

## CHAPTER – III

### ECONOMIC CHANGES: AGRICULTURE AND PLANTATION ECONOMY

#### SETTING – A: AGRICULTURAL EVOLUTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF LAND

It needs to be recalled here that the foot-hills of the Himalayas are known as Terai whereas the plain land of Darjeeling has come to be known as Darjeeling Terai. In this chapter we are concerned with the latter which came under the Company's Rule on 1850. Before the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is unlikely that there was any human habitation worth the count in this region. The earliest settlers presumably were the Dhimals and the Meches followed by the Koches. The Meches and Dhimals were settled in the upper reaches of the Himalayan foothills and the Koches or Rajbanshis in the lower part of the Terai region with some peasant castes who came here from the adjoining state of Bihar before the Colonial Rule. The ecology of the place was characterized by very dense vegetation, heavy rainfall, and excessive dampness and infested by killer-diseases like Malaria and *Kala-Azar*<sup>1</sup>.

The agricultural pattern of Darjeeling Terai was completely different from the rest of Bengal. Living as the Bodos and Dhimal has for ages in the condition of subjects to foreign Governments, it need hardly be observed that they had no public laws or polity whatever, nor even any traces of the village economy which so pre-eminently distinguishes Indo-Arian Society<sup>2</sup>. Mr. B. H. Hodgson, in his valuable monograph on the Koch, Bodo and Dhimals people published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society Of Bengal on 1849 described the Meches and Dhimals as nomadic cultivators practicing shifting cultivation by periodic clearing of forest, had a relatively undifferentiated societal organizations. Through dwelling in the wilds, were the people in the Terai periodically graze immense numbers of buffaloes and cows, they have no large herds nor flocks of their own to induce them wander; but, as agriculturists little versed in artificial renovation processes, they found in the exhaustion of the worked soil a necessity, or in the high productiveness of the new temptation, to perpetual movement. They never cultivated the same field beyond the second year or remain in the same village beyond from four to six years. After the lapse of four or five years, they frequently returned to their old fields and resumed their cultivation, if in the interval the jungle had grown well,

and had not been preceded by others. In general, however, preferred new land to old, as there were still abundance of unbroken forest around them. They were in constant movement. Particularly if they found a new spot unfertile they used to decamp after the first harvest was completed.<sup>3</sup> The agricultural implements or instruments used by them were an axe to fell the forest trees, a strong of bill or billhook to clear the under wood and also dig the soil, a spade for rare more effectual digging and lastly a dibble for sowing the seeds. The axe was called *Rua* by the Meches and *Duphe* by the Dhimals. It was serviceable implement of iron (the head) similar to that in used the plains, where the head is bought the half being made at home<sup>4</sup>. A.Wanderer also states that in early part of 1839 when he visited Terai “the Meches use no ploughs, tilling ground only with a hooked stick, like what is made use of by the Lepchas but shod with iron. We suggested that the use of the plough drawn by oxen, but his reply was God created them ignorant of the management of bullocks, giving them only a hooked stick armed with iron to till the ground, therefore, they could not use the plough.”<sup>5</sup>

In their social system there were no separate calling of herdsman or shepherd, “or tradesman or shopkeepers, or manufacturer or handicraftsman.” They lived on perfectly amicable term with their neighbors and can, thus, always procure, by purchase or better, the few things which they require and do not produce themselves. They had no buffaloes, few cows, no sheep, a good many goats, abundance of swine and poultry, and some pigeons and ducks. But each family tends its own stock of animals, which was entirely consumed by that family, and no part thereof sold, though the neighboring hill-men would gradually purchase pigs from them<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, they hardly had any concept of property on soil.<sup>7</sup> The Sikkimese rulers recovered from them an annual payment of one rupee per agricultural implement, and extracted *corvee*<sup>7a</sup> or tribute of labour of the sovereign and for this local representative. Considering that they could pays Rs. 30 to 40 worth of agricultural produce per implemented. So it can be assumed that the land tax was very light<sup>8</sup>. Campbell and Hodgson had mentioned about *jhum* cultivation in Terai for a number of times. In this system a large area were cultivated for only a year or two and then abandoned for a long time. This type of cultivation was more prevalent where there were large tracts of forest and jungle-clad hills, inhabited by more or less primitive castes or tribes. In these cases of temporary location of bamboo huts forms the village residence, and the families, having selected a suitable hill slope, where the angle is not too steep, proceed to cut down all the bamboos and smaller vegetation, killing the larger

trees by ringing or girding. The stuff is collected in heaps during the early hot season and allowed to dry thoroughly. Just before the rains set in, the whole is fired, and the ashes are raked up, mixed with suitable kinds of seed, and dibbled into the soft forest-soil with a hoe. The next process, involves heavy labour for weeding the crop and sometimes fencing it strongly against the required to protect it from animals like deer, cows, and others. One or perhaps two crops are taken off and then the site was abandoned. It was not returned to till a period of years has elapsed sufficient for the re-growth of the forest. This period depends largely on the numbers of the tribes, the area available and other circumstances, it may be as long as twenty to forty years or it may be as short as five to seven years. This form of cultivation is called *jhum* in Bengal, *kumri* in South India, *taungya* in Burma, *dahya* in the Central Provinces<sup>9</sup>. Dr. Campbell, who became the first Superintendent of Darjeeling pointed out that during pre-British period there, was huge cultivated lands in Terai and any persons could plough the land with complete freedom. He said that “the people of the Morung, who have free use of the forest for firewood, ploughs and sapling for hut building; grass for roofing is also free.”<sup>10</sup> Regarding the tax it is to be noted that there was no tax paid by any individual to Sikkim Raja. Taxes were paid by the community to Raja. Beside the methods of cultivation, it is important to understand the system of land revenue, taxes, measurement and productivity of the land.

A *jote* in Terai or Morung was a portion of unmeasured land, though there was no definite land measure in use. The owner of the *jote* was a *jotedar*. Regarding the owner of the land, Campbell says, “the *Jotedar* holds it by a *pottah* which has never been granted for a long period than 4 years. He cannot sell or mortgage the land, such a proceeding has never been affected and would not have been allowed by the former (Sikkim) Government, if he desires to quit the *Jote*, it reverts to Government. It goes by succession from father to son and the heirs in general.....The *Purja* gets half of the produce of the land he cultivated”<sup>11</sup>. The *Jotedars* furnished the bullocks, plough, seed and could dismiss the *Purja* at pleasure, moved him to another portion of the *Jote* or diminished the land he cultivated in short, could treat him much as the like<sup>12</sup>. During Sikkimise reign the Choudhuries had always been employed in the Terai, had a hereditary tenure in office. They were judicial as well as fiscal officers<sup>12a</sup>. They had no rights of property over the *mouzas* in which they used to collect taxes. The *Raja* was considered the owner of the land, whether under primitive forests, occupied or cultivated<sup>13</sup>. However Campbell says that “The inequality is greatest in the *mouzas* of the

Upper Morang (Terai), where the land has been most recently brought under cultivation. In some *Jotes* here the present assessment is very light as compared with the produce, but the outlay of labour and capital in bringing the land under the plough had been great and recent. There was no land measure in use". Though Campbell cannot speak accurately to the share of the produce taken by the Government<sup>14</sup>. In revenue language, the village is known as *mouza* in Terai<sup>15</sup>. The assessment in land was easy but very unequal. "For the purpose of a meliorating the climate, the only means in our power is the conversion of forest and jungle lands into cultivation. The usage of the Morang (Darjeeling Terai) is for Choudhuries, and *Jotedars* to advance this capital to newcomers, but their means are exceedingly small, and the increase of agricultural population is proportionately slow."<sup>16</sup> Previous to the annexation of Terai, the revenue of the Terai was derived from the following sources; i.e.

Firstly; from a *dao* or hoe tax paid by the Meches and Dhimals;

Secondly, from lands settled with the Bengali inhabitants of the lower Terai,

Thirdly, from dues paid for cattle sent from the adjoining District of Bengal to graze during the early months of the year;

Fourthly, from forest produce;

Fifthly, from excise or spirits;

Sixthly, from market dues;

Seventhly, from fines,

Eighthly, from a tax on musicians.

The revenue raised from the first two at least of these sources was called by the Bengali officers called Chaudhuries, who also exercised certain civil and criminal powers. They were apparently in all cases *Jotdars*; probably each Chaudhuri was the chief landholders in his own jurisdiction. Each Chaudhuri received Rs. 45 yearly as fixed pay, besides a *dastur* or customary fee of Rs. 2 for each house in his jurisdiction, and also certain fees and fines. They also seem to have got 4 *annas* out of each rupee paid by the Mechs and Dhimals as hoe tax. There seems to have been eight of these Chaudhuris at the time of the annexation (1850)<sup>17</sup>. Regarding the classification of land it is been found that there is no lime in any portion of it (Soil in Terai) without reference to the nature of the soil, but an account of its position the land is classed under two heads, viz. *Dhangi* or the upper level, and *Oolai* or the lower level, the relative value depending on the facility of relishing the water during the rains. The lower level lands are at least twice

as productive as the upper ones and in the neighboring districts, where a land measure is in use, are rated by the *beegah* accordingly. In the Morung (Terai) a *Jote* is also rated accordingly to the proportion of low land, but the rate per *beegah* cannot be ascertained from the absence of a land measure.”<sup>18</sup> B.H. Hodgson describes “*Chait, Baisak* and half *Jeth* comprise the season for preparing and sowing the soil. *Sawan, Bhadun, Kuar* and half *Kartik* that for gathering the various products, save cotton, which is not gathered till *Pus-Magh*. The reat are reaped as they successively ripen: first, cucurbitaceous plants (*Louka, Khira, Karela*); then greens (*Sem, Matter, Poi*); then the several edible roots (*Yam, Arwi*); then the condiments (*Haldi, Adrak*); then the millets and pulse, then maize; next rice; then the mustards; and last of all, cotton. The cotton is a biennial of inferior quality, but it is the main crop, and that from the sale of which in the plains the Mechs and Dhimals look to provide themselves with the greatest part of the rice they consume”. Though they consume little oil, the mustards were grown not for their oils, nor as stimulants, but merely eating like parched peas. Upon the whole, the agriculture of the Mech and Dhimals were conducted with as much skill as that of their low land neighbors i.e., the Rajbanshis and with skill much superior to that of their highland neighbors i.e., the Nepalese and Lepchas <sup>19</sup>. The peasants of the Darjeeling hill generally earned less than the Mech and Dhimals and their condition were proportionally worse, though they were lightly taxed. On the other hand, the Newar peasants of the neighboring valley of Nepal were more skillful then the Meches and Dhimals, they were earn more and retain more and paid heavy rent to their landlord <sup>20</sup>.

### **3:1:1 LAND SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE UNDER THE COLONIAL REGIME: UP TO 1898**

Agriculturally, the district of Darjeeling was divided into three tracts: the mountains west of the Tista River, the Kalimpong and the Terai <sup>21</sup>. After annexation of Darjeeling Terai the entire region was governed as a non-regulated district and hence Company's regulation were not applicable to that area except Regulation III of 1828. On the basis of that regulation the Government was the owner of all lands and there was no intermediary between the Government and the ordinary tenant in matter of settlement of land. When British rule began in Bengal, it was estimated that from one-third to one-half of the total area of the province was waste and uncultivated. But as time went on and as estates became better known and their limits practically fixed, attention was called (In 1819) to the fact that lands were being taken up that really did not belong to any estate;

the first thought, however, was only to make them pay the proper land revenue. But in 1828 Regulation III asserted that right of Government and then various efforts were made to separate the waste tracts and deal with them. This especially affected districts like Chittagong, some parts of Eastern Bengal, Sunderban, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, some forest land of Chutiya Nagpur district and in Orissa <sup>22</sup>. Though various rules had been issued from time to time in different districts, for the disposal of Government Waste Lands. But, in 1861, under the Vice-royalty of Lord Canning the subject was first seriously considered. The value of State Forests was to be made out of the best and most usefully situated in wooded and grass lands- was not even then recognized, and the occupation of the waste by the capitalist and settlers was alone discussed. For this reason, in a Minute on the waste land was sent to Home in 1861 is as follows:

“It was pointed out that the waste in its present state was only a burden to the Government, and it was recommended that it should be sold outright without any conditions as to its being utilized or cultivated in a certain time, and that the liability of Land Revenue should be discounted by allowing the purchaser to redeem it by certain payments.

