

A P P E N D I C E S

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER III

I. A Short History of Annexation of Western Duars to British India

The British Government first came into contact with Bhutan in 1772. The Bhutias invaded the Cooch Behar State and, on its Raja applying for help, a force was sent to his assistance which drove out the invaders and pursued them into their own territories. Through the interaction of the Regent of Tibet, a treaty of peace between the East India Company and Bhutan was concluded in 1774. A few years later in 1783 an attempt was made to promote commercial intercourse with Bhutan, but Captain Turner's mission to that State proved unsuccessful. After this there was little intercourse until the occupation of Assam by the English in 1826. It was then found that the Bhutias had seized several tracts of country lying at the foot of the mountains, called the Duars or passes. They agreed to pay a small tribute, but failed to do so and used their command of the passes to raid into British territory. In consequence of this Captain Pemberton was sent to Bhutan, but his negotiations yielded no definite result and, as all attempts to obtain redress and ensure security to the inhabitants failed, the Assam or Eastern Duars were wrested from the Bhutias, and the British Government agreed to pay them Rs. 10,000 a year as compensation for the loss, subject to their good behaviour. But no improvement followed; the Bhutias continued to commit outrages on British subjects in the Duars, and scarcely

a year passed without the occurrence of several raids on British territory, headed by Bhutia officials, in which the inhabitants were plundered, killed or carried off as slaves.

In 1863 Mr. Ashley Eden, C.S. was sent as an envoy to Bhutan, to put a stop to these depredations and outrages and to demand reparation. But he was grossly insulted in Bhutan darbar and was compelled to sign two documents agreeing to make over the Assam and Bengal Duars to Bhutan, and to surrender all run-away slaves and political offenders. It is said that Mr. Eden had signed the said documents with an endorsement that he was being compelled to sign it under duress. About 300 Indians and several Britishers had been detained as captives in Bhutan at that time. All requests for their release went unheeded. Thus the previous time-serving treaty made by the Britishers with the Bhutias was put to an end.

The Britishers then admitted that the Bengal Duars was populated by a race which had no affinity with the Bhutias and had long suffered from their tyranny, but who were closely allied with the people of Bengal and were expected to co-operate cordially with the British authorities. On the 12th November 1864, the British Government issued a proclamation permanently annexing the Bengal Duars; and it was determined that an expedition should advance in four columns, which were to take up their several posts at Diwangiri, Sioli, Pasakha and Dalinkot.

In the war that followed, the Bhutias had to suffer a heavy defeat. The Bhutan Government at last came to terms and conceded to the demands of the Britishers. On the 11th November 1865, a treaty of peace and friendship was concluded between the Britishers and Bhutan according to which the Indo-Bhutan boundary was permanently settled along the mutually accepted line and the Bhutias gave up all claims to the Duars region. It was a treaty of friendship and fair dealings for the future. An annual subsidy of Rs. 50,000 was granted to Bhutan Government which was to depend entirely on the will and pleasure of the British Government and on the good conduct of the Bhutias. Shortly after this, the Indo-Bhutan boundary was permanently marked by a joint survey and by fixing permanent boundary pillars along the entire Indo-Bhutan border.

II. Land Laws of Western Duars

A few years after the formation of the district of Jalpaiguri in 1869, the Western Duars part of it was included in the list of scheduled district under the Scheduled Districts Act (Act XIX of 1874). Under this Act the head of the district administration was called the Deputy Commissioner. After this Act was passed some of the laws applicable in regulated territories came to be applied to the non-regulated territory of Western Duars. The Government of India Act 1919, declared the Duars of the Jalpaiguri district as a backward tract and the Governor General was vested with the powers of issuing notifications directing that an Act to the Indian Legislature shall not be applicable to the

non-regulated territory except with such modifications as he may direct. The Governor-General was also empowered to authorise the Governor of a province to issue similar notifications in respect of Act of the local legislature.

Being a non-regulated area and a scheduled district, the Western Duars region enjoyed a special position regarding the application of land laws.

The Acts and Regulations that were applicable in other parts of Bengal did not come into force in the Western Duars unless, those were specifically extended to this area. The area was kept as one for the purpose of Khas management of the Government. It was divided into five Government Estates or Tahsils, namely, Maynaguri, Falakata, Alipurduar, Bhalka and Ambari Falakata and each of the Estates was treated as a Touzi.

