

Chapter 3

Growth and Development of the Bengali Entrepreneurship in the Tea Plantation Industry

Bengal being the nucleus of the British Empire with its capital at Calcutta its habitants was the first to come under the influence of Western education through English education. The middle class which emerged here as a result was destined to play an important role in the history of Modern India. It was both the creature and the creator of modernity. These middle class people virtually monopolised the subordinate services in the new administration and other learned professions. Commerce and industry which could give material prosperity did not attract them much. Intellectual pursuits and white collar jobs were their forte and they took pride on them. Taking advantage of their early start in English education they spread out in all directions. In contrast to it, Prince Dwarakanath Tagore was really an exceptional one¹. A growing body of scholarship argues that the advent of the Bengali entrepreneurship began under the tutelage of Dwarakanath Tagore. Born in a Zamindar family of Bengal he pioneered the Bengali entrepreneurs of various field in mid – nineteenth century in his own unique ways. Kling has identified Carr, Tagore and Company (1834) as the first equal partnership between European and Indian businessmen, and as the initiator of Managing Agency system in India. In between 1836 to 1846 six Joint – Stock Companies came into existence under the initiative of the firm such as the Calcutta Steam Tug Association (1836), the Bengal Salt Company (1838), the Calcutta Steam Ferry Bridge Company (1839), the Bengal Coal Company (1844), the Bengal Tea Association (1839), and the India General Steam Navigation Company (1844). Dwarakanath Tagore was a partner of Mackintosh & Co. and director of the Commercial Bank. He was also the founder member of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce along with Rustomji Cowasji in 1834².

The success of Dwarakanath Tagore inspired other to penetrate in trade and business in Calcutta. In this context we can elucidate such examples like Asutosh Dey (Banian to Ralli brothers, a Jute tea Co.), Ramgopal mallick (an opium merchant to Macao), Parvati Charan Bose (supplier of raw materials to France through Giilanders Arbuthnot), Maharajadhiraj Pratap Chand of Burdwan and so on. Fired by idealism and motivated by altruistic ends they helped to generate a pan – Indian spirit which

ultimately flowered into nationalism. But the fall of Union bank in 1847 brought to an end the Bengali entrepreneurship in Calcutta. This collapse came as a rude shock to those Indian businessmen who were associated with British businessmen in different enterprises. After 1848 Bengali businessmen practically withdrew from any adventurous business activity in Calcutta. But as a researcher in economic history especially on North Bengal we highly express our frown with this view. Because during the middle of nineteenth century though we saw the sunset of Bengali entrepreneurship in Calcutta with the fall of Union Bank but on the other hand we could see fortuitously the sunrise of Bengali entrepreneurship in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling district as well. During the last half of the nineteenth century a number of tea estates began to setup in North Bengal and in Assam (Surma valley) ³. The total number of Indian public limited companies having registered offices in the Jalpaiguri District was 89 ⁴. Professor Binoy Sarkar opined that “moneys are flying in Jalpaiguri, if you can catch it.” He further commented that “the most prosperous town of the Bengalis, across the whole of Bengal, outside Calcutta is none other than Jalpaiguri. The Court Bar Library did not consist of the minute details of the legal sphere; rather it consisted of discussion and debate on share market” ⁵. So this statement undoubtedly elevated in front of us about the sound economic base of Jalpaiguri town which came into force with the entrepreneurial activity of the Indian planters. A few Bengali entrepreneurs adorned the chair of various associations not even only in Calcutta but also across the whole country. Perhaps the economic historians mentioned above were unaware about this vast region which is far away from the mainstream of Bengal. Thus we can say that when the Sun of Bengali entrepreneurship set in one part of Bengal, it rose in the other part of Bengal simultaneously.

The two areas namely the hill area and the Terai region of the Darjeeling district as well as the Jalpaiguri Dooars of West Bengal have come to occupy a significant position in the tea map of India. Tea plantation industry in these two areas was originally initiated and developed by European enterprises. Along with the European enterprise in the tea plantation industry in Himalayan and sub – Himalayan region of Bengal, side by side the Bengali entrepreneurs coming various parts of undivided Bengal also played an important role in this field indeed ⁶. The bright prospects to act as tea garden employee in the European tea gardens in Darjeeling and

Jalpaiguri welcomed large number of immigrant educated Bengalis from various parts of Eastern and Southern Bengal⁷. Some of them later transformed them as tea planter by their own virtue.

Another significant incident contributing to the migration of large – scale educated Bengali energetic youths in Teari – Dooars during the middle of the nineteenth century was the introduction of the Railway during 1860. The first railway extension was made in Jalpaiguri in 1860 with ‘East India Railway’ up to Siliguri. Then in the year 1862 ‘Eastern Bengal Railway’ put its step in the Jalpaiguri district. By 1870 ‘Northern Bengal State Railway’ also introduced there⁸. This system undoubtedly opened a massive field of employment which lured a large number of Bengali unemployed youths to come here and settled there. In addition to that the availability of vast unmanned forest land and cultivable waste land in Jalpaiguri Dooars was also a contributing factor behind the immigration of Bengali people of undivided Bengal⁹. References should be made to Behari Lal Ganguly (founder of the Mogulkata T.E.) who began his career as a timber merchant later identified himself as a tea planter¹⁰.

In this context it is important to mention the role played by the ‘Dooars Planters Association’ (now known as Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association, DBITA) behind the introduction of Railway in Jalpaiguri district. On account of poor transport system owners and managers of European managed tea gardens had to face lot of inconveniences during their travel between Calcutta and their gardens. This resulted in the introduction of railway (then only the metre gauge with the Padma unbridged) in Jalpaiguri district in 1878 – four years after the start of the first tea plantation. The journey often used to be via Sahibganj and Karhagola ghat – a good portion by road, either on horseback or ox – drawn vehicles. The produce had to be taken down to points where the rivers became navigable by boats and then sent to Dhubri to be transhipped to steamers. The Association demand for railway’s can be better understood if it is recalled that in the district there were 125 ferries. Road transport was slow and arduous with loaded carts having to be put on boats for being ferried across. Transhipped was more expensive and slower. In 1866 the Association presented an address to a Governor visiting Jalpaiguri town and urged the construction of railway and promised an assured traffic of 180,000 maunds of tea and 60,000 maunds of garden stores¹¹. The contract for building the railway was given to

Octavius Steel & Co. who was looked down upon as a Calcutta firm by the Association in their 1891 resolution built the railway¹². They later became the owners of tea gardens in Teari – Dooars and Darjeeling hill and one of their managers W.L. Alston became chairman of the Association in 1908. The Octavius Steel & Co. bought the electricity for the first time in the district in 1920. The next Secretary of the Association was A. Oliver. He submitted a memorandum to Sir John Woodburn (Governor of Bengal) before the century closed and traced the growth of the industry. He calculated the investment in tea at Rs. 16 lakhs each year and urged extension of the railway. The memorandum bore results and extensions of the existing lines were sanctioned¹³. Thus we may say that the introduction of railway as well as emergence and mushrooming of many European tea gardens in Jalpaiguri district in post – eighties of the nineteenth century was also a fillip for large – scale immigration into this sub – Himalayan land of Bengal.

It is quite interesting to note that the first Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry in North Bengal was first emerged in Darjeeling hill. The name of this first venture by a Bengali was the Makaibari Tea Estate. This tea estate in Darjeeling hill was started with the joint venture of Captain Samler and Girish Chandra Banarjee (G.C. Banarjee) in the year 1858. He was actually belonged to an aristocratic Zamindar family of Dacca by birth. The later left his home (Boral, South 24 Pargana) at the age of 16 and travelled to North Bengal on horseback, leaving behind his family and fortunes. In Darjeeling hill he incepted his career as a translator and scribe with the East India Company. He also worked as a servant of a European postal company named ‘Carry Company’ in Kurseong where he opened a departmental store ‘G.C. Banarjee and Sons’ near the railway station. In addition to it, he was also a young polyglot. Thus he created a good relation with the rulers and it helped him to become the first Indian entrepreneur in the tea plantation industry in Darjeeling hill. This cordial relation was culminated in the creation of a beautiful tea garden namely Makaibari Tea Estate with Captain Samler, a deserter from the British imperial army in the year 1858¹⁴. Makaibari literally means "Maize Land" and is strategically located in Kurseong, the land of the white orchid. It is located at an altitude of 4500 feet above the sea level. In 1859 Captain Samler was appointed as an Agent of the Darjeeling Tea Company. A month before he died in 1859, samler sold the garden to G.C. Banarjee permanently who ran his commissary and mail services

business out of the old Tarapore Building at Kurseong next to the present day Goenka petrol Pump¹⁵. The Tarapore Building has since been demolished but the Makaibari garden has not and the Banarjee family still runs it. Tea planter G.C. Banarjee had three sons – Tarapada, Haripada and Hemchandra. All of them completed their school level education in Kurseong and later went to Calcutta for further study. Their father breathed his last one at Siliguri in the month of November 1899 and thereafter the family business began to run under his worthy sons. Among the three brothers, Hemchandra Banarjee did not show any interest in this field as he commenced his career as a successful pleader in Calcutta High Court. It is, however, very unfortunate to say that G.C. Banarjee's pioneering work in Indian tea was never given any recognition.

Tarapada and Haripada Banarjee, both of them was a under graduate of the Presidency College, Calcutta. At that time Tarapada was only 18 years old. He along with his brother Haripada acquired huge properties in Kurseong and Darjeeling town and later on owned a beautiful house at Elgin road, 8A Calcutta from where they controlled their business in hill towns. The biggest achievement of Tarapada Banarjee, the most worthy son of G.C. Banarjee was the purchase of the Happy Valley Tea Estate under the name of his own family in Darjeeling hill. It was established in the year 1854 by David Wilson, an Englishman who renamed the garden after his name as Wilson Tea Estate and by 1860 had started cultivation of tea. In 1903, this tea estate was taken by an Indian named Tarapada Banarjee, an aristocrat from Hooghly in 1903. T.P. Banarjee bought the tea estate and merged another tea estate and gave the name Happy Valley Tea Estate¹⁶. In addition, both of them owned also another garden namely Nurbang Tea Estate in Tindharia from a British tea planter.

However, with the splitting up of the ancestral property took place in 1929, Hemchandra became the owner of the Nurbang Tea Estate, the departmental store 'G.C. Banarjee and Sons' along with the residential house of Calcutta where Tarapada became the owner of the Happy Valley tea Estate. In the same year he further owned a small tea garden name Windsor tea estate. This doyen of the Indian tea industry left the hill in 1940 on account of his severe chest problem and settled in Calcutta permanently from the year 1946. In 1948 he died in Puri (Dist: Orissa) at the age of 78. After his death, his two sons namely Amiyanath Banarjee took over the

Happy Valley and Vah-Tukvar, while Pashupatinath Banarjee took over the reins at Makaibari. Amiyanath was an M.A., first class in English from Calcutta University and Pashupati Nath was a graduate (B.A.) from Scottish Church College of Calcutta University.

Apparently dreamy, nevertheless resolute, farsighted and positive minded attitude, Amiyanath Banarjee gradually became a populist tea personage in Darjeeling hill. He was associated with various socio – cultural activities in Darjeeling hill in between 1950 to 1980. He was the most out stand member of the Ciney Club and took the prime role ‘Nripendra Narayan Public Hall’ every year which is being used over the years as a common meeting place and for Durga Puja celebrations. He also adorned the chair as Secretary of the Darjeeling Branch Indian Tea Association and owned the Tukvar Tea Estate in 1970. In 1940’s he also established a zoo consisting of various rare animals in the Happy Valley Tea Estate and made a movie ‘Ramkhoka’ along with his director friend Surapati Bhattacharya. The entire shooting of the film was casted in the Happy Valley estate alone. His wife Nirupama Banarjee was herself a cultured woman. She was fond of books and wrote in various magazines. During 1990’s Amiyanath Banarjee came back to Calcutta perennially on account of political disturbances such as Gorkhaland movement led by Subhash Ghising, the founder of the Gorkha National League Front party in Darjeeling hill. Tea planter Amiya Banarjee died in the year 1998 at his own residence in Calcutta. After the demise of Amiya Banarjee, his three sons namely Manik, Falguni and Tridev took the charge of management. Tridev Banarjee has completed his education, both in Darjeeling Govt. School and College while his other two brothers did in Calcutta. Arun Banarjee, grandson of Sir Shyamapada Banarjee, a renowned Congress leader and Bengali film actor Victor Banarjee belonged to the same family tree of the Banarjee’s¹⁷. However, in order to commemorate the achievement of tea planter late Girish Chandra Banarjee and late Tarapada Banarjee in Indian tea industry the British Government named two streets in Darjeeling hill after their names like G.C. Banarjee road and T.P. Banarjee road¹⁸.

Wilson was the brand name of tea produced in their garden. The superscription “Happy Valley Gives Happiness” levelled on the tea packets gives a glimpse of the charmless of the brand. They have opened up an outlet for selling pet dogs in Calcutta. Siv Sankar Pasari, owner of the Remington Type- Writer Company;

Gauri Dey, owner of Enco Plywood Company ; A Toss and Company were the financier of this tea estate. They had a very good museum where a number of visitors used to visit of and on. Tridev Banarjee himself maintained a beautiful library consisted of very rare and precious books. He also developed a habit of reading books sitting on a Tiger's skin. In every year, gun-washer men came to their Bungalows for the pretext of washing private guns. During the Gorkhaland movement, these were surrendered to Indian Govt. However, the ownership of this tea estate has been transferred from this family to the Bansal group in the year 2008. The last Bengali director of this tea estate was Drona Banarjee, daughter of Tridev Banarjee ¹⁹. However, the Makaibari Tea Estate now run under the possession of Dipankar Chattarjee and the earlier owner of the tea Estate was Swaraj Banarjee (popularly known as Raja Banarjee) ²⁰.

So, after observing the fact in Darjeeling hill how we can say that the first Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry was launched in Jalpaiguri Duars which has been acknowledged by different historians over the years.

The journey of the Pal Chaudhury family in the tea plantation industry began under the suitable leadership of two legends in Indian tea industry Naffer Ch. Pal Chaudhury and Bipra Das Pal Chaudhury. Their first and foremost elegance was the Ghayabari Tea Estate which they bought from Mr. Bells in 1864 ²¹. In this process, the main initiative was taken by Naffer Ch. Pal Chaudhury. Tea industrialist Bipra Das Pal Chaudhury was the first Indian having qualified as engineer in the Manchester University in England ²². As soon as the Hill Cart road was ready in 1869, he came to visit the Darjeeling hill. He became highly impressed in seeing the British tea planters starting so many tea plantations in such a healthy climate. Being a cultured and educated man, he desired to devote his life and make his career as tea planter ²³. Since then he began to live in Darjeeling hill and soon organized instant tea, first in Gayabari with Chinese seeds and secured some indigenous Assam seeds from Ananda Mohan Bose, his close friend who had to start National Tea Co. Ltd. in 1895 with the Monai tea estate in Assam. The Assam seeds were planted in Mohargaong Gulma near Sukna. The name 'Gayabari' meant the cultivation of dry land seeds, which was the staple food of Lepches and they called the grains "Ghaiya". Bipradas during his stay in Hill found that the plants of tea required longer time to grow and produced less tea in the higher altitudes than in the lower hills. He visited

the small experimental plantation of Mr. James White in Sibring (signal T.E.) near Khaprail (Champta T.E.). Finally he took a large area of land from Jamansing Busnet "Pattader" of cart road fame. In the process, he transferred the land grant in his name. He thought that the production of tea in this altitude should be most suitable²⁴. At the same time, he made his application to the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling for a land grant near Sukna at the foothills. Since the only tea garden planted by "Babu" or Zaminder of Maheshganj was Gayabari, the hill people called the garden "Babu Kanan". Bipra Das Pal Chaudhury also opened out a small tea garden at Tindharia in Darjeeling hill in the same period. After his death his son Amiya Pal Chaudhury, a doyen in Indian tea industry, inherited the property of his father. During his tenure the Tindharia tea estate attained a prestigious name along with other European tea estates in international tea market. His wife Ila pal Chaudhury was also a central figure behind its prosperity and development. In the year 1966 the ownership of this garden was transferred to the Chattarjee family of Kolkata. This family also had a tea estate in Dooars namely Malnudy T.E.

Apart from his tea planter life, Biprodas Pal Chaudhury played a vital role in promoting cultural environment in Darjeeling Hill. He was a member of Brahma Samaj in hill. He was devoted friend of Keshab Ch. Sen and Pratap Chandra Majumder. Both of them were great teachers of Brahma Samaj who were the visitors in the ridge of Tindharia. A Brahma Samaj temple was established by the efforts of BiproDas and with the help of Motilal Haldar and Girish Chandra Guha in Kurseong. His close friend Asutosh Chaudhury (Justice Sir Asutosh) built a house alongside of Bipro Das Pal Chaudhury's residence in Tindharia ridge. Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore was casual visitor to this place, as he was closely related to Justice Sir Asutosh. Bipro Das had his only son-in law U. N. Roy. He was given some money to have a house in Gayabari. This property was later acquired by Amiya Pal Chaudhury, another son – in – law of Bipro Das Pal Chaudhury. He is said to have built a beautiful mansion on the property and the descendants still have it as their summer residence. Janaki Nath Bose, the father of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose had come to the neighbourhood at the instance of Bipro Das. Janaki Nath Bose preferred to have his house in the ridge of Gidhapahar about a mile up the approach road from Gayabari. However, in this house Netaji Subhash Chandra was confined at one time as political leader²⁵.

It is important to mention here that the name 'Maheshganj', the native area

of the Pal Chaudhury family in Nadia had been given by Naffer Chandra Pal Chaudhury to commemorate his son Mahesh Chandra Pal Chaudhury as he died due to lightning. Naffer Chandra Pal Chaudhury had other three sons namely Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury, Satish Chandra Pal Chaudhury, Sirish Chandra Pal Chaudhury. Among his four sons, Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury was the fittest one. His dexterity in tea industry was unquestionable. He was the founder of the Radharani Tea Estate in Dooars and Krishnakali Tea Estate in Assam. In regard to his unprecedented success in tea industry discussion will be made during the explanation of the growth and development of the Bengali entrepreneurship in Dooars. However, the Ghayabari tea estate later came under the control of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury, the worthy son of Naffer Chandra Pal Chaudhury. Unfortunately he was disowned by his father as he had no son. He had only two daughters namely Jogmaya and Mahamaya. Thereafter, when his brothers such as Satish Chandra Pal Chaudhury and Girish Chandra Pal Chaudhury were selling off the inherited properties of their father at the auction conducted by J.Thomas & Company, he purchased the Gayabari tea estate in 1946. But very consciously he did not induct the garden into his own company 'Radharani Tea & Estate Pvt. Ltd.' which was formed to avoid taxation, laws and avail of other benefits. The articles of Association were framed under the tutelage, his son – in – law, whose legal luminescence transcended the shores of the country and was taken as points of reference at the Higher Courts in London. This was ensured in 1936 as enunciated in the articles of the Association. However, after the death of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury in December 1961 the garden came under the control of Dhruvendra Nath Sinha (D.N. Sinha), son – in – law of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury. Later he renamed the garden as Jogmaya in memory of his beloved mother Jogmaya Debi, daughter of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury. The Jogmaya tea garden came under the control of Radharani Tea & Estate Pvt. Ltd. in the year 1978. After the death of Samarendra Nath Sinha (S.N. Sinha), brother of D.N. Sinha the Radharani Tea & Estate Pvt. Ltd. with its other two tea estates like Radharani, Krishnakali came under the control of Pradip Kumar Sinha (P.K. Sinha), Dilip Kumar Sinha (D.K. Sinha), Sandip Kumar Sinha (S.K. Sinha). They were the sons of Mahamaya Debi, another daughter of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury. However, in 1997 P.K. Sinha inherited the Jogmaya garden and formed another tea company Jogmaya Tea Estate Pvt. Ltd. in February 1999. In the next six - seven years the condition of the garden became so deplorable and as a consequence the tea estate

was sold to Sujit Bhattacharya in 2010²⁶.