Subsequent developments have left no doubt that this policy was based on erroneous but very natural assumptions. Had it been extensively acted on the result would have been disastrous. The loss to the state would have been very great, both owing to the rise in the value of land, which was entirely overlooked, and to the heavy sacrifice of future Land Revenue. The rules would also directly encourage the taking up of land by mere speculators, who had no intention of using it, but desired simply to hold it till it rose in value, so that they could re-sell it in blocks at a profit. It was fortunate that the State of affairs did not invite capitalists, and that the area parted with under the first rules was not, on the whole, large.”<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, Darjeeling, Terai, being a non-regulated area, provisions of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 were not applicable here in respect of granting settlement of land to the tenants. In fact, Company's Waste Land Rules which were applied in other parts of India also came into force in Darjeeling Terai. Though, the fifteen *mouzas* under Siliguri Police Station and three *mouzas* under Phansidewa Police Station<sup>23a</sup> were governed under the Permanent Settlement Regulation of 1793. The above minute laid down three main principles on which grants of waste lands were to be made

in future. Firstly, that such lands should be granted in perpetuity as heritable and transferable property, subject to no enhancement of land revenue; secondly, that all prospective land revenue would be redeemable at the grantee's option by a payment in full when the grant was made or a sum might be paid as earnest at the rate of 10 per-cent, the remainder being paid later; and thirdly, that there should be no condition obliging the grantee to cultivate or clear any specific portion within any specific time. The minimum price for the fee simple was fixed at Rs. 2-8 per acre, so that by paying 10 per-cent of this or 4 *annas* per acre, a title was obtained. This minute was followed up by the issue in 1862 of fee-simple rules for the sale of land by auction to the highest bidder above a fixed upset price<sup>24</sup>.

After the annexation of Darjeeling Terai from the Sikkim Raj in 1850, the Colonial Government made five settlements, i.e., first in 1853-1862 or ten years, settlement which was extended up to 1867; second from 1867-1877 which was expired in 1878; third, in 1879 a fresh settlement for ten years was made though it was extended up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 1895 by the Government Order No. 3791-1545 L.R, dated 30<sup>th</sup> November 1888; fourth, in 1897 the Settlement was renewed for period of twenty years, and last, the next settlement took place in 1919-1925<sup>25</sup>. Dr. Campbell had made the first regular settlement, there were 544 *jotedars* or persons with whom land had been settled. The gross revenue was then Rs. 19507 and net Rs. 17630. Dr. Campbell considered that, these *jotedars* renewed their *jotes* every year but infact they had hereditary rights which could not be refused. He, therefore, allowed the Chaudhuris over 10 percent for collection charges. Five-year rent free grants were also made to encourage clearance of land under jungle which was called *pal*<sup>26</sup>. In 1853 the cultivated portion of the Terai was resettled for 10 years exclusively with *jotedars*. There were 595 *jotes* assessed and the *jama* on them was fixed at Rs. 30730 being 36 percent more than the previous *jama*. Between 1853 and the end of the term of settlement in 1863; 207 new rent-paying *jote* were created, most of which appear to have been expired *pal* holding. In April 1863, 660 Terai holding of which 558 were rent-paying, expired; and as it was decided that the new settlement should be based on a survey which were renewed year to year until 1867. During this period the system of collection through the Chaudhuries had been abolished in 1864, and the collection were, therefore, made through a new sub-divisional establishment with its head quarter at Hansqua in Terai<sup>27</sup> near Phansidewa. After the expiry of the period of this settlement a regular settlements in 1867 for another 10 years

with 808 *jotedars* with an area of 115,137 acres were settled at a revenue of Rs. 35041<sup>28</sup>. The Terai occupies an area of 173,856 acres or 271.56 sq. miles; of which in 1871; 62115 acres or 97.06 sq. miles were returned as under cultivation; 100875 acres or 157.62 sq. miles as cultivable but not actually under cultivation and 10866 acres or 16.98 sq. miles as barren and uncultivable waste<sup>29</sup>. The estimated area under the different crops in the Terai in 1871 was returned the then Deputy- Commissioner of Darjeeling as follows:

**Table: 3.1.1**

**DIFFERENT CROPS AND AREA IN DARJEELING TEARI 1870-71**

Serial Number	Name of crops	Area (in Acres)
1	Rice	47737 acres
2	Cotton	3818 "
3	Pulses	1909 "
4	Jute	3818 "
5	Oilseeds	1324 "
6	Sugar-cane	1409 "
7	Tea	1900 "
8	Vegetables	50 "
9	Fruit trees	50 "
10	Other crops	100 "

[Source: *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol- X, W.W. Hunter, Trubner & Co. London, 1876, p. 97]

In this connection it is interesting to note that in the same year the hill sub-division occupies an area of 615,321 acres or 961.44 sq. miles of which 22,453 acres or 35.8 sq. miles were returned as under cultivation; 456,945 acres or 713.98 sq. miles as cultivable but not cultivated and 135,923 acres or 212.39 sq. miles were barren and incapable of cultivation<sup>30</sup>. The Deputy-Commissioner states that the extension of the cultivated area would doubtless proceeded much more rapidly, though throughout in Terai the jungle were being rapidly taken up for the rice cultivation, owing to the increase of population<sup>31</sup>.

Among the agricultural products of the Darjeeling Terai, rice were forms the staple agricultural product. This is divided into two great classes namely aman or *haimantik* and aus or *bhadai*. Twenty four principal kinds of aman or *haimantik* and eleven principal varieties of aus or *bhadai* rice were grown in Darjeeling Terai. In the hilly portion of the district rice is not grown by any means to such an extent as in the Terai. W.W. Hunter ascribed that in 1870s a considerable extension had taken place in

the area under rice cultivation in the district. For the development of rice cultivation an attempt was made to introduce Carolina rice into the district. Apart from rice, *turi* or mustard, *pan* or betel-leaf, tobacco, potatoes were grown in Terai. But barley, Indian corn, wheat, indigo, were not grown in Terai. Cotton was extensively cultivated by the Meches in the upper Terai region. Dr. Campbell stated that “the soil best adapted for cotton cultivation is a light blackish loam, occasionally mixed with gravel..... After one crop of cotton, a rice crop is taken the following for five year, after which the lands is allowed to run fallow for five years, when it is over grown with heavy jungle and again becomes fit for the growth of cotton. Manure, except the ashes of the burnt jungle, is never used, irrigation is not practiced, and the crop is generally a sure one. The only causes of failure I can ascertain one very heavy rain in October when the pod is forming, and a dry month of May when the seed is sown. The later, however, is of very rare occurrence. When the seed suffers from drought, a second sowing is made. The seed is dibbled in by itself in the best cultivation, but it is sometimes sown broadcast along with rice. The former method of cultivation is called *kil*, the later *jhagri*”<sup>32</sup>. The mangoes were cultivated everywhere in the Terai and lower hills up to a considerable elevation, though it was generally very poor. The Meches and the Rajbanshis were tried to cultivate coffee in the Terai and Western Dooars <sup>33</sup>. Though it was an experimental one. Naxalbari, Kharibari, Matigara were the important jute cultivating areas of Darjeeling Terai. Though, due to commercialization of agriculture, more or less every district of Northern Bengal produced Jute during the early part of seventies in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The following table shows the real picture:

**Table:3.1.2.****AREA UNDER JUTE IN NORTH BENGAL 1872-73**

District	Total area of arable land in acres	1872		1873	
		Area under Jute in acres	Yield of Jute in mounds	Area under Jute in acres	Yield Jute in mounds
Dinajpore	1650400	117629	1764435	---	----
Jalpaiguri	1260800	50000	750000	50000	750000
Cooch Behar	600000	25000	375000	25000	375000
Malda	670080	3500	52500	3500	52500
Darjeeling	16462	1500	22500	1500	22500

[Source: *Report on the Cultivation and Trade in Jute in Bengal*, Hem Chander Ker, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1877, p.65]

On the other hand the following table shows for a period of tobacco cultivation in Northern Bengal and the total production of tobacco in Bengal for the year 1873-74.

**Table 3.1.3**  
**AREA UNDER TOBACCO IN NORTH BENGAL 1873-74**

Tobacco in Bengal 1873-74, total area in acres /last 5 year	Producing Districts	Average area under cultivation in acres /last 5 year	Annual exports in mound
20,000	Cooch Behar	24000	287500
	Jalpaiguri	30000	3000
	Darjeeling	24	Nil
	Dinajpur	20000	30000
	Malda	1240	Nil
Total		75264	

[Source: *Report on the Cultivation and Curing of Tobacco in Bengal*, No. 3725 dt. Calcutta, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1874, p. Appendix-A And *Report of Govt. of Bengal, Agricultural Department*, Cooch Behar Division, No. 144T, dt. 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1873, p.53(W.B.S.A)]

W.W. Hunter gives a list of agricultural implements <sup>34</sup> that were used by the peasants or peoples of Terai is as follows:

- (i) The *hal* or plough
- (ii) *Joyal* or yoke
- (iii) *Mai* or clod-crusher
- (iv) *Bida*, a large rake or harrow for weeding and clearing the plants from jungle
- (v) *Hathbida* or hand rake
- (vi) *Kurish* or wooden mallet for breaking any clods left by the mai
- (vii) *Basila* or small adze
- (viii) *Kodali* or hoe
- (ix) *Dao* or a large knife or billhook for fencing and clearing jungle.
- (x) *Kurpi* or Spud and
- (xi) *Denati* or oxgoad

Manure was applied by the peasants of Terai for the cultivation of mustard, tobacco and fiber. Cow and buffalo dung and household ashes were used. Irrigation was very common in the Terai, the slope of the land and the numerous small streams and water courses of offering great facilities for such a utilization of the water supply. These

were taken advantage of by the energetic habits of the cultivators, mostly Rajbanshis, Mohammedens and Meches, who spend much time and money in excavating artificial canals to lead the water onto their fields<sup>35</sup>. It may be noted that during the later part of the forties in nineteenth century the Meches dug up the stream from Old Balasun (Buri Balasun) to New Balasun, just below Siliguri for the purpose of fishing<sup>36</sup>. Irrigation in the Terai was mostly used for the rice crops. During this period, the land measurements, in the Terai and hills, were locally known as the *hal* and *pati*. The former being the quantity of land which a plough and pair of oxen can turn up in one day, and the latter the weight of seed required to sow a given area. The seed standard was a most variable one, but for general purposes one *pati* may be taken as the equivalent of 8 lbs. Weight of seed, and twelve *patis* as the measure of seed required for one acre. According to the other standard, an acre is represented by a quarter *hal*, or a plough and pair of oxen for four acres. In course of time these local measurements were superseded by the English standard acre. In Terai, the yield of rice per acre varies from 8¾ cwts. or 12 mounds to 3½ cwts. per acre. A revised land settlement was concluded in 1880 with the *jotedars* for a period of ten years, at rates varying from 3 *annas* to 4 *annas* per acre.

