a few minor typing errors' that have occurred in the thesis, I would like to state that these errors will certainly be corrected before publication. As of now, an 'Erratum'⁴ has been attached herewith for the convenience of the readers of my thesis.

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1. 1.Ray, Girijasankar, *Uttarbange Rajbansi Kshatriya Jatir Puja-Parvana*, N.L. Publishers, Dibrugarh, Assam, Second Edition 1999, pp. 211 – 212.
 2. 2.Choudhuri, Harendra Narayan, *The Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue Settlements*, Cooch Behar State Press, 1903, p. 120.
 3. One example may be cited here. The printed handbills in Bengali were issued by one Kumar Charu Narayan of Nutan Bazar, Cooch Behar, a distant relative of the Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan, inviting the Muslim immigrants of Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna and Mymensingh for settlement in his land. The English translation of the Handbill is as follows : "The poor Muslims are hereby informed that I have got arable lands at Kaljani under Sadar (within a mile from Baneswar Station). I require immigrant Muslims for cultivation of this land. I shall give them food which will be required for them for 6 months. But they will have to pay this after cultivation. I shall also supply them with houses to live in, ox for ploughing and a cart with a pair of oxen. The cart will have to be set to work in half-share system. Those who wish to work on the above conditions should see me immediately..."
"It may be mentioned here that my relation has got about 200 bighas of land attached to my land. Many other poor immigrant Muslims will be required if they can satisfy me by cultivating my land." – Extract from Daily Summary of Information of Assam, No. 12, dated 18.06.1949, received from Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs by Ministry of States, Govt. of India, on 25th June, 1949. File No. 15(8) – P/19 (secret), 'P' Branch, p. 68.
 4. See pp. 7 – 8

Errata

Page	Paragraph / Line	Printed as	Read as
(9)	2/12	Urgrading	upgrading
(38)	2/5	Brahma	Brahmo
(43)	18	the governments of West Bengal	The Governments of West Bengal and Assam
(44)	/3	meseum	Museum
(49)	/44	Sanyak,R.R.L.	Sanyal,R.R
(50)	/4	Prul, in the Revenue Dept.	Proceeding of the Governor General in the Council in the Revenue Dept.
(52)	/35	Nripenodranarayan's	Nripendranarayan's
(73)	1/1	hass	has
(73)	4/2	Maharaja Sayaji Rao, Gaekwar	Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwar
(75)	3/5	Excellancy	Excellency
(103)	/ 17	Charu Rayer Darogairi	Charu Rayer Darogagiri
(152)	/15	Sketsh	Sketch
(158)	/19	Dass,Rakesh Bhan, op.cit.,p-81	Dass, Rakesh Bhan, <i>Maharani</i> Delhi, 1973, p-81
(191)	3/3	sState	State
(191)	3/3	prtopagated	propagated
(198)	1/3	mycroscipie	microscopic
(199)	3/3	Minster	Minister
(217)	3/	nowever	however
(347)	1/6	paramountry	Paramountcy
(348)	2/3	representaives	representatives
(349)	/ 3	Butter	Butler
(357)	2//1	India States	Indian States
(365)	1/4	Concessions	concessions

Errata

Page	Paragraph / Line	Printed as	Read as
(366)	/6	Country	country
(374)	64	Confield	Corfield
(375)	3/2	Country	country
(376)	1/1	Country-side	country –wide
(396)	3/1	occurances	occurrences
(399)	1/3	James Major also said "...princely india"	James Major also said, " long before 1947 princely India
(432)	/ 1	upon	upper
(439)	2/7	spititual	spiritual
(441)	2/	logical	theological
(443)	1/9	the basic pattern condemned	the basic pattern of rural culture remained virtually the same. The practices condemned
(444)	1/4	it is also	(b) Its is also
(444)	1/6	the local Muslims	(c) the local Muslims
(446)	1/8	culturilly	Culturally
(451)	/31	1944	1994
(452)	/41	Mukammad	Muhammad
(453)	/11	hand	Land

Nurul Islam
12. 12. 2011



All pages (pp. 1-8) have been checked.
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12/12/11
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12/12/11