

Chapter 7

Conflict and Confrontation in the Society of Jalpaiguri

In the previous Chapters, the formation of society of the district Jalpaiguri, condition and status of the people had been discussed. The cultural condition of the people of Jalpaiguri in the colonial and post- colonial period in the context of changing scenario has also been discussed. It is found in the aforementioned discussion that after formation of the district in 1869 the British – India Government had taken initiative to reforms in the district introducing new jotdari system, tea- estates specially in the Dooars areas and other economic measures and administrative reforms. As a result of these reformative measures the socio- economic and cultural pattern of the district were being changed rapidly. Huge number of people of different castes, religion and classes immigrated in the district. These immigrated people including the English people dominated on the illiterate and simple minded indigenous people capturing the economy of this region. Culturally the immigrated people, particularly the ‘Varna Hindus’ or the people of ‘Sanskritic Culture’ and the people belonged to Western culture dominated and extended their culture on the indigenous people. Needless to say, as a result of the immigration and their activities the indigenous people of the district were deprived and oppressed in different ways. It is relevant to mention here that in spite of attaining the independence on the 15th August, 1947 after age- long struggle by the Indians, the oppressions and repressions on the peasants, workers and depressed class people have been continuing.

Since the attainment of independence of India in 1947, lot of discontents and grievances were being accumulated among the indigenous people of North

Bengal, particularly, the people of Northern portion of North Bengal. They were affected socially, economically and culturally as a result they protested against all sorts of deprivations and negligence in time to time organizing and conducting socio-political movements such as Uttarakhand- Utjas, Kamtapur Movement and Greater Cooch Behar movement etc. Many reasons were behind this Movement which is classified in the following way:--

At the time of attainment of independence and partition of India, Bengal was divided namely West Bengal and East Pakistan as a result of which North Bengal lost her major portions of valuable and developed areas such as Rajshahi, Bagura, Pabna and Rangpur districts and partly some portions of Dinajpur and Jalpaiguri district, once these areas were under Rajshahi division and then Jalpaiguri division, known as undivided North Bengal. The regions which handed over to Pakistan were more developed and socio- culturally enriched; land was very fertile for agrarian cultivation. So, post- independent North Bengal became economically weak for losing this valuable tract.¹

It is remarkable that the five Thanas (Police station) of Jalpaiguri district had been handed over to Pakistan at the time of partition on the basis of the demarcation line- up of Radcliff. It was a tremendous affect to the people of Northern portion of North Bengal, because this portion of North Bengal had been split out from the Southern part of West Bengal; for this unavoidable and unfortunate political game played by the British Government and the Indian political leaders, the people of Northern portion of North Bengal had to communicate with the Southern part of West Bengal, particularly the Calcutta, the capital of West Bengal where all the head- official works and passing law through various bill by Legislative Assembly were held and the people of this split portion of West Bengal were bound to go by facing various troubles and expensive load. If the said Thanas remained in the Jalpaiguri district as earlier the people of this region could have communicate with Calcutta, nay West Bengal in short time saving seven to eight hours and of course less fare. It is

unfortunate that these five Thanas had been ceded to Pakistan illegally, because we are well known that the country was divided in accordance with religion and as such these Thanas also handed over to Pakistan showing the majority of Muslims in these areas wrongly on the basis of census report. But originally in these areas Hindus were majority in such a way that the Hindus were shown separately i.e. caste Hindus, scheduled caste and scheduled tribes etc. in the census report. Among the scheduled caste people major portions were Rajbanshis who were Hindus. If all the Hindus were shown including SC & ST altogether they would become majority, naturally these Thanas could have not been handed over to Pakistan. So, it is a tremendous grievance of the people of North Bengal till now.