The average price of rice in the Terai during the five years ending 1881-1882 was 8 *annas*. a cwt, the current rate in the last year was 6 *annas* and 8 *paisa* in the Terai while it was 8 *annas* per cwt. in the hills. The prices of rice and the Indian corn were fall, the two main food-crops of the district. The fall in prices, while due to some extent to good harvest, great measure attributable to the improved means of communication afforded by the Darjeeling and Himalayan Railway, and the Tista bridge. On the other hand, the wages have risen. This was mainly due to the large demand for skilled labour for the great public works in progress i.e. the Railway, Tista bridge, hospital etc.<sup>37</sup>

It was found in the Settlement Report of 1898 that there had been no increase of ordinary cultivation in the Terai during last 18 years, in spite of the improvement in communications, the rise in the price of rice and the opening out of tea gardens. This stationary character of the cultivation was almost due to the malarial character of the Terai<sup>38</sup>. In the previous settlement i.e. in 1879, the high and low cultivated land had each been valued by the settlement *amins*, and had been divided into 1<sup>st</sup> class, 2<sup>nd</sup> class and 3<sup>rd</sup> class. But in 1898 these subordinate classes have been abandoned, and, in the place of them, the *jotes* have been divided into three classes in Terai according to the rates of rent paid by the subordinate tenants in them is as follows:

**TABLE: 3.1.4**  
**RENT WISE CLASSIFICATION OF LAND IN TERAI**

Settlement Operation (1879)			Settlement Operation (1898)		
Class of Soil S.L NO.		Rate per acre Sanctioned		Class of Soil	Rate per acre Sanctioned
01.	Rupit 1 <sup>st</sup> class	R	A	Rupit 1 <sup>st</sup> class	R A
		1	8		2 0
02.	Rupit 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	1	4	Rupit 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	1 8
03.	Rupit 3 <sup>rd</sup> class	1	6	Rupit 3 <sup>rd</sup> class	1 4
04.	Faringghati 1 <sup>st</sup> class	0	8	Faringghati 1 <sup>st</sup> class	0 10
05.	" 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	0	6	" 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	0 8
06.	" 3 <sup>rd</sup> class	0	4	" 3 <sup>rd</sup> class	0 4
06.	Tea	1	8	Tea	1 8
07.	Sal	1	8	Sal	1 8
08.	Homestead	0	8	Homestead, Bamboo	
09.	Bamboo			and garden	0 8
10.	garden and				
11.	Orchard				
13.	The cultivated tea	0	12	New fallow	0 10
14.	" " Rupit	0	12	Old fallow	0 3
15.	" " Faringhati	0	3		
16.	High Grazing	0	2		
17.	Low Grazing	0	2		

[Source: *Letter No. 462 T.S, Dated 3rd November 1898, from the Director of Land Records, Submitting, with his remarks, the Final Report of the Settlement of the Darjeeling Terai, and a note thereon by the Commissioner of the Rajsahi Division, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1899, Calcutta,(W.B.S.A)*]

In the settlement of 1879 the system of classification followed for *rupit* or low lands and *faringhati* or high lands was based on an estimate made of the value of each field by the measuring *amin*, who have been found had no knowledge of such type of work. So in the Settlement Operation of 1898 a method was adopted to classify the lands according to the rents actually paid by the sub-tenants. For this purpose the *jote* and not the *mauza*, was taken as the unit, and it was assumed that in a *jote* giving a rent of Rs. 16-25 a *hal* were settled as first class, while a *jote* giving a rent of Rs. 10-15 per *hal* were considered second class and the lands paying lower rent per *hal* were considered third class<sup>39</sup>. It is to be noted from the table no 3.1.4 that the seventeen classes of land in the previous settlement (1879) was reduced to nine in the settlement of 1898. The cultivated fields which have been left fallow lately for temporary causes, such as illness of *jotedars* or absconding of *raiya*s, have been recorded as new fallow but the waste land never brought under cultivation was considered as old fallow<sup>40</sup>. The result of classification of land that was found in 1898, as compared with the previous one, is shown below.

**TABLE: 3.1.5**  
**COMPERATIVE CLASSIFICATION OF LAND**

SETTLEMENT REPORT (1879)		SETTLEMET REPORT (1898)	
Description of Soil	Area in acres	Description of Soil	Area in acres
1 <sup>st</sup> class	11,537	1 <sup>st</sup> class	14,727
Rupit { 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	19,826	Rupit { 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	15,118
3 <sup>rd</sup> class	6,266	3 <sup>rd</sup> class	7,719
1 <sup>st</sup> class	2,276	1 <sup>st</sup> class	4,88
Faringhati { 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	11,989	Faringhati { 2 <sup>nd</sup> class	7,556
3 <sup>rd</sup> class	4,673	3 <sup>rd</sup> class	5,264

[Source: *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal, Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p.21]

According to the above principle 834 *jotes* in 19 *mauzas* have been divided into three classes for the purpose of assessment as given below:

**TABLE: 3.1.6.**  
**JOTEWISE CLASSIFICATION OF LAND IN DARJEELING TERA 1898**

Name of Mauza	Number of Jotes	area in acres and decimal	Percentage	Number of Jotes	area in acres and decimals	Percentage	Number of Jotes	area in acres and decimals	Percentage
Attarokoi	6	805.40	16	17	3811.63	67	6	902.13	17
Baraghorla	35	3,224.37	48	16	1,545.51	23	16	1,044.69	29
Bissorebati	--	--	--	--	--	--	7	2,106.69	--
Champasari	9	605.42	28	13	1030.20	48	9	502.94	24
Dumriguri	14	2955.67	71	8	690.58	17	4	513.45	12
Gossuinpur	11	1,392.97	27	13	2,227.62	43	11	1,503.70	30
Hetmuri	11	1,327.84	30	10	1,916.97	45	7	1,092.83	25
Jalash	9	1,077.12	24	9	2,385.90	52	4	1,075.29	24
Nizamtara	24	3,209.68	33	27	4,427.06	45	7	2,091.55	23
Pathorghata	45	4,869.96	53	8	1071.20	12	28	3,378.13	36
Singijhera	4	439.46	8	14	1482.10	23	29	4,329.59	69
Thakurganj	--	--	--	12	2,309.61	35	21	4,365.05	65
Hatighisa	18	2487.28	32	16	1,877.10	24	27	3,431.68	44
Nuxalbari	37	5,487.51	51	16	3,134.96	29	21	2,149.51	20
Raniganj	10	1,052.93	20	18	2,385.78	44	15	1,925.99	36
Panisali	12	1383.54	19	23	4,917.91	67	8	1,014.13	14
Khokogaon	9	1,177.06	20	14	2,809.98	47	10	1,985.23	33
Birnabari	9	1490.13	22	10	1,770.11	26	20	3,450.44	52
Buraganj	26	3920.82	28	33	6,168.27	44	18	3,963.65	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>2891</b>	<b>36911.15</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>45962.49</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>41402.67</b>	<b>--</b>

[Source: *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. 22]

The Terai soil is sandy loom and light. The animals used in agriculture were bullocks and buffaloes. The later was used by Dhangurs, Santalis and Nepalese for cultivation<sup>41</sup>. The cultivators were used several rivers and various water passage, such as *pherees, nalas* and others for irrigation purpose and for which the *jotedars* were quarrel always<sup>42</sup>. It is found in the Settlement Report of 1898 that the extension of tea cultivation in Terai were 3,163.76 acres, whereas under ordinary crops there has been actual decrease in cultivation i.e., 55,270.67 acres against 56,567.75 acres by last Settlement(1879). It appears than an increase of cultivation of 7,727 acres in 385 *jotes* and decrease of 5,862 acres in the remaining 449 *jotes*. The following table given details-

**TABLE: 3.1.7.**  
**STATEMENT SHOWING THE INCREASE AND DECREASE IN CULTIVATION OF JOTES FROM 1879-1898**

Name of Mauza	Number of Jotes	Cultivated area in Jote		Increase		Decrease	
		By Last Survey (1879)	By Present Survey (1898)	Number of Jotes	Acres	Number of Jote	Acres
<b>PARGANA: PATHORGHATA</b>							
Pathorghata	81	4475	4940	43	822	38	357
Champasari	31	647	866	16	362	15	143
Barogharia	67	3088	3197	29	45	38	236
Gossainpur	35	2431	2838	19	434	16	27
Jalash	22	2414	2208	08	119	19	325
Atharokhai	29	2256	2266	13	202	16	192
Thakurganj	33	2660	2679	10	410	18	391
Nizamtara	58	4989	4920	22	262	36	331
Dumriguri	26	1810	1776	10	105	16	139
Hetmuri	28	2630	2207	05	105	23	528
Singijhora	47	1782	2630	29	1050	18	200
Bisarobati	07	500	833	06	333	01	-
Total	464	29,682	31,360	210	4549	254	2869
<b>PARGANA: HATIGHISA</b>							
Naxalbari	74	5279	5195	34	516	40	593
Buraganj	77	7017	7030	38	641	39	628
Panisali	43	4696	4972	26	377	17	102
Birnabari	39	3771	3748	20	358	19	380
Khokograin	33	3088	2501	09	67	24	652
Raniganj	43	2200	2430	23	500	20	79
Hatighisa	61	3427	3789	26	719	36	357
Total	370	29478	29665	176	3178	195	2791
Grand Total	834	59,160	61025	386	7727	449	5,660

[Source: *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. 09]

It is to be noted that when cultivated portion of land were decreasing in Terai, in certain parts of Kalimpong, it had already reached its extreme limit and further extension

was neither profitable nor desirable<sup>43</sup>. Nevertheless, in the Settlement Report of 1898, the areas measured under different crops in the Terai were 70,659.33 acres, out of which 2001.84 acres yield more than one crop in a year. The following table will show the real figures:

**TABLE: 3.1.8.**  
**AREA UNDER EACH CROP IN DARJEELING TERA I 1898**

Name of the Crop	Area (In Acres)	Percentage of Area
Rice	46,160.49	65.330
Wheat	3.13	0.218
Barley	32.15	
Jowar	.09	
Bajra	.41	
Mandua	11.26	
Maize or Bhutta	106.65	
Gram	15.49	1.201
Kalai	787.19	
Kauni	45.40	
Linseed	4.72	4.329
Til	24.78	
Mustard	3,023.89	
Soorguzi	4.72	
Condiments &	53.14	.076
Sugarcane	167.17	.237
Jute	2338.54	3.311
Coffee	.82	17.638
Tea	12,462.70	
Tobacco	441.95	0.625
Ginger	1.45	0.001
Betel leaves	4.54	
Garden Produce	508.51	.720
Potato of different kinds	505.27	.716
Thatching Grass	3,954.87	5.598
Total	70,659.33	100.000
Deduct area cropped more than once	2001.84	--
Net area under cultivation	68,657.49	100.000

[Source: *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. 09]

From the above table it can be said that the production and cultivation of rice was maximum among all the crops which were cultivated in Terai and it was divided into two principle varieties, viz., *Bhadoi* and *Haimantik* as stated earlier. The former is again subdivided into four kinds, locally known as *Shani*, *Kachai*, *Mansara* and *Kala*. They grow in upland which was ploughed five or six times commencing from February and then leveled with May. The weeds and clods collected by it are then brunt and their ashes

serve the purpose or manure. The later or *Haimantik* which grow on low-lands were subdivided into twelve principle varieties i.e., *Kalam*, *Bachi*, *Kukurjali*, *Mansara*, *Bindisar*, *Kalanunia*, *Dasnunia*, *Bagasar*, *Soulpa*, *Ham*, *Pagli*, *Katisali*, and *Dhunsi*. It is first shown broadcast in nurseries in May or in first part of June after the first rainfall. The ground is then brought under constant ploughing with the heavy fall of rain in the latter part of June and in July until the land has become sufficient soft puddle. The process of cultivation of *rabi* crops and *pat* in the same as *Bhadoi*. Only difference is that mustard field do not require to be thinned by rake. They are properly manures by cow dung which are heaped close to cow-shed for the purpose. Mustard and Jute are sown broadcast in November and April and cut in January, February and in August respectively.<sup>44</sup>