It is absolutely true that until 1933 the ownership of most of the tea estates in Darjeeling hill were belonged to the British Sterling tea companies. They maintained an oligopolistic position up to 1947²⁷ though exceptions were also there like the Banarjee family of Makaibari, Happy Valley Tea Estate and Paul Chaudhury family of Jogmaya Tea Estate and so on. However, in between 1933 – 1947 the gradual entry of the Indian entrepreneurs were began to observe in this region²⁸. The sudden fall of tea price in London market due to the economic slump since 1930's²⁹ and of course the immense effect of India's freedom struggle movement to wipe out the British Government fall the colonial firms from grace and made a hasty retreat from India³⁰. Although a large number of British managing agencies like Andrew Yule, Gillanders Arbuthnot, Devenport & Co., Begg Dunlop & Co. packed up after 1947, many others remained. But they could not survive their position in the tea industry owing to the shortage of fund, mismanagement and followed the same path even after 1960's³¹. This situation no doubt accelerated the advent of Indian entrepreneurs in this field. This vacuum was fulfilled by the notable industrialists of Kolkata like Goenka, Bidla, Khaitan family. For instances, the tea estates established under the initiative of the Duncan Brothers & Company were owned by G.P. Goenka and are now being controlled and managed by the same family³². In regard to the Bengali entrepreneurs we can mention the names of Parswanath Ghatak who owned the Mission Hill tea Estate (P.O.-Fagu, Mirik) from a British planter after independence³³. It was initially a British garden. Later on, Parswanath Ghatak, a Zaminder by profession owned it. He had timber business in Burma. After his death, his son Amal Ghatak took its rein. During his tenure, the ownership was transferred to S. Agarwalla of Kolkata. In 1990's its ownership was further transferred to Nilmoni Ray of Mal Bazar, Dist- Jalpaiguri. This garden sells its tea under the name of Asha Tea Co. (founded in memory of Nilmoni Ray's mother) through auctioneers in bulk and currently packaged in different variants. It is based in Malbazar, Dist – Jalpaiguri. He has a petrol pump in Caltex road of this town³⁴. Parswanath Ghatak had another garden in Alipurduar named Sreenathpur tea estate. Now it is being run by Paritosh Sarkar of Siliguri town.

Table 3.1 Caste, Occupation and Native Places of the Bengali Entrepreneurs in Darjeeling Hill

Name of the Planter	Caste	Occupation	Native Place	Tea Estate
Naffer Chandra Pal Chaudhury	Hindu non Brahmin	Zamindar, Trader	Ranaghat, Nadia	Jogmaya
Bipra Das Pal Chauhdury	Do	Engineer	Do	Gayabarie and Tindharia
Ganesh Chandra Banarjee	Hindu Brahmin	Govt. Service	Dacca	Makaibari
Tarapada Banarjee	Do	Zamindar, Trader	Do	Happy Valley and Wiondsor
Bhagwati Charan Rai	Hindu Nepali Brahmin	Govt. Contractor	Darjeeling Town	Sourini and Sampripani

(Source: Annual Progress Report, Darjeeling Branch Indian Tea Association, 1921-1922)

Therefore, from the above table it is cleared that along with the European entrepreneurship Indian entrepreneurship also came into existence in the tea plantation industry of Darjeeling hill. Most of them were Hindu Brahmin and non – Brahmin and belonged to the Zamindar class. The most interesting point to be noted here is that most of the Bengali entrepreneurs came here from the Nadia district whereas in regard to the other tea palnting areas such as Terai – Dooars most of the Bengali entrepreneurs came from various part of undivided Bengal.

The second significant aspect of the Bengali entrepreneurship took place in the tea plantation history was the Jalpaiguri Dooars. Dooars was originally a strip of land situated at the foot of the Himalayas and to the east of the river Teesta which was annexed from Bhutan to the British India in 1865. The word ‘DOOARS’ implies ‘Doors’ or ‘passes’ into Bhutan and there are 18 such passes. After annexation of Dooars it was divided into two parts like the Eastern Dooars and the Western Dooars of which the former now forms a part of Goalpara in Assam while the Western Dooars came to be known as the present day Dooars. Initially the Western Dooars was divided into three Tehsils such as the Sadar, the Buxa and the Dalimkot. Later, the Dalimkot Tehsil was transferred to Darjeeling district while the Titalya sub – division of Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) was united to the Western Dooars to take shape as Jalpaiguri district in the year 1869. Although considered unhealthy for

human habitation due to menacing diseases in and around the mid eighties there was much to recommend this district as a tea growing area for its geo climatic characteristics. The tract of around 5 to 10 miles down slope in the neighbourhood of Bhutan range has a low depth of soil containing a substratum of gravel and shingle. In the dry season the beds of hilly downstream around these tracts were left dry with the stream reappearing further down. Apparently because of this the area was known as waterless area where the ordinary cultivators found no charm for putting the land for agricultural use ³⁵.

In the middle of the nineteenth century this land was covered with almost impenetrable jungle containing much valuable but unexploited timber, giving shelter to all manner of wild beasts and inhabited only by primitive tribes such as Garos, Meches, Totos and so on. 'This was a land only for the saints or the Satans'. Eventually, such lands came up under tea and its success with the early experiments culminated in rapid spread of tea cultivation through the district. The tea garden entrepreneurs had to maintain some rules and regulations incorporated by the British Government published in the Calcutta Gazette on 02/05/1894 ³⁶. By these rules and regulations land for tea garden was granted to an entrepreneur at first for only five years. If the entrepreneur could fulfil all terms and conditions then lease would have been renewed further for next thirty years. For the initial year that is first five years no rent was charged. As the years went on, the rate of rent varied for each of the remaining four years from initial three to six annas to maximum twelve annas to one rupee eight annas per acre on the basis of quality and quantity of land. However, the terms and conditions for sanctioning lease to planters have been mentioned below –

- 1) An applicant was not allowed to keep not less than 50 acres of land under cultivation
- 2) If in the first term of lease the planter failed to bring one – fourth of the given land under cultivation, the Collector had the right to bring back the lease.
- 3) For the first year no rent was charged but from the second year rate would be six annas per acre, twelve annas for third year, one rupee two annas for fourth year and one rupee eight annas for fifth year until the resettlement for thirty years ³.

However, behind these rules and regulations the Government had an objective. By doing so, the Government intended to bring more and more uncultivated land under tea plantation as possible and thus the amount of land – revenue would be increased in future.

Let's go back from where we started. By 1874 there was hardly any land left in Darjeeling district and one of the Darjeeling tea garden owners Dr. Brougham crossed the Teesta in that year and established a garden at Gazuldoba on 16/02/1876. That was the first tea garden in the Dooars. It is hardly known now having been incorporated in a larger estate, that of Oodlabari also owned by Dr. Brougham³⁸. Mr. Richard Haughton was the manager of Gazuldoba tea Estate and was fittingly also the first Secretary of the Dooars Planters' Association. The matter was not a mere coincidence. Haughton has been described as the pioneer of tea in the Dooars and till his death in 1895 was the Association's moving spirit. The second established tea garden by a European was the Fulbari tea estate. Its manager was Pillans who established a hat near his garden which is still known as Pillanshat. The first station on the metre gauge railway after crossing the Teesta is Pillanshat and for 126 Kilometres thence the railway runs through unbroken tea territory. Fulbari's owner was Colonel Edward Money who sold his garden in the Chittagong Hills Tea Co. to move to the Dooars in 1876. Writing in the Tea Encyclopaedia in 1881 he declared: "I thought years ago when I first began work there, and the place was a howling wilderness that the said Western Dooars would eventually prove the best tea district in India". His prophecy has been largely fulfilled – Dooars is the second most productive among administrative districts which also grow tea, contributing 19 per cent of the country's total tea output.

W.S. Cresswell, who later formed a tea broking firm still in existence, established a garden at Bagrakote in 1877. His manager was W.M. North. Another tea broker Thomas Carritt (whose name is commemorated in Carritt Moran & Co.) opened a garden at Washabarie³⁹. Ellenbarrie and Manabarrie Tea Estate in Jalpaiguri Duars were established by a Calcutta Bank manager, a Darjeeling planter and a sub – manager of the Land Mortgage Bank and later came to be managed by Duncan Brothers. Hope Tea Estate was also started by the manager of a Darjeeling garden⁴⁰. Henry Fisher was the first manager at Ellenbarrie tea estate appointed in the year 1877. We have other names such as Westfield at Dalimkote (1876), Festing at

Rangatee (1876), Mcadonald at Bainbaree (1877), Windram at Ellenbarrie (1877), Hubert at Damdim (1877), Clarke at Kumlai (1877), Harrison at Washabaree (1877), Luff at Dalimkote (1877) and so on. Further, all the European tea companies had their management entrusted to one or other of the British – owned managing agency houses of Calcutta such as Goodricke Duncans, Williamson Magor & Co., Devenport & Co., Kilburn Tea Co., Octavius & Steel Co., Gillanders Arbuthnot and so on. They had inter - locking interests in diverse activities ⁴¹. According to Sunders report, the process to manage the gardens through the agency houses began in 1884. The owners were away in Calcutta or Britain.

In Jalpaiguri there were 18 Sterling tea companies and 33 British Rupee Public Limited tea companies. These companies employed agents or secretaries in Calcutta to implement the policies and programmes formulated by the Board of Directors in London. The management of the estates of various Sterling and British Rupee Public Limited tea companies were vested on the British Managing Agency Houses of Calcutta. They played an important role in converting either a personal lease or proprietary estate into a public limited company ⁴². An analysis of the rupee companies listed in Investor's India Year Book 1911 revealed that the seven European managing agency houses like Andrew, Yule and Company, Bird and Company, Dunlop and Company, Shaw, Wallace and Company, Williamson, Magor and Company, Duncan Brothers and Octavius Steel and Company controlled 55% of jute companies, 61% of the tea companies and 46% of the coal companies. However, in case of jute Andrew Yule and Company, Bird and Company alone controlled fourteen out of twenty-nine rupee companies, and their control increased by the decade 1910-20 ⁴³. Many of the sterling companies managed by the managing agency houses were closely held, and their shares were not quoted on the stock exchange ⁴⁴.

The British mercantile presence on the eve of World War I was truly staggering. Most of the tea plantations were managed by Britons. The larger of these were organized along joint – stock lines and 96 per cent of such companies had boards that were exclusively British. At first glance, matters seemed somewhat different in the coal industry: only 47 per cent of the firms were managed by non – Indians ⁴⁵. However, in the tea plantations, the major collieries – commanding greater capital and larger mining rights – were joint – stock firms and 89 per cent of these were controlled by Europeans, mostly British, managing agencies ⁴⁶.

Although tea cultivation primarily took its origin under the European tea planters, the Indians especially the Bengalis also took large – scale initiative to set up a large number of tea gardens singlehandedly with issuance of grants of lands in a phased manner. The year 1879 was a watermark in the entrepreneurial history of the Jalpaiguri district in colonial rule. In this year the first joint – stock public limited company was set up namely Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd. in the Jalpaiguri town. But the entrepreneurial activity of the Jalpaiguri Indians commenced before that date. Two tea estates were set up in 1877 such as Jaldhaka and Altadanga. In the year 1877 Late Munshi Rahim Baksh, a Peshkar of the then Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri could induce the ‘Saheb’ to allow him a grant for the purpose of tea plantation and this ceaseless efforts was resulted in the attainment of Jaldhaka grant on 17/08/1877 for 728 acres. In 1878 more than one tea estates came into existence ⁴⁷.

In the same year the Kalabari grant for 800 acres was given to Mr. Jhonson on behalf of Land Mortgage Bank on 09/03/1878. Being unable to make this grant as a tea garden, subsequently the grant was passed into the hands of DR. Nilratan Sarkar, the then eminent physician of Bengal along with his wife Sarojini Roy. It is important to notice here that before the First World War many Indians from the professional classes had entered in the field of industry either on their own or in association with other businessmen. DR. Nilratan Sarkar is a perfect example in this regard. Tarini Prasad Ray, a stalwart in the atlas of the Indian tea industry and side by side a class friend of DR. Sarkar was the main inspiration behind this venture. Unfortunately, the tireless attempt of DR. Nilratan Sarkar was not destined to success as he was not backed by any large Banking and financial institutions. Consequently, the property run under the name of Eastern Tea Company was transferred to Tarini Prasad Ray in 1912 ⁴⁸.

In the year 1878, the Altadanga grant of 310 acres was given to Babu Kali Mohan Roy and Durgawati sen on 19/09/1878 but very soon they transferred it to Late Behari Lal Ganguly, a timber merchant coming from Jessore. From a timber merchant he eventually became a Jotedar. He had a close relation with Khan Bahadur Munshi Rahim Baksh. Apparently the latter passed on the grant at a subsequent date to the Jaldhaka grant taken by Khan Bahadur Munshi Rahim Baksh. The later started his career as a tea planter at the age of fifty seven. During his service to Deputy Commissioner Office, he earned handsome allowances by supplying intelligence to

the British Government about the Indian rebellious Sepoys involved in the Great War of Indian Independence of 1857. In addition to that, he also attained commendation from the Colonial rule freehandedly by affording all sort of military provisions and beasts of burden to the British army during the course of the Second Anglo - Bhutan war of 1864 – 65. These two causes definitely helped him to become a rich man of the Jalpaiguri town as well a successful entrepreneur later on ⁴⁹. In addition to it, two Bengali gentlemen Babu Chandra kanta Das and Babu Prasanna Kumar Das got land on lease from the tea plantation. Both of them started their venture in 1883 with the primary opening of two gardens namely Ingdong and Chaluni. After few years their venture was proved to be a futile one and thus these gardens were sold to the Chalsa Tea Co. Ltd ⁵⁰.

Bhagwan Ch. Bose, the then Deputy Magistrate in Jalpaiguri and father of the renowned scientist Sir J.C. Bose was truly the brain child of the Bengali entrepreneurship in Jalpaiguri Dooars. The unprecedented success of the Europeans in opening tea estates in Dooars contemplated him highly as to whether or not the Indians could venture in this field. To get a tea lease, an applicant must satisfy that he has capital at his disposal and he will have to deposit cost of surveying the land calculated at Re. 1/- per acre and thereby get a preliminary lease for five years. There after a thirty – year lease was granted. When the European entrepreneurs were about to get the preliminary lease renewed, Bhagwan Ch. Bose thought that the Indians should come in. This significant endeavour was resulted in the formation of the first Indian tea garden named Mogalkata tea estate along with the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd., a purely Indian concern in 1879, though actually the Company got a grant for 741 acres on 09/03/1881. The first general meeting of the share holders was held on 02/06/1879 and the first and second meeting of the Directors on 04/06/1879 and 03/07/1879 respectively. The first chairman of the Company was Jay Chandra Sanyal and the first directors were Srinath Chakrabarty, Jay Chandra Sanyal, Gopal Chandra Ghosh, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty, Mohima Chandra Ghosh. Its first Secretary was Umanath Chakrabarty. Apparently, this Company was formed by a group of Hindu lawyers and only one Muslim was attached with this company. Perhaps, Srinath Chakrabarty was instrumental in acquiring the land where Mogalkata tea estate came into form ⁵¹.

Table 3.2 **Promoters of Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd.**

Name of the Entrepreneurs	Profession	Native place	Caste
Joy Chandra Sanyal	Pleader	Pabna	Hindu Brahmin
Gopal Ch. Ghosh	Do	Do	Do
Keshab Ch. Ghatak	Do	Do	Do
Hriday Nath Bagchi	Do	Do	Do
Jadav Ch. Chakrabarty	Do	Do	Do
Ram Charan Sen	Do	Do	Kayastha
Mahim, Charan Ghosh	Do	Do	Kayastha

(Source: Memorandum of Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd., 1879, Jalpaiguri.)

How far the Indians especially the Bengali entrepreneurs of Jalpaiguri with their slender means advanced in tea cultivation is given below in detail. The high water mark of Indian entrepreneurship in Dooars was a period which roughly stretched from 1910 till about 1930. Most of the Indian owned tea companies had their offices in Jalpaiguri town, some outside Jalpaiguri like Alipurduars Tea Co. Ltd., Sreenathpur Tea Co. Ltd. and a few outside the district such as Radharani Tea Estates Pvt. Ltd., Ambari Tea Co. Ltd. in Calcutta and Rungpore Tea Association Ltd. at Rungpore. In between 1879 to 1900 the Bengali entrepreneurs of Jalpaiguri town had formulated nine Joint – Stock Companies. Apart from the Mogalkata tea estate the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd. was said to have formed another tea company named Northern Bengal Tea Corporation Ltd. in the year 1882. In this year the Company succeeded in getting a Pucca Lease in lieu of the preliminary five – years lease. The main venture of this company was the Needam tea estate ⁵². Two years after its formation Gopal Chandra Ghosh went to native district for better treatment. At that time, Panchanan Neogi, the then Secretary of the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd. told him that unless Rs. 5,000 it would be impossible to save the garden. Gopal Chandra Ghosh after realising the necessity called the directors of the Company and one Marwai businessman Kaluram Agarwal. “In their presence he told the money lender you have to lend Rs. 15,000 for our tea garden for which we the Directors are agreeable to execute Promissory Note in your favour”. In reply, Kaluram Agarwal

told Gopal Chandra Ghosh “Sir, a hand note by you alone will be enough for me as a security for Rs. 15,000.”⁵³ This incident certainly proved the reputation and laudation of the first generation Bengali tea planters.

In the same year the third Joint – Stock Company was raised named Gurjunghora Tea Co. Ltd. which took a grant of 799.34 acres on 21/05/1986. Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh, Beharilal Ganguly, Ibrahim Sowdagar, Ganga Govinda Sen, Sreenath Chakrabarty, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty, Hriday Nath Bagchi, Priya Nath Banarjee, Umesh Chandra Moitra were the most important personages behind the promotion of this tea company. The occupational status of the promoter group of this company was heterogeneous like four land holders, four service holders, five professionals of whom four were legal practitioners. Among the legal practitioners and service holders we find two service holders and three legal practitioners belonged to the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd. However, in the year 1888 the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd declared its first dividend.

In 1889 the fourth Joint – Stock Company named The Anjuman Tea Company Ltd. was formed with two estates like Mujnai and Makrapara tea estates. “The illustrious group of Promoter Directors of this company were late Joy Chandra Sanyal, Gopal Chandra Ghosh, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty, Srinath Ray, Munshi Abdul Hamid. They, though not individually rich, procured some money to start a tea estate. Their main motto was to show that the Bengalis could also run industries. They applied to the then Deputy Commissioner on 04/03/1889 for the grant of land measuring 1,600 and 2,200 acres in order to start two separate tea gardens. As a result, they got the permission and the land was recorded on 18/11/1889. The tea lease grant of 1,768 and 2,265 acres for Mujnai and Makrapara respectively was obtained from 1st April, 1896 to 31st march, 1926.”⁵⁴ However, seven or eight years after this, Gopal Chandra Ghosh went outside Jalpaiguri for treatment of his beloved ailing wife. At that time pleader Srinath Roy took over the charge of the Company. During his tenure the Company suffered much and the condition became so feeble. After his return, Gopal Chandra Ghosh took major steps to survive the Company with some bold harbinger Bengali tea planters of the contemporary period such as Tarini Prasad Ray, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty, Jay Chandra Chakrabarty. With their personal risks and assistance they borrowed Rs. 90,000 and saved the two gardens from its acute crisis condition⁵⁵.