Major portion of North Bengal was under Kamata- Koch kingdom and earlier it was a part of Pragjyotishpur and Kamrup kingdom which had a historical legacy and pride ruled by various rulers in time to time with separate geographical locations. It is true historically that this portion of North Bengal was never included with other parts of Bengal before penetration of colonial power, even in the age of Sultanate and Mughals this tract was excluded from their rule. In the colonial period it was joined with Bengal Presidency for convenience of their empire and in the post- colonial period the Koch kingdom became only a district of West Bengal losing her entity and legacy. Socially and culturally it had a distinctive character unlike other parts of undivided Bengal. Till now, some of these distinctive characters are found in the society of North Bengal, particularly in the society of the northern portion of North Bengal. It can be said that in the society and culture of this region the Mongoloid tradition, customs and usages are laying much more unlike other parts of North Bengal, nay Bengal. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee writes, “The Bodo tribes are linguistically connected with the Nagas but where as the Nagas have till recently remained isolated and primitive, one may say that the Bodos, who spread over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley and North Bengal as well as East Bengal, forming a solid bloc in North – Eastern India, were the most

important Indo-Mongoloid people in Eastern India, and they formed one of the main bases of the present- day population of these tracts.”²

The Northern portion of North Bengal had much more distinctive character unlike other parts of Bengal. In the epic age it was under Pragjyotishpura, then Kamrup, after that the history of Kamtapura and Cooch Behar was well known to all. The Pragjyotishpura- Kamrup Empire was bounded by Karotoya to Brahmaputra River comprising the triangular shape. Needless to say, this tract was separate from other parts of Bengal in terms of geopolitics, society, economy and culture. The people of Indo-Mongaloid groups played a significant role in the society, economy, culture and polity of this region. Anthropologically, linguistically and culturally there are so many evidences and instances till now which prove that a distinctive society and culture was formed flowing over the tide of history unlike other parts of Bengal, nay India. There were so many rulers who ruled Kamrup with their pride and prestige; I have no intention to discuss in details unnecessarily. For the weakness of the Pala Empire, Baidyadeb, the minister of Ram Pal became the king of Kamrup taking the title ‘Maharajadhiraj Parameshwar Parambhattacharack’ and he shifted his capital from Kamrup to Kamtapur. But it is debateable, many scholars denied this view. They opined that after Baidyadeb the rulers of Kamrup did not last long, the rulers lost their positions shortly. In these circumstances, Prithu became the king of Kamrup in 1195 and he extended his empire from Brahmaputra to Karotoya. In his old age he selected his son Sandhya Roy to be ascended the throne and ultimately Sandhya Roy became the King of Kamrup. After the death of Prithu, Sandhya Roy shifted his capital from Gauhati to Kamatapur to protect his empire from the Muslim invasion. Whoever the founder of the capital of the kingdom of Kamtapur, it had a glorious history. The three rulers namely Niladhvaj, Chakradhwaj and Nilambar of Khen dynasty ruled Kamtapur from the capital founded in Gosanimari, near Dinahata. The Kamtapur kingdom was destroyed by the invasion of Alauddin Hussain Shaha in 1498. After the downfall of Kamtapur

kingdom a period of short breaking was going on. But within short period Biswa Singha, the son of Haria Mandal or Haridas Mandal, a Koch leader who ruled as a tribal chieftain in Chikna hill near Dhubri of Assam, occupied the Kamtapur kingdom and established his empire called Koch kingdom. Koch kingdom was ruled by the Koch rulers independently up to 1772 and from 1772 to 1947 it was ruled under British dominion as a tributary state. After independence King Jagaddipendra Narayan signed an agreement with Central Government on 28 August, 1949 and thereafter Cooch Behar became a district of the state of West Bengal on and from 1st January, 1950. Haripada Roy writes, “North Bengal has its own tradition, history, language and culture. The ancient tradition bound glorious history of North Bengal is completely different from Bengal. This region was famous under different names from ancient to the historical period – e.g. Paundra Desh, Pragjyotishpur, Virat, Kamrup and Kamtapur. It has maintained its separate identity till today.”³

The said region is a full of natural resources having fertile lands for agricultural cultivation, huge amount of various types of agricultural crops are produced since past to present, suitable lands and favourable climate, temperature and rainfall for tea- cultivation; needless to say that high quality of tea had been produced in North Bengal, particularly in the Dooars and Darjeeling district; the quality of Darjeeling tea is world famous; there are huge areas covered with forest and hill wherefrom valuable natural resources are found. Apart from these there are so many rivers, sufficient rainfall and natural beauties. By utilising all these natural resources many developmental works could have been done through which the socio- economic uplift would be possible. But unfortunately, all these possibilities had been ignored and proper initiative had not yet been taken both from the Central Government and State Government. Since the colonial period the Government used North Bengal as their source of income and as such the colonial imperialist power collected resources and revenues from different sources only for their own interest depriving the people of North Bengal. Unfortunately, after independence no

change has been taken place in the question of the proper development of the people of North Bengal. Since independence both the Central Government and State Government used North Bengal as their colony and source of revenue neglecting the people of North Bengal.