During the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the economic pattern of Darjeeling District had a dualistic structure i.e., the plantation in Darjeeling-Kurseong area and agriculture in Kalimpong-Terai area. The Tista river is the dividing line between two types of structure. So besides tea, agriculture played an important role in encouraging large scale of immigration in Terai as well as in the district. As stated earlier that Dr. Campbell gave the early settlers every encouragement to reclaim forest land and settle there. Till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when in the field of agriculture, it was better to call a period of introduction in the hill area of Darjeeling, it can be said a period of consolidation through the different experiments of the land tenure system in Terai. The land tenure system which the British Government introduced in this district was novel. They introduced a Riyotwari system in the hills and *Jotedary* system in Terai. Though, the only *Zamindar* in the hills was Chebu Lama who helped the British in the Anglo-Sikkim wars in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But Chebu Lama's *Zamindary* was not permanent, as after his death the land was taken away by the Government and it was renamed Relling Estate Khasmahal.<sup>45</sup>

### **3:1:2 CLASSIFICATIONS OF TENANTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOTEDARY SYSTEM OF TERAI DURING COLONIAL PERIOD:**

It is not possible to draw a firm picture of the system of agrarian relations in Darjeeling Terai during colonial period because, the evidence is so fragmentary. So, we can only present such evidence as we have for the various aspects of the system, and attempt, on its basis, a tentative reconstruction. The Bengali word *jote*, from its Sanskrit original *Yotra*, simply means cultivation or cultivable land. A local Officer of Jalpaiguri noted in 1909: "the term *jote* is applied to any holding large or small, held direct from a

proprietor or from a holder of a recognized tenure, such as *patni*”<sup>46</sup>. The *jotedar* theory generalize for Bengal as whole an typical form of agrarian organization that prevailed mainly in North Bengal had graphically portrayed by Buchanan-Hamilton during his surveys of Rangpur and Dinajpur and latter Settlement Reports of those districts. Though, it may be said that, “*jotedars*” in the sense of de facto village landlords or village controlling dominant peasants had no existence in Bengal except its frontier parts<sup>47</sup>. On the other hand Rajat Kanta Ray and Ratnalekha Ray, said that during the 19<sup>th</sup> century *jotedars* were simply a raiyat or subject who held his *jote* or cultivable plot on a direct lease from *zamindar* i. e., a subject who was not an under – raiyat<sup>48</sup>. Though Rajat Datta argued that, there is no strong evidence regarding the rise of *jotedars* in Bengal during late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century which was mostly confined in the two district of Bengal i.e., Rangpur and Dinajpur. He also said that the theory proposed by Ratnalekha and Rajat Ray have very little to say about the actual milieu of agricultural production while discussing the emergence of *jotedars* over two centuries of British rule in Bengal and their sources were mostly confined in those two districts<sup>49</sup>. Bell on the other hand in his Settlement Report of Dinajpur, Said that “..... As elsewhere in North Bengal, this *jotedar* class is socially supreme in the countryside. The *jotedar* families may hold several hundreds or even thousands of acres of land in their own possession..... All these men are of a class which may be described as practicing large-scale farming, though it is farming not with any large capital sunk in machinery, but through the traditional methods, employing either labourers or *adhiars* (sharecroppers)”<sup>50</sup>. In Northern districts of Bengal, such as Dinajpur and Rangpur, the big *jotedars*, commanding land, labour and credit, collected half of the produce as rent from *bargadars* and often managed to get themselves recognized as raiyat under the categories created by late nineteenth century tenancy legislation<sup>51</sup>

In North Bengal rich, enterprising farmers who had helped to clear the scrub and jungle during the nineteenth century were the dominant elements in a highly polarized agrarian structure. Vast areas in this region were uncultivated jungle and settled for reclamation with enterprising tenant-farmers called *jotedars*. Ecological factors had an important bearing on this particular form of agrarian organization. Large tracts of land were assigned to substantial men of capital at low fixed rents and with permanent and transferable rights to facilitate organization of large-scale reclamation from jungle. The reserves of labour provided by the semi-tribal Koches and Paliyas and the Rajbanshis

and by the immigrant Santal of later year were utilized to conquer the inhospitable waste land. Once the work of reclamation was completed, they remained as sharecroppers with no right of continued occupancy of the land they tilled. So, during the nineteenth century, the *jotedar-adhiar* pattern became the dominant feature of the agrarian structure in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling Terai; which were wrested from Cooch Behar and Bhutan and came under the British dominance about in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>52</sup>. The tenants in these region were divided into tenants-in-chief (*jotedars*), sub-tenants (*chukanidars*, *darchukindars* and *dara -darchukanidars*) and holders under the metayer system (*adhiars*)<sup>53</sup>. Mr. Edgar gives the following interesting account of the revenue system and land tenure of Sikkim during second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century in following way:

“There are twelve Kazis in Sikkim, and several other officers with various names exercise jurisdiction over specific tracts of land. Each of these officers assesses the revenue payable by all the people settled on the lands within his jurisdiction,.....he has no proprietary right in the lands, though the kazis have at least a kind of hereditary tittle to their office. The Kazis and other officers exercise limited civil and criminal jurisdiction within the lands the revenue of which they collect,.....the cultivators have no tittle to the soil, and a man can settle down and cultivate any land he may find unoccupied without any formality whatever; and once he has occupied the land, no one but the Raja can turn him out.....There is a kind of tenant-right, however, under which are enable to dispose of unexhausted improvements.....this custom is acknowledged not to be absolutely a right, but more of the nature of an indulgence on the part of the Raja, by whom it was allowed to grow up for the sake of convenience.

The land is not assessed, and pays no revenue. The assessment is on the revenue-payer personally. I think that in theory he is allowed the use of the Raja's land in order that he may live and be able to render to the Raja the services which he is bound to perform as the Raja's live cattel; and possibly if the system were carried to theoretical perfection, he would be bound to give over to the Raja all the net produce of the land that is, all the fruit of his labour beyond what might be actually necessary to support him-self and his family. In practice, the subject is only bound to give a certain portion of his labour, or of the fruit of his labour, to the state; and when he does not give

actual service, the amount of his property is roughly assessed, and his contribution to the state fixed accordingly, but such assessment is made without the slightest reference to the amount of land occupied by the subject. The value of his wives and children, slaves, cattle, furniture etc. are all taken into account, but not the extent of his fields.”<sup>54</sup>

So, it may be said that like the Kazis in the hill, the Sikkim Raja had collected revenue from the Terai through the officers, were called Chaudhuris. It may be presumed that during the pre-Sikkimise reign in Terai, the Raikat of Baikuntapur were also to collect the revenue of Terai with the help of these Chaudhuries. As Sikkimise administration in Terai was not so strong during that period, the ruler of Sikkim was not in position to release their duty. On the other hand, it may be said that the ruler seeking a support of a strong class i.e., the Chaudhuries in Terai who would act as an intermediary class and help the expansion of its rule over the land. But after annexation by the Sikkim *Raja* the district were divided into several different tracts. One of these tracts was Terai region of bellow Pankhabari which was annexed by the colonial Government in 1850. As the first settlement for short term with the Bengalis, the settlement holders were called Chaudhuris of *jotes* or group of cultivation. However, the Chaudhuries were abolished in 1864, as stated earlier, and the settlement was made with the *jotedar* or cultivators of the *jote* <sup>55</sup>. In this connection it is to be noted that during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the eastern Terai region, the land and other taxes were collected on a contractual basis through the Chaudhuri of each *pargana* on behalf of the Nepal Raja <sup>56</sup>. Yet it is still not known that when the system of *Jotedari* began in Terai. Sasi Bhusan Dutta Says: “The owners of the holding created before and after the annexation by British Government are designated by British and grant-holders.”<sup>57</sup>

The economic setbacks and political turmoil of the 1850s compelled the Government to attempt a redefinition of agrarian law in the raiyat’s favour. The Rent Act of 1859 recorded the transition from an era of migrancy to predominantly settled agriculture by introducing tenant. Raiyats were sub-divided into three major categories (i) permanent raiyats paying fixed rents. (ii) occupancy raiyats protected against arbitrary eviction and rent inner case and (iii) non-occupancy raiyats paying the competitive rent<sup>58</sup>. The Government introduce this act into Darjeeling is mainly made the arable or jungle land into cultivable one on the one hand and to form a loyal administrative machinery who were economically bonded with the Colonialist interest. Despite this,

during that period saw the rise of a new organizational form in North Bengal districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, where tribal were came from Bihar<sup>59</sup>. Though Tweedy, the then Deputy Commissioner of Western Dooars, found that the *jotedar* represented the original re-claimers of the soil of Western Dooars and their rights were hereditary and it passed through many generation. He also said that the *jotedars* existed during the Bhutanese period. This means the *jotedari* system is not the creation of British but existed long before they come here<sup>60</sup>.

But immediately after British annexation of the Darjeeling Terai, Campbell in his first settlement of agricultural lands reported the settlement of 544 *jotedars*, the holding of *jotedars* were renewed from year to year but Dr. Campbell considered that they were practically hereditary owners of land and that each year when they went to the Chaudhuris to have registration of their holding renewed, they claimed a hereditary right which the Chaudhuris could not refuse. Some of the *jotedars* get three years of lease of their holding with clause which was meant to imply a promise of renewal<sup>61</sup>. This indicates that the *jote* form of organization of production predated British control. It was with the least alteration in the existing agrarian system that a land revenue system was imposed in Terai. It may be, that the lands were never permanently settled in this border area but perpetually leased out<sup>62</sup>.

The concept of *jotedar* in Terai, historically, one who held land directly under Government and paid revenue to Government<sup>63</sup>. Originally, the *jotes* were let out on to the local agriculturists with the object to bring the land under cultivation either by the lease or by the tenants but the original purpose was not traceable. But after British annexation with an influx of outsiders as middlemen, the purpose was completely different<sup>64</sup>. They purchased many *jotes* or parts of *jote* and emerged as middlemen. As a result the number of *jotes* increased sufficiently and a huge numbers of middlemen interest created between the Government and the tiller of the soil. Sub-in feudations increased day by day and the actual agriculturist were to pay double amount of rent in comparison with what they used to pay previously. The original settlers of the soil gradually pushed out by the rich and influential immigrants who were mere receivers of rent that actual cultivator or agriculturist<sup>65</sup>. The structure of the *jotedary* system in Terai was based on a patrimonial-feudal culture of the Rajbanshis. It is generally held to be true that the original *jotedars*, who were almost exclusively Rajbanshis, settled down on a tract of largely forest or fallow land. They possessed both working capital and fixed

capital (instruments of production). They brought with them fellow-caste men who had only their labour at the disposal of the *jotedar*<sup>66</sup>. Though it is beyond a doubt that many *jotes* exist which have passed hereditary through several generations and whose origin the present holders cannot be trace. Another way in which a *jote* may be acquired is by purchase and other is by gift from a *jotedar*. The *jotedar* may occupy his *jote* himself as peasant proprietor, cultivating such crops as he pleases and disposing of the produce as to him seems best. He also sublet the whole or any portion of his holding to whom he pleases, on whatever terms he can obtain. A *jotedar* whether holding in severalty, joint or in common, may at any time sell his rights, provided that in so doing he does not prejudice the rights of any third-person. Thus if a *jotedar* have a son, who will be heir to his father, the father cannot dispose of the *jotedari* rights without the consent of his son, they are the property of the family and not of individual. Previously, in all the cases of alienation and probably also in cases of succession, a fee of recognition of the change was payable to the Raja or representative of Raja i.e., the Chaudhuris. This fee was in its nature either a fine or a relief. But a *jotedar* may also alienate his holding for a fine only, which is effected by mortgage<sup>67</sup>.