To deal with this area an Act known as the Bhutan-Duars Act was passed in the year 1869. It remained in force till the end of 1895 when it was repealed. So long as it was in force, it excluded the operation of Civil Procedure Code in Express terms. The jurisdiction of ordinary civil courts was barred from the matters relating to the immovable property, Revenue and Rent. Jurisdiction in matters relating to Revenue was to be exercised by officers appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor and they were to be guided by the provision of Regulation VII of 1822, which was a regulation declaring the principles of land revenue settlement and for preparing record-of-rights etc.

However, there was no provision relating to suits regarding immovable property and rent. There was therefore, until 1895 no definite rent law for the Western Duars.

The Scheduled District Act (Act XIX of 1874) was declared to be in force in the Western Duars in 1875. In the same year another Act called Waste Land Claims Act (Act XXIII of 1863) was also extended to this area.

The Bhutan Duars Act was repealed in 1895, although the validity of action taken under the Act was safeguarded. In the same year, the Bengal Rent Act of 1859 was extended to the Western Duars, with its amending Acts of 1862. These Acts remained in force until Bengal Tenancy Act was extended to the Western Duars in the year 1899. Bengal Revenue Sales Act 1859 and 1868 were also applicable to the area, though these were of limited practical value. The Bengal Tenancy (BT) Act did not, therefore, bring about any great improvements in the position of majority of tenants in Western Duars who were left to be governed by the terms of their leases. The BT Act was extended in the Duars with the following modifications.

Firstly, the BT Act did not apply to the lands previously or subsequently granted under written leases for the cultivation of tea or for reclamation under the Arable Waste Lands Rules. Secondly, nothing in the Act which was inconsistent with any rights or obligations of a Jotedar, Chukanidar, Dar-chukanidar, Adhiar or other tenants of agricultural lands as defined in the settlement

proceedings theretofore approved by the Government or with the terms of a lease, theretofore granted by the Government of any such tenant, was to be held to override these rights and obligations.

The B.T. Act thus did not apply at all to any lands in the Duars leased under the Waste Land Rules. It applied to jotes already in existence at the time when the British took possession from Bhutan. Even here the terms of the leases issued to such Jotedars prevailed over the Bengal Tenancy Act when the two came in conflict. The Jotes to which B.T. Act applied were called Old Mal Jotes.

The rights and obligations of all classes of tenants in the Western Duars were governed by the Waste Land Rules issued from time to time and the terms of the leases granted to the tenants. All leases in the Western Duars were issued by the Government. Even when the leases were issued by private persons, the terms of the leases could not be different from the terms of the standard leases approved by the Government for this purpose.

III. Evolution of Various Forms of Jotes and Leases

After the British annexation certain original settlers were found to occupy certain jotes. These jotes were described by Mr. Sunder who carried out the settlement operation of 1889-95 in the Western Duars, as Mal Jotes. The term Mal Jote originally applied to those jotes which were found to exist at the time of

annexation of the Duars from Bhutan as contrary to new jotes created later on.

For over twenty years after annexation, jotes were settled under the provisions of the Act XVI of 1869 and the Waste Land Rules of 1875. The Waste Land Rules of 1888 was framed to systematise the land policy and to define the rights and obligations of all classes of tenants.

Mr. Sunder settled three types of jote with jotedars. These were (1) Mal Jotes as defined above (2) Time Expired Jote was a jote which existed prior to Mr. Sunder's settlement and was settled under Arable Waste Land Rules, the preliminary lease of which had expired, and (3) Arable Waste Land Jote was a jote the preliminary lease of which had not expired during the commencement of Sunder's settlement. This third type of jote was settled with the jotedars at their requests and with the permission of the Commissioner by cancelling the preliminary lease and superseding by a lease for 15 years, the term of Sunder's settlement.

But all the three types of jotes were settled by Sunder issuing only one type of lease, namely, the "Mal Jote Lease".