The members of the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Ltd. promoted other tea companies like Chamurchi, Kathalguri and Ramjhora. The Chamurchi Tea Company was a mixed venture of the Europeans along with their Indian counterparts. The lease of land in order to establish the Chamurchi tea estate was first lent to the Europeans. The interest of the European share holders were represented by F.A. Shillingford who was one of the Promoters – Director of the company⁵⁶. The Kathalguri Tea Company was established in the year 1895 under the auspicious guidance of Srinath Ray, Bhabani Charan Ghatak, Walliur Rahaman and Sashi Kumar Neogi. The main responsibility was given to Gopal Chandra Ghosh and Tarini Prasad Ray. The Ramjhora Tea Company was established in the year 1907 by some Indian stalwarts like Gopal Chandra Ghosh and his son – in – law Tarini Prasad Ray, Walliur Rahaman, Sashi Kumar. It began its journey with some lands refused by the European planters earlier. Actually the lease was granted to the Ramjhora Tea Company in the year 1909. Gopal Chandra Ghosh was the Managing Director of the Company. Close to the Ramjhora T.E. Dalmore T.E. was also started by the Needam Tea Co. on much better soil⁵⁷. Thus we find the entrepreneurial activity of the Jalpaiguri Indians was on the increase under the headship of two communities – Hindus and Muslims. Among them most of the members and directors of the promoter groups were Hindus. They dominated the entrepreneurial field superlatively by their own virtue, social status and educational background. Before going into details we need to explain the entry of the Indians as members of the ‘Dooars Planters Association’ (DPA).

The phenomenal growth of the tea gardens of the earlier period continued between 1910 and 1929 but the new element between these two years was the entry of the Indian planters especially the Bengalis. The outstanding expansion of the tea market during the First World War opened up new avenues to the Indian planters. After the War the European planters were not favourably disposed to the expansion of Indian plantations and actively discouraged it⁵⁸. By this time the Indian planters can be said to have come of age and were not to be cowed by the European planters. It resulted in the creation of a number of tea gardens by the Indians of their own. Moreover, by taking advantage of the outmost expansion of the International tea market the Indian gardens were enrolled as members of the ‘Dooars Planters Association’ (DPA). It might be worthwhile mentioning a few points regarding the entry of the Indians as members in the ‘Dooars Planters Association’. The massive out

spread of the impetus of the Indian Freedom Struggle Movement made highly contemplative the European planters about their stability in future. They realised that it would be ostensibly impossible for them to remain in future without the support of the Indian planters. This resulted in enrolling the Indian gardens as members of the monopolistic 'Dooars Planters Association' since the beginning of the twentieth century. Without membership of this Association it was possible for the Indian planters to avail all sorts of privileges attained by their European counter parts. Fortuitously the number of Indian gardens as member of the DPA began to enhance by the beginning of the year 1917 and it reached up to nineteen before the end of the year. For the first time the Indian planters were allowed to elect an Indian A.C. Sen as their representative of the 'Dooars Planters Association' ⁵⁹.

However, though the Hindu planters dominated the field of tea plantation there were few Muslim families also in Jalpaiguri who also enjoyed the same status with the Bengali Hindu planters. The most influential Bengali Muslim tea planter as well as harbinger of the Muslim community in this economic venture was Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. It would not to be exaggerated to say that no one among the Muslim in Jalpaiguri town could challenge his supremacy. The glorious history as well as reputation of the Nawab family of Jalpaiguri town began with the awesome leadership of Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. His father Munshi Makram Ali was a Promoter Director of the Altadanga tea Company.

In 1896 Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh was successful in taking two grants at Jayanti area for 1,847 and 400 acres respectively where he was said to have established two estates namely Rahimabad and Chuniajhora. The Rahimabad tea estate was began under the flagship of the Rahimia Tea Company named after Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh himself. It is important to mention here that the style of giving family name to the tea estates in Jalpaiguri Dooars began from this family. The Chuniajhora tea estate derived its name after the Chunia River flowing over this Jayanti region. In 1898 nine grants were taken of which late Srinath Babu, Bibi Nurjan and Mussaruf Hossain, son – in – law of Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh took three grants for the Atiabari tea estate. Mussaruf Hossain was the central figure in forming three companies in 1910, all of which were fully promoted by the Muslims such as Rahimia Lands and Tea Company, Diana Tea Company in Dooars and Nuxalbari Tea Company in Terai. He was legal practitioner and energetic young man

marrying into the well known Nawab family of Jalpaiguri town. He also promoted another tea Company namely Malnudy Tea Company with the Malnudy Tea Estate. In 1912 the Hossainabad tea estate was started by the Nawab Saheb ⁶⁰. By 1933 he owned and controlled at least 17 tea estates either as Managing Director or as the member of the Board of Directors. The name of the residence established by Mussaruf Hossain in Jalpaiguri town was 'Rahman House'. This name is popular even today to the people of Jalpaiguri.

Apart from Mussaruf Hossain, mention must be made of Moulavi Walliur Rahaman, nephew of Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. His first entry in this field was appeared in Kathalguri Tea Company in the year 1895. He adorned the chair as Director in three Companies promoted by Mussaruf Hossain in 1910 such as Rahimia, Diana, Nuxalbari. In 1912 the Rheabari Tea Estate was established by him. From the year 1912 he along with Mr. Jatindra Nath Chakrabarty formed a separate group and thus appeared a new entrepreneur group namely Walliur - Jatindra Group. Other important personalities joined with this group were Nurul Hossain, Sureswar Sanyal, Biraj Kumar Banarjee and Sreenath Hore. The tea estates established by this group were all in Assam such as Fatemabad, Manmahinipur. The Fatemabad tea estate was established in the name of Mussaruf Hossain's wife Faizannessa Khatun and Manmahinipur tea estate in the name of the mother of Jatindra Nath. This group also promoted other two tea estates like Brajapur (in the name of the father of Jatindra Nath) and Alimabad (in the name of the mother of Moulavi Walliur Rahaman) ⁶¹.

Another important personality of the Nawab family was Khan Bahadur Mokleswar Rahaman who started the Batabari Tea Company in 1925 and Nepuchapur Tea Company in 1927. In 1929 the Rahimpur tea estate was also started by this personage of the renowned Rahaman family of Jalpaiguri town ⁶². Janab Inamul Hossain, M.A., B.L. Pleader was closely related to Nawab Mussaruf Hossain of Jalpaiguri town. Shortly after acquiring law degree he joins Jalpaiguri Bar. He was Director of Nawab Group of Gardens. He became the Chairman of ITPA in the year 1960 ⁶³.

The next important phase of the Bengali entrepreneurship was the entry of the native Jotedars. After the first settlement took place in Dooars in 1871 – 73, many native Jotedars both Hindu and Muslims occupied huge land covered with thick

Jungles as much as possible. The scarcity of Khas lands in Dooars drew the attention of many promoters to these Jotelands for starting tea plantation. Unfortunately, a very few Jotedars could provide large lands individually required for a tea estate. Thus the Jotedars grouped together to club their jotes under one company. Moreover, owing to the lack of proper education and awareness a number of Muslim Jotedars invited many experienced affluent promoters to join with them. This resulted in the formation of a number of tea companies like Nepuchapur Tea Company Ltd. (1927), Batabari Tea Company Ltd. (1928). However, the Hindu Jotedars could not follow the same policy like the Muslim Jotedars in beaten pattern. Owing to have cultural and educational background and of course experiences attained from the participation in previous attempts, many Hindu Jotedars converted their Jote lands into tea estates such as Sukna Tea Company Ltd. (1913), Bhojnarayan Tea Company Ltd. (1915), Saraswatipur Tea Company Ltd. (1917), Taripur Duars Tea Company Ltd. (1919), Laxmikanta Tea Company Ltd. (1929).

Among the Hindu Jotedars, references must be made to the Raikot family of the Jalpaiguri town. A prior permission was required to obtain from the Government before converting the Jote land into tea garden. With the outbreak of the First World War such permission was not required if the land was situated within the Zamindari. The Raikots of jalpaiguri had such lands and their activities started in 1917. The central figure of the Raikots in the field of tea plantation was Prasanna Deb Raikot who took over the Zamindari in 1914 after the death of his father Phinindra Deb Raikot. His son Prasanna Deb Raikot got the help in this field from his close friend Makhan Chakrabarty, owner of the Jadavpur T.E. Thus Prasanna Deb incorporated the Merry View Tea Company within his Baikunthapur Zamindai and close to his forest. In 1917 Saraswatipur T.E. was started and in 1918 Jaypur and Karala Valley T.E. was started. In the next year Bhandiguri (Good Will Tea Co.) was also started. In lieu of the price of the land, Raikots kept the corresponding shares and also extended the helping hand to other companies whenever necessary. Prasanna Deb Raikot himself started two other tea estates such as Sikarpur and Bhandarpur. The introduction of railway between the two estates was also a great example of his pensive provident thinking in industrial field ⁶⁴.

Next to the Raikots, the Rahuts of Jalpaiguri also did not stand behind. Two tea estates came into existence in Dooars under the leadership of this family like

Anandapur and Kailashpur. Kailash Chandra Rahut was the founder of this family. He was born in a notable Kayastha Zamindar family of Dacca. His father Ramlochon Rahut owned a residence in the year 1900 in Jalpaiguri town. Since then the Rahuts became the dweller of Jalpaiguri town. Kailash Chandra Rahut migrated in Jalpaiguri from Dacca as a servant of the colonial police. He had no wards and that is why he loved his brother Ananda Chandra Rahut very much. After his death, his brother Ananda Chandra Rahut inherited the property. Ananda Chandra Rahut owned the Gazoldoba T.E. from the Oadlabari Tea Company in 1902. It was the first European venture in the tea plantation industry in Dooars. However, due to frequent land slide caused by the Teesta River, the condition of this garden became so feeble. Hence Kailash Chandra Rahut sold it to the Friends Tea Company in the month of September, 1912. But the said British Tea Company committed some nuisances in case of payment which drew Kailash Chandra Rahut to file cases in the Jalpaiguri Court against fraudulence. In the mean time he passed away and the Rahut family underwent through a financial deplorable condition alongwith its Anandapur T.E. However, this situation did not last long and the financial assistance provided by late Prahalad Chandra Rahut revived the family afreshly. The financial help afforded by the Martin Company (a Broking Firm dealt with tea business in those days) need also to be mentioned here. As a consequence, in 1939 – 40 the ownership of the Gazuldoba T.E. fully came under this family. The severe flood of the river Teesta in 1950 washed the Gazoldoba garden as a whole. This situation dipped Ananda Chandra Rahut into severe financial crisis. The later had four sons such as Kaminikanta, Abanikanta, Nalinikanta, Ramanikanta. Among them Kamini kanta Rahut was a genius and people thought he had a Midas touch. Thus he could build up the tea garden when the original garden was washed away by 1950 flood. He started planting there in 1950's under his direct guidance and supervision and turned it into one of the best gardens of the Dooars. This was the history behind the formation of the Kailashpur T.E.⁶⁵

Kamini kanta Rahut also laid the foundation of the Anandapur T.E. by the name of his father. In his life time Kamini kanta Rahut was associated with eleven tea Companies of Jalpaiguri town such as Bengal Dooars National Tea Co Ltd., Kathalguri Tea Co Ltd., Dheklapara Tea Co Ltd., Choibari Tea Co Ltd., Sunny Valley Tea Co Ltd., Kohinoor Tea Co Ltd., Ramjhora Tea Co Ltd. and so on. He had been a

guiding force of ITPA for long being as its Chairman. He was also the promoter of the Rahut bank, Arya Bank of Jalpaiguri town. In this context it is important to mention that the British Government did not adorned them with the title “Raja”. According to the intelligence report they had a prolonged connection with the rebels of the Sanyasi insurgence ⁶⁶.

During the period 1911 – 1913 near about thirteen new tea companies were floated in Jalpaiguri town by the Bengali entrepreneurs. The Khayerbari Tea Company was established in the year 1912 on a mixed plot (partly Government Khas land and partly private Joteland) near Kalchini Railway Station. The joteland was purchased from two jotedar brothers of the Gabur family of the Kalchini area (P.O. – Alipurduar) late Krishnadas Gabur and Haridas Gabur in exchange of cash and part in shares. They never intended to become the directors. This venture was followed by Manmahinipur Tea Company established in the year 1912. However, the Khayerbari Tea Company faced some initial problems in its beginning phase. First of all, the Company started purchasing the Khayerbari lands in Mouza near Madarihat. Later it was found that the land was unfit for tea cultivation. In the mean time some work of plantation had already been started. Undeterred by the initial fiasco, the prompters like Rajendra Kumar Neyogi, Purna Chandra Ray, Ganga nath Bagchi, Sashi Kumar Banarjee, Tarini Prasad Ray shifted the plantation work to Nimti – Domohani area, 35 miles east of where the plantation of the Khayerbari Tea Company ultimately attained a new life. The tea estate controlled under the name of the company was the Nimtijhora T.E. It derived its name from the Neem forest surrounded by a falls of water (in Bodo language the word ‘Ti’ means water) ⁶⁷. Sachindra Kumar Neogi (Badal Babu), son of Rajendra Kumar Neogi owned the Nepuchapur tea estate from the Nawab family of Jalpaiguri in 1964. Naresh Chandra Dasgupta, relative of the Neogi family helped Rajendra Kumar Neogi financially to achieve this goal. Today the tea estate is being owned and controlled under the Dasgupta family. After the death of Sachindra Kumar Neogi (Badal Babu) in the year 1973, the property was inherited to his three sons. Later on, the Nimtijhora T.E. was sold in 2005 to Shyam Goyal of Siliguri town ⁶⁸.

The Bengal Dooars National Tea Company also came into existence in the same year with the Dhawljhora tea estate (P.O. – Alipurduar). 1593.15 acres of Jote land was purchased by the promoter Director of the Company in the year 1912 near

the Dhawla River and hence it derived its name from the Dhawla River situated at the adjacent area of the garden. “The jote land so purchased was brought under tea lease grant and approximately 500 acres were planted in the year 1913 but plantation in only 200 acres survived”⁶⁹. This company was registered on 19/08/1912 and formed with a handsome amount of Rs. 2, 50, 000 assimilated by a group of tea garden employees such as Anath Bandhu Sen, Manager of Gurjhangjhora T.E.; Rajani Kanta Sen, Head Clark (Bara Babu) of Rangamati T.E.; Harimahan Biswas, Manager of Malnudy T.E., Rai Kalipada Banarjee Bahadur, Abinash Charan ghosh, Krishna Chanda Saha, Ashutosh Mukharjee and so on. Everybody barring Rajendra Kumar Neogi and Manmohon Chakrabarty was a new comer.

Among these tea garden employees, Manaranjan Dasgupta and Karuna Kishor Kar deserved special attention. His father Ratneshwar Dasgupta was the store keeper (Gudam Babu) of the Banarhat T.E. He also played a vital role in the formation of the Ambari T.E. along with the Saha brothers of Nadia district⁷⁰. Naturally it would not be exaggerated to say that Manaranjan Dasgupta spent his childhood in the womb of tea plantation. It definitely sowed the seed within him to become a tea planter in future. After giving resignation from the tea garden employee’s job, he became share – broker of various tea companies in Jalpaiguri town. He also started to provide short term institutional finance to various tea companies and later on established a share – broker firm of his own namely “Das & Co. Banker and Share – Broker”. Karuna Kishor Kar, hailed from Cachar was said to have established an Indian Agency House namely Indian Planter’s Agency with its head quarter in Calcutta for the pretext of managing the Indian owned tea estates in Assam that is Cachar and Sylhet. However, the rhythm of these tea garden employees did not ended with the formation of only the Bengal Dooars National Tea Company; they formed two other tea companies like Kohinoor Tea Company and the Darjeeling Duars Tea Company Ltd. (1916). The registered office of the Bengal Dooars National Tea Company was at Malbazar. Most of the promoters were tea garden employees and for their convenience the office was situated there. It’s Secretary was Sashi Bhusan Sen. In the mean time, the board of Directors were changed and some respected stalwarts of the Jalpaiguri town joined their hands with the Company such as Rajendra Kumar Neogi, Chand Mahan Mukharjee Gobinda Nath Sen, Makhanlal Chakrabarty, Annada Charan Sen,. Among them Chand Mahan Mukharjee was

appointed as the secretary of the company. In order to run the Company luxuriantly, the registered office was shifted to Jalpaiguri town in the month of September, 1914
71 .

Apart from the success of The Bengal Dooars National Tea Company, the coruscate activities of the other group of tea garden employees is worthy to be mentioned here such as Gour Netai Tea Company Ltd. (1912) with Baragar tea estate and the Choibari Tea Company Ltd. (1925) with Choibari tea estate in Goalpara, Dist - Assam. Experienced Indian managers like Radhika Mohan Pandit, Manaranjan Dasgupta were some elucidate personages behind its creation. The Neogi family of Jalpaiguri had a profound relation with the Choibari tea estate. Sukumar Neogi, son of Sasi Kumar Neogi was the Managing Director of this tea estate. Today the Choibari tea estate is possessed under the ownership of the Subrata Chanda, son of the reputed chanda family of Jalpaiguri. His grandmother Suniti Bala Chanda, founder of the Kadamtala Girls High School was the first female educator to receive the National Award from the Jalpaiguri town.

The tea industry in Jalpaiguri Dooars ruled immensely by two Bengali Hindu family of the Jalpaiguri town in the Colonial period none other than were the Ghosh and Ray family. The era of the Ghosh family in tea industry began under the jargon leadership of Gopal Chandra Ghosh belonged to the Jalpaiguri Tea Company Group. He belonged to the first generation of the pioneer Bengali tea entrepreneurs of the Jalpaiguri town. He along with his son – in – law Tarini Prasad Ray incorporated copious tea companies and also was the main inspiration to other. Gopal Chandra Ghosh started his career as a lawyer in Rangpur Court and later joined in the Jalpaiguri court. He began his better future in Jalpaiguri court and the main credit in this respect went to the then Commissioner of Cooch Behar who actually inspired him to go to Jalpaiguri court rather than to work in Rangpur. He was the founder member of the Jalpaiguri Tea Company and the Mogulkata T.E. as well. He also established Anjuman Tea Co. Ltd. in 1889 with Makrapara and Mujnai tea estates under the sway of Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. In 1912 – 13, one Company was promoted by Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, son of Gopal Chandra Ghosh which had far reaching consequences in entrepreneurial activity on regional identity and family initiative – the Gopalpur Tea Company (1913) with the Gopalpur Tea Estate (1912) by his own father's name. The Gopalpur Tea Company was formed as a promoter group out of the friends and

relatives of both Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and Tarini Prasad Ray having the same regional identity Rarhi and belonged to the same native village Manikganj, Dacca. In this respect it is nevertheless need to be pointed out that the style of giving family name to the properties established by themselves did not only belong to the Nawab family. This trend was also followed by the Ghosh and Roy family of Jalpaiguri town deliberately⁷².

Tea industrialist Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, son of pioneer Bengali tea planter Gopal Chandra Ghosh was a doyen of the contemporary Indian tea industry. The Gopalpur Tea Estate (1912) was established in the land measured 1200 acre donated by an Anglo – Indian Mr. Paul and a Nepali gentleman Goyasen. As we know the Indian tea industry faced a severe economic crisis during the year 1915. It dipped the Gopalpur Tea Company into a sea of financial liabilities. The “Jalpaiguri Banking and Trading Corporation” in the mean time sent the notice to the Company to refund the money one lakh twenty thousand took as a loan. In this task Jogesh Chandra Ghosh got deleterious support from the Financiers M/S. J. Thomas & Co. under the sagacious of his friend late Asutosh Chakrabarty, the then Head Clark of the J. Thomas & Co. who established a cordial relation between and T. Evers, Senior Partner of the Company. Nevertheless, in this respect he also got help from his two worthy sons Debesh Chandra Ghosh, Birendra Chandra Ghosh along with his able lieutenants Purna Chandra Das, Jagat Bandhu Sarkar, Kaviraj Satish Chandra Lahiri. As gratefulness, the Company bestowed 400 Kl. Tea to the M/S. J. Thomas & Co. in the year 1919. However, Gopalpur T.E. was the first garden out of the all Bengali owned tea estates in Dooars who opened Post Office for the first time in 1921, bought car and Rikshaw in 1923. In addition to that, Lord Ronaldsay, the then Governor of Bengal stayed one night at Gopalpur garden’s Bungalow in 1922 which was established in the year 1918. The tea manufactured in the factory of Gopalpur Tea Estate was sold as “Governor’s Tea” in packet form. This tea estate had also the credit to bring coal for the first time in its factory in Dooars as well⁷³.