As stated earlier that in re-settlement that was took place in 1853 were exclusively made with the *jotedars*. The lands were not measured for the assessment of the *jama* but each *jote* was assessed roughly, on a comparison made between it and certain standard *jote* in the same *mouza* which had been previously carefully surveyed and examined. Between 1853 and the end of settlement in 1863, 207 rent-paying new *jotes* were created. In 1863, the number of *jotes* settled is stated to be 739, and the rents used to vary from 12 *annas* per acre for low paddy land to 1 *annas* per acre for grazing land. The settlement of 1867 was based on a survey of the Terai made between, 1863-1865 and according to theory, the renewed lease of each *jote* conveyed to the lease of the area to which he was actually entitled under the previous lease. But there is nothing in the office records to show how the holdings were defined for the purpose of survey. Besides the revenue paying holding surveyed in this way, there were *pal* or rent free holding. The leases of these holdings gave a right to cultivate 200 *bighas* within a certain indefinite larger area and in this respect resembled the well-known Jum Mahal of Shyllet. When the survey was made the holders of *pal* leases were told to point out the limits of their gross holding. In almost all, if not in every case it turned out that the area within such limits was much greater than the 200 *bighas* of the lease, and the lease was

told to point out in what portion of the surveyed area he would take his 200 *bighas*. On his doing so, the area was surveyed off and the remainder of the holding was returned as excess. The total area, shown was 14,405 acres, much of which was scattered plots in all parts of the Terai. Besides this, there was an area of 14,228 acres, which seems to have been taken up for the Forest Department and relinquished by it at the time of survey. These lands are called in the office records as “forest excess” lands. These as well as the *jote* excess lands, have all been settled on thirty years leases <sup>68</sup>. In 1879 a fresh settlement for ten years was made and the rent demand was fixed at Rs. 79,518.00. Though, the term of this settlement was extended up to November 30<sup>th</sup> 1888 as stated earlier. According to the settlement of 1894-95 excluding of forest land the total area of Darjeeling Terai was 1,47,170.19 acres or 229.95 sq. miles as distributed as follows:

**TABLE NO 3.1.9:  
AREA UNDER SETTLEMENT OPERATION IN 1894-95(EXCLUSIVE OF  
FOREST LAND)**

	Name of the Holdings	Area (Acres)	Average Size of Holding (Acres)
Jote held formerly ten year leases	834	124,376.36	149.13
Tea grants made under the Wast Land Rules	80	22,475.63	280.94
Government Markets	10	289.6	--
Khas Land	03		
Private Markets	08	29.14	--
Total	935	147,170.19	--

[Source: Letter, No. 462 T.S, Land Revenue Department, Resolution No. 2075, 20<sup>th</sup> May, 1899, Calcutta (W.B.S.A)]

In the settlement of 1879, including *jotes* and grants the total demand of revenue was 93,197 Rs. 11 *annas* and 9 *paisa*. But due to increase in the rates of rent, classification of the land and increase of cultivation had resulted in raising the demand of revenue 1, 13, 22 Rs. 4 *annas* 3 *paisa* in 1897, giving an increase of Rs. 20,024, *annas* 8 and 6 *paisa* or nearly 21.48 percent. The increase obtained from the grants under the Waste Land Rules was only 110 Rs.13 *annas* and 10 *paisa* or 1.27 percent but that from the *jotes* amounts to 19,913 Rs., 10 *annas* and 8 *paisa* or 26.56 percent. In the case of 20 years lease the *jotedars* had to pay the revenue by two equal installments from 1<sup>st</sup> November 1897 to on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> October and the other on or before 31<sup>st</sup> January<sup>69</sup>. So, on the basis of the above table i.e 3.1.9 it can be said that there were altogether 834 *jotes* in Terai with an area of 124, 376.36 acres under the settlement of 1894-95. The average size of each *jote* is therefore 149.13 acres. The largest one had an area of 11, 92.14 acres and the smallest one 2.41 acres. In the previous settlement (1879)

the *jotedars* have been treated as raiyats with a right of occupancy. So, in this connection, an attempt was made to treat certain *jotedars* as tenure-holders who were found to servers themselves entirely from the cultivation of land and to reduce themselves to mere rent-receiver<sup>70</sup>. Nevertheless the following table i.e 3.1.10 showing the details of *jotes* grouped into three classes according to their value, with the particulars of grants that were entitled under Settlement Report of Darjeeling Terai in 1898 (in acres):

**TABLE NO.3.1.10**  
**STATEMENT SHOWING THE DETAILS OF JOTES GROUPED INTO THREE CLASSES ACCORDING TO THEIR VALUE, WITH THE PARTICULAR OF GRANTS IN THE ENTIRE TRACT UNDER SETTLEMENT 1894-95**

Name of Class		Rupit	Faringati	Tea	Homestead Bamboo and Garden	New Fallow	Sal	Old Fallow	Govt. Khas	Total	Old demand		
											Rs	A	P
First Class Jote	289	14,727.00	4885.38	150.65	1064.54	1531.9	1470.22	11696.27	1431.26	36957.12	18868	13	3
Second Class Jote	277	15,117.96	7556.33	473.02	1231.38	2455.14	1199.41	1687.37	1471.94	45692.55	28872	9	6
Third Class	268	7719.54	5264.46	5133.59	805.96	2027.32	2792.94	16569.13	1413.75	41726.69	26747	5	7
Total	834	37,564.50	17706.17	5757.26	3101.88	6014.26	54.62.57	44452.77	4316.95	124376.36	84488	12	4
30 Years Lease Grant	80	604.65	319.47	6705.44	500.57	243.28	4841.03	9493.43	467.76	22475.63	8708	15	5
Total	914	38,169.15	18025.64	12,462.70	3,602.45	6257.54	9603.6	53,916.20	4784.71	146851.09	93107	11	9

[Source : *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutt, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. Appendix, F]

The *jotedars* both in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts were sometimes a middleman who sub-lets all his land and sometimes as a cultivator. The most important clauses of the lease for the Terai *jotes* corresponded closely with similar clauses in the Mal *jote* lease in the Western Dooars, parts of the clauses being almost word to word the same. The resemblance of the *jotedar* in these two tracts of the country is due to the history of these tracts and the similarity of the geographical conditions prevailing therein. About the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century both of these tracts were annexed by the Colonial Government. The tracts that were cultivated by the Meches and Rajbanshis but in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Mohammedans were settled there. In course of time due to the opening and growth of tea industry the *jotes* passed by transfer or by new settlement into the hands of middlemen who let out all their lands. So, in these two tracts the *jotedars* being mainly resident cultivators and they could not be treated in any way as

*zamindar*<sup>71</sup>. Sugata Bose pointed out that, the existence of considerable waste in North Bengal usually placed the *jotedars* in a powerful bargaining position vis-a-vis the absentee *zamindars* and from the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were also armed with the formidable legal rights<sup>72</sup>. The then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, dated 22nd August 1898 observes that the cultivators of Terai were divided according to the legal incidents of their holding into tenants-in-Chief (*jotedars*), and sub-tenants (*thiccadars*) and labourers paid in kind (*adhiars*). The *adhiars* were forms a distinct social class being composed of men without capital and often without skill, under the direction of a superior, in this respect they differ generally from those who work a similar system under the name of Bhawalidars in Bihar. He also stated that the farmers do very well and the poorest person is sure of receiving enough food, not only as long as he can work but also in the time of temporary sickness. The Terai fever deprives the farmers from the pleasures of life. But on the other hand in the adjoining region of the Dooars, the continuation tract of Darjeeling Terai, the cultivators seems happy enough, though their health suffers frequently. Sometimes the *adhiar* or *projah* receives from his landlord either *jotedar* or *thiccadar*, who settles him on his holding, an advance of paddy to enable him to tide over the time until he reaps a crop. He is also helped with plough, bullocks and other necessary articles for the cultivation of land and for creating his house to live. The tenants holding lands at money rent immediately below the *jotedar* and grant-holders were called *thiccadars*. They have no right of occupancy on the land held *thicca*, nor of transfer by sale of gift both and only inherit the holding with the *jotedars* permission. In fact the *thiccadars* do not stay long in one place. Sometimes they were compelled to do so on account of black-fever, bad harvest and other inconvenience to the grater loss of *jotedars*<sup>73</sup>. An Assistant Settlement Officer Jogesh Chandra Mitra observes that “Instances of middlemen holding between the *jotedars* and the tiller of the soil are not wanting and we have got a series of sub-infedations ranging from *thiccadar to dar-thiccaders, dara-dar-thiccadars, nim-daradar-thiccadars* and so on down to the fifth or sixth degree till the actual cultivator is reached”<sup>74</sup>. He also added that in the Terai unders *Joteders, thiccaders* a name which covered all cash rent paying- tenants of different grades “One great holding under the one next superior to it just tenure-holders of different grades who are governed by the Bengal Tenancy Act”<sup>75</sup>. It is to be mention here that the rights of the *thiccadars* were nowhere defined in the *jotrdars* leases<sup>76</sup>.

Therefore the particulars of their holdings was found in Settlement Report Of 1898 been explained in the following table for easy reference

**TABLE: 3.1.11.**  
**STATEMENT SHOWING THE STATUS AND RENT OF TENANTS AS**  
**RECORDED IN THE KHATIAN IN 1894-1895**

Classes of Cultivators	Particular of Cultivated Land (In Areas)									Total	
	Number of Holding	Aggregate cultivated area hold by each class	Average area of cultivated land per holding	Rent			Average rent per cultivated area				Aggregate cultivated area hold by each class (In Area)
				Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P		
Tea planters	136.	12,462.70	91.63	18,360	9	0	1	8	6	19,543.85	32,006.55
Ordinary Jotedars	778	15,114.74	72.23	74,837	2	9	1	5	1	43,244.04	58,358.78
Adhiars under Jotedars	1,7,44	5,736.08	3.38	--			3	6	8	257.24	5,993.32
Thikadars	4,757	25,886.28	7.43	1,20,898	3	9	--			9,328.90	35,215.18
Adhiars under Thikadars	915	2,597.55	2.83	27,119	13	4	3	15	3	139.46	2,737.01
Darthikadars	2803	6,666.69	2.44	--			--			852.92	7,519.61
Adhiars under Darthikadars	86	193.45	2.24	--			--			43.38	236.83
Total	11,219	68,657.49								73,409.79	142,067.28

[Source: *Final Report on the Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutt, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p. 9 and Appendix- A]

In the 1894-95 survey and settlement *jotedars* were treated as *raiya*s having a right of occupancy and as stated earlier and those who were tenants under the *jotedars* (describes as *ticcadars*) or tenants under *ticcadars*, as having no right of occupancy however long they might have been in occupation. In the 1924 settlement, however, *jotedars* who had sublet over 50 percent of their lands were recorded as “under-tenants” within the meaning of section 3 of Act VIII of 1879. This description means that they are what is commonly known as tenure-holders. Similarly *ticcadars* under *jotedars* who have held over 50 percent of their land unlet were recorded as *raiya*s and those who fulfilled the condition of section 6 of Act X were recorded as *raiya*s having a right of occupancy. *Dar-ticcadars* under such *ticcadars* were recorded as *korfa*<sup>77</sup> *raiya*s having no right of occupancy. A small number of *ticcadars*, the area of whose tenancy was large with 50 percent leased out to *dar-ticcadars* were recorded as under-tenants (tenure-holders) and the *dar-ticcadars* under them were recorded as *raiya*s having a right of occupancy where they had been in occupation of their land for 12 years<sup>78</sup>. So on the

basis of above table the agrarian structure of Darjeeling Terai as follows till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is as follows<sup>78a</sup>:

In Darjeeling Terai Jotedar	Other Parts of North Bengal Zamindar
↓	↓
Thiccadar	Jotedar
↓	↓
Dar-thiccadar	Chaukidar
↓	↓
Adhiar	Dar-Chaukidar
↓	↓
Agricrural Labour	Adhiar
	↓
	Agricultural Labour

So, like other parts of North Bengal, the Chaukidars were not directly associated with the agrarian structure of Terai. Though, in 1894 the Colonial Government had introduced Chaukidari system in Terai. They were the patrol police free of rent, to watch over the village during day and night and to help the police in arresting the offenders and to furnish other information occurred in the village. According to the settlement of 1895-1897, 392.33 acres of land were found in the occupancy of the Chaukidars in 16 *mouzas*. Of this 68.50 acres were settled in nine separate holdings with them as tenants directly under government, under G.O No. 284 T.R, dated, 17<sup>th</sup> June 1895, as they have been found to occupy and cultivate the land themselves and the remaining 323.83 acres which the Chaukidars let out to sub-tenants was added to original *jotes* and sub-tenants were entered as tenants under *jotedars*<sup>79</sup>.