In terms of large scale industries North Bengal is laying behind still now for which it is said to have been North Bengal is neglected. It is unfortunate that after so long period of attaining independence not a single large scale industry have been established. Only the tea industry is laying in North Bengal though it was established in the colonial period and the profit of tea industries goes to planters. The local people are less benefited from these tea industries. It can be said neutrally that there are favourable condition and atmosphere including market and natural resources for establishing large scale industries. If both the Central Government and the State Government would take initiate or measures to establish industries in North Bengal utilising natural resources and raw materials of North Bengal many industries could have been built up in the soil of North Bengal. Agro- based industries; Food processing industries, Tourism industries could have been developed. Unfortunately, nothing has been done for the negligence and ignorance of the Government and dominating tendency of the Delhi and Kolkata oriented political leaders. Sukhbilas Barma pointed out, “Since the employment market is not growing as fast as the number of entrants, local middle class aspirants have started viewing migrants as blocks to their mobility and development.”⁴This negligence and biasness has given birth different types of crisis and problems which led the people of North Bengal to various movements created socio- political tensions.

The indigenous leaders of Jalpaiguri like other parts of North Bengal speaking in Kamtapuri language or Rajbanshi language as their mother tongue demanded that their language is not originated from Bengali language and added that Kamtapuri language is completely separate from Bengali language. They objected that their mother tongue has been neglected and dominated by

the Bengali language and Bengali culture. They expressed grievance that in spite of having their separate language and culture Bengali people including elites and Government imposed the Bengali language forcefully on them in their every sphere of life such as taking education, studying, writing and official works. There is no Kamtapuri or Rajbanshi medium of language for giving education in school, college or university level; no official works held by this language. Girindra Narayan Roy writes, “This led to vigorous attempt on the part of the Kamtapuri leaders as well as some intellectuals of the community to establish their identity in terms of a politics of cultural difference that took all pains to prove that their language was a different language from Bengali, not a distortion of it.”⁵It is true that many of the elite people or educated intellectuals belong to Bengali language; particularly living in the town insulted the Rajbanshi language. So it has become an issue of discontent of the Kamtapuri people.

There are many debates on the language issue of Kamtapuri whether it is separate from Bengali language or not. Their demand of language could not establish because of their weak instances and proofs in separating the language. There are many similarities in terms of morphology which proved that the Bengali language including all the dialects related to Bengali language, Assamese, Maitheli, Hindi, Oriya etc. are originated from same source of language; as a result of evolution of language there created many separate language in India. Moreover they had no grammar or no scripts which is a problem to justify a separate Kamtapuri language.

Before occupation of the Dooars area by the British in 1865, it was ruled by Koch Kings and Bhutias gradually. This area was full of jungles and ferocious animals. In the hilly areas and forest areas only the people of Indo-Mongoloid Tribes namely Mech, Garo, Rabha and Toto etc. could live there. In the plain areas of the Western Dooars the indigenous people of Rajbanshi community and local Muslims called Nasya Sheikh lived there. No human

being other than the Indo-Mongoloid tribes could live in the hilly and forest areas of the Western Dooars.⁶

There are many debates on the origin and ethnic identity of the indigenous communities namely Rajbanshi, Mech, Garo, Rabha, Toto etc. It can be said that these communities in spite of having separate identities they originated from Indo-Mongoloid race. They were simple in habit, habituated with shifting cultivation (except Rajbanshis) treating the lands and natural resources as the property of God which was not saleable or transferable. After living in a particular place some years, they shifted into another place and started to live there. The main occupation of these tribes was shifting cultivation and hunting. These communities lived out of the ambit of civic society, governed by their own leaders called *Moral* or *Mondals*. Though they had separate groups or *gotras* among themselves, they had no castes or classes. They would never go out of their own ethnic society for any kind of necessity. They had their own culture, own system for treatment; own system for judgment or solution any kind of problem or crisis among them. It was the ethnic culture.⁷