Apart from the meretricious history of the Gopalpur Tea Estate some hectic efforts were also made by Jogesh Chandra Ghosh during the period 1925 to 1930. He started the Bijaynagar T.E. in Terai in 1925 and in Dooars the Malhuty T.E. in 1926 with the financial assistance of M/S. J. Thomas & Co., Kadambini T.E. and Luxmikanta T.E. in 1927 and the Soudamini T.E. in 1930 of the Bijaynagar Tea Co.

Ltd. Among them the bedrock of the Kadambini T.E. and the Soudamini T.E. was laid down to commemorate the name of his two sisters Kadambini Debi and Soudamini Debi. Kadambini Debi was the wife of Tarini Prasad Ray, the pioneer Bengali tea planter in Jalpaiguri town ⁷⁴. However, rivalry over the question of distribution of shares of the Gopalpur Tea Company between Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and Tarini Prasad Ray resulted in the creation of split into two groups such as Ghosh Group and the Ray Group. Tarini Prasad Ray attributed to the egalitarian distribution of shares and also aimed assiduously in controlling the Company. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh resented outrageously over this fallacies opinion and affirmatively pledged to control the shares. This exasperating environment educed Tarini Prasad Ray from this joint venture and he made a segregate group of his own with his credulous friends like Jay Govinda Guha, Purna Chandra Roy, Annada Charan Sen and so on. The Ghosh Group was formed under the mettle leadership of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh along with his two drift sons namely Birendra Chandra Ghosh, Debesh Chandra Ghosh and Taraprasad Biswas (son of Gopal Ghosh's friend Hari Prasad Biswas), Purna Chandra Das and Kaviraj Satish Chandra Lahiri ⁷⁵. The later had to set up Panchabati tea estate at Chittagaong with the help of Jogesh Ghosh who once survived the Panchabati tea estate by providing twenty five thousand rupees to Satish Chandra Lahiri. Subhasini Debi, wife of Jogesh Ghosh loved him very much as her other sons. Conspectus to say, this separation proved as a vicissitudes rather than a holocaust over this two group and since then the regime of the Bengali entrepreneurship in Indian tea industry began to rule by them ⁷⁶.

The expansion which occurred after 1922 was mainly due to the opening of new gardens by the Indian entrepreneurs. In fact most of the expansion during that period took place by converting jotes into tea gardens. Under such circumstances, conflict between the Europeans and Indian planters began to increase on a mount scale. We can mention here a finest example in regard to this fact from the The history behind the establishment of the Kadambini T.E. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh appealed to the Government to buy 2,000 acres of jotes in the Falakata tahasil for the pretext of establishing the Kadambini T.E. In this attempt he faced a vagary envious attitude from the then Deputy Commissioner and Chairman of DPA. He replied as follows –

“My committee again desire to emphasise the fact that this Association does not oppose the expansion of Indian interest in the tea industry, but does foresee that serious consequences may occur should conversion be granted in too many case. For the following reasons –

1. Conversion of jote land into tea land would certainly pose interceptions in regard to the production of rice and other staple foods.
2. Due to this conversion the aboriginal occupants and the labourers worked as coolies would be dispossessed
3. At present the numbers of labourers worked in the existing tea gardens are indeed meagre and the opening out of more land into tea land would eventually cause a serious and acute crisis to the gardens.

The annual published in the reports of DPA between the years 1924 and 1929 expressed the similar concerns. This undoubtedly helped us to perceive how the European planters being enforced by DPA tried to obliterate the Indian planters from the Indian tea industry. Their outstanding elevation in international market caused qualm to the Europeans and hence they assumed such ignoble deleterious steps against them ⁷⁷.

However, the death of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh in 1934 did not cause any harm owing to have his two diligent sons like B.C. Ghosh and D.C. Ghosh. Actually he had five sons such as Kshitish Chandra Ghosh (Ram Babu), Tejesh Ghosh (Ajay Babu), Bhakta Kumar Ghosh (Mani Babu) including B.C. Ghosh and D.C. Ghosh. Kshitish Chandra Ghosh obtained his B. Sc. Degree from the prestigious Oxford University and spent the half phase of his life there. He did not show any interest to involve family business. Tejesh Ghosh initiated the beginning phase of his life as a prisoner in Deoghar Conspiracy case took place in 1927 – 28. After his release from the imprisonment, Jogesh Ghosh sent him to England, Sweden and Germany for better education. Later he actively joined in India’s Freedom Struggle and devoted the whole life to propagate the Swadeshi ideas in Calcutta. Bhakta Kumar Ghosh obtained the M.Sc. degree from the Calcutta University in Chemistry and began his

career with the plywood industries. Henceforth, the responsibility of the tea gardens was naturally attributed on B.C. Ghosh and D.C. Ghosh ⁷⁸.

B.C. Ghosh was one of the leading Bengali tea planters in India. He obtained his B.Sc. degree in Chemistry (Hons.) from the Scottish Church College, Calcutta. He began his career as Tea Taster in M/S. J. Thomas & Co. under the inspiration of Mr. Evers, bosom friend of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh. He joined ITPA and served the Association in various capacities. He was the Chairman of ITPA in 1951, 1959 and 1963. He was the lone Indian planter who was honoured with the Honorary Membership of London Branch ITA. He was the member of first Wage Board constituted by the Government of India to fix up minimum wages for tea employees in India. He served Tea Board as a member and Vice – Chairman. He was also the main promoter for establishing Siliguri Tea Auction centre and served as its chairman till his death ⁷⁹. Apart from managing the tea estates established by his father, B.C. Ghosh himself opened out two tea estates namely the Sonali and Rupali tea estate after the name of his two beloved daughters. It was primarily a European garden established in 1906 by a Sterling Company called “The Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Company”. Up to 1960 Sonali and Rupali was a division of Bagrakot Tea Estate founded in the year 1876. Sonali and rupali was then known as the Saongaon Division of Bagrakot Tea Estate ⁸⁰. In 1960 it was sold to an Indian managed Tea Company the “Great Gopalpur Tea Company “ (Regd. No. 21692) in exchange of Rs. 2 lakhs. Since then it acquired a separate identity and began to run with a new name. The garden had a total area of 1174.63 acres of which 458.16 acres were under tea. It had no of its personal factory own within the garden premises and hence all teas produced in the garden were sold to the nearest factory of Good Hope Tea Estate controlled under the name of the Duncan Goenkas ⁸¹. B.C. Ghosh had also bought other tea estates under the possession of the Gopalpur Tea Co. such as the Bamandanga T.E., Tandoo T.E. from a European enterprise and the Cooch Behar T.E. from the Royal family of Cooch Behar. The Cooch Behar T.E. (P.S. Shoulmari) was the creation of the Royal family of Cooch Behar laid down in the year 1946. Their advent in Indian tea industry especially in Dooars as yet not get proper attention from the scholarly World. The Cooch Behar Tea Cultivation Control Act incorporated in the year 1945 promoted the Royal family to take interest in this field. In 1950’s the ownership of this garden was transferred to the Kadambini Tea Company, a wing of the Gopalpur

Tea Co. controlled by the notable planter of the Jalpaiguri town B.C. Ghosh. In 1980's its ownership was further changed hands to S.P. Agarwal, Calcutta ⁸². It is deserve to be mentioned here that no tea estates owned and controlled by the Gopalpur Tea Co. was under the possession of B.C. Ghosh and his successors. This tea company is now being owned and controlled by S.P. Agarwal, Calcutta ⁸³.

Debesh Chandra Ghosh was also a doyen in Indian tea industry who also played an important role like his brother B.C. Ghosh for spreading the name of Jalpaiguri in the international tea market. He obtained his B. Sc. Degree from the Asutosh College, Calcutta and later admitted in Calcutta Medical College after passing the I. Sc. Examination. But he followed the path of his great father and began his career in M/S. Octavius Steel & Co. and Jardine Skinner & Co. This experience vindicated him to be a deft tea planter in future. He was the Honorary Joint Secretary of ITPA from the year 1928 to 1943 and Vice – Chairman from 1945 to 1947 ⁸⁴. He was a staunch believer of the Swadeshi ideas who took a prime role in establishing the first textile handloom industry in Jalpaiguri namely 'Bayanashram' ⁸⁵. In 1950's he transferred the Head Office of the Bijaynagar Tea Co. along with the other members permanently in Calcutta from Jalpaiguri town ⁸⁶. Since then the Company along with its tea estates like Subhasini, Bijaynagar, Mogulkata is being controlled under the successors of Debesh Chandra Ghosh as yet. It is important to mention here that the Mogulkata T.E. was first controlled by the Jalpaiguri Tea Company. Later it came under the control of Bijaynagar Tea Company. The main credit in this respect went to Satyabrata Ghosh (Dodo Babu), son of D.C. Ghosh who also laid the foundation of Gita Debi T.E. (P.S. Goalpokhor, Dist – Darjeeling) ⁸⁷. So, it would not be irrelevant to say that today no tea estates is being owned and controlled under the successors of planter B.C. Ghosh whereas the Bijaynagar Tea Co. is still owned and controlled under the successors of D.C. Ghosh like Subhojit Ghosh, Supratik Ghosh. Under their management the Company really touched the pinnacle of its glory in tea industry.

The journey of the Ray group in Indian tea industry began under the juvenile kinetic personage Tarini Prasad Ray. Born in the Village 'Diabari' in Dhaka district of undivided Bengali in the year 1858, he began the first phase of his life as a prodigy lawyer. He was a renowned and highly successful lawyer of the Jalpaiguri Bar and became the President of the Bar Association. One of the founders of the Indian Tea Planters Association he became its first Chairman in the year 1915 and

elevated the post till 1947. Against heavy odds for acquiring suitable lands in Dooars and in spite of difficulties for securing finance at his time he became promoter of the highest number of Indian Tea Companies of Jalpaiguri and founder of large number of gardens such as Kathalguri, Bandapani, Atiabari, Mathura, Diabari, Madhu in Dooars and Chandmani, Kamala in Terai. The venture of Tarini Prasad Roy commenced with the Kalabari tea estate. He purchased this old garden from the renowned physician of Calcutta Dr. Nilratan Sarkar. In 1895 the Kathalguri Tea Co. Ltd. established by Srinath Babu was given to the charge of Gopal Ghosh and Tarini Prasad Ray. He tied the knot with Brahamaputra Himalayan Tea Company (1913) which had tea estate in Assam namely the Monaka T.E. He founded numerous tea companies singlehandedly such as the Kamala Tea Company (1914) with Kamala T.E. (P.O. Bagdogra, Dist – Darjeeling). He was key figure in promoting Amritpur Tea Co. and Amrawati Tea Co. in 1913⁸⁸. In 1917 due to the strife with his father – in – law Gopal Chandra Ghosh, Tarini Prasad Ray founded the Saroda Tea Company with Mathura T.E. in jote lands in eastern Dooars, known as Kansinggram singlehandedly to outshine his illustrious father – in – law. It was the biggest venture the Ray family have ever had. Saroda was his beloved sister and Mathura Dutta helped profoundly him in getting the lands. To commemorate the name of these two personages of his life he named the company with its garden according to their names⁸⁹. At a later date this company became the owners of the biggest garden opened by Indians in the Jalpaiguri district. Perhaps the tussle with his son – in – law never efface out from his mind and the result was the creation of the Bhabanipur Tea Company Ltd. (1925) named after his father Bhabani Prasad Ray. In 1929 Tarini Prasad Ray laid the foundation of the Diabari Tea Company Ltd. with the Madhu T.E., his last entrepreneurial activity under the charge of the then best Bengali planter Biren Guha Neogi. Joy Govinda Guha and P.C. Ray instigated Tarini Prasad Ray to fulfil his dream expeditiously. Diabari was his native village and Madhu was the eldest son of his affable colleague Jay Govinda Guha. His son Madhusudan Guha was a radiant pertinent medical practitioner of Calcutta. His untimely death mourned imbecile his father Jay Govinda Guha profoundly and thus he vowed to eschew him once and forever from this venture. This grim situation warned Tarini Prasad Ray very much and also compelled him to perceive how he could further bought back Joy Govinda Guha in this field. Hence Tarini Prasad Ray started the Madhu T.E. according to his son's name and in this way further enclosed him with the same field.

This discernible proverbial quality of Tarini Prasad Ray made him the most influential planter and industrialist of Jalpaiguri. He was highly respected to all for his sharp intelligence, strong foresight, courage and keen business interest ⁹⁰.

After the death of Tarini Prasad Ray in 1948, his son Satyendra Prasad Ray inherited the property of his father. He was a renowned lawyer and famous Bengali tea planter. He came into 'Tea' in early thirties to assist his father and later became the Managing Director of various tea companies established by his father. He was in the managing committee of ITPA since 1936 – 37 till his death. He became the Chairman of ITPA in the year 1952. In recognition of his all round services to the betterment of Indian tea, Govt. of India had nominated him as a member of Tea Board for three terms and became the Vice – Chairman of Tea Board in his last term. He was the Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) for three terms, Member of the Railway Consultative Committee (N.F. Rly.), Member of the Senate of the North Bengal University. His devotion towards the advancement of education in North Bengal deserves special mention as he helped establishing innumerable schools and colleges throughout North Bengal ⁹¹. He also adorned the chair of West Bengal District Sports Association for the last few decades till his death in the year 1987. His contribution towards the sports and cultural world of North Bengal was widely known. In a word he was a creative genius and became famous to all as "S.P. Ray" for his sublimity ⁹². However, during his tenure ownership of a number of tea estates were transferred from the Roy Group to other such as Bandapani, Kathalguri, Kalabari, Needam, Chandmani, Kamala, Ramjhora, Atiabari in 1970's ⁹³.

The last de – facto sailor of the Roy Group in Indian Tea Industry was none other than Ashok Prasad Ray. After the death of S.P. Ray on 7th September 1987, his third son Ashok Prasad Ray born on 06/04/1938 inherited the property of his father. Soon after his graduation from St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, he joined M/S. A.W. Figgis & Co. Pvt. Ltd. and underwent training in Tea Testing, Manufacturing, Processing and field job for 6 years. He joined as Board of Directors in eight Tea Companies at Jalpaiguri in the year 1964 and became ITPA Committee Member in the year 1967. He also served the Association as Joint Secretary, Vice – Chairman and became Chairman in the year 1979 – 80 and became the Honourable Secretary of the Association. He also appointed as the Director of West Bengal Tea Development Corporation and became member of the Tea Board in the year 1981 and

again from 1984 to 1990. He was also the Chairman of North Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Ex – Member of the Executive Committee of Siliguri Tea Auction Centre⁹⁴.

Another agile predecessor tea planter family in the history of the Bengali entrepreneurship was the Sanyal's of Jalpaiguri. Jay Chandra Sanyal was the harbinger from the Sanyal family in this economic venture. Their first venture was the Durgapur Tea company established in the year 1916. A group of leading tea planters of the contemporary Jalpaiguri town such as Lokendra Nath Bagchi, son of Hriday Nath Bagchi and two worthy sons of Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty (founder of the Jadavpur T.E.) namely Makhanlal and Chandidas Chakrabarty corroborated Joy Chandra Sanyal massively⁹⁵. Durga Chandra Sanyal, younger brother of Joy Chandra Sanyal was a revolutionary personage devoted his whole life in Swadeshi Movement and hence kept him aloof from family business⁹⁶. His son Jyotish Chandra Sanyal grew under the tutelage of his uncle late Joy Chandra Sanyal who made him a consummate success planter in future. He was also the central figure behind the creation of Indian Tea Planters' Association in Jalpaiguri town in 1915 and also assisted others to promote their business. For example Tarini Prasad Ray got assistance from him in introducing Kamala Tea Company in Terai to a large extent. The Sanyal family had also the credit to promote another Tea Company in Jalpaiguri town like Sunny Valley Tea Company (1918) with Sunny Valley T.E. in Dooars and Ashapur Tea Company with Ashapur T.E. in Terai. The leading figure played vital role in promoting these companies were DR. Charu Chandra Sanyal, Ganesh Sanyal (son of Joy Chandra), Bhabatosh Sanyal (son of Madhab Chandra, younger brother of Joy Chandra). Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was the main inspiration behind the formation of the Ashapur Tea Company in 1925. Charu Chandra Sanyal was the Director of several Tea Companies. He was the director Chairman of M/s. Anjuman Tea Co. Lt. He served ITPA in various capacities and was elected Chairman in the year 1956. He was also a member of the Legislative Council of Government of West Bengal and also a member of Senate of the North Bengal University⁹⁷. It is worthy to point out here that apart from a commercial environment; the Sanyal family is also famous due to its cultural spirit even today. Jyotish Chandra Sanyal was the founder of a Bengali Magazine 'Janamat' published from Jalpaiguri since 1924⁹⁸. Charu Chandra Sanyal was a very populist cultural personage not even in North Bengal, but across the whole

India. He was the first educator got the D. Lt. degree from the North Bengal University. The first research work on the Rajbanshis namely “The Rajbanshis of North Bengal” (published by the Asiatic Society, Calcutta) written by him is truly an epic on these endemic inhabitants of North Bengal. This book not only dispersed his name in the elite society of India but also enshrined him with the Rabindra Sahitya Award ⁹⁹. However, the entrepreneurial activity of the Sanyal’s did not last long on account of pertinent successor. Apart from their financial scarcity from the beginning, most of its successors chose the literary life or political career rather than maintain their family business. As a result, the management of tea companies became so feeble within a span of time and the tea estates underwent this family sold to others.

Another Bengali tea entrepreneur of the Jalpaiguri town was the Saha family. They had to advent in Jalpaiguri town from the Amla Sadarpur, Nadia district. The Sahas had their ancestral home in Natudah – Boira, Nadia district. They styled them as Zamindar though they were trader. Their actual profession was the money lending. In addition, they supplied all type of grocery items like sugar, rice in various part of India. How did they put their step in Jalpaiguri town is fully obscure. The name of the Saha family made their first appearance in the list of the share holders of the Anjuman Tea Company. They later turned their attention in developing tea estates ¹⁰⁰. Their first venture in this field was established with the introduction of Totapara T.E. on 14/04/ 1892. The elegant personalities behind its formation were Janaki Nath Saha, Bhagwan Chandra Saha, Kedar Nath Saha and Badri Nath Saha. Having successfully established the Totapara T.E. in 1892 the Saha family of Amla Sadarpur also started Ambari T.E. in 1908 ¹⁰¹. Two grants known as Kathalbari 1 and Hartalguri 1 had been leased to the Ambari Tea Co. These two grants were earlier leased to the Chunabhati Tea Co. Ltd. but later on they gave up these grants on account of dearth of water. Hence these two grants later leased to the Ambari Tea Co ¹⁰². However, prior to one year this Bengali tea planter family laid the foundation of the Sahabad T.E. in Terai region in 1907 ¹⁰³. It is important to mention here that today no tea estates exist of their own. Ownership of each and every tea estates have been transferred to the Non – Bengalis. For example, ownership of Totapara and Ambari tea estates has been transferred to Sanjib Singhania group of Kolkata and Sahabad T.E. to the Birla family of Kolkata ¹⁰⁴.

In the race of promotional activities by the descendants of stalwarts of the first generation, the Banarjee of Jalpaiguri town too joined. It is true that they had not bagged so many tea companies as did by the Ray's and Ghosh's but their performance in one word so spectacular superlative. Sasi Kumar Banarjee was the central figure of the Banarjee family of Jalpaiguri town. He had three sons namely Biraj Kumar Banarjee, Santosh Kumar Banarjee, Saroj Kumar Banarjee. They had only one sister. After her untimely demise her only one daughter 'Kajri' grew up under the tutelage of her three brothers with so much affection and love. Later she got married with Jiten Mukherjee, a leading broker of tea garden shares of the Jalpaiguri town. After some years he claimed himself as the Managing Director of the Debpara Tea Company after having established his own control over its shares with the help of fraudulence. However, this family feud was solved later by voting procedure where the Banarjee brothers defeated him by twelve votes ¹⁰⁵.