In the settlement operation of 1894-1895 the entire Darjeeling Terai area was divided into two parganas i. e., Pargana Patharghata and Pargana Hatighisa and it was further divided into 19 *mouzas*. This division was out of date and had no administrative value, *mouzas* being too large and reprinting on recognized fiscal divisions. But in the 1919-1925 Settlement Operations the *mouzawari* division has been abolished and the

*mouzas* reduced to convenient sizes each being adopted as a unit of survey and consisting of one or more *jotes* according to their size <sup>80</sup>.

In this connection it is to be noted that a *mouza* in the Terai was akin to a *taluk* of Jalpaiguri with this difference that the latter is a unit of survey and is useful as a fiscal division whilst the former had no such usefulness but was an agglomeration of units of survey. The 30 year grants have each been treated as a different *mouza* or unit of survey except where two or more grants belonging to the same person or company lie contiguous to one another in which case they have been amalgamated into one unit. A *hat* has been treated as a separate *jote*. In this way the number of units was considerably reduced <sup>81</sup>. During this period the boundary between the Terai Khas Mahal and Purnea was settled and that between the Baikunthapur Estate in the district of Jalpaiguri and the Terai Government Estate was adjusted, Government and the Baikunthapur Estate having agreed to accept the line of Pembarton's survey as the common boundary. On this basis, the boundary between Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling was notified in Department notification No. 616 T.R , dated 7<sup>th</sup> October 1924<sup>82</sup>.

In the last settlement (1894-1895) there were 834 *jotes* exclusive of *hats* for 20 year grants. But in the Settlement Report of 1919-1925 the number is as follows:

<i>Jotes</i> of the Darjeeling Terai-----	845
<i>Jotes</i> transferred from Jalpaiguri-----	15
<i>Hats</i> -----	22
Total-----	882

So, since the last settlement 11 new *jotes* (845-834) have been formed in Terai and new creation excepting the *jotes* formed out of the land transferred from Jalpaiguri. The rent demand was therefore fixed at the present settlement is Rs. 1,79,163, 1 *anna* and 2 *paisa* and this will be fully payable after the rents have increased progressively within a period from 3 years to 11 years. The term of the settlement was twenty years<sup>83</sup>. The average area of a *jote* was therefore 142.74 acres. Though there were 22 *hats* having a area of 331.08 acres. There were 171 tenures held under *jotedars* with a total area of 9,301.62 acres. The average area of such as tenure is therefore 54.4 acres<sup>84</sup>.

Though apparently the *jotes* were originally settled for the purpose of direct cultivation, the Terai has not been immune from the activities of speculators and land

grabbers bringing in their train the usual evils of sub-infeudations. The indigenous population seems to be unable to withstand peaceful presentation by enterprising strangers, and it is worth mentioning that in the Settlement Report of 1919-1925, 97 *jotedars* were found having no cultivated lands in their *khas* possession as against 53 at the Settlement Report of 1894-1895<sup>85</sup>. In this connection Mr. F.D. Ascoli, the then Officiating Secretary of the Board of Revenue of Bengal tried to put attention of the Commissioner of Rajshahi that the speculators have taken up a very large quantity of *jote* lands meant for rice cultivation and have planted them with tea. He further reported that, this conversion is going at a very rapid rate and unless steps were taken at once to prevent it there is the danger of the rice producing and other crops producing land being before long so reduced in quantity that the quotation of food supply will become acute. It has accordingly been proposed by the Deputy Commissioner to insert with the sanction of Government the clause noted below in the renewed *pattas* to be granted to the *jotedars* at the ensuing Settlement forbidding the conversion of *jote* lands into tea land without the previous sanction of Government:

“ That you, your heirs, legal representatives or assigns shall not convert any portion of the land converted by this lease into tea cultivation without the previous sanction of Government”.<sup>86</sup>

So it is needless to say that after establishment of tea industry in Terai the Marwaris, pleaders, merchants, speculators and others came in Terai and brought many *jotes* or portion thereof. Land-grabbing became the craze of the day among the in-coming speculators. As a result the old and original settlers of the soil have ever since been giving way before these rich and influential new comers. Most of these purchasers were receivers them were the actual cultivators of the soil<sup>87</sup>. Out of the 860 *jotes* in the Terai exclusive of the 22 *hats* 535 have been recorded as tenures. The remaining 325 *jotedars* who were found to have in their “*khas*” or direct possession more than 50 percent of the area of their *jotes* were recorded as occupancy raiyats. In the Settlement Report of 1919-1925 the rights of the *thiccadars* were defined the *jotedars* leases. *Thiccadars* holding under *jotedars* “under-tenants” have been recorded as raiyats or under tenants according as they have respectively in their direct possession more or less than 50 percent of the lands forming their tenancy. The total number of tenants found directly under the under-tenants *jotedars* was 5,075 and they were classified as follows:

Under tenants-----	171
Occupancy raiyats-----	2,252
Non-occupancy raiyats-----	2,629
Non-agricultural tenants-----	23
Total-----	5,075

Source: [Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Darjeeling Terai: 1919-1925, Babu Jogeah Chandra Mitra, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, pp.15-16]

The total number of *thiccadars* holding under all *jotedars* were 6,104 as against 4,757 in the settlement operation of 1895-1897 existing rates of these tenancies have been left untouched, but as stated already their assessment in future will be limited to an increase of 50 percent above the *jotedars* rates. The number of subordinate *thiccadars* of all grades comes to 4,672 in 1919-1925 as against 2,803 in 1894-1895<sup>88</sup>. So, there has been an increase in the number of *thiccadars*. But Mr. P.C. Lyon pointed out that in 1894-1895, during the last decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a competition for labour in Terai but not for land. He, therefore, observes that when competition for land had replaced the competition for labour the question would be completely changed and it would then be necessary to devise means to protect the *thiccadars*<sup>89</sup>. It was a common feature that the rent demanded of the *thiccadars* by the *Jotedars* and similarly by the *thiccadars* from the *dar-thiccadrs*, who held lands under them, was often many times in excess of the rates they themselves pay. Therefore, *thiccadars* who held land under *Jotedars* regarded as a occupancy raiyats<sup>90</sup>. Though there were no *abwabs* or *salami* in Terai for the settlement or transfer of their lands by the *jotedars*. But the *jotedars* have absolute and indefeasible rights to cut down trees growing on their *jotes* and to appropriate the timber. *Thiccadars* and tenants sub-ordinate to them have no rights to cut down or appropriate trees growing on their holding but they usually enjoy fruits of such trees and for this there was no necessary permission would be taken from their landlords<sup>91</sup>. But a healthy tenants right was to be seen in *thanas* of Siliguri and Phansidewa where *thiccas* were found to have been transferred by sale, gift etc. Up to march, 1922 fifteen of such cases were found in *thana* Phansidewa and several cases round about Siliguri. In 1923-1924 only five *thiccas* were sold in the Terai and in 1924-1925 seventeen. No sale of *thiccas* has hitherto taken place in police station of Kharibari

and Naxalbari<sup>92</sup>. Apart from this to protect *dar-thiccadars* the Colonial Government entered the following clause in the *Jotedar* lease:

“No sub-tenant under the lease shall sublet any of his land on pain of forfeiture of his tenure. If a sub-tenant of the lessee sub-lets any of his land, no suit or proceeding for the recovery of rent in money or kind on his part shall lie in any court. The Government reserves power to make rules to be observed by the lease and his tenants for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this clause; and the lessee agree to abide by such rules when published for general observance, and to hold the land subject to such rules on pain of forfeiture”<sup>93</sup>.

In the adjoining estate of Darjeeling Terai i.e., the Baikunthapur Estate a permanently settled one -governed by the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act; where no general and systematic enhancement of rents was known<sup>94</sup>. Hunter showed that the raiyats of Baikunthapur would not pay revenue in fixed way by measuring their lands, rather they used to pay revenue by guess measurement according to their *Jotes*. There was no proper settlement in the *Pargana*. Land was also measurement like *Jote, gaon, bish, don, kali* etc. One *don* is equal to 20 *kali* or 86 *bigha*, *bish* is equal to 20 *don*, 1 *gaon* is equal to 16 *bish*, 1 *hal* is equal to 15 *bigha*<sup>95</sup>. Jagadindra Dev Raikat in his article “*Raikat Bangsha O Tahader Rajwer Sankhipta Prrichay* divided the tenancy of *parghana* in such a way i.e., (i) *Zamindar*, (ii) *Jotedar*, (iii) *Mulander or Chaukanidaars* and (iv) *Proja* or ryot<sup>96</sup>. The *Adhiars* or *Projas* were the only cultivated their lands, without any right under a *Jotedar, Chaukanidar or dar-Chaukanidar*, but whatever the designation or status of the *adhiars* immediate superior may be, he is known as *Giri*. The *adhiars* had to pay half of the produce in the land to their *Giris*, not only that they had to pay more from their share called *abwab* and instead of advance of seed or cash supplied at the time of cultivation<sup>97</sup>. About the right of the *jotedars* it is referred in the provision of Bengal Tenancy Act, that those *Jotedars* whose residence was within the tenancy and who had in their own possession at least one third of arable land and those *Jotedars*, whose homestead was outside the boundaries of the tenancy but who had at least half the arable land in their own possession were recorded as raiyats<sup>98</sup>. The following table compares the rates of Terai in 1924 with those for the neighboring Baikunthapur private estate in the Jalpaiguri District and those of the West Tista Khas Mahal of the Darjeeling District:

TABLE 3.1.12

## LAND RATES OF TERAI AND ITS NEIGHBOURING AREAS IN 1924

	Terai		Baikunthapur		West Tista	
	R	A	R	A	R	A
Rupini (Paddy) I	3	0	3	0	1	10
Do. II	2	4	2	4	1	5
Do. III	1	14	1	8	0	14
Danga (highland) I	0	15	1	14	1	8
Do. II	0	12	1	2	1	3
Do. III	0	6	1	0	0	13
New Fallow	0	15	3	0	0	13
Old Fallow	0	4½	2	4	0	2
Homestead and Bamboo	0	12	10	0	1	12
			To		1	8
			28	0	1	4
Sal	2	4	-	-	-	-
Tea	2	13	-	-	-	-
Waste Land	-	-	-	-	0	3
	-	-	-	-	0	2

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling*, A.J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.230]

But it is interesting to note that in Dooars the *jotedars* were mainly Rajbanshi (an autochthonous community), Bengali Hindus and Muslim. There were also *jotedars* among the *adivasis*<sup>99</sup>. Though in Terai there were no *Adivasi* and Nepali *jotedars*. Most of them were Rajbanshis with some Muslim, Mech and Dhimal *jotedars*. The following tables of Siliguri Police Station under district Darjeeling furnish some name of *jote* according to *mouza* wise:

**TABLE: 3.1.13****NAME OF SOME JOTES ACCORDING TO MOUZA WISE UNDER SILIGURI POLICE STATION 1921-24**

Jurisdiction List Number	(Mouza) Name in English	Area in Acres	Name of Jote		
36.	Champasari	245.57	(i) Salbari (ii) Duramarie I	(iii) Duramarie II (iv) Champasarie	(v) Majhauri (vi) Pashunath Baru
100.	Tomba	359.13	(i) Tomba (ii) Bara Ramdulal	(iii) Baobhara (iv) Khola Bhaxtari	
107.	Mandalaguri	527.09	(i) Mandalaguri (ii) Pukhar	(iii) Narayan (iv) Jran ch. Das	(v) Khoklaisingh
102.	Matigara Hat	71.12	(i) Matigara Hat		
14.	Khaprul	1111.25	(i) Khaprul (ii) Fulbarie patan (iii) Piyaran, (iv) Rohini	(v) Patan (vi) Fulbaril (vii) Nispi fulbarie (viii) Patan jhar	(ix) Demdema (x) Tarajubarie (xi) Khaprul Hal (xii) Khaprul Excise Shop
111.	Shiliguri	446.97	(i) H.D. Dyak Sahb (ii) Ranga Das (iii) Depurbighar Nasva	(iv) Krishna Dayal Singh Das (v) Suraj Kanta Das (vi) Dhardhasa Das	(vii) Pahulal Singh (viii) Shiliguri Hat
47.	Mahish Marie	542.28	(i) Chotta Dumriguri (ii) Bara Dumriguri (iii) Damragaon (iv) Jadu Bhita part I	(v) Jadu Bhita part II (vi) Mahish Marie I (vii) Mahish Marie II (viii) Mahish Marie III	(ix) Tula (x) Bhaish Mari Hat
82	Uttar Bagdogra	402.64	(i) Bhagu Bairagi	(ii) Bagdogra Hat	
89	Rajajhar	565.90	(i) Rajajhar	(ii) Alokjhar	(iii) Chandal
90	Shiavita	606.22	(i) Shiavita	(ii) Tara barie	(iii) Basu