Between 1895 and 1905 Sunder's Mal Jote lease was issued by the Deputy Commissioner to some jotes which were preceded by 5 years preliminary lease under Arable Waste Land Rules. But the proper form of renewal of these jotes should have been the Renewed Arable Waste Lands Lease.

After 1905 for a few years, preliminary leases under Arable Waste Land Rules were issued to all new settlers. But at the time of consideration of new lease forms, only amalnamas were issued with a promise of a lease in future.

Thus when Mr. Milligan started his settlement operations in 1906, he found four classes of jotes for which he prepared leases. These jotes were :-

- (1) Jotes settled by Mr. Sunder under Mal Jote Leases.
- (2) Jotes settled subsequently under Renewal Arable Waste Land Leases.
- (3) Jotes settled under Arable Waste Land preliminary leases and
- (4) Jotes created under amalnamas for the reclamation of Waste land for which lease was then to be issued.

Mr. Milligan, however, could not issue renewed leases for the Jotes in existence at his time. This work devolved upon the Deputy Commissioner's staff.

At this time according to Government orders distinction was made between two types of Mal Jotes, namely :-

- (1) Mal Jotes which existed before 1888.
- (2) Mal Jotes which originated after promulgation of the Arable Waste Land Rules of 1888.

Renewal of the first type was made in Old Mal (O.M.) form. This type constituted jotes recorded and styled by Mr. Sunder as Mal Jote, that is a jote which had existed before Sunder's settlement. The B.T. Act applied to this class of jote subject to some restrictions.

The second class was renewed in Restricted Mal (R.M.) form and constituted jotes of the following three kinds:

- (1) Time expired jotes for which Mr. Sunder issued Mal Jote lease.
- (2) Arable Waste Land Jotes recorded by Mr. Sunder and for which he issued Mal Jote lease.
- (3) Mal Jotes granted by the Deputy Commissioner between 1895 and 1905.

The Bengal Tenancy Act was not applicable to the R.M. leases as these leases were granted by Government for reclamation.

During Mr. Mukherjee's settlement (1931-35) D form and A form leases were issued. D form was the form of renewal of preliminary reclamation lease under the Waste Land Rules of 1888. A form lease was issued under the rules of 1917 to all amalnama jotes recorded by Mr. Milligan. All new settlements made after ^{Mr.} Milligan were issued in A form lease.

Both A and D form leases were outside the purview of the Bengal Tenancy Act. This Act was also inapplicable in cases of Santhal Colony jote leases and special jote leases as these jotes were originally granted for reclamation.

Besides D form and A form, three other forms were also sanctioned by the Government.

These were :-

- (1) Ar Form Lease - This form was granted for renewal of leases granted in form A.

(2) E Form Lease - It was the form of lease for Mal Jotes in the Western Duars granted subsequent to the promulgation of the Arable Waste Land Rules of 1888, that is, restricted Mal Jotes.

(3) F Form Lease - Renewed lease was issued in this form for Mal Jotes in the Western Duars, that is, Old Mal Jotes.

Thus, the RM and OM Jotes were renewed in forms E and F respectively. Like A form, Ar form lease was also protected from the operation of the B.T. Act.

Besides the above lease forms the following lease forms were also approved by Government during Mr. Mukherjee's settlement:-

- (1) Lease for lands of late Colonel Hedayet Ali.
- (2) Renewed form of lease for the settlers in the Santhal Colony.
- (3) Chukanidars' lease.

Thus, under different lease forms six types of jotes were recorded during Mr. Mukherjee's settlement (1931-35) in the Western Duars. These were :-

- (1) O.M. Jote.
- (2) R.M. Jote.
- (3) D Form Jote.
- (4) Ar Form Jote.
- (5) Santhal Colony Jote Lease.
- (6) (i) Special Lease for colonel Hedayet Ali's grant in Falakata Tahsil.

- (ii) Special Jote leases taken by the tea companies for cultivation by their labour force.
- (iii) Ordinary leases in O.M., R.M., D, or Ar Form of the tea companies in respect of which they had executed a special agreement for cultivation of land by their labour force.

IV. Incidents of Different Classes of Tenures

(a) Incidents of a Jote

It can be found from various Settlement Reports of the British period that a Jotedar's interest ~~is not transferable~~ was heritable and transferable with certain restrictions.