Sasi Kumar Banarjee began his career as a lawyer in Jalpaiguri Court under the inspiration of his father – in – law late Mahesh Chakrabarty. The later was also the legal advisor of the Royal family of Jalpaiguri. Sasi Kumar Banarjee also laid the foundation of the Jalpaiguri Trading Bank under the cordial corroborate of pioneer tea planters such as Tarini Prasad Ray, Ganesh Chandra Sanyal, Gopal Chandra Ghosh, Srinath Hore, Nawab Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh and so on. In the year 1913 the Palashbari Tea Co. was registered in Jalpaiguri town by Sasi Kumar Banarjee.

Table 3.3 **Promoters of Palashbari Tea Co. Ltd.**

Name of the Entrepreneur	Profession	Native Place	Caste
Trailakya Prasad Maullik	Pleader	Dacca	Hindu Brahmin
Nepucha Muhammad	Jotedar	Jalpaiguri	Muslim
Ismail Hossain	Do	Do	Do
Sasi Kumar Banarjee	Pleader	Dacca	Hindu Brahmin
Abdul Karim	Jotedar	Jalpaiguri	Muslim
B. Gurzamen	Do	Do	Do

(Source: Memorandum of Palashbari Tea Company, 1913, Jalpaiguri, P. 12)

What emerging from the above mentioned table is that like other Bengali entrepreneurs the promoters of the Palashbari Tea Company were not the immigrants settled here from various part of undivided Bengal. Most of them were the son of the soil and did not hold legal profession like others.

The Debpara T.E. in Dooars, Bhojnarain in Terai and Manmahinipur Tea Co. in Assam are also some examples of his success as a tea planter. He was also the main inspiration behind the formation of Ramjhora T.E., Karala Valley T.E. in Dooars. Bhaba Kinkar Banarjee was also a popular figure of the Banarjee family of Jalpaiguri. He was an established lawyer in Jalpaiguri Bar and Director of several tea companies like Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd., Northern Bengal Tea Corporation Ltd., Atiabari Tea Co. Ltd., and Choibari Tea Co. Ltd. He served ITPA as its Chairman and Secretary in the year 1954. He died in 1962¹⁰⁶.

However, Biraj Kumar Banarjee, son of Sasi Kumar Banarjee a great name in the tea industry is well known by all tea planters. He passed his matriculation Examination with distinction in the year 1916. In 1922 he obtained his M.A. degree from the Calcutta University and stood first class first in experimental psychology having been awarded with a gold medal. He passed his Law examination in 1923 and was a lecturer of the Calcutta University for some time when his love for art and acting on the stage developed so much that Ashutosh Mukharjee was once overwhelmed by his acting and awarded him a medal as the best performer on the stage. Thereafter in the year 1925 he came back to Jalpaiguri and joined his family tea gardens such as Debpara, Palashbari in Dooars, Bhojnarain in Terai and Manmahinipur Tea Co. in Assam. A fearless speaker of the British regime, he laid the foundation stone of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh Memorial of ITPA in 1930 and onwards he was for a long time a member of the then Indian Tea Market Expansion Board (now called the Tea Board) where the British planters and other tea men showed him great respect. He died in 1960 in Calcutta at the early age of 62.

Saroj Kumar Banarjee, son of Sasi Kumar Banarjee was born on 29th August, 1907. He was educated at Jalpaiguri and Calcutta and had a penchant for classical music – both vocal and instrumental. He showed a keen interest in the sports World and was a very popular figure in the tea industry. Soon after the death of his father, he automatically joined in the traditional tea business where he consolidated

the family tea gardens such as Palashbari, Debpara, Bhojnarain and Manmahinipur. In 1958 he was elected Managing Director of the aforesaid gardens and served the Board until his demise on 21st June, 1985. Besides this, he was also on the panel of Directors of other gardens like Dheklapara T.E., Sukna T.E. and Diana T.E. At the end of fifties he was elected to the Board of Directors of A.W. Figgis & Co. Calcutta and served there till his demise. In addition he was associated with the Jalpaiguri Town Club, Friends Union Club, Ramkrishna Mission of Jalpaiguri town. He served as Chairman of ITPA for the period 1975 to 1976. He was also a local committee member of UCO Bank, Jalpaiguri town. After the death of Saroj Kumar Banarjee, his son Sanat Kumar Banarjee took the reign of tea business. Born in the year 1936, Saroj Kumar Banarjee completed his education in Calcutta. After coming back his home town, he became closely connected with the tea industry from 1960. Later he joined ITPA and served the Association as Treasurer and Vice – Chairman. He was the director of M/S. Manmahinipur Tea Co. Ltd. and Bhojnarain Tea Co. Ltd. He adorned the chair of ITPA as Chairman from 1988 to 1991. He was also the member of the Governing Body of Siliguri Tea Auction Centre and Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Calcutta ¹⁰⁷.

The next prominent Bengali entrepreneur in the tea industry in Dooars region was the Pal Chaudhury family of the Ranaghat, Nadia district. In regard to the history of this family, we have discussed a lot in the context of their association with tea business in Darjeeling hill as well as in Dooars. In Dooars their first venture was the Radharani Tea Estate. It was established by Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury, the worthy son of the worthy father Naffer Chandra Pal Chaudhury in the name of his mother Radharani Devi in the year 1911 on 626.57 acre of land. The grant was leased for this garden on 20.12.1913 and was registered under the name of Radharani Tea Co. Ltd. in the year 1917. Being disowned by his father as he had only two daughters namely Jogmaya and Mahamaya, Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury set out to establish a tea estate of his own. To put down in words the valuable contribution of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury is beyond my ability. He was endowed with a wealth of knowledge and foresight, a fearlessness of exceptional order, a reservoir of patience and perseverance and an uncompromising dedication in pursuit of an objective. Any how, through sheer dint of hard work and single minded determination he coaxed, cajoled and convinced the British administrators to allot a piece of land so that he

could prove his ability in this field. There is no record of correspondence to deduce what transpired. Somehow, ultimately the district administration agreed but gives him a small stripe of land, remote and farthest from the local habitation. It was adjacent to Buxa forest which was the corridor of thick and virgin forest area between the border area of Bhutan and India, on the foot hills of the sub – Himalayan West Bengal. To honour his commitment to the British administrators around 250 acres were planted within a span of ten years. And records available testify that around 1 lac. Kg of tea was harvested by 1932.

It would not be out of place to mention that Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury had made a huge investments in colliery and after the First World War when he sold off the coal mines, he reaped huge profits which he ploughed back and cleared financial liabilities on account of Radharani tea estate. Hence from such humble beginning an institution was born. Any how, slowly age was catching up with the indomitable spirit of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury and fresh hands were needed to be trained to keep the business running, he bought up Samar Sinha, son of Jogmaya Debi who had had by then settled in Bombay and Sandip Sinha, son of Mahamaya Debi to run the affairs of the Radharani tea estate. In 1956 Samar Sinha shifted the Head Office of the Radharani Tea & Estate Pvt. Ltd. from Maheshganj, Nadia to Calcutta (A.C. Mansion House, Benticck Street). He became the Managing Director of the Company in 1959.

However, approximately twenty five acres of vacant land was also planted out within the span of 1958 to 1964. Since 1958 Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury used to finance other garden. And he gave a large sum to an owner having a tea garden in lower Assam called Phalimari. The gentle man was not in a position to return the money and hence Samar Sinha started legal proceedings and got the tea garden attached in lieu of money due by the Court. Thus was the birth of second garden Krishnakali Tea Estate. The name of this garden had been derived from Kali Dasi Debi, wife of Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury and Lord Krishna. The biggest advantage of this neglected garden was that it had large tract of fertile land unutilised. With the necessary infrastructure available at Radharani, the company ventured into a massive scheme to plant out 165 acres in 6/7 years. With minute hardship at initial stages, the garden has been nurtured to the present state of profitability. Meanwhile the mother garden Radharani sacrificed any development schemes so that its child

could be nurtured properly. Thereafter, calamity struck in the form of flood in 1972 at Radharani which derailed the prospect of rejuvenating the plantation where law of diminishing return were fast catching up ¹⁰⁸.

Meanwhile, the Darjeeling garden Gayabarie which Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhury managing himself was gifted to S.N. Sinha in 1961. Thereafter the name of the garden was changed to Jogmaya. By 1977 the garden was in the sea of crisis and had to declare lock out due to huge financial liabilities. Fortunately, 1977 was a boon year for the company Radharani Tea & Estate Pvt. Ltd. with all the excess taxable income at its disposal; it must have been a tempting offer from D.N. Sinha to buy up Jogmaya into the company. Thus the third garden was inducted into the company in the year 1978. First bought the garden from his brothers and second time his company bought from D.N. Sinha ¹⁰⁹. However, in 2011 the ownership of the Radharani Tea Estate and in 2009 the Krishnakali tea estate changed hands. Now these two gardens are being owned and controlled by Ashok Garg (Garg Tea Co.) under the name of Radharani Tea Estates Pvt. Ltd ¹¹⁰.

The next venture of the Pal Chaudhury family in Dooars was the Washabari Tea Estate. It was primarily a European garden established by the Imperial Tea Co. in the year 1904 ¹¹¹. The grant taken for this tea estate was taken on 01/04/1904. Later the ownership of this garden was transferred to the Pal Chaudhury family under the leadership of Amiya Pal Chaudhury, son of renowned planter Bipro Das Pal Chaudhury. He also bought the Mahargaon Gulma tea estate of the Terai region in the same manner. After his death his sons Amitava and Anik Pal Chaudhury inherited the property of the garden. The garden still remain under the possession of Anik Pal Chaudhury and his son Aditya Pal Chaudhury ¹¹². The Mahargaon Gulma tea estate of the Terai region is now being owned and controlled by Nayan Tara Pal Chaudhury, daughter of Amitava Pal Chaudhury.

The Dheklapara tea estate came into existence by the Karmakar family of Jalpaiguri town with an authorised capital of Rs. one and half lakhs ¹¹³. 1913 was a year in which Kumud Kanta Karmakar was successful in taking a grant of 796.78 acre of land where he had to set up the tea estate. Born in the year 1859 he was the son of a Zamindar family of Bharanga Village (Dist. – Pabna) of undivided Bengal. He obtained his Graduate both in Arts and law from the Calcutta University and later on

joined the Bar Association of Jalpaiguri. He also established the Gaur Nitai tea estate in lower Assam in the year 1922. He was also the founder member of so many Tea Companies in Jalpaiguri. These two gardens were controlled under the flagship of the Dheklapara Tea Co. Ltd. After his death on 14th December 1944 his eldest son Nagendra Nath Karmakar inherited the property. Born in 1895 Nagendra Nath Karmakar passed the M.A. examination from the Presidency College and Law from the University Law College, Calcutta University. He then joined the Bar Association of Jalpaiguri in 1917 to start his legal career. Within a few years he established himself as a successful lawyer. Following his father's death he entered tea industries and became a tea planter of great distinction. He was the Director Chairman of Dheklapara Tea Co. Ltd., Chuniajhora Tea Co. Ltd. and the Planters Press Limited, Jalpaiguri till his death. He served the ITPA as the Vice – Chairman in 1954 – 55, Senior Vice – Chairman in 1956 and Chairman in 1957. This doyen of Indian tea industry died on 12th July, 1959 ¹¹⁴.

In post First World War era, the British Government issued an order on stopping formation of new tea companies in Khas land of Jalpaiguri Dooars. In the meantime, K.C. Dey, I.C.S., Member Board of Revenue visited Dooars in 1924. During his stay ITPA presented him a memorandum protesting against the order whose main motto was to create a set back to the acceleration of the Indian tea planters in the tea plantation field. This gave situation as an Indian provoked him so much to take a drastic step and at his instance the Government withdrew the ban order ¹¹⁵. This was a great achievement of ITPA and the immediate result was the opening of several tea companies by the Indians such as Batabari Tea Co. promoted by Mokleswar Rahaman in 1925, Jadavpur Tea Co. by Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty in 1926 ¹¹⁶.

The journey of the Alipurduar group in the tea plantation industry in Dooars began during the first phase of the twentieth century. The Alipurduar group consisted of Indra Bhusan Chakrabarty, Rasiklal Ganguly, Govinda Sundar Bhowmik, Panchanan Biswas, late Nilratan Mukharjee, Ramani Mukharjee, Bidhu Karjee, Sib Dayal Pal, Ambika Charan Mukharjee and so on. They commenced their entrepreneurial activity under the flagship of the Alipurduar Tea Co. Ltd. registered in the year 23/11/1912. The most important personality of this group was Rai Bahadur Bidhubhusan Samaddar. The entrepreneurial activity of other tea companies such as Ishanpur Tea Co. Ltd., Duars Boundary Tea Co. Ltd., Duars Union Tea Co. Ltd.,

Harihar Tea Co. Ltd. were circumferentially encircled under the valiant leadership of Bidhubhusan Samaddar. The title enclosed with his name was given by the British Government ¹¹⁷. All of the Tea Companies had their Head Offices in Alipurduar Town. All the promoters of the Alipurduar group were Hindus and belonged to the Rarhi group of the Faridpur, Jessore district of undivided Bengal. By virtue of their numerical majority, social status and educational background, they dominated the field in Alipurduar sub – division. The venture of the Alipurduar Tea Co. Ltd. started with the introduction of tea estates like Turturi T.E. (1910) and Patkapara T.E. (1915). The Turturi tea estate was registered under the name of the Alipurduar Tea Co. Ltd. on 01/10/1910 and the Patkapara tea estate under the name of the Dooars Union Tea Co. Ltd. on 27/07/2015 ¹¹⁸. The polestar from the galaxy of the Alipurduar group was none other than Rai Bahadur Bidhubhusan Samaddar. He began his career as a lawyer at Alipurduar Court. Later he kept his eye in the tea industry. Apart from his whole career as a tea planter, he was also a timber merchant and founder of the Alipurduar Banking Corporation (1911), Duars Transport Corporation, Jayanti Printing and Publishing House. So it can be guessed that the wealth and property of Bidhubhusan Samaddar gave his family accepted leadership over the immigrant Hindu Community settled in Alipurduar town. No one from the town ever challenged his leadership.

After the death of Rai Bahadur Bidhubhusan Samaddar, his four sons such as Manindra Nath Samaddar, LLB (BELL First London), Hirndra Samaddar (B. Sc., Calcutta University), Jitendra Nath Samaddar (B.A., Presidency College and Tocklai Trained, Assam), Sourendra Nath Samaddar (M.A. in Bengali, Calcutta University) inherited the family property. They were guided to run the family business by their uncle Makhan Samaddar. The later was also the Managing Director of the Majherdabri T.E. The foundation of this tea estate was laid down under the management of the Rangpur Tea Association Ltd. in the year 1918 under the inspiration of Rai Bahadur Bidhubhusan Samaddar. Since then the member of the Samaddar family were closely attached with this tea estate. The founder of this Tea Company was Badal Ray. He had also other tea estates in Chittagaong. The Rangpur Tea Association Ltd. was registered on 14/05/1917 under the name of Badal Roy. After his death his two sons Kshnish Ray and Manish Ray inherited the management of the Tea Company. After independence the ownership of the Majherdabri T.E. was

permanently transferred to the Samaddar family. In 1970's the ownership of this garden was further transferred to Dayananda Agarwal ¹¹⁹.

The ownership of the Turturi T.E. and Patkapara T.E. were sold to Saroj Nahata, son of the respectable Nahata family of Jalpaiguri town in the year 1966. The Nahata brothers along with experienced planter Mithilesh Ganguly of the same town run the tea estates. Born in a high respectable family Mithilesh Ganguly was a graduate of A.C. College (Ananda Chandra Collge) of the Jalpaiguri town. Later he joined his father's business and became Director of several Tea Companies at jalpaiguri. He joined ITPA as Committee Member, Vice – Chairman and became the Chairman in the tear 1981. Mithilesh Ganguly was the Managing Director of the Turturi T.E. and Patkapara T.E. From the year 2003 he remained aloof himself from the management due to his age old problem. Today the Turturi T.E. is being owned and controlled by Sekhar Roy Choudhury. He also owned the Rahimabad T.E. from the sons of Tarachand Agarwal in the year 2007. The Patkapara T.E. was sold to Tarachand Agarwal in the year 1966 ¹²⁰.

During the year 1920 to 1933, there was no new development. The total number of tea companies promoted during this period was smaller in comparison with the other tea companies promoted in the preceding period. However, the merchant group as well as share holders strengthened their position along with the tea industry. During this period most of the tea estates were said to have set up on Jote lands as the Board of Revenue Government of West Bengal gave permission behind the conversion of Jote lands in tea gardens. The initial post War slump took place between the year 1919 to 1921 posed interceptions in the creation of new tea gardens but since 1924 the tempo enhanced tumultuously till the divulge of the Great Depression period. In 1921 the Bitri (Hantupara), Carron and Moraghat tea estates came into existence. In 1922 the Red Bank T.E. was started under the management of the Andrew Yule Company ¹²¹. Prior to it this Jute Company as well as the Managing Agency House of many European tea estates had to establish many tea estates across the whole Terai – Dooars region such as Atal in Terai, Karbala in Dooars and so on. However, after being considered unsuitable for tea plantation the ownership of the Red Bank T.E. was transferred to the notable Bengal Lamp Factory of Kolkata. But by the end of 1930's in the field of electric bulbs, Bengal Lamp was being swamped, first by General Electric Company (GEC) and then by the Dutch – based Philips

(India) Limited. So in this deplorable condition the management of the garden was transferred to Dharendra Nath Bhowmick who later became the Managing Director of the Red Bank Group. During his tenure the garden became one of the high yielders in Dooars.¹²²

The Sreenathpur tea estate was established by Parswanath Ghatak in the year 1927 to commemorate the name of his father Sreenath Ghatak. Parswanath Ghatak belonged to a Zamindar family of Dacca of undivided Bengal. Prior to the penetration into the tea industry he established himself as an elegant timber merchant. The ramification of his business had to expand even in Assam, Burma also. This delectable success inspired him to start the second innings of his life as a tea entrepreneur. The first lease was granted to the Sreenathpur Tea Co. Ltd. on 01/04/1927. This company had its estate on a mixed plot in Kalchini Police Station, Alipurduar. It was partially Government Khas Lands and partly private lands. The private jote lands were purchased from the nephews of tea planter M.L. Rahman of the Nawab family of Jalpaiguri. Parswanath Ghatak got the financial help to promote this venture from the Central Bank of Kumilla of undivided Bengal. This Bank had important bearing on the entrepreneurial activity of the Hindu Community of the Jalpaiguri district. However, Parswanath Ghatak had to establish other tea gardens as well such as Lohorijan T.E. (P.S. – Dimapur, Nagaland). In 1960's his son Amal Ghatak inherited the property of his father. He assembled around him people having the same regional identity and belonging to the same native area of Dacca. Here we saw the same foot step followed by the Roy and Ghosh group of the Jalpaiguri town. The factory of this tea estate was established during his tenure in 1953. During the third generation of the Ghatak family the ownership of the Sreenathpur T.E. was transferred to other hand. In the month of July 1997 it was sold to Paritosh Sarkar, a businessman by profession of Siliguri town. He was said to have established other tea gardens like Daspara T.E., Pangavalley T.E. (P.S. Prasanna Nagar, Jalpaiguri), Ichhamati T.E. (P.O. Daspara, Dist – North Dinajpur)¹²³.

In 1939 Jahwri Lal Mukharjee, an ex – employee of Dalsinghpara T.E. had to start a tea garden in his jote land known as “Gopimahan Tea Estate”. He passed away in 1971. Since then this garden has been controlled by his sons under the management of Jahwri – Durga Tea Co. Ltd. This tea garden is locally known as “the garden of five brothers” where all the five siblings run the show¹²⁴.

The effect of the World wide economic depression on the tea industry took place in 1930's was much heavier than that of the First and Second World War. It resulted in the retreat of many colonial tea companies in London and these companies were owned by the Indians among them the Marwaris played the major role. Instances must be given to the Industrialist Goenka family of Kolkata who owned the Managing Agency House of the Duncans along with their tea estates. However, certain general trends are worth nothing. The expansion of the tea industry did not stop immediately with the onset of the depression. Even in 1930's twelve new gardens were opened in Dooars, mainly by the Indians. However, during the thirties of the twentieth century we saw the end of expansion in tea industry. The International Tea Agreement signed in 1933 inhibited the extension of tea cultivation. This proclamation bought an end on the extension of Indian entrepreneurship in Jalpaiguri district as well as in Darjeeling district.