After the second Anglo-Bhutanese war in 1865, the British-India Government occupied the Western Dooars and they cast their commercial eyes on the area because it was full of natural resources and the soil was favourable for cultivation. As a part of their agrarian reforms the Britishers divided the lands into three categories namely (1) Lands for agricultural purposes (2) Lands for tea cultivation and (3) Lands for reserve forest. In the field of agriculture, they introduced jotdari system in new forms like other parts of Bengal. After each settlement a large number of jotes were created and these were given to the Jotdars by agreement or lease. Most of the Jotdars did not cultivate lands directly; therefore, further devolution of land was necessary on the basis of an agreement of revenue named pattani to the intermediaries called Chukanidars, Dar-chukanidars, Tasya chukanidars, Dar-Dar-chukanidars.

Moreover, there were *Bargadars* or share croppers who had no right on lands. They cultivated lands as well as of the intermediaries called 'Giri' only for 50% share of crops.

In the Western Dooars, Britishers introduced tea cultivation since 1874. As the local people or indigenous tribes of the Western Dooars and the neighbouring areas were less interested to work in the tea-garden, so the Planters imported labourers from Santal Parganas and Rajmahal areas of Bihar through 'Sardar' by commission. Not only labourers, but also planters of different communities and castes, officials immigrated in the Dooars for earning.

On the other hand in the agrarian field also many people of different communities, castes and classes immigrated into the Dooars. They obtained lands from the Govt. by lease or agreement and became Jotdars. In such a way population in the Western Dooars increased rapidly, for example population in the Western Dooars in 1872 was 90,668 in 1901 it increased to 4, 10,606 and in 1931 it became 6,61,068.

As a result of the increasing population in the Western Dooars and initiation of the economic reforms by establishing tea industries, jotdari system etc. by the Britishers the indigenous tribes faced an identity crisis because they had been losing their rights and liberty in the Western Dooars. They had been transferred to settled cultivation from shifting cultivation. They had to pay revenue to the Government which was not earlier.

Apart from this socio-economic crisis, they also faced a cultural crisis because of losing their ethnicity for entering into the civic society. Many of them had been converted into Hindus, some converted into Islam and many tribes had been converted into Christian. So, facing such type of crisis many tribal people left the place towards East and settled different places of N.E.

India. Even after independence the Indo-Mongoloid tribal people have been facing different types of crisis and problems. Proper development has not been taken place in their localities. They are lying behind educationally from the other sections of the society. Few among them have obtained Government job.

Besides, these tribal communities having their ethno-cultural identity crisis because of their conversion into other religions, now-a -days, many of them are going to forget their mother tongue and their traditional customs, usages etc. By entering into global world and global culture the young generations are going to forget many things of their own traditional culture. Sukh Bilas Barma writes, “The dominance of migrants in the world of economic, social and political fields has led the local youth to emulate their dress, their style of living, even their language. But they have now grown with a feeling that the migrants have forced them to lose their own cultural identity.”⁸ So, lot of discontents and grievances have been accumulated in the minds of the tribal people in the Western Dooars as elsewhere in North Bengal as a result of which socio-political tensions are going on in the soil of North Bengal, sometime it has been bringing violence and destroying the environment of peace and integrity of North Bengal.

Since independence the politics of North Bengal, nay West Bengal was controlled by the leaders of the elite class oriented higher caste people. Most of the top- rank leaders including Ministers, Bureaucrats, higher class officers belonged to higher caste and higher class. The main remote control was in the hands of these classes of people, particularly the people of Kolkata oriented Babus. Though after few decades of independence, particularly after coming of Left Front Government in power the indigenous people got chance to participate in politics, not only that a good number of ministers were selected from indigenous people. Moreover a large number of indigenous people getting education and joined in services in different sectors of the Government and Private Companies also. In spite of that the functions of decision and policy