An Old Mal Jote could be transferred to any one domiciled in the district of Jalpaiguri who derived his income mainly from landed interests or tea cultivation. A Restricted Mal Jote could be transferred to a Tea Company or one who resided on or near the jote. In a 'D' form jote transferee must reside on or near the jote. In both Old Mal Jote and Restricted Mal Jote even a share could be transferred. For the transfer of a 'D' form jote, prior permission of Deputy Commissioner was required for transferring a share. In case of 'Ar' form lease, transfer without the permission of Deputy Commissioner was prohibited. Inheritances and transfers affecting any jote were to be registered with Deputy Commissioner within six months of their taking place.

A jotedar had rights to sublet and he could cultivate the land himself or with the help of adhiars but with some restrictions.

An Old Mal Jote or Restricted Mal Jote could be sublet to a bonafide resident-cultivator only. A 'D' form Jote could be sublet to any one. But the sub-lease in all cases was forbidden from further subletting. In 'O.M.', 'R.M.', or 'D' form jotes adhiars could also be employed.

An 'Ar' from Jote could not be sublet at all, nor could adhiars be employed. Theoretically, the degree of permanency varied with different classes of jotes, though in practice they were all permanent. In cases of O.M., 'R.M.' and 'Ar' from jotes, all conditions of the lease, including that of renewal could be revised at the time of the renewal of the lease. In case of 'D' form lease, there was no such provision. Theoretically, therefore, an 'O.M.', 'R.M.' or 'Ar' form jote could be determined after one renewal, whereas 'D' form jote was more or less permanent subject only to the fulfilment of the conditions of lease.

Tea could not be cultivated without the prior permission of Government on an 'Ar' form and Restricted Mal Jotes. In case of O.M. Jote there was no such restriction. Tea could be cultivated in 'D' form jotes upto 200 areas only.

Jotedars were prohibited from establishing any hat on their jotes. All markets and hats in Western Duars were exclusive property of Government. A separate organisation called "Western Duars Market Fund" was created to manage the hats. The receipts from the hats were used for the improvement of hats and for maintenance of dispensaries, etc.

All the leases contained a stipulation that if at any time the leased lands were required for a public purpose, the lands could be resumed without payment of any compensation.

(b) Incidents of a Chukani

A chukanidar was one who held land under a jotedar. As mentioned above most of the jotedars had a right to sublet to a chukanidar but not further. It follows, therefore that a chukanidar had no right to sublet his lands. The jotedar was bound by the term of his agreement with the Government to issue a written registered lease (form of which was approved by Government) to all his chukanidars and in that written lease, right to sublet was not granted, but adhiars could be employed.

A chukanidar was, in theory, an actual cultivator who was to reside on or near the jote. The rent of a chukanidar was fixed for the term of a settlement and was not liable to be enhanced during its currency. The margin of profit allowed to jotedars was fifty per cent above the rate at which the Jotedar's rent was assessed for the land sublet.

A chukani interest was heritable, but chukanidar had no right to transfer his interest without the permission of his jotedar.

The degree of permanency allowed to a chukanidar was the same as that of the jote containing it, unless Government at any time thought it proper to modify any of the conditions. A chukanidar

could not be ousted from his holding even when he was not in occupation for over twelve years. Although a chukani interest was created by a jotedar, the Deputy Commissioner had the power to cancel any chukani or forfeit the right of renewal if the chukanidar was found to have contravened any of the conditions of the lease.

After independence, by the Estates acquisition Act of 1953, all chukanidars who held under jotedars have been classified as raiyats.

(c) Tea Gardens, Their Leases and Incidents

A big area of the Western Duars is covered by tea gardens. All tea gardens held leases granted by the Government. Preliminary leases were granted for five years at the first instance. On the expiration of this period and on the leases fulfilling the requisite conditions, the leases were then used to be renewed for thirty years and so on for similar periods in perpetuity. The right to graze cattle, to build factories and labour colonies, the right to grow plantation and forests and the rights of cultivation were also settled along with these leases. The Government reserved the right to resume any lease granted to any Company or part thereof, for public purposes. Tea garden leases were heritable and transferable. For a part transfer, prior permission of the Deputy Commissioner was required. A tea garden lease had no right to sublet, except without prior and express permission of the Deputy Commissioner. For establishing hats for the facility of the labourers, prior permission of the Deputy Commissioner was required.