In spite of that the entry of the renowned Daga family of Jalpaiguri town in tea industry was the most significant event during this period. Mohanlalji, the first of them to be in Jalpaiguri at about 1875 helped all the Jalpaiguri tea companies with loans on promissory Notes whenever they were in difficulties. His two worthy son's Ram Chandra Daga and Dhuli Chand Daga helped copious Tea Companies of Jalpaiguri town to develop and flourish ¹²⁵. Dhuli Chand Daga in his later years speculated that simply giving of money on loan was not enough, and thus he tied the knot with so many Tea Companies of Jalpaiguri town. Ramananda Daga, son of Ram Chandra daga born in the year 1908 was very much associated as Directors with numerous tea companies such as Kohinoor Tea Company, Bengal Duars National Tea Company, Merry View Tea Company, Atiabari Tea Company, New Assam and Duars Tea Company. He became the Chairman of ITPA in 1962. Bhagwan Das Daga was an illustrious member of this family. He was the Chairman of ITPA in the year 1969 and 1970. He had spent many years at dagapur Tea Estate near Siliguri town. He was a graduate of Calcutta University in 1934 and his fondness for tea and nature grew as the years went by. This great personality of Indian tea died on 14th June 1991. Nathmal daga, son of Ramananda Daga served the tea companies mentioned above for many years. He elected as a Chairman of ITPA in the year 1977 – 78. His brother Jugal Kishore Daga was a very popular figure in Indian tea industry. He was one of

the pioneers of Siliguri Tea Auction Committee. He joined ITPA and served as its Chairman in the year 1984 – 85 ¹²⁶.

Their first venture in this field was the Dagapur Tea Company which they started with the modest capital of Rs. 50,000/- only. The Longview Tea Company which was incorporated on 16th January, 1879 by James Warren and Company Ltd. (formerly known as Planter's Stores and Agency Co. Ltd. who had been looking after the management of the company as secretary and treasurers) registered under the name of the Daga family on 31st January, 1950. In the same decade ownership of other tea estates run under the Longview Tea Company such as Arya, Rohini, Orange Valley, Phuguri were transferred to Daga and Co. Ltd., Jalpaiguri, a private company incorporated under Indian Companies Act 1913. The Daga family has also promoted other industrial enterprises including Deepak spinners Ltd, Deepak Industries Ltd and continental profiles Ltd ¹²⁷.

Next to the Daga's the Kalyani family became very active during this period. They had initially remained as share holders but later on promoted as Directors with others. Earlier they were known as Mahesri. Later they adopted the title Kalyani. However, the central figure of the Kalyani family in Jalpaiguri tea industry was Sitaram kalyani. His father Fate Chand Mahesri was a jotedar of the Malbazar area. He had a rice mill. Sitaram kalyani was himself an advocate of the Calcutta High Court and later bought several tea companies under his control like Sukna, Sunny Valley, Coronation, Gurjhanjhora, Saraswatipur, Gaur Nitai. He had two son's Kishan Kumar Kalyani and Shib Kumar Kalyani ¹²⁸. Kishan Kumar Kalyani was a graduate from Calcutta University with distinction. He entered the industry from the year 1971 after the death of his father in 1970. During his domain, the Kalyani family became the majore producer of green tea in the country. He adorned the chairman post of ITPA in 1982, 1983 and member of Tea Board Calcutta from 1981 to 1984 and 1987 to 1990. He was also an ex – member of the Governing Body of Siliguri Tea Auction Committee. Today they laid the foundation of S.R.K. Plantation Pvt. Ltd. in memory of their father with Chaulibari Tea Estate (P.O. Rajganj, Dist – Jalapiguri). R.P. Kalyani joined in his family garden M/S. Anjuman tea Co. Ltd. and became Chairman of I.T.P.A. in 1986 – 87. He was a good sportsman especially in Badminton ¹²⁹.

The last gardens to be opened in Jalpaiguri Dooars in between the year from 1934 to 1968 were the Surendra Nagar T.E. and the Dharanipur T.E. In the surplus land of the Red Bank Tea Company, Dharendra Nath Bhowmick started the Surendra Nagar T.E. On 27/10/1964 in the surplus lands relinquished by a sterling tea company and taken for the purpose of settling refugees from East Bengal, he started the Dharanipur T.E. it was heard that Khagendra Nath dasgupta, the then Congress MLA helped him to obtain this land ¹³⁰. These two gardens along with the Red Bank T.E. were controlled under the flagship of the Red Bank Group. In the year 1981 D.N. Bhowmick and his wife Reba Bhowmick sold the controlling shares of the Red Bank Group to Rabin Paul, the then Solicitor of Calcutta High Court. Tea industrialist Dharendra Nath Bhowmick died on March 15, 1992 ¹³¹.

So, after narrating the contributions made by a large number of Indian tea planters in the tea plantation industry of Jalpaiguri Dooars, references should be made to other Bengali planters who largely contributed behind the growth and development of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the Jalpaiguri Dooars.

Lalit Chandra Ghatak, son of first generation Bengali entrepreneur Bhawani Ghatak born in a highly educated and cultural family of Pabna in 1889 graduated from Scottish Church College and obtained degree in Bachelor of Law from Calcutta University. He completed his schooling in Jalapiguri Zilla School and passed the entrance examination in 1909 with brilliant result obtaining 'Sir Charles Elliot Medal' in recognition of his merits. He joined the Jalpaiguri Bar Association in 1920 and gets himself associated with several tea companies as director thereof like Anjuman Tea Co. Ltd., Northern Bengal Tea Corporation Ltd., and the controlling Director of the Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd., owner of Mogolkata T.E. at Banarhat. He possessed profound knowledge about tea plantation and soil testing. He adorned the post of Chairman of ITPA in the year 1953. He helped many Bengali owned tea gardens financially during his tenure as Director of the Jalpaiguri Banking and Trading Co. Ltd.

Taranath Ghatak, born in the year 1893 was well connected with M/s. Goodwill Tea Co. Ltd. He joined ITPA and served the Association as it's Vice – Chairman and then elected Chairman in the year 1960.

Atul Chandra Ray, son of Ramesh Cjandra Ray joined several tea companies of Jalpaiguri town such as The Eastern Tea Co. Ltd., Ramjhora Tea Co. Ltd. he joined ITPA and served the Association for the longest period as its Secretary. He was elected Chairman of ITPA in 1964. He was also the Chairman of Jalpaiguri Municipality and connected with many educational institutions, sports and cultural clubs.

Nirendra Nath Bagchi, born in the respectable Bagchi family of Jalpaiguri town was well connected with so many Tea Companies as Director such as Jalpaiguri Tea Co. Ltd., Anjuman Tea Co. Ltd., Ambari Tea Co. Ltd., Bengal Dooars National Tea Co. Ltd., Khayerbari Tea Co. Ltd., Sunny Valley Tea Co. Ltd., Gour Nitay Tea Co. Ltd., Karala Valley Tea Co. Ltd., Debijhora Tea Co. Ltd., Nepuchapur Tea Co. Ltd. He was the Managing Director of the Jalpaiguri Banking and Trading Co. Ltd. He was also the Treasurer, Joint Secretary, Vice - Chairman of ITPA and then elected Chairman in the year 1965.

Phani Bhushan Guha was the third son of renowned tea planter Rai Bahadur Jay Govinda Guha. Phani Bhushan Guha completed his Graduation from the Ripon College, Calcutta and later joined with various tea companies as Directors in North Bengal and Assam. His knowledge of pruning was so excellent in nature. He was offered Directorship of several gardens and could accept twenty such offers which was the ceiling as per Government rules. He became the Chairman of ITPA in the year 1961. He served the tea industry till his last days before he died on 17th December, 1986.

Bibhuti Bhushan Ghosh had an illustrious career as a renowned lawyer not only of Jalpaiguri but of the whole of North Bengal. He joined the Bar Association in 1941 and continued to hold the prestigious position of Government pleader and Public Prosecutor for thirty long years. He was also an honorary lecturer in North Bengal University College of Law. He made an untiring effort to establish law College and for a Circuit Bench at Jalpaiguri town. He was connected with many tea companies as Directors and legal advisors. He became the Vice – Chairman of West Bengal Bar Council twice.

Sachindra Nath Basu, son of tea planter Hemendra Nath Basu, a signatory to the memorandum of the Association, and grandson of tea planter Tarini

Prasad Ray joined ITPA in 1962. He was honorary joint secretary and convenor of the Calcutta and Assam Sub – Committee in 1963 and 1964. He served the Association as Chairman in 1973 and 1974 and as Honorary Advisor since 1988. He represented the Association as the sole speaker from North Bengal in C.C.P.A. Calcutta in 1963 and also at all important meetings with Central and State Authorities, Tea Board. He was also an invitee to the Council of Management of Tea Research Association, Tocklai for a few years. He was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Assam tea Planter's Association, Jorhat and of B.N.C.C.I. Calcutta for several years¹³².

Thus we may say explicitly that the growth and development of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry in Jalpaiguri Dooars was truly significant in the economic history of undivided Bengal. The national spirit emerged with the advent of the Indian community of the Jalpaiguri town became a headache to the colonial planters. They attempted in various way through their own Associations like Dooars Planters Association (DPA), Indian Tea Association (ITA) to stop the augment of the Indians in this venture by creating numerous interceptions. Till the second decade of the tweenteith century the Indian planters came to have any say in the tea industry of the Dooars. But these could not subvert the Indian entrepreneurs. 1879 was a landmark regarding the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry in Jalpaiguri Dooars. In this year the first Public limited tea company Jalpaigur Tea Company came into existence. The most important factor which helped behind the rise of the professional and other occupational groups as entrepreneurs and investors was the form of business organisation. The Rarhi and Varendra group took the prime leadership in this respect. The Rarhi group led by Tarini Prasad Ray and Gopal Chandra Ghosh along with his son Jogesh Chandra Ghosh were closely associated with almost all tea companies promoted in Jalpaiguri town from the year 1879 to 1910. They centred round them the Dacca – Manikganj group. Side by side the Varendra group led by Joy Chandra Sanyal, Hriday Nath Bagchi, Jadav Chandra Chakrabarty hailed from pabna also kept their remarkable contributions behind the development of the Bengali entrepreneurship. Their experiences in tea plantation as well as their resources helped the second generation to forge ahead. Some time established successful entrepreneurs might have been invited by new entrants to help them form a Company. They were placed at the helm of the management of the new companies and the new comers took a subordinate position. In those days, it was a

procedure to establish a new company as a successful one in future. It is worthy to be mentioned here that the success rate of the Rarhi group in comparison with the Varendras in the tea plantation industry in Jalpaiguri Dooars was much higher. The immediate successors of Jay Chandra Sanyal could establish the fame of their family in this field but not to a large extent. The premature death of Hriday Nath Bagchi literary to say faded the prestige of the Bagchi family as his son – in – law Abinash Chandra Roy stepped much later in this field. Thus we may say that the Varendra group could not go ahead so much like the Rarhis on account of competent successors. They followed the Rarhis but on a later stage.

One thing is very important to mention here that the introduction of tea plantation in Dooars led to the redundancy of some indigenous groups like the Meches and Garos. The utilisation of reserved forests to meet the demand in North East India and the inception of tea gardens in Dooars gradually declined the importance of the Meches and thus found them redundant with the demise of cotton cultivation and the gradual replacement of homespun by factory made clothes. It is true that an attempt was made from the Government of keeping some areas reserved for them ¹³³. In a Government record it was said that “in 1895 the Meches and Garo subjects in the Western Dooars apprehending all the lands hitherto occupied by them were being taken up for tea cultivation, petitioned the Settlement Officer, Jalpaiguri, asking that some specific area might be reserved for them. The Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri and the Commissioner of Rahshahi division supported the proposal and by the Government’s Notification No. 3203 L.R. dated 06/07/1895 a reserve was set up in a block of land measuring about 30.7 square miles in the Alipurduar Subdivision to provide a refuge to the Meches and Garos. This area was declared not to be available for tea plantation”. However, this attempt proved as a futile one. By the turn of the century, a number of Meches migrated to Assam in searching other avenues for their daily livelihood. The 1911 Gazetteer of the Jalpaiguri District gave a finest statement in this respect. It was said that “the Meches are gradually driven towards the East owing to the pressure of most intelligent races” ¹³⁴.

The third significant aspect of the Bengali entrepreneurship took place in the tea plantation history of the Darjeeling district was the foothills of Himalaya of the Bengal province commonly known as Terai. The term originates from a Persian word signifying dampness ¹³⁵. By 1907 – 08 no more waste lands were available in the

Dooars region ¹³⁶. It compelled the Bengali entrepreneurs to search for arable or Jote lands suitable for tea cultivation. This search sent the Indians across the boundary of the Dooars that is the Terai region as well as in the lower province of Assam ¹³⁷.

In Assam, the majestic emergence of the Bengali entrepreneurship was not a contingency incident. Their previous success in Jalpaiguri Dooars actually made them highly craving to go ahead in this field even in Assam also. References should be made to some competent Indian tea planters such as Chanda family, Nawab family, Banarjee family, Nahata family of the Jalpaiguri town and the Sinha family of Kolkata also. In pre – independence period especially in 1920's – 1930's nine tea estates were said to have established in the lower province of Assam. Nawab Musharuf Hossain laid the foundation of the Fatemabad T.E. at Barpetta, Assam. In post – independence period, the ownership of this garden came under the possession of D.K. Chaudhury, the renowned planter family of Guwahati town ¹³⁸. The Choibari T.E. was established by an experienced group of Indian tea garden employee's with the Choibari Tea Co. Ltd. in 1925. Manaranjan Dasgupta was the central figure during its inception. This garden is being owned and controlled by the renowned Chanda family of Jalpaiguri. They had also other tea estates in Assam as well such as Chapar T.E. and Krishnakali T.E. The Chapar T.E. is now being owned by Sudhindra Nath Bose and the Krishnakali T.E. by the Malhaty Tea Estates Pvt. Ltd. run by Ashok Garg and others. However, apart from the Choibari T.E., the Lalmati T.E. is also run by the Chanda family today.

The renowned Nahata family of Jalpaiguri town is also a landmark in the entrepreneurial history of Assam. They migrated in Jalpaiguri town from Rajasthan and started their first phase of life as money lenders ¹³⁹. Later they began to take interest in this field. The Birjhora T.E. in Bongaigaon, Lalmati T.E. and Banglabari T.E.; Odlabari T.E. in Dooars, Fulbari Patan T.E. in Terai were some notable examples of their achievement in the tea industry. All were controlled under the flag of the Bhutan Dooars Tea Co. Ltd. established by the Nahata's. This tea company was registered on 25.09.1919. The central figures in this entrepreneurial activity were Panchiram Nahata, Dipchand Nahata and Saroj Nahata who was a Toclai Trained planter also. They were assisted in this venture by a group of pioneer Bengali entrepreneurs like Sureshwar Sanyal, Troilokya Nath Moullick and so on ¹⁴⁰. Apart from their own creation, they owned other tea estates like Mornai T.E. (P.O.

Kokrajhar). Its bedrock was laid down by a group of European Missionaries namely Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (P.S. Dumka, Dist – Bihar) in the year 1882. Earlier it was known as Tama T.E. later came to be known as Mornai T.E. as it was formed on the bank of Mornai River ¹⁴¹. Paritosh Kumar Dutta was the most praiseworthy successful manager of the Nahata's. He was said to have revived the Mornai T.E. from its too deplorable condition in 1970's ¹⁴². The Head Office of this tea planter family in Kolkata is known as Nilhat House.

According to O' Malley, "32 estates with an area of 7,900 acres were under tea lie within the Siliguri thana. The development of the tea industry in the lower portion of the Darjeeling district has had to contend against serious drawbacks. It is an extremely unhealthy tract ... The result is a tendency for the Terai tea gardens to fall into the hands of the native managers and owners while elsewhere the industry is almost entirely under European management". This situation (unhealthy tract) undoubtedly created a vacuum to run the administration of the tea estates in Terai region and it thus welcomed a number energetic people from various part of Eastern Bengal to work as an employee in the tea estates. In this way they learned all the techniques to run tea estates and thus most of them turned as a successful tea planter in future some time even as an entrepreneur in this region.

One thing we would like to mention here is that the introduction of the tea cultivation in Terai region proved to be disastrous to the Dhimals, one of the most aboriginal inhabitants of the Terai region. As lands for tea estates were demarcated and land acquisition for tea plantation continued, the Dhimal people faced the trouble of being evicted from the land they inhabited for generations. In a Government Report it was said by the then Deputy Commissioner of the Darjeeling district that 'They are disappearing absolutely dying out faster than any race of whom I have known or read. The reason is, no doubt, that distinctive cultivation is by Jhum, which is barred by Government forest conservancy and the spread of settled plough cultivation from the south' ¹⁴³. This incident of eviction makes us understand how commercialisation of agriculture led to the ouster of people from their age – old habitants and residential areas. Here again lies the case of the migration of the Dhimal people from the Terai region to the North – East especially in Assam.

The introduction of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry of the Terai region began in the last phase of the nineteenth century. The first tea estate established by a Bengali planter in the Terai region was the Sannyasisthan Tea Estate. It was first established by a European tea company namely “Devenport and Co.” in the year 1865 while the Hansqua tea estate was also set up by an English planter named Mr. Arthur Currie ¹⁴⁴. Before the introduction of this tea estate this area was known as the centre of the Sannyasi rebellion. As we know the uprising spread in different parts of North Bengal. Poet Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyay drew an agonizing picture of the rebel in his outstanding noble ‘Anandamath’ and ‘Devi Chaudhurani’. He pointed out Devi Chaudhurani used to travel every nook and corner of North Bengal by her own prolonged boat (commonly known as Bajra in Bengali language) ¹⁴⁵. Perhaps she sowed the seeds of the Sannyasi rebellion there and hence this area known to local people as Sannyasisthan. The tea estate also derived its name from the place name also. However, in 1878 Beni Madhab Mitra, a Bengali horse trader came from an adjacent place of Calcutta owned the Sannyasisthan Tea Estate. He began his career in Darjeeling hill as a supplier of horses to the European tea planters. This cordial relation finally helped him to buy the tea estate from the Devenport and Co. After his death in Darjeeling hill, his son Jitendranath Mitra took over the charge of the garden. The later began his career in Darjeeling hill as a high – official of the British Government. He was the first Bengali commissioner of the Darjeeling Municipality and adorned the chair for about 13 years. The hill people loved him very much for his sincerity and elegance to work. That is why he was elected more than one time from the Chandmari ward during the Municipal election of the Darjeeling town. He was also the fellow of the ‘Royal Horticultural Society’ of London, U.K. he spend he last days of his life in his own tea garden along with his son Rabindranath Mitra ¹⁴⁶. However, after his death, his son became the owner of the garden. He had a good relation with Bidhan Ch. Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal who was said to have sent Rabi Mitra to Switzerland for the pretext of learning mountenaring to provide the same to the Sherpa’s on his return to India. In addition to that, he also assisted the legend Tenzing Norgy during the course of his Mount Everest victory. He was also a very well – known life member of the Swami Vivekananda Memorial Rock Foundation, Kanyakumarika. During his tenure, the garden was sold to the Daga’s, the notable tea planter family of the Jalpaiguri town ¹⁴⁷.

The Naxalbari tea estate was established in the year 1907 by the Nawab Family of the Jalpaiguri town. This family was the harbinger as a Bengali Muslim entrepreneur in the tea plantation industry in Jalpaiguri Dooars and also belonged to the first batch of the Indian entrepreneurs of this region. They were said to have 22 tea estates across the whole North – Eastern India ¹⁴⁸. However, the scarcity of waste lands in Jalpaiguri Dooars led them to search for Jote lands suitable for tea plantation. This search sends them in the Terai region of the Darjeeling district where they established the Naxalbari tea estate in 1907 under the name of the Naxalbari Tea Co., registered on 18/05/1910. The promoters of this company were the family members of the entrepreneur Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. This was the beginning of promotion by a closed group based on communal identity in the Terai region. Nawab Musharruf Hossain, son – in – law of Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh was the central figure in this activity. Prasanna Deb Raikat, a prosperous Jotedar of the Baikantapur Pargana was said to have assisted Musharruf Hossain to set up this garden. The total amount of capital debited to complete the project raised from one lacks to one and half lacks ¹⁴⁹.