making were in the hands of the Kolkata oriented Babus. Haripada Roy writes, “We are helpless and directionless in the whirlwind of Calcutta based economic, industrial, educational politics, misleading politics, nepotism and corrupt policies of the one eyed partial leadership and administration.”⁹ Unfortunately, it is followed that there are few indigenous people who have become the district secretary or president of all political parties though they are ‘son of the soil’. Is it not surprising? Even it is unfortunate that there is no Vice Chancellor or Registrar or Controller belongs to indigenous people. All are placed from Kolkata oriented intellectuals. In such a way there are so many higher posts where indigenous people are not getting chance due to obscure reasons in spite of having their qualities and efficiencies. So, all these instances are giving birth lot of discontents and grievances among the indigenous intellectual classes.

The heavy influx of population in North Bengal in time to time, particularly since independence is one of the reasons of discontents and tensions of present North Bengal. It is well known to all that on the eve of the independence communal riots was started between Hindus and Muslims and we obtained our freedom on the 15th of August, 1947 by dividing the country in two parts namely, India and Pakistan on the basis of religion. Since independence devastating communal riots was started in all over the country, particularly the riots got its intensive character in Pakistan thousands of Hindu people left Pakistan losing everything and came to India to save their lives. These migrated people were called ‘Refugee’; they kept shelter in different parts of North Bengal like other parts of the country. As a result of the migration the demographic pattern of North Bengal, nay West Bengal changed rapidly. This process of migration was going on since long time of the independence for communal torture of the Muslims of Pakistan on the Hindus. Naren Das pointed out, “As a result (of migration) the safety and security of indigenous people were at stake. Thousands of indigenous people left their mother land on constant torture of the government machinery and so called

political and social leaders.”¹⁰ Not only the Bengali Hindus migrated from East Pakistan, many people came and settled in different parts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts from Assam at the time of riots in 1960s and first half of the 1980s led by ASSU and the extremist movement for their sovereignty led by ULFA. Other than these many people of different professions and classes namely Beharies, Marwaries, Nepalties came and settled in North Bengal for their livelihood in time to time. In this way due to heavy burden of population influx various types of socio- economic crisis and problems have been created as a result discontents have been growing up among the indigenous people.

Indian independent Government wanted to abolish all the intermediary systems in the agrarian field. In view of the abolition of the zamindari system West Bengal Government passed the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act in 1953 and West Bengal Land Reforms Act in 1955. There were many big Zamindars and Jotdars who possessed thousand acres of lands till after the independence. So, the ceiling of lands possessed by any land holders was fixed up to 25 acres. The lands over ceiling under any land holders would be illegal which handed over to the Government and distributed to the landless people. But, unfortunately it was followed that the Zamindars, Jotdars and land holders yet occupied the ceiling surplus lands illegally. During the period of two spells of United Front Government in 1967 and 1969 and the Left Front Government since 1977 Land Reforms Programmes got a new motion. Thousand acres of lands were acquired and distributed to the landless people by the Government. Ceiling- surplus lands were also occupied forcefully by the different left Parties and distributed to the landless peasants.

It is true that the Land Reforms Programmes had a positive role because by this programmes many landless people including sharecroppers got their right on lands. The slogan ‘Land to the tillers’ became successful. But in the case of the district, nay North Bengal unlike other parts of West Bengal the picture was slightly different. In this region the indigenous people namely

Rajbanshis, Tribals and local Muslims were completely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and all most all of them were illiterate. So, while going on Land Reforms Programmes many of the Jotdars or landholders were failure to hold their lands for not to furnish their proper documents of lands to the authority of land department of the Government in time. The ceiling of lands possessed by the zamindars- Jotdars was fixed to 75 acres and later on 7 standard hectares in all over West Bengal. But it was not scientific because there were lot of differences in land in accordance with fertility and value in different region of West Bengal. Production of crops was not same in all parts of West Bengal. So, the ceiling of lands measuring on quantity was a blunder, it should be fixed up in accordance with quality and value of land.