[Source: *List of Settlement Villages as Demarcated and Surveyed in the Survey of 1921-1924*. Also adopted as villages under the Bengal Tenancy Act. Vide Government Notification No. 1021 T-R, Dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July, Calcutta, 1920(W.B.S.A)]

Data on land tenancies after 1924 are not available even now. It is therefore difficult to assess any change that may have taken place between the different categories of the people in agrarian hierarchy. However, it seems clear from the data of Census Reports as well as from the data of Ishaque Survey of 1944-45, the majority of agriculturists, near 75% - 80% in the Terai region are *adhiars*, cultivating lands of *jotedars* on the *adhi* system. The position of *adhiars* is very unsatisfactory, as the share they get is hardly sufficient to maintain themselves. Thus, the study of agrarian relations in this region means by large the study of *jotedari-adhiari* system in which the people belonging S.C and S.Ts play a vital role. Interestingly the two classes- a class of land owners and a class of labourers- are found exist within the same community in this

region. This is perhaps an unique feature of the Darjeeling Terai's agricultural pattern compared to the other regions of West Bengal <sup>100</sup>.

After the settlement of 1919-1925 there has been no settlement till Independence <sup>101</sup>. So, structurally, this was a two-tier system of *jotedar-adhiar* or the *thiccadar-adhiar* forming a complex of social and economic relationship. In respect of the social organization of production of the *jotedari* system has been linked to that of a farm in comparison to the traditional village economy. Normally, if an ordinary *jotedar* had lands in excess of what could be cultivated by family labour, he would parcel out a portion of his lands to fixed-rent tenants (*thiccadars*). In the rest of the lands he would settle upto 10-15 families of *adhiars* who would be given lands to cultivate with a share-contract of 50 percent gross of the produce. The limited number of *adhiars* which was a pervasive phenomenon, followed some latent concept of an outer-limit size beyond which it would be difficult to certain the patrimonial-feudal, quasi-extended family structure. Apart from the crop-sharing content of the economic relationship, the *adhiar* was expected to contribute his labour toward repairing his master's house, his granary, his irrigation channels and so on <sup>102</sup>.

Within the Rajbanshi culture in Terai the social relationships between the *jotedar* and *adhiar* were almost indistinguishable. The Rajbanshi *adhiar* would have free access to the inner sanctums of his master's house and participated in all the social ceremonies helping willingly in their organizations. One interesting fact is that, unlike the *zamindars*, the *jotedars* of Terai had no muscle-men, no *sepaies*, no courts. There was not a single instance of an *adhiar* house being razed to the ground or his women violated for his crime or acts. However, in the Darjeeling Terai perpetual indebtedness never reached the extremes of bondage and slavery as in many other parts of the country. In this connection it can be said that, this system as less exploitative than the others.

So, the *jotedari-adhiari* system established by the Rajbanshis expanded to include non-Rajbanshis who entered the land market. Finding the system so smooth in its functioning they found their investments in land very safe and very good. The British too were happy to protect a system which yielded them good land revenue with the minimum cost of governance <sup>103</sup>. The Bengal Rent Act of 1859 and Bengal Rent Settlement Act of 1879 continued up to 1955. After the introduction of West Bengal Land Acquisition Act 1953 all the pervious land rules and all the earlier enactment in this respect were superseded with effects from 15<sup>th</sup> April 1955 <sup>104</sup>. It is important to mention

that the *jotedar and* tenant belonged to the same community and in this region the *jotedar* was unique in character as it also tilled the lands, and were never an absentee landlord like a *zamindar* under Permanent Settlement.

### **3:1:3 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DARJEELING TEARI DURING THE LAST HALF OF THE COLONIAL RULE: UPTO 1947**

The extraordinary variety of physical configuration or conditions of Darjeeling makes it practically impossible to give any connected account of agriculture in the Terai or in the district as a whole<sup>105</sup>. The principal agricultural statistical of the Darjeeling district for 1903-04 are shown below, areas being in square miles :(Note that 1 sq. mile = 640 acres)

**TABLE: 3.1.14**

#### **AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS OF DARJEELING DISTRICTS 1903-04**

Subdivision	Total	Cultivated	Cultivated waste	Forest
Darjeeling	726	116	27	326
Kurseong	438	135	17	107
Total	1,164	251	44	433

[Source: *The Imperial Gazetteer Of India*, Vo-XI, Henry Frowde, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1908, p. 172]

There was no separate agricultural statistics available for Terai region of the District. Rice, which occupied nearly a third of the cultivated area, was the only foodgrain grown in the Terai, though the winter crop being the most important. In the Terai, the yield of rice per acre varies from 4 to 10 maunds<sup>106</sup>. Apart from Jute, the principal other crops in Terai were oil-seeds, tobacco, sugarcane and pulses etc. The following table shows the agricultural statistics of Darjeeling district in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century:

**TABLE: 3.1.15.**  
**AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT 1901-02**

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS OF 1901-02	AREA IN ACRES
TOTAL AREA	7,44,960 (1,164 SQ MILE)
Acre age under the crops during the year	1,79,100
Area cropped more than once	31,900
Net area cropped	1,47,200
Cereals and Pulses:	1,02,00
Rice	59,900
Wheat	5,000
Barley	2,000
Jowar	--
Bajra	--
Ragi	5,800
Mize	21,700
Gram (pulse)	--
Other food grains	7,600
Oilseeds:	7,000
Linseed	--
Til or Gingelly	--
Rape and Mustard	7,000
Condiments and Spices:	4,000
Sugar	2,000
Sugarcane	2,000
Fibres:	2,000
Cotton	--
Jute	2,000
Others	--
Dyes:	--
Indigo	--
Others	--
Drugs and Narcotics:	51,200
Opium	--
Coffee	--
Tea	49,100
Tobacco	600
Cinchona	1,500
Indian hemp	--
Fodder crops:	--
Orchards and Garden produce	200
Miscellaneous and crops:	12,500
Food	12,500
Non-food	--

[Source: *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, p. 06]

O' Malley ascribed that the cultivation of jute increased largely since the advancement of the railway system of the transport which ensured cheaper costs of export jute. The paddy growing lands were being largely planted with jute and the area under the crops has increased by nearly 30 percent in the last ten years<sup>107</sup>. Naxalbari, Kharibari, Matigara were the jute cultivating areas of Darjeeling Terai. The earlier records said that the jute cultivating area of Darjeeling Terai were decreased rather the increased. The following table illustrates jute area for the year 1907-08 to 1909-10 in the different districts of North Bengal as bellow:

**TABLE: 3.1.16.**  
**AREA UNDER JUTE IN NORTH BENGAL 1907-1910**

Districts	1907-08 to 1909-10
	Area under Jute (In Acres)
Dinajpur	92,000
Jalpaiguri	12,5,500
Cooch Behar	--
Malda	30,000
Darjeeling	3600 to 4000

[Source: *Department of Agriculture of Bengal, Agricultural Statistics of Bengal for 1907-08 and 1909-10*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1909 and 1911, p. 11 and p. 13]

The Settlement Report of 1919-25 revealed that in Terai the total area were 258 sq. miles of which 28 sq. miles were estimated to be reserved forest and 66 under tea, leaving 164 sq. miles of other land. Cut of this area of 164 sq. miles 14½ were waste and about 8½ were under *sal* forest, probably 20 sq. miles of the balance would be uncultivated, leaving 121 sq. miles as cropped area in Terai. Tabulated the figure are as follows<sup>108</sup> :

<b><u>Terai (Siliguri Sub-division)</u></b>	-	<b><u>258 sq. miles</u></b>
(a) Reserved Forest	-	28 sq. miles
(b) Area under Tea	-	66 sq. miles
(c) Cultivated Forest & Waste land	-	164 sq. miles
(i) Waste lands	-	14½ sq. miles
(ii) <i>Sal</i> forest	-	8½ sq. miles
(iii) Uncultivated Land	-	20 sq. miles
(iv) Cropped area	-	121 sq. mile

The total area under cultivation in the district as a whole were 320 sq. miles, with 35 sq. miles in Sadar Kurseong and 84 sq. miles in Kalimpong area<sup>109</sup>. C.A. Bell pointed out that there were different methods of cultivation were used by three different races in the district. A Nepali will attempt to cultivate every available portion of his holding and will keep his bullocks engaged as much as he can; a Bhutia will keep a portion of his holding uncultivated either to give the land a few years rest or to allow jungle to grow for firewood etc. a Lepcha will keep part of his holding out of cultivation like the Bhutia though not very long time like the Bhutia<sup>110</sup>.

The Assistant Settlement Officer pointed out that agriculture in the Terai presents no special features. The soil is loamy and owing to abundant rainfall, retains enough moisture throughout the year. Irrigation, though a primitive type or well irrigation is practically unknown but the smaller rivers, streams, *khals* etc. were dammed up and water diverted into irrigation channels which were locally called *ponris* or *pouris*. The responsibility for maintaining them in proper working order lies with the *jotedars* who also bear the expenses<sup>111</sup>. The appliances used for irrigation were very primitive and consist usually of a bamboo basket by means of which the water is baled out by hand whenever necessary. Even the far too primitive swing-basket of Lower Bengal and the don were unknown in Terai. It appears from the Agricultural Statistics of India for the year 1919-1920 that 30,300 acres of the land in the Darjeeling district was irrigated that year. Very little (Approx. 300 acres) irrigation is carried on in the hills. Therefore most of the area belongs to Terai which covers about 43 percent of the total cultivated area<sup>112</sup>.

The safest system of farming viz., the mixed arable and stock farming chiefly obtains amongst the agriculturists in the Terai as in other parts of Bengal. The livestock consists of buffaloes, cows, bullocks, stud bulls, goats and sheep. The local agriculturists always complain on falling off in the productive powers of the land. This is due to want of proper manuring, though the quantity of manure actually used is very small. The cheapest manure used in cow-dung and very little care is given to its proper conservation. Oil cakes, guanos and chemical manures were never used. The local peasantry had a very poor knowledge of the value of rotation of crops. The only mentionable rotation is Jute followed by *haimantic* or winter rice. Cereals were sometimes followed by leguminous crops such as *Lau (lagenaria vulgaris)*, *Kumra (cucurbita maxima and pepo)*, *Ucchhe (momordica muricata)*, *Jhinga (luffa amantala)*, *Sasha (cucumis sativus)*, and *Kankri (cucumis utilisimus)*. Onions, Garlick, Potatoes,

Brinjals, Chillies Tomatoes etc. were grown on the *bastee* or homestead lands but no judicious system of rotation is followed in growing them <sup>113</sup>. The names of the various agricultural implements used in Terai and their respective names are as follows <sup>114</sup>:

- (i) *Nagal* - Wooden plough
- (ii) *Phal* - A plough share
- (iii) *Kodali* - Spade
- (iv) *Kurali* - Axe
- (v) *Delabhanga* - A wooden mallet for breaking beds of earth
- (vi) *Dao* - A large knife or billhook
- (vii) *Mai* - A bamboo barrow for leveling the field
- (viii) *Bidu* - A large wooden or bamboo rake-for thinning or weeding the fields
- (ix) *Kasehi* - A sickle or reaping hook
- (x) *Khurpi* - Hand weeders
- (xi) *Bashila* - For splitting bamboo.