There had been cases of Tea Companies purchasing jote lands in the vicinity for their requirement either for plantations or for other purposes. Prior permission of the Deputy Commissioner had to be obtained in these cases for conversion of jote lands into tea gardens and the Company was liable to pay adequate compensation to the sub-tenants, if any.

With the application of the Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, the intricacies of the land laws of the Western Duars as outlined above have disappeared. The land laws of Western Duars have become similar to those as elsewhere in West Bengal and the tenants enjoy similar rights and privileges in the Duars with the coming into force of the Land Reforms Act, 1955.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

THE SIX INVESTIGATED VILLAGES IN PROFILE

It would be quite relevant to give a description of the six villages we have investigated. Some information on these villages have already been presented in the main body of our analysis. Some additional information is given here, ~~which are deemed necessary.~~

Talukertari : V₁

The village Talukertari of Falakata Police Station (P.S) fall under Falakata Settlement Circle and is a part of Mairadanga Gram Panchayat (G.P) of Jalpaiguri district. It is situated at 5 kms north of Falakata town. A metalled road passes through its western boundary which originates at Falakata and leads towards Madarihat. This village is bounded in the north by villages Chhoto Salkumar and Sibnathpur, on the east by villages Sibnathpur and Lochhmandabari, on the south by villages Mairandanga and Satpukumia and on the west by villages Satpukumia, boundary of P.S. Maharihat and village Chhoto Salkumar.

The total area of this village is 695.62 hectares, of which 259.37 hectares are not available for cultivation. In 1981, total population of this village was 2992 persons of which 1549 were males and 1443 were females.

Talukertari is inhabited by peoples of different castes and tribes. Among the scheduled castes, the Rajbanshis are predominant and among the schedule tribes the (a) raons are predominant. According to 1981 Census, 47.99% of the population belonged to scheduled castes and 13.74% were scheduled tribes. Literacy is very poor in this village. Only 16.31% of the population were literates in 1981.

In total 523 households were covered by the survey, of which 58 were of agricultural labourers. The condition of agricultural labourers was a little better in this village as far as their wages were concerned. The nominal wage rate was about Rs. 8/- with lunch per day. Sharecropping was widely prevalent in this village. There was generally good relation between recorded bargadars (sharecroppers) and their land owners, and the produce of land was shared between them in a 50:50 ratio in most cases.

There is practically no arrangement for irrigation in this village. The method of cultivation is traditional. However, cultivators who have come from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) appeared to be more enterprising than the others. Some persons were engaged in various other occupations in this village.

Parangerpar : V₂ [J.L. No. 22]

The village Parangerpar of Falakata P.S. of Jalpaiguri district is a part of the Settlement Circle of Falakata and of Falakata G.P. It is situated at 4 Kms north east of Falakata town.

A State Highway passes through its southern boundary. The village is surrounded in the north by villages Harinathpur and Jogendrapur and the boundary is marked by the river Buritorsa, in the east by village Chuakhola, in the south by Falakata town area and in the west by village Baganbari.

The total area of the village is 570.41 hectares of which 86.42 hectares are not available for cultivation. Parangerpar is multi-caste and multi-community village. About 12% of the population were scheduled castes and 7.28% were scheduled tribes according to 1981 Census. But majority of the people are upper caste Hindus. There are very few Muslim households in this village.

In terms of educational status, this village is fairly advanced compared to the other five villages we have investigated. About 53.41% of total population of this village were literate according to the Census of 1981. Landlessness was comparatively high. 44 out of the 296 households surveyed did not own any land. Wages of agricultural labourers were comparatively high in this village than in the other villages we have investigated due to the availability of some non-farm jobs in the neighbourhood. Apart from agricultural labourers, there were persons in this village who worked as casual labourers in tea gardens.

Many of the cultivators of this village have received loans from various institutions. Moreover, they were very much accustomed to taking loans through mortgaging land to local mahajans (money lenders) or neighbours. The system of mortgaging land is called subbandhak. Most of the bargadars appeared to be highly indebted.