There were many differences between the landlords of Northern North Bengal and South Bengal. The Zamindars and intermediaries of South Bengal had alternative sources of income other than their zamindaries such as business, industries and service but in this region almost all the cases except few, the Zamindars- Jotdars and intermediaries were completely depended on land. They had no alternative sources of income other than agricultural cultivation, particularly the Jotdars of Rajbanshi, tribal and local Muslims were uneducated, simple and unconscious. It is common knowledge that in East Bengal most of the Zamindars and renters were upper caste Hindus and the majority of the peasants were Muslims, while in Jalpaiguri there was no such demarcation as the majorities of the Jotdars as well as the sharecroppers were Rajbanshis. Even the Muslims had their representatives in both classes.¹¹ In the tribal communities, the Jotdars and sharecroppers or *projas* belong to same community. As almost all the cases the Jotdars had no alternative sources of income, they had been gradually demolishing after losing their lands by the Land Reforms Programmes. In most of the cases, the lands, remaining after vesting were divided among their sons & daughters. Naturally, after one or two generation the lands gradually decreased. Not only that they became like a fish without water because they were not laborious, not efficient in other technical

works, naturally to maintain their families they sold their lands. There were so many instances in North Bengal that the then Jotdars sold their lands and became later on agricultural labourers or day labourers in the different sectors in different parts of India. Some instances of such condition are given which is collected from field work by the author.

Khagendra Nath Das, S/O Late Nara Nath Das, 77 years old of Chaparerpar, P.S Alipurduar Dist- Jalpaiguri, was a member of Jotdar family and they had 18 *hal* (land 270 bigha) which was cultivated by their *Raiyots* or Chukanidars. Now he has only 6 *bighas* of land and he has six sons and one daughter of whom only his elder son is doing service in Calcutta, rest of his five sons are jobless. His brother, Khajen Das and Brojen Das are completely poor, Khajen Das (Roy) is a day labourer and Brojen Das (Roy) is also a day labourer works on Road. ¹²

Ramesh Roy, S/O Late Santeswar Roy (Dhangu Roy), 48 years of Chapani, P.S Samuktala, and Dist. Jalpaiguri stated that his grandfather late Bankanath Roy (then Jotdar) had 300 *hal* lands (4500 bigha) and four sons – (1) Kalicharan Roy, (2) Ramdayal Roy (3) Brojen Roy and (4) Santeswar Roy. After vesting and division of land his father Santeswar Roy obtained 5 *hal* (75 *bigha*) land and now he (Ramesh Roy) obtained only 15 *bigha* lands and his each cousin (5 brothers) obtained 4 *bighas* of land and they are living very ordinarily. ¹³

Noni Mohan Sen of Basusuba near Maynaguri informed me of his tragic situation. His grandfather was a *Jotdar* having 85 bighas of lands; the *jotdari* was still existed up to the period of his father. A large portion of land went under the river Tista at the time of flood in 1968. At present he had approximately 40 *bighas* of land with proper necessary documents. But, for a wonder that no land have in his possession; all the lands were occupied un officially by the cultivators or sharecroppers who cultivated lands but no share

is given to the land holder. He surprisingly expressed that he tried to obtain his share but he became failure. Now he does not go to the cultivators for either having his share or reoccupy his possession on the land.¹⁴

Other than these few instances there are many indigenous families in the district once who were Jotdars or Zamindars, now their successors have become agricultural labourers, industrial labourers, servants or doing many of them inferior works or illegal works which is a tragic situation. Now many questions arise about the success of the Land Reforms. Should it not remain any laws or systems to protect such types of Jotdars or intermediaries only depending on agriculture? Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh pointed out that a proposal was taken in the conference of Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in Jateshar in 1957 to recruit a representative of Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in the committee of distribution of surplus lands as they were only agricultural-based people unlike the Zamindars of other parts of West Bengal. But the Government did not accept the proposal of the Samiti as a result of which many problems & crisis raises in the socio-economic and political situation of North Bengal.¹⁵

One of the causes of demolition of the local Jotdars was heavy immigration in the district from outside. As a result of immigration and changing economic policies local Jotdar faced in unequal competition with the immigrants which was a question of struggle for existence and in this life – struggle they lost their lands except few instances.