Apart from Naxalbari tea estate the Nawab Family of the Jalpaiguri town had to set up more than one tea estates in the Terai region such as Sayyedabad, Sukna, Azamabad, and Merry View. The foundation of the Sayyedabad tea estate was laid down under the auspicious leadership of Musharruf Hossain in 27 October, 1919. He was a lawyer by profession. Due to his loyalty to the British Government he was awarded with the title Nawab from the British Government. With the partition took place in 1947, though all the dignitary personalities of the Nawab family went to Pakistan (East Bengal) but Nawab Musharruf Hossain settled down in Jalpaiguri town permanently with his two daughters along with their husbands also. Later Nawab Saheb was elected as a member of the State Legislative Assembly. However, with his demise the tea estates began to transfer from the ownership of the Nawab family to others ¹⁵⁰. For instances, the Sayedabad tea estate was sold to Amiya Ghatak and his two sons respectively Samarendra Ghatak and Saurindra Ghatak, owner of an reputed engineering company of the Siliguri town Amiya Corporation. Later its ownership was further transferred to the Terai Tea Co., Ltd. in 2004 ¹⁵¹.

The Sukna tea estate was opened out in the year 1913 by Nawab Musharruf Hossain. After partition took place in 1947 it was sold to Sitaram kalyani in 1955. The later began his career as an advocate of Calcutta High Court. It did not

suit his mind and he returned to Jalpaiguri in 1948. He possessed an extraordinary intelligence, creative power and administrative ability. All these rare qualities urged him to become a tea planter. In this way he brought under his control several tea companies and astonishingly most of the tea estates owned and controlled by the nawab family of Jalpaiguri in Dooars were brought by him ¹⁵². The transfer of the Sukna tea estate to him is a classic example in this regard. Today this tea estate is being controlled by Kishan Kumar Kalyani, son of Sitaram kalyani under the flagship of the Gurjanghora Tea Co. Since 1971 this man comes from a respectable planter family of Jalpaiguri town has been managing six tea companies along with tea estates

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The Nawab group led by Nawab Musharruf Hossain had also opened another tea estate named Azamabad in the year 1898. In 1913 it was purchased by Azam Ali. When he died in 1917, he left behind eight sons, nine daughters and three widows. The name of Ismail, his eldest son was entered in the official records in succession. He sold the tea estates in 1931 to National Agency Co. Ltd. on various ground. The last owner to this estate from the Nawab family was Golam Momen and Abdur Zabbar, grandsons of Nawab Musharruf Hossain. This tea estate is now being owned and controlled under the Garg Tea Co., Siliguri ¹⁵⁴.

The Merry View tea estate was opened by the same personage Nawab Musharruf Hossain of the Nawab family in the year 1917. The Raikots of the Baikunthapur allowed their lands to be utilised for tea cultivation which was resulted in the creation various tea estates such as Saraswatipur, Sunny Valley, Karala Valley, and Merry View. The first three tea estates were laid down by the Raikat family and the last one that is Merry View tea estate by the Nawab family of the Jalpaiguri town in the year 1917. The Tea Co. Ltd. was registered on 24/04/1919 ¹⁵⁵. The ownership of this tea estate was transferred to the notable planter family of the Jalpaiguri town Daga's in 1960's. Now it is being owned and controlled by the M.L. Dalmia Group. It is one of the India's leading manufactures of plastic woven bags used for bulk packagin of fertilizers, cement, food – grains, chemicals and other essential commodities. This tea estate was early owned by Tezpore Tea Co. Ltd.

Out of the two outside families which had to set up tea plantations with the help of the closed group of shareholders from among their family members, the

Saha family was the first. The next family belonged to this strata was the Pal Chaudhury family of the Ranaghat, Nadia district. In regard to the history of this family, we have discussed a lot in context of the Darjeeling hill. However, the first venture of the Saha family in the tea industry was started with the creation of the Totapara tea estate in Dooars. Their first venture in the same field in Terai region was the Sahabad tea estate. It was established by the Saha Brothers came from like Nityananda Saha, Ramananda Saha, Shyamananda Saha in the year 1907. The name of the tea estate has been derived from the surname of the family. The Sahabad Tea Co. Ltd. was registered on 20.03.1920. It is interesting to note that the style of giving a family name to the tea estates to such a closed group for the first time began with this family in Terai region, which was later followed by other promoter groups of different family. The Sahas had their ancestral home in Natudah – Boira, Nadia district. They styled them as Zamindar though they were trader. Their actual profession was the money lending. In addition, they supplied all type of grocery items like sugar, rice in various part of India. How did they put their step in Jalpaiguri town is fully obscure. The name of the Saha family made their first appearance in the list of the share holders of the Anjuman Tea Company ¹⁵⁶. The last man belonged to the family controlled the tea estate as an owner was Sambhunath Saha. During his tenure the estate was sold to the Jayashree Tea Company (a group of reputed industrialist Birla family, Kolkata) in 1989. In the same year, the garden was renamed as Jayantika Tea Estate after the name of one daughter of the Birla's ¹⁵⁷.

The Bhojnarayan tea estate was established by Bhojnarain Singh, a Rajbanshi Jotedar by class in 1915 who converted his jote lands into tea cultivation and named the garden with his own name. In those days, Jote land could only be used under tea with the Deputy Commissioner's permission and at the rate fixed for tea lands under jotes (Rs. 2 – 13 per acre). The Jotedar of the Terai region had also the right to the trees on their land ¹⁵⁸. However, the Raikots of Baikunthapur also allowed their Zamindari to be utilised for tea garden employees group like Sunny Vally, Merryview, Saraswatipur, Karalavalley Tea Company. However, the Bhojnarain tea estate later came to be controlled by the Banarjee's, a reputed tea planter family of the then Jalpaiguri town. This garden was established by Sasi Kumar Banarjee, a pleader by profession and controlled under the name of the Bhojnarain Tea Co. Tea planter Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was also associated with this company. Then his son Biraj

Kumar Banarjee came to manage the garden along with other family tea gardens such as Palashbari, Debpara in Dooars and Manmohinipur in Assam ¹⁵⁹. As a tea planter he laid the foundation stone of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh memorial Hall of ITPA, Jalpaiguri, a fearless speaker of the British regime. He also joined the then Viceroy Lord Wavell's dinner party at Simla Conference as the sole Indian representative ¹⁶⁰. After his death in 1960 in Calcutta at the early age of 62, Saroj Kumar Banarjee took the reign of the Bhojnarain tea estate. The last director chairman of the Bhojnarain Tea Company was Sanat Kumar Banarjee. He was also the director chairman of the Manmohinipur Tea Company. He also adorned the post as a chairman of ITPA in between 1988 – 1991. The next owner of the Bhojnarain tea estate was Prakash Saha, proprietor of the Saha and Company Ltd., Siliguri who owned it in the year 2002 ¹⁶¹.

The Nischintapur Tea Estate came into existence in the year 1921 under the leadership of Jyotindranath Sen, the then chairman of the Dinajpur Bank of undivided Bengal. This tea estate derived its name from the name of endemic jote such as Nischintapur. However, the founder of this garden Jyotindranath Sen was awarded with the title 'Rai Bahadur' from the British Government. The major share of activities was undertaken by the Hindu Rarhi regional group under the leadership of Rai Bahadur Jyotindranath Sen. Financial need of the garden was met earlier through this Bank. After his death, his son Sudhindramahan sen (Mantu Babu) took over the management of the garden. He was the solicitor of the Calcutta High Court. Next to him, Samirendranath Sen, son of Mantu sen adorned the chair as chairman director of the garden ¹⁶². During his tenure the condition of the garden became so feeble and strikes, gheraos became a regular feature of the garden. Being unable to run the estate the responsibility of the garden was given to Mahini Ranjan Das, the then Secretary of the 'Terai Indian Planters Association' (TIPA) for two years that is from February 2002 to January 2004 ¹⁶³. He also could not succeed in his tenure to revive the garden and hence authority of the estate further transferred to Samirendranath Sen. The later also being debacle to survive the estate finally sold it to the Garg Tea Co. They have other tea estates in the Terai region such as Longview, Azamabad and Singhiahjhora ¹⁶⁴.

The Ashapur tea estate was established in the year 1916 by the notable planter family of the Jalpaiguri town the Sanyal's. Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal and Ganesh Chandra Sanyal, (son of Madhab Chandra, the youngest brother of

Jaychandra) together promoted Ashapur Tea Company Limited in the year 1925. They were financially assisted by a co – operative organisation of the Bogra district, East Pakistan namely Bogra Loan Office Ltd. This entrepreneur group established other tea companies also such as Sunny Valley Tea Company (1918) and Durgapur Tea Company (1916). Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, a stalwart in the tea industry of Bengal, was the principal advisor behind this venture ¹⁶⁵. But the group was short lived on account of its fulsome fiscal condition from the earlier stage. In addition to it, Ganesh Chandra died early and Charu Chandra Sanyal along with other personalities of the same family tree devoted their life as a political activist in India's freedom struggle movement ¹⁶⁶. Hence it became impossible for them to continue the business and most importantly, the investments floated adrift and were eventually frittered away. As a consequence, the Ashapur tea estate was also sold to Kalipada Sanyal, a Zamindar of the Bogra district, East Pakistan in 1966. The present owner of the garden is Tulsidas Sanyal, son of Kalipada Sanyal ¹⁶⁷.

The formation of Kiran Chandra and Satish Chandra tea estate marked a significant aspect of entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry in the Terai region. The period under discussion saw the gradual entry of a new generation that was the advent of tea garden employees as entrepreneurs. The Kiran Chandra tea estate was established by Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya, a timber merchant by profession. He migrated at Siliguri in 1910 from the Raghunathpur Village, Pabna district of undivided Bengal. He began his career as a supplier of commodities to various tea gardens in this region and later as a timber merchant. In 1923 he formulated the Kiran Chandra tea estate by his own name singlehandedly. In 1953 he became the owner of the New Darjeeling Tea Company Limited and the Hind Tea Estate ¹⁶⁸. He had two sons like Badal Bhattacharya and Ajay Bhattacharya. However, after the death of Kiran Chandra Bhattacharya his two pertinent sons came into power. Badal Bhattacharya was one the most successful planter in the Terai region. He owned the Kamalpur tea estate from the Haldar family of Bagdogra in the year 1965 and played a pivot role along with tea planter Birendra Chandra Ghosh in the creation of the Siliguri Tea Auction Centre. However, with the untimely death of Badal Bhattacharya, his brother Ajay Bhattacharya runs the garden luxuriantly ¹⁶⁹.

The Satish Chandra tea estate controlled under the flagship of the Southern Terai Tea Co. Ltd. took its birth under the leadership of Satish Chandra Kar in the

year 1926. He came here from the Khulna district of undivided Bengal. Previously this garden was known as Daulatpur tea garden established by a zamindar of the Chaterhat Village (P.O. Matigara, Dist – Darjeeling) Daulat Mian. Satish Chandra Kar worked in the garden as a supplier of commodities and financially helped the authority to run the garden. It was heard that due to some financial liabilities Daulat Mian sold the garden to him in the year 1926¹⁷⁰. Since then the garden came to be known as Satish Chandra tea estate. This garden is now run under the same family of Siliguri town as yet.

The Kharibari tea estate locally known as Sonachandi garden was established in 1912. It was controlled by the Kharibari Tea Co. Ltd. came into force in the year 1917. Two tea gardens namely the Kharibari tea estate and Manjha tea estate were controlled under the flagship of this company. These estates were said to have set up in 1912 respectively by a European tea Company. After the British, the ownership of this estate was transferred to the Kingsly family of Nepal, the Rana's. From their hand, its ownership was further transferred to a group of pleaders of the Jalpaiguri town such as Bibhuti Ghosh, Pratul Chandra Ghatak, Jibangati Roy. In the year 1957 pleader Sitaram Kalyani joined his hand with this lawyer group as directors of the company. Sachindra Chndra Mitra belonged to the Zamindar family of Sholmari supplied labourers to these tea estates. He had also a dealership of Kerosene oil near NJP Railway station. With the passage of time he became a major share holder of this company and thus became the managing director of the two tea estates. In the meantime he formed a new tea company named 'Coronation Tea Company' under which the Manjha tea estate was controlled. The Kharibari tea estate was also known to the labourers as Sachindra Chndra tea estate¹⁷¹. However, after the untimely death of Sachindra Chndra Mitra at his Kharibari garden's bungalow in 1961 his two sons Tapan Mitra and Pradyut Mitra became the Managing director of Kharibari and Coronation Tea Company respectively. Up to 2000 these two companies were under the control of the Mitra family of the Jalpaiguri town. In December 2000 the Kharibari tea estate along with the Kharibari Tea Co. was sold to the Terai Tea Company, Siliguri and Manjha tea estate along with its company Coronation Tea Company to Mr. Kishan Kumar Kalyani, Jalpaiguri.

The Chandmani tea estate was established with an area of 850 acre of land in the year 1924 by the pioneer Bengali Hindu tea planter Tarini Prasad Ray of the

Jalpaiguri town¹⁷². He was the founder of large number of gardens in Dooars as well as in Assam. He took initiative through ITPA to save district from going to Pakistan during Radcliff's Award. However, his close friend late Jogesh Chandra Ghosh was the main inspiration behind the formation of the Chandmani tea estate. After the death of Tarini Prasad Ray, his son Satyendra Prasad Ray took over the charge. He came into tea in early thirties to assist the management of gardens of his busy father and became director of various tea companies like M/s Saroda Tea Co. Ltd., M/s Diabari Tea Co. Ltd, M/s Kamala Tea Co. Ltd, M/s Chandmani Tea Co. Ltd¹⁷³. During 1970's with the drastic fall of tea price the condition of various tea companies run under Roy group became too feeble and this resulted in selling of number tea estates to others such as Bandapani, Kamala¹⁷⁴. Thus in this way the Chandmani tea estate was sold to Binay Kumar Dutta, a renowned tea specialist of Siliguri town. In the year 1992 its ownership was again transferred to Dipankar Chattarjee under the name of Laxmi Tea Company. However, today the Chandmani tea estate exists no more. It has transformed as a luxurious residential complex 'Uttarayan Township'¹⁷⁵.

The Kamala tea estate was established in the year 1914 under the initiative of the Roy group led by Tarini Prasad Ray of the Jalpaiguri town. The name of this garden has been derived from Tarini Prasad Ray's daughter Kamala. Dinanath Das, a Jotedar by profession of the Bagdogra region assisted him very much to succeed the project¹⁷⁶. After Tarini Prasad Ray, his son Satyendra Prasad Ray took over the charge. Throughout his political career as an M.P. of Indian National Congress, the Bungalow of this garden was treated as the main shelter point of various leaders in their way to Calcutta or Delhi. During 1970's with the drastic fall of tea price the garden was sold to Dhirendranath Moitra in 1972 of the Jalpaiguri town, the director of the Dheklapara tea estate. However, today the garden is being owned under a non – Bengali company¹⁷⁷.

The Ghosh group of the Jalpaiguri town had not bagged so many companies in the Terai region as they did in the Dooars region in a spectacular way. They had established only one tea estate namely Bijoyanagar under the tutelage of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh in the year 1925¹⁷⁸. This garden was registered under the name of the Bijoyanagar Tea Co. Ltd. on 24/06/1925.

Table 3.4 **Memorandum of Bijaynagar Tea Co.**

Name of the Subscribers	No. of Shares taken by each Subscribers	Description of Witness
Jitendra Mahan Sen, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Gopal Chandra Chattarjee, Secretary, Anjuman Trading & Banking.
Asutosh Ray, Pleader, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Do
Kumud Kanta Moitra, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Do
Naresh Chandra Dasgupta, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Do
Abinash Chandra Sen, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Anukul Chandra Bhattacharya
Satish Chandra Ray, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Girish Chandra Mukherjee
Md. Kedar Baksh, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Manibuidin Ahamed
Bibhuti Bhushan Bagchi, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Purna Chandra Bagchi
Asutosh Ghosh, Pleader, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Biraj Krishna Sarkar
Jogendra Chandra Chakrabarty,MLC Vakil, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Akhil Chandra Pandit
Makhan Lal Chakrabarty, Pleader, Jalpaiguri	100 Shares	Akhil Banhdu Ray
Sarada Kanta Ray, Medical Practitioner, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Paresh Chandra
Kedarnath Sen, Zamindar, Dinajpur	100 Shares	Priyanath Sen
Krishnanath Sen, Zamindar,	100 Shares	Do

(Source: Memorandum of Bijaynagar Tea Co., 1925, P. 04)

From this table it proved that the share capital of the company was Rs. 75, 00, 000/- (Rupees Seventy Five Lakhs) divided into 3, 00, 000 equity shares of Rs. 25/- each with power to increase or reduce the capital ¹⁷⁹. Most of the subscribers of

share capital of the company were pleaders and a few were Zamindars. The Bijoyanagar tea estate was awarded from the Tea Board of Calcutta for its highest yield of production in West Bengal in the year in 1976. It is important to mention here that Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, the founder of the Bijoyanagar Tea Company donated twenty shares of this company to his own Maharaj (religious priest) for the pretext of establishing Gauriya Math in Bhubaneswar ¹⁸⁰. However, after the demise of Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, the responsibility of this garden along with other gardens like Mogolkata, Subhasini as a law of succession was attributed on his elder son Debesh Chandra Ghosh. The other gardens such as Soudamini, Malhati, Laxikanta and so on came under the possession of his other son renowned planter Birendra Chandra Ghosh. Today no more tea estates exist under the ownership of the Birendra Chandra Ghosh group. Astonishingly the tea estates came under the control of Debesh Chandra Ghosh still go on under his successors luxuriantly ¹⁸¹.

The foundation of the Thanjhora tea estate was laid down by Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, a successful lawyer of the Jalpaiguri Bar under the name of the Jalpaiguri Dooars Tea Co. Ltd. in the year 1920. He was also closely connected with several tea companies as its director. He was also elected as Member of Lok Sabha from Jalpaiguri Constituency. Bijay Basanta Bose, manager of the garden was the founder member of the 'Terai Indian Planters Association'. After his death, his son Parimal Ghosh (former Central Deputy Railway Minister), came to the management. During his tenure the garden was sold to Rabindra Nath Mishra, an Oriya by cast of the Jalpaiguri town in 1974. Since then he along with his partner Roshan Lal Agarwal, director of the New Tea Company a Kolkata based non – Bengali tea company began to control the garden. As Rabindra Nath Mishra had no wards the whole responsibility of the garden was shifted to his partner as a whole ¹⁸².

The kamalpur tea estate established by Kamal Krishna Haldar came from Barrackpur in the beginning of the twentieth century. He began his career as the first Tahasildar manager of Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Mahatab Chand of Burdwan in Darjeeling hill. He put his foot for the first time in Darjeeling hill in 1850 with Maharajadhiraja. He was said to have managed to acquire small beats of land from the Lepchas and he succeeded in building huge property in favour of the Royal family. In exchange of his loyalty to the royal family, the Maharajadhiraja bestowed him a lot of wealth which no doubt strengthened his hand to do something out of the job as a

Tahasildar. Thus he planted the Kamalpur tea estate by his own name near Bengdubi tea estate ¹⁸³. The first manager of this garden was a European namely R. Bruthnat. However, his son Moti Haldar was also a renowned tea planer of this region. The tea estate was modernised with superficial modern equipments during B.R. Haldar, son in law of Kamal Krishna Haldar. B.R. Haldar was an Engineer from England and he bought for the first time modern machines as a Bengali tea planter in the Terai region. The tea estate was under the possession of the Haldar family up to 1960's and in 1967 it was sold to Badal Bhattacharya, owner of the Kiran Chandra tea estate. Since 1976 the Kamalpur tea estate have been owned and controlled under Jayanti Prasad Agarwala ¹⁸⁴.