Like other villages of our investigation bargadars (both recorded and unrecorded) were less articulate in establishing their rights and found to share the produce of barga land on a 50:50 basis with their landlords.

The methods and techniques of cultivation were found to be very much traditional. Barring the case of a lone very big landlord (Mr. Nandura Barman, son of late Sitanath Barman), all other cultivators in the village appeared to be non enterprising. Lands in this village are not so fertile. There is a private irrigation canal (locally called jampoi) in this village but was found to be defunct. Productivity of land was found to be low.

Paschim Chikliguri : V₃

The village Paschim Chikliguri is in the Alipurduar P.S. and Settlement Circle and Parokata G.P. of the Jalpaiguri district. It is situated at a distance of 18 kms south east from Alipurduar town. On its northern boundary lie villages Uttar Chikliguri and part of Purba Chikliguri villages, on the east lie villages Purba Chikliguri and Chikliguri, on the south lie the boundary of Cooch Behar district and on the west lies village Kumarijan. A metalled road touches its northern boundary which runs from Alipurduar to Kamakshaguri. The nearest marketing centre is at Purba Chikliguri hat which is at a distance of about 2 kms from the centre of the village Paschim Chikliguri. There is a branch of the Uttar Banga Kshetriya Gramin Bank at village Chikliguri, 2 kms away from the centre of village Paschim Chikliguri.

According to 1981 Census the village Paschim Chikliguri had a population of 1136 souls of which 595 were males and 541 were females. Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population constituted 43.31% and 1.85% of the total population. Compared to all other investigated villages this village has a large number of Muslim households. Literacy among people was not so high. Nearly 28% of the population were literate in 1981. Out of the total 322 literate persons 87 were females.

Although incidence of agricultural labourers was not too much, yet number of sharecroppers was comparatively large in this village. Out of the total 238 households, 12 belonged to agricultural labourers and 174, belonged to sharecroppers (exclusive plus owner-cum-sharecroppers). Wages of agricultural labourers were found to be as less as Rs. 5/- to Rs. 6/- without meal. This was due to the meagre availability of non-farm jobs.

In this village some lands were found to be possessed by two absentee landholders who live in Alipurduar town. Sharecroppers of these landowners were found neither to share cost of cultivation with the landowners nor to give any share of produce to the landowners. There were a few instances of eviction of sharecroppers in this village. It was found that landowners gave some lumpsum amount to the sharecroppers and debarred the latter either in recording their names or evicted them once for all.

The total area of this village is 342.30 hectares of which 36.36 hectares are not available for cultivation. There are no

irrigation facilities. Cultivation is carried on in the traditional method. Productivity of land is very low. Agriculture is rain-fed and lands are mostly mono cropped. Cultivators are by and large very poor. Many of them have taken loans from both private and institutional sources. But repayment position appeared to be very poor.

Baniagaon : V₄

Village Baniagaon belongs to Alipurduar P.S. and Settlement Circle and a part of the Samuktala G.P. of the district of Jalpaiguri. This village is 22 kms away from Alipurduar sub divisional town and bounded on the north by villages Joypur and Baniadabri, on the east by villages Samuktala and Patotola, on the south by village Pukhuria and on the west by village Madhya Sibkata and Srinathpur Tea Garden.

Sociologically, Baniagaon is an Adivasi (tribal) village.

Of the total population of 1492 persons, 1465, i.e., 98.19% were tribals in 1981. Majority of the tribal population belongs to Santal tribe. There are also a few households of Oraons tribe. There is no scheduled caste household in this village. Most of the Santals practise the religion of Christianity. Literacy among the people is very poor. In the 1981 Census it has been shown that about 12% of the total population were literate (4% of the total).

There are very few bargadar holes in this village, but the number of agricultural labourers are comparatively higher than that of the other investigated villages. Of the total 179 households surveyed in this village, 33 belonged to the agricultural labourers.

Farily a large number of bargadars have remained unrecorded. Even those who have recorded their names were not conscious at all about their rights. Naturally, produce of land was found to be divided between bargadars (both recorded and unrecorded) and their landowners in the 50:50 ratio inspite of the fact that only 50% or less of the cost was borne by the latter. Both the parties were satisfied with the arrangement. Bargadars appeared to dislike any kind of dispute or confrontation with landowners and therefore a good relation was found to be prevailing among them.