The following table shows the population increasing and their variations in the district, Jalpaiguri:¹⁶

1872	1951	Variations 1872- 1951	1961	Variations 1951- 1961	1971	Variations 1961- 1971	1981	Variations 1971- 1981
201,659	914538	712879	1359292	444754	1750159	390867	2214871	464712

It can be said easily that huge number of people immigrated in the district from 1872 to 1981; accordingly the lands for cultivation were not increased. Maximum number of people of total population lived in villages, because percentage of urban population in 1951 was 7.22, in 1961 was 9.11, in 1971 was 9.60 and in 1981 was 14.05. As there were no large industries except tea – industries, major portion of population had to depend on agricultural land for their livelihood. Naturally, land crisis was seen for which local people particularly the local Jotdars were affected gradually.

Land reforms mean not only acquisition and distribution of land to the landless people. Land reform is not only a means of securing better distributive justice but also one of improving the social status and dignity of the poor cultivator as well as his political influence.¹⁷ Besides land acquisition and distribution, technological systems and instruments for agricultural purposes including irrigation systems, soil conservation, seeds, and manure should have been improved to increase production. Because, day to day population has been increasing, lands are being divided among the members of the families after each generation; as a result of which amount of land per family have been decreasing. In such a situation production should have been increased from insufficient land, side by side lands are to be conserved from soil pollution. Manjula Bose writes in her editorial address, “Since the pressure of excess population on land will continue for some time to come in the near future, technological and organizational development should proceed, as far as

practicable under this constraint. Technological development are however easier to achieve than organizational restricting.¹⁸

It is found in the field survey in the different villages of Jalpaiguri district that most of the villages are out of irrigation facility, electric facility. The peasants in these villages are not aware of the modern technological improvement in agriculture; they depend on the traditional method of cultivation.

The following table shows total number of villages, total area and irrigated area in different P.S. of the district, Jalpaiguri –¹⁹

Sl. No.	Name of P.S.	No. of inhabited villages	Total area (in hectare)	Percentage of Cultivation	Percentage of irrigated area to total cultivation
1.	Rajganj	28	38497.41	26.02	5.49
2.	Jalpaiguri	29	44262.07	79.17	1.12
3.	Mal	101	51859.38	45.68	9.86
4.	Metiali	30	20489.39	39.84	40.10
5.	Maynaguri	77	49304.60	68.52	2.49
6.	Nagrakata	23	34073.76	83.94	1.42
7.	Banarhat	50	28391.93	47.89	8.29
8.	Dhupguri	62	25325.61	75.99	3.49
9.	Birpara	21	18717.88	71.18	9.25
10.	Falakata	63	34911.28	64.22	15.95
11.	Madarihat	28	15835.36	57.75	6.42
12.	Alipurduar	129	68472.20	67.11	2.84
13.	Kalchini	43	69512.82	29.16	10.90
14.	Kumargram	52	86984.17	19.83	11.89
Total		736	586637.86	50.67	6.82

Upendra Nath Barman wrote, “The ceiling of Khas land has been fixed up, but no sufficient measure has been taken up for increasing productions in

the land in North Bengal as a result, most of the people once depended only on land have been destroyed in the end of destiny and living completely in a impoverish condition.”²⁰

The difference between urban life and rural life is one of the causes of the discontents of the indigenous people. It is followed that the condition of the urban people is comparatively better than the rural people. Most of the rich and well established people including industrialists, trading communities, service men of higher income, elite and intellectual classes live in the urban areas; as such these people of urban areas obtain different types of facilities. It is also true that most of the elite people of urban areas belong to higher caste and higher classes. Few indigenous people belong to elite classes or economically solvent or established living in the town. So it can be said impartially that the society, economy, politics and culture are dominated by the people of higher caste and higher classes where no position is remained for the indigenous people. Not only that, sometimes village people are insulted and culturally neglected by the urban elites or *Babus* by throwing different derogatory comments to the village people. Such type of attitude of the urban people affected the minds of the village people as a result they bear a discontent and pain in their heart to the urban people.