The Bengdubi tea estate was established by a British tea company in the year 1889 managed under a British tea planter Mr. Bruthnut. Later in 1915 this garden was owned by a Bengali tea garden employee Gopal Chandra Sarkar of the Nadia district. He began his career as a sub – staff in a European managed tea garden in Dooars and then in Kamalpur tea estate. By virtue of his work he later on bought the Bengdubi Tea Estate from a European tea company. Moti Haldar, the then owner of the kamalpur tea estate helped him very much to achieve this goal. Tea Planter Prabadh Chandra Sarkar, son of Gopal Chandra Sarkar was also a Zamindar in this region. He also commenced his life as an employee in Good Hope tea estate. This garden is being controlled under the same family even today ¹⁸⁵.

The Fulbari tea estate was established by a British tea company in the year 1918 and the plantation began in 1919. The factory of this garden was set up in the year 1922. Later in 1930's this garden was owned by two bosom friends came from Birbhum, Sen and Majumders. This garden was managed under the flagship of the Darjeeling Jalpaiguri tea company. They had other gardens such as Manu valley, Kalishasan in Tripura and Saikoan in Assam. The first Bengali manager of this garden was Gopal Chandra Sen. Other notable Bengali managers were Kunja Ghosh, Jamini Bhusan Sengupta, Braja Gopal Sinha, Bibhuti Chandra Sarkar and so on. From the initial stage green leaves were produced here and a number of Punjabi tea traders used to come in this garden to buy green leaves. In the year 1982 ownership of this garden was transferred from Kumudkanti Sen and Paresh Majumder to Dipankar Chattarjee, a notable tea planter in India who has fifteen tea estates in Tripura and Assam. His father P.C. Banarjee was a freedom fighter. He came to Tripura from Eastern Bengal

in 1940's and later became an entrepreneur in tea plantation industry. He was said to have formed the Indian Tea and Provisions Ltd. with some tea estates such as Shyamguri, Mohonlal, Ramchandra. Later he established the New Jatinga Valley Tea Co. Ltd. and bought some gardens from the Sen and Majumder's like Manu valley, Kalishasan. S. Chattarjee, elder brother of Dipankar Chattarjee is also a renowned planter ¹⁸⁶.

The Simulbarie tea estate was established in the mid of 1870's by a British sterling Tea Company of London, U.K. and managed by National Company Agency of Calcutta ¹⁸⁷. Later its ownership was transferred to a Bengali A.C. Sen of Calcutta. He was the grandfather of the famous cricketer of Bengal P.C. Sen. Its ownership was further transferred to Tarapada Banarjee, founder member of the 'Terai Indian Planters Association'. He began his career as a staff of various tea gardens like Majherdabri, Atal, Manjha. Later he appointed by the management of the Simulbarie tea estate as the manager of this garden. In 1952 T.P. Banarjee became the owner of this garden. He had three sons such as Tarit Prakash Banarjee, Jyoti Prakash Banarjee and Ranjit Banarjee. T.P. Banarjee was also the chairman of the Terai Branch Indian Tea Association (TBITA, P.O. Bengdubi) with Rabi Mitra, director of the Sannyasisthan tea estate as its secretary. They never hang down their heads to the British planters. In 1973 T.P. Banarjee died in his own garden Bungalow and since then his sons began to control the garden from Calcutta. Ranjit Banarjee was also the chairman of the 'Terai Indian Planters Association' (P.O. Matigara, Dist – Darjeeling). In 2001 the garden was sold to Santosh Bansal (Bansal Tea Trading Co. Ltd., Ganesh Chandra Avenue, Kolkata) ¹⁸⁸.

The second biggest achievement of Naffer Chandra pal chaudhury, founder of the Jogmaya tea estate in Darjeeling hill was the Mohurgaong and Gulma T.E (P.O. Sukna, Dist – Darjeeling). At first it was divided into two parts under two separate administrators of two estates. One was Mohargaong tea estate and the other was Gulma Tea Company. The first one was taken by Naffer Chandra and Bipra Das pal chaudhury from Mr. Lewis Prince Delves Broughten, Administrator General of Bengal and also the administrator of the T.E. on the 4th sep. 1895. It is almost a partnership firm. The Gulma tea estate was taken by Amiya Paul Chaudhury, son of Bipra Das pal Chaudhury on 28th June, 1930 from Gulma Tea Company. In the year 1930 this two tea estate was collaborated into one and since then this tea estate came

to be known as Mohargaong Gulma tea estate ¹⁸⁹. ILA Pal Chaudhury, wife of Amiya Pal Chaudhury was an M.P. from Krishnagar, Nadia for Congress party also the treasurer of the district Congress. She had two sons – Amitava Paul Chaudhury and Anit Paul Chaudhury. They also have shipping business in Calcutta having two ships in accordance with same name of the gardens like Mohurgaong and Gulma. Amitava Paul Chaudhury was a doyen in Indian tea Industry. The present Managing Director of this tea estate is Nayan Tara Pal Chaudhury, daughter of Amitava Paul Chaudhury ¹⁹⁰.

Prior to 1947, new tea estates were often established in India on the extension of the existing ones. The practice was like this – any estate acquiring through extension, a large area was ultimately divided into two tea estates. And thus giving rise to a new estate with sufficient stuff and a separate factory like Matidhar and Bijlimani ¹⁹¹. But since independence this practice had stopped and no estate had any chance to form afresh. However, during its inception years this two tea estates were owned and controlled under the Dasgupta family of Calcutta. Later it came to be owned by Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, son of a Zamindar family of Dacca. He was also the finance minister of DR. B.C. Roy, the first Congress Chief Minister of Bengal. This two tea estates were run under the umbrella of New Tea Company, founded by Nalini Ranjan Sarkar in 1936. He also said to have established an insurance company named ‘Hindusthan Insurance Company’ which later on became Life Insurance Corporation of India during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ¹⁹². After the death of Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, his nephew Pramad Ranjan sarkar became its owner. In 1975 this two gardens were owned by Rabi Mishra along with Roshan Lal Agarwal under the name of the New Tea Company, Kolkata ¹⁹³. This tea company have other tea estates like Chandan T.E. (P.O. Banarhat, Dist - Jalpaiguri) and Tinbigha T.E. (P.O. Mekhliganj, Dist – Cooch Behar).

The Girish Chandra tea estate, situated at the adjacent area of the Matidhar and Bijlimani tea estate had to set up by Arjun Chandra Pal of Dacca. He began his career as an employee of the Gungaram tea estate and later had to set up pineapple garden in 1952 -53. With the drastic fall of price of tea in 1950s, he converted the garden as a tea garden by his own father’s name and its factory was established in 1988 ¹⁹⁴.

The last Bengali owned tea garden lying in the border area of the Darjeeling Terai region was the Debijhora tea estate. Its foundation was laid under the leadership of Rajendra Kumar Niyogi, Makhan Lal Bhowmick in the year 1922¹⁹⁵. He was the brother of Sasi Kumar Niyogi, the famous lawyer of the Jalpaiguri town. The contemporary planters Satish Dasgupta, Dharendra Nath Moitra assisted him a lot in this project. During his son Sachindra Kumar Niyogi (Badal Babu) and his manager Kalipada Moitra the garden reached its highest watermark¹⁹⁶. The Niyogi family of Jalpaiguri town had other tea estates also such Nimtijhora, Ramjhora in Dooars and Choibari in Assam¹⁹⁷. Today no tea estate is possessed under their ownership. The Debijhora tea estate was sold to the Garg Tea Company, Siliguri in 2008-09¹⁹⁸.

The Atal tea estate took its birth under Andrew Yule Company in the middle of 1870's. It was primarily a Jute company later entered the fields of coal and tea¹⁹⁹. The supremacy of the group of British Managing agency houses began to be challenged seriously with the entry of new Indian entrepreneurial groups into the tea industry. With the depression of tea prices in 1930's the garden was sold to Irfan Randeriam, an elite Muslim of Kolkata and the then president of the soccer club Mahamaddan Sporting. With the partition of India took place in 1947 he went back to East Pakistan after selling all properties in India. Then its ownership was transferred to Dhandumal Chirimar, a non – Bengali tea trader of Siliguri town. During his tenure the garden witnessed several strikes, gheraos by the trade unions and consequently, the responsibility of the garden was attributed to Sudhir Chattarje and his wife Chandrima Chattarje under the leadership of the trade union leader Ishwar Tirkey²⁰⁰. In the year 1989 the garden was sold to the New Tea Company of Kolkata²⁰¹.

However, the emergence of the Bengali entrepreneurs received a setback initially during the post war slump (1919 – 1921) but since 1924 further the tempo increased steadily till the Great Depression in 1930's. In 1933 the International Tea Agreement was signed by various tea producing companies which stipulated that no more new tea gardens could be set up. This proclamation certainly bought a deadline in the atlas of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry.

Table 3.5 Date of Registration of Various Bengali owned Tea Companies

Name of the Company	Founder	Date of Registration
Nuxalbari Tea Co. Ltd.	Musharaf Hossain, Jalpaiguri	18/05/1910
Fulbari Tea Co. Ltd.	Sen mjumder Family, Birbhum	1919
Sukna Tea Co. Ltd.	Musharaf Hossain, Jalpaiguri	11/04/1913
Kamala Tea Co. Ltd.	Tarini Prasad Ray, Jalpaiguri	06/03/1914
Bhojnarayan Tea Co. Ltd.	Biraj Kumar Banarjee, Jalpaiguri	27/07/1915
Darjeeling Dooars Tea Co. Ltd.	Karuna Kishor Kar, Jalpaiguri	01/01/1916
Baikunthapur Tea Co. Ltd.	Prasanna Deb Raikot, Jalpaiguri	05/12/1916
Jalpaiguir Dooars Tea Co. Ltd.	Nalini Ranjan Ghosh, Jalpaiguri	24/03/1920
Merryview Tea Co. Ltd.	Musharaf Hossain, Jalpaiguri	24/04/1919
Sayyedabad Tea Co. Ltd.	Musharaf Hossain, Jalpaiguri	27/10/1919
Debijhora Tea Co. Ltd.	Rajendra KumarNeyogi, Jalpaiguri	14/05/1922
Chandmani Tea Co. Ltd.	Tarini Prasad Ray, Jalpaiguri	23/12/1924
Bijaynagar Tea Co. Ltd.	Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, Jalpaiguri	24/06/1925
Sahabad Tea Co. Ltd.	Saha Borthers, Nadia	20/03/1920
Radharani Tea Co. Ltd.	Jyotish Chandra Pal Chaudhuri,	1917
Kharibari Tea Co. Ltd.	Darjeeling Tea Company	1917
New Tea Co. Ltd.	Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Kolkata	1936
Mahargaon Gulma Tea Co. Ltd.	Amiya Pal Chaudhuri, Nadia	1930, September

(Source: Detailed Report of Various Tea Companies, Touji Department, District Magistrate Office, Jalpaiguri.)

Table 3.6 **Name of Company raised by the Jalpaiguri Indians between 1912 and 1919**

Year	Number of Companies	Terai		Jalpaiguri		Assam	
		Jote Land	Khas Land	Jote Land	Khas Land	Jote Land	Khas Land
1912	11	01	-	06	02	-	02
1913	19	01	-	05	-	-	03
1914	04	01	-	01	01	01	-
1915	02	02	-	-	-	-	-
1916	05	03	-	-	-	02	-
1917	07	01	-	06	-	-	-

1918	02	01	-	-	-	01	-
1919	20	10	-	08	-	02	-
Total	60	20	-	26	03	06	05

(Source: Proceedings of Indian Tea Planters Association (ITPA), for the year 1920)

Therefore, from the above table we find that most of the Bengali owned tea estates were established in jote lands rather Khas lands. These Khas lands were reserved particularly for the Europeans where they built up tea gardens and other plantations.

However, we generally find a complete different perspective pertaining to the entrepreneurial activity of the Darjeeling hill and the Terai region in comparison with the Jalpaiguri Dooars. In Darjeeling district most of the Bengali entrepreneurs were Government servants, Zamindars, Bankers, merchants, tea garden employees whereas in Jalpaiguri Dooars most of them were lawyers, Maqtars. Secondly, most of the Bengali owned gardens were either purchased from the European tea planters who considered such properties as unprofitable whereas in Dooars most of the Bengali tea gardens were said to have established on lease lands. Thirdly, Bengali entrepreneurship in Terai region was started by buying jote lands and amalgamating same into a tea grant. Fourthly, the size of the Bengali owned gardens in Terai were much smaller than the English owned gardens whereas in Dooars the size of the Bengali owned gardens and the English owned gardens were proportionately similar. Fifthly, the tussle between the Bengali planters and the European planters were also there like the Dooars region. For instance we can mention the tussle between Robertson, the king of the Terai and on the other side Tarapada Banarjee along with Kusum Dutta as because they were managers of small gardens or their members were few and the gardens were small. In spite of that most of the Bengali owned gardens in Terai were purchased from the European tea planters whereas in Dooars this type of instances was very rare. All Indian owned gardens were established there by the Bengali entrepreneurs. Why a different atmosphere regarding the Bengali entrepreneurship in tea industry prevailed in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling district needs deep attention from the researchers in future. Lastly, in the Terai region the emergence of the Marwari entrepreneurs began to observe in 1970's whereas this

process was culminated in Jalpaiguri district in 1930's. The entry of the Daga and Kalyani family was the most significant event during this period. The Agarwala and Mahesri families became very active in this direction.

Lastly it is worthy to be mentioned here that regarding the history of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry in both Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling district we find the absentee of Rajbanshi entrepreneurship on a major scale. References should be made to some Rajbanshi jotedars such as Raikot family of the Jalpaiguri town and Bhojnarain Singha of the Terai region. Prasanna Deb Raikot promoted the following companies and proprietary estates assiduously on his Zmindari lands like Baikunthapur Tea Co. Ltd. (1916) with Bhandarpur and Shikarpur Tea Estates (1917) and Karala Valley Tea Co. Ltd. (1919). Bhojnarain Singha allowed Biraj Kumar Banarjee of Jalpaiguri to set up the Bhojnarain Tea Estate on his Zamindari land. However, such examples are very meagre. As we know the Rajbanshis constituted the most predominant section of the local Hindu population in the Northern districts of Bengal. They were a socially homogenous community, in the sense that there was no sub – caste among them²⁰². Economically agriculture was their basic occupation and their representation in other professions was not very significant. A very small section of them possessed a substantial amount of land commonly known as Jotedars, Zamindars²⁰³. However, a distinct change took place in the economy of Northern Bengal with the migration of upper caste gentry into the traditional Rajbanshi areas. With the passage of time these migrated people became the land lord of this area. This example might also be coined regarding the Bengali Hindu and Muslim entrepreneurs advented here from various part of undivided Bengal. They had to set up a large number of tea estates on the land owned by the Rajbanshi Jotedars once. In stead of assuming initiative in this economic field the Rajbanshi jotedars and other affluent personalities of the same community remained aloof them from the tea plantation industry. So many factors were responsible for it. Perhaps being traditional they were in general conservative and were not inclined to venture much beyond their known periphery. Secondly, due to the availability of land, the condition of poor Rajbanshi peasants was comparatively better than that of their counter parts in other areas in Northern part of North Bengal. It is true that the Rajbansi Jotedars and the populant personalities belonged to the same community had surplus money procurated in heterogenous way either from cultivation, business

transactions or from money lending professions. But very little of the surplus appropriated through extraction of produce rent – cum – trade – cum – usury was used for cultivation²⁰⁴. Nor was their savings were coined for the growth and development of the tea industry of this region.

Naturally question arises that where these surplus money were used and of course in what way instead of building entrepreneurship in the tea plantation industry? As we know that most of the Rajbansi Jotedars used to spent their daily life in a highly extravagant style. Their standard of living was very high. Some of them used to keep elephants, horses and even five or six house wives as a sign of coruscative life style. In the occasion of various festivals like Durga Puja, Manasha Puja they used to arrange fairs and other compatible items for providing amusements to the endemic rural people. All the expenditures were met from his own repository funds²⁰⁵. Baring this they also invested the surplus money to purchase jotes from others. But they were never seen to invest the surplus money in tea industry. Perhaps they were not interested to go ahead from their own periphery. In this context the observation analysed in Jalpaiguri District Gazetteer is worthy to be mentioned. It has written that “the local population of Rajbansis, Mahamadans can make a living too easily by cultivation to have any incentive to learn a trade”²⁰⁶. Most importantly when the tea gardens came into existence, the population of the Duars region were very scanty. The local people had plenty of land and were engaged in food cultivation. They loved easy life. So, local people were not available for the arduous job of tea plantation²⁰⁷.

So what emerges from the foregoing discussion is that owing to have copious cultivable land no initiatives had been taken from this community in tea industry at all. The Rajbansis were always prone to staticity. As all primitive communities, they were tied to family profession and were normally disinclined to change professions. This situation remains continued for a long time. Total abstention from the non – family professions was the basic norm of the Rajbansi milieu until the external caused some important change to be introduced in their attitude towards new professions²⁰⁸. This attitude of the Rajbansi community can also be further explained by uttering two local proverbs such as –

“Uttam krishi Madhyam Ban

Dhik Chakri Vekkha Nidan”

(It meant that agriculture was their main profession. Trade and commerce belonged to the second category of their occupational status. They staunchly disdained Government service as a mode of occupation and beggary is the last option for living.)

“Dhane Dhan Aar Odhyek Gai

Jat Kinchit Sona Rupa Aar Sokole Chai”

(It meant that rice was the foremost paramount property to them. Cows belonged to the second strata as a medium of property. Next came Gold – Silver and all the rests are like ashes to them.)²⁰⁹

It is true that with the settlement of upper caste Hindus a tendency developed among the better off section of this community to emulate the culture and social values of the upper caste Hindus. Those among the Rajbansis, who were jotedars or rich farmers, came under the cultural influence of the upper caste landlords or other Jotedars of the area, as they were closer to this group in terms of secular status. The well - off Rajbansis thus began to migrate to towns, send their children for higher education, and take up subsidiary occupations like Government jobs, besides the family occupation of cultivation. It was this section of Rajbansis who felt the urge to change their existing cultural practices and lifestyle²¹⁰. This situation literally to say had to retreat the whole community to become an entrepreneur not even in tea industry but in other industrial fields also. The British Colonialists were also highly responsible for the backwardness of the Rajbansis. The upper caste Hindu gentry nurtured antagonistic attitude towards them. In fact the protagonists of the Bengal Renaissance could not go out of their social orbit to regenerate those²¹¹. Moreover, in the beginning of the twentieth century we could not find the emergence of any educated gentry class among the Rajbansis especially in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar district. What were changes had been done pertaining to their social and economic status that took place only in Rangpur²¹². Hence we may say that lack of proper knowledge, proclivity to family occupation and of course inability to cope with modernisation drifted the whole community from the industrial field. This grotesque mentality, innocuously to say, made them unable to become an entrepreneur even in the tea plantation industry.

Another reason highly responsible for the absentee of Rajbansi entrepreneurship in tea industry was the migration of large number of outsiders to different districts of North Bengal. The attractions of this regions were the abundance of land, possibility of good business, job opportunities in Government offices as the local people were not in a position to compete and the lure of tea gardens which provided job facilities for the the ‘Babus’ as well as the labourers ²¹³. The Census figures between 1891 and 1921 in Jalpaiguri district showed us that the large influx of people led to a growing demand for land and a rise in land prices. The local people being tempted and lured by the spiralling prices began to sell their land and in course of time became subservient to a new class of immigrant landed gentry consisted of educated upper caste Bengali middle class people and Marwari ²¹⁴. This reason definitely wiped out all the possibilities in the creation of the Rajbansi entrepreneurship in the tea industry in colonial period. However, this change in the ethnic composition of the land holding class in village economy began the commercialisation of agriculture, particularly in tea plantation and the introduction of railways in the northern part of North Bengal.

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