The special feature of this village is that most of its people are accustomed to drinking liquor of every kind. Peoples spend a lot of money in liquor consumption. This often leads them to indebtedness. They are idle and lack any aspiration. It appeared that unless their habit of taking liquor can be changed it is not possible to change their material condition.

The total area of this village is 592.92 hectares of which 28.38 hectares are not available for cultivation. There is no system of irrigation. Method of cultivation is traditional and the cultivators in general are not so enterprising as to introduce improved agricultural practices. Therefore, level of production has remained at a low level.

Padamati : V₅

The village Padamati belongs to Maynaguri P.S. and Settlement Circle and a part of Padamati G.P. of Jalpaiguri district. The nearest town Maynaguri is at a distance of 16 Kms from it. In its

northern boundary lie villages Penchahati, Barakamat and Bhotpatti, in its eastern boundary lie villages Bhotpatti and Khaerkhal, in its southern boundary lies Cooch Behar district and in its western boundary lie villages Penchahati and Dharmmapur.

There is a hat in this village which sits every Thursday and Saturday.

The Village Padamati is a larger multi-caste and multi-community village of Jalpaiguri. But socially it is dominated by scheduled castes, the majority of whom are the Rajbanshis. Of the total population of 4882, the scheduled caste population comprises as large as 71.24% of the total population. There is no scheduled tribe household in this village but there is fairly a large number of Muslim households. Literacy among the people is very poor. Only about 17% of the population are literate. Of the total 453 households surveyed 39 belonged to agricultural labourers and 250 belonged to small farmers. Majority of the small farmers were found to lease in land from owner-cum-lessor cultivators. Traditional 50:50 sharing of produce between landowners and bargadars was widely prevalent in this village like other investigated villages.

The village has a total area of 1843.52 hectares of which 362.37 hectares are not available for cultivation. Total agricultural land is 1953.12 acres of which 53.12 acres are irrigated by tube wells. Like other investigated villages cultivation in improved methods is not worthy of mentioning.

Churabhandar : V₆

The village Churabhandar belongs to Maynaguri P.S. and Settlement Circle and a part of Churabhandar Gram Panchayat (G.P) in the district of Jalpaiguri. It is situated at a distance of 7 Kms from Maynaguri town. In its northern boundary lie villages Ratherhat and Bhangarhat, in the east lie villages Bhangarhat and Hashdanga and Bhangamali and in the west lie villages Tekatuli, Nirendrapur and Bosilardanga.

In 1981, the village had a population of 2100 persons of which 1086 were males and 1014 were females. Though a multi-caste multi-community village, the scheduled caste population constituted 85% of the total population. Number of Hindu upper caste households and Muslim households are very few.

In terms of educational status, the village is a backward one. About 21% of the population were literate according to 1981 Census. The male literacy was higher than female literacy. Landlessness is rampant in this village. Out of the total 214 households surveyed, 55 households belonged to agricultural labourers.

It was found in this village that most of the poor cultivators and bargadars have adopted family planning measures at the initiative of the Panchayat members. Evidence of eviction of bargadars by landowners, in the name of personal cultivation, came to our notice. It was found that many of the agricultural labourers were the erstwhile bargadars.

Most of the cultivators of this village appeared to be politically conscious and strongly support some or other political

party. Of the total bargadars recorded, a big percentage have been recorded at the initiative of the members of the peasants' organisations. Economic disparity in this village appeared to be very sharp. Agricultural labourers are very poor. Their wages were Rs. 6/- per day with one meal during the period of our investigation. But agricultural work was available only for a few months of a year.

The total area of this village is 449.75 hectares of which 104.55 hectares are not available for cultivation. Of the total agricultural land of 631.25 acres only 10.00 acres were found to be irrigated by private canal (jampoi) and another 10.25 acres were irrigated by tubewells. Except the cultivation of HYV crops by two big enterprising cultivators, the cultivators in general, practises usual traditional method of production. Though some of the cultivators received the facilities of institutional finance, it appeared that more cultivators should be brought under its coverage.