The imbalance development and the question of getting facilities between urban life and rural life is one of the causes of the discontents of the indigenous people. It is followed that the condition of the urban people is comparatively better than the rural people. Most of the rich and well established people including industrialists, trading communities, service men of higher income, elite and intellectual classes live in the urban areas; as such these people of urban areas obtain different types of facilities. It is also true that most of the elite people of urban areas belong to higher caste and higher classes. Few indigenous people belong to elite classes or economically solvent or established living in the town. So it can be said impartially that the society,

economy, politics and culture are dominated by the people of higher caste and higher classes where no position is remained for the indigenous people. Not only that, sometimes village people are insulted and culturally neglected by the urban elites or Babus by throwing different derogatory comments to the village people. Such type of attitude of the urban people affected the minds of the village people as a result they bear a discontent and pain in their heart to the urban people.

Deprivation, poverty and depression of the indigenous people are one of the causes of discontents. In the previous chapter it is shown how the indigenous Jotdars and Zamindars lost their lands and became landless and helpless. The successors of the said Jotdars and Zamindars became very poor; many of them have become labour and works different sectors. They have no permanent job or service. Many of them stepped into separate state for their livelihood. In these circumstances these indigenous people, particularly the younger generations are becoming angry; considering and remembering their glorious past of their predecessors that once they were Jotdars- Zamindars and they had many things, did not know what poverty was, they are involving in the different sub- regional movements.²¹ Amarendra Nath Narjeenari pointed out that for imbalance attitude and negligence of the Government and the people of elite class led the indigenous people to face in deprivation and helpless.²² Whether there are logics or not behind their grievances, it is their psychological discontents which cannot be denied.

It can be said that there are many reasons behind the discontents and grievances of the indigenous people of this region and these roots of discontents were grown since the attainment of the independence in 1947, as a result of which many socio-political movements such as Uttarkhanda-UTJAS movement, Kamtapur movement started in the district and it extended in different parts of North Bengal for the demand of separate state in North

Bengal. Though these movements turned into a political shape, but the roots of the movements lies in the society and minds of the indigenous people.

Apart from the indigenous people, discontents are also cropping up amongst the settlers' tribes i.e. Tea-tribes who raised various demands on several issues in the district, particularly in Dooars. Interestingly, it is found that since the attainment of independence the settlers, in the political canvas played significant role in the district joining different socio-political movements, such as trade Union Movements, Labour Movements, Peasant movements etc where as the indigenous tribe remained silence comparatively. If we analyse the nature and pattern of the electoral representatives from the Panchayet to the Parliamentary Constituencies it will found that most of the winning reserved seats (ST) or representative belonged to the settlers' tribes. In the surface we will find that there is no conflict between the settlers and the indigenous tribes like the conflict between the settlers' and refugees of East Bengal, East Pakistan or Bangladesh and the Rajbanshi groups in then on-teagarden area, we found the similar kind of discontents among the tribal areas of the district.

Again we found another kind of conflict between the Rajbanshi ethnic groups and the "Bhatia" scheduled caste group. For example we can specifically mention the conflict of the emerging Rajbanshi educated class and the migrant Namasudra class. The number 1) the reserved quota for the scheduled caste group is fixed i.e. 22%. Before the coming of the migrant Namasudras the reserved seats for employment in the Government section was also enjoyed by the Rajbanshi ethnic groups. But now it is showed by the Bhatia Namasudra scheduled caste educated class.As a result a strong kind of resentment rapidly escalating among the educated Rajbanshi ethnic groups. In fact, the conflict is multifaceted, not one faced one.

In corporation of the O.B.C. groups like the North India is also creating conflict. Because the O.B.C. system was not earlier accepted by the Govt. of West Bengal. Again the discontent of O.B.C. between 'A' & 'B' has extended the conflict.

Reserved for other backward class was included in 13.07.94, since then many debates were going on the issue of including O.B.C. in the constitution of India. In West Bengal 166 communities were included in the list of O.B.C. then more sub castes were included in list of O.B.C. and it was divided in two categories O.B.C.-A and O.B.C.-B. The number of O.B.C. –A category is 78 and O.B.C.-B is 88.

It is followed that indigenous Muslims are included in the O.B.C. –A category (Abdal, Muslim Molla, Khotta Muslim, Muslim Rajmistri) and most of the immigrant sub castes belonged to O.B.C.-B category such as Baisya Kapali, Barui, Bansi-Barman, Dewan, Malakar, Sutradhar etc. Here also a conflict between migrant communities is followed in the district like other parts of North Bengal.

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