The areas under the main crops in Terai were as follows according to the Settlement Report of 1925:

**TABLE: 3.1.17.**  
**COMPERATIVE AREA UNDER EACH CROP IN JOTES AND GRANDS IN DARJEELING**  
**TERAI 1898-1925**

Name of Crops	Area Under each Crops (In Acres)		Percentage (In 1925)
	In 1898	In 1925	
Rice	46,160.49	49,523.30	60.67
Wheat	3.13	0.89	--
Barley	32.15	16.78	0.02
Juar and other crops	0.69	185.95	0.22
Bajra	0.41	7.82	0.01
Mandua	11.26	23.0	0.03
Maize	106.65	497.38	0.61
Grain	15.49	12.51	0.01
Kalai	787.19	0.00	--
Kauni	45.40	0.00	--
Linseed	4.72	8.67	0.01
Tol	24.78	7.79	0.01
Mustard	3023.89	2,291.80	2.81
Surgooja	4.72	0.00	--
Other oil seeds	--	54.65	0.07
Condiments and Spices	53.14	54.98	0.07
Sugar-cane	167.17	282.28	0.34
Other sugarcane	--	3.77	0.00
Products crops	--	--	--
Jute	2338.54	3,689.53	4.53
Sunn Hemp	--	0.06	--
Coffee	0.82	0.00	--
Dyes	--	247.21	0.30
Tea	12,462.70	18,467.55	22.63
Tobacco	441.95	541.53	0.67
Ginger	1.45	0.00	--
Betel-leaves	4.54	1.87	--
Drugs	--	0.02	--
Garden produce	508.51	801.08	0.99
Fruits	--	264.84	0.31
Potatoes	505.27	312.62	0.38
Thatching grass	3,954.87	--	--
Other food grains	--	237.10	0.30
Miscellaneous food crops	--	241.96	0.30
Miscellaneous non-food crops	--	3842.87	4.71
Other crops	--	--	--
Total	70,659.33	63,701 (Excluding Tea)	100.00

[Source: *Final Report On the Survey and Settlement Operation In the Darjeeling Terai 1919-1925*, Babu Jogesh Chandra Mitra, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1927, p. 13]

There has been a fair increase in the cultivated area since the last Settlement (1894-95) by 18 percent, including tea, though it was still forms only 55 percent of the total area in Terai <sup>115</sup>. According to the statistics prepared by the Assistant Settlement Officer in 1925 that about 49523.30 acrer grow rice in the Terai. The average yield per acre is 20 mounds of paddy and 15 *bhars* of straw which were valued as 83 Rs. and 8 *annas* approximately. The total value of paddy produced is there for Rs. 4135795. On the other hand the value of the field from 13,632.98 acres planted with other crops exclusive of the area under tea may be estimated Rs. 2,72,659. The average annual agricultural income per capita in the Terai is there for Rs. 58 out of which only 1 Rs. and 11 *annas* will have to be paid as rent, which will be considered as a progressive rent <sup>116</sup>.

From the above table it is needless to be said that the most important crops in the Terai were paddy, tea, jute. Under paddy, the most important crop was *haimantic* or winter which occupying 60.67 percent of the cropped area. Among the *haimantic* the most notable was the *kalanunia* variety - the specialty of the Terai with its fine and fragment grains. Three varieties of tea were grown in Terai. The fiber of jute grown the Terai is inferior in length and the quality to that grown in Eastern Bengal <sup>117</sup>. Compared with the settlement of 1894-1895, it is to be find that during the early part of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the main increase in cultivation was under tea, paddy, jute, and slightly increase in the field of *karif* crops with other food products. In this connection it is noticeable that in the area under wheat, barley, *kalai*, mustard, coffee it was decreased during the first half and latter part of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Terai the local cultivators were capable of growing of cabbages and cauli flowers near Bagdogra and Phansidewa. Potatoes, pineapples, papaya and other garden vegetables were to be profitably grown on a larger scale but it was less than it was at that period. The main reason behind this that the local agriculturists since to be too impervious to innovations and too contended and idle to enlarge their vocational and financial outlook <sup>118</sup>. It is therefore J.A.L. Swan, then Deputy Commissioners of Darjeeling pointed out that “There has been considerable extension of cultivation and numerous changes since the last settlement” in Terai. <sup>119</sup>

As Siliguri was the center of large trade in all sorts of agricultural produce, the price prevailing there regulated the prices in the interior of the sub division. Apart from this, it was found that there was a negligible difference between the prices of rural and urban areas of the sub-division. In the tea garden areas the prices sometimes rose higher

than the prices at Siliguri. At Naxalbari, where rice from the Nepal Terai was brought for sale, the prices were some extent lower than the prices at Siliguri and it was similar in Khoribari. But these differences fluctuated and depend upon the quantity of rice exported from Nepal <sup>120</sup>. The average price of rice in the Terai during the five years 1916-1921 was higher than the average price during the years 1891-1895 by 14 *annas* and 9 pies per rupee. The Assistant Settlement Officer admits that the abnormal rise of price during the years 1916-1921 was caused by economic conditions which were result of the World War I but he thinks that, after allowing deductions on this account and on other grounds, and enhancement at the rate of 10 *annas* per rupee. The Deputy Commissioner thinks that *jotedars* who were tenure-holders should be assessed on their assets and does not regard an enhancement of 10 *annas* per rupee as excessive in their case<sup>121</sup>. Though it is difficult to correctly judge the extent to which the local economy conditions were affected by the W.W.I, but it can be asserted that the temporary disturbance of normal condition did cause undue inflation of prices of food- stuffs and articles and implements of husbandry. The area being almost immune from flood and drought and the local peasantry reaped the full benefit of the high prices, because in such an area as this they always mean gain to the tenant rather than loss. On the other hand high prices mean increased cost of living and cultivation because rice was virtually the only universal economic standard Terai which regulates the price of other necessities of life<sup>122</sup>

The Ishaque Survey of 1944-45 gives the agricultural statistics of the Darjeeling district as are under: <sup>123</sup>

Cultivated area.....	1,10,196 acres
Culturable waste.....	43,334 acres
Unculturable waste.....	16,507 acres
Area under Jungles.....	15,815 acres
Area under Water.....	6231 acres

The area under both culturable waste has decreased since the last settlement (1919-1925). Increase in the population, deforestation and extension of tea cultivation were the three main factors responsible for this decrease.

Of the different crops, the cultivators concentrated on *aman* paddy most in Terai, because the soil is most suitable for the same. Next to it is *bhadoi* paddy and next is *rabi*, the area covered by each being *aman* 48,724 acres, *aus* 1,155 acres and *rabi* 4,315 acres, jute 1,704 acres and tea 18,450 acres. Jute and tea were the main among the special crops of the district. The acreage under jute being so small that it has little effect on the general economy of the area. There has been an increase in the acreage of *aman*, *rabi* and *bhadoi* crops over those of the last settlement (1919-1925). In the hill area of the district most of the first-class lands maize is followed by one or other winter crops e.g millet, mustard and phapar, though mustard is grown rather sparsely. The other principal crops which are grown in this district are soyabean, *arhar*, *khesari*, *mug*, wheat, mustard, potato, sugar cane, pulse including various vegetables and foods. Cultivation of mulberry has become almost non-existent of the district till that period. The size of an average holding in the district is 6.50 acres and the average size of a family in this hill works out at 5.5 persons, being slightly higher than that in the plains or Terai region.

In the Terai 80 percent, of the agriculturists were *adhiars*; cultivating lands of *jotedars* on *adhi* or half-share system. The position of this *adhiars* is very unsatisfactory, as the shares the *adhiars* get is hardly sufficient to maintain themselves. The agriculture structures keeps the *adhiars*, forming so large a proportion of the population, in perpetual poverty<sup>124</sup>.

The following table gives the land employment of the district is as follows 1944-45:  
(Area in acres)

**TABLE: 3.1.18.**  
**LAND EMPLOYMENT IN THE HILLS AND TERAI AREAS OF DARJEELING**  
**1944-45**

Description of Crops	Hill Sub-Division of Darjeeling	Terai (Siliguri Sub-Division)	Total
Paddy			
(a) Aman	12,618	48,724	61,342
(b) Boro	---	---	---
(c) Aus	10	1,155	1,165
Gram	--	--	--
Wheat	1,126	10	1,136
Barley	395	16	411
Maize	68,020	534	68,554
Sugarcane	--	231	231
Mustard	--	3,008	3,008
Potato	1,793	542	2,335
Jute	--	1,704	1,704
Mango	--	53	53
Tobacco	--	295	295
Are not available for cultivation	78,436	16,507	94,943
Culturable but not cultivated	64,387	43,334	1,07,721
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,75,321</b>	<b>1,70,037</b>	<b>7,45,358</b>

[Source: *Census 1951, West Bengal, An Account of Land Management in West Bengal 1870-1950*, A. Mitra, Bengal Government Press, Alipore, 1953, pp. 219-220]

Nevertheless, it is clear from the earlier table 3:1:18 that more area has been brought under tillage by the Colonial Government since annexation of Terai in 1850 by reducing other uncultivated lands through the process of land reclamation. How the cropped area has been gradually increasing proportionally is evident from the earlier statement. In this connection it is noticeable that, cropped are, of course, does not remain constant all through i. e., during colonial period. Similar is also the case with the area remaining current fallows. Through it depends on various geographical factors and fluctuated with the privileging weather and natural conditions and the agro-economic situation of the country<sup>125</sup>. Thus it can be said that there was so little cultivation in this region before the introduction of Company's Rule in Terai but after their arrival all the crops, fruits and vegetables grown in the district has been introduced and acclimatized by the government<sup>126</sup>. However, another interesting thing is noticeable in this connection that in the early Census Report of 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951, the category of agriculture labour was virtually nil or insignificant but assumed importance after independence<sup>127</sup> in Siliguri Sub-Division. Though, the huge increase of population after

1947, in the Terai has aggravated the land-hunger of the people. At the initial period of annexation, the volume of population in this area was so small that the people did not find any difficulty in getting employment and earning either from cultivable land or from the tea gardens. In fact there was a balance between the growth of population and the growth in demand for hired farm labour and tea garden workers. This situation, however, was reverse after the later part of 1940s when the economy had already reached a point in which future employment was not called for. Thus, with the growing population, the number of unemployed and under-employed increased and the process pauperization among the peasantry as well as labour began. This process was further accentuated because of the backward condition of agricultural production in this region<sup>128</sup>.

### 3:1:4 AGRARIAN EVOLUTIONS IN TERAJ AFTER IDEPENDENCE OF INDIA

The peculiar geo-physical condition of the district of Darjeeling make a little less than 40 percent of district total area only were available for cultivation till the end of 1960s. The statement below shows that even for about a decade after the Independence the extent of net cropped area remained unaltered. Only in 1958-59 it rose to about 32 percent from 28.5 percent in 1947-48<sup>129</sup>.

**TABLE: 3.1.19.**  
**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF KINDS OF AREA TO TOTAL ACRES**  
**IN DARJEELING DISTRICT 1947-59**

Years	1947-48	1950-51	1954-55	1956-57	1958-59
Area not available for cultivation	60.93	60.81	61.55	61.93	61.47
Other uncultivated lands excluding current Fallows	8.71	6.49	6.56	6.37	5.73
Current Fallows	1.82	4.28	3.48	3.38	0.87
Net Cultivated area	28.54	28.42	28.41	28.32	31.93

[Source: *Census 1961, District Handbook; Darjeeling*, Part I, B.Roy, Director of Census Operation, West Bengal, 1961, p. 78]

Table No 3.1.19 shows that a fairly large proportion of the net area was being used in this district to raise more than one crop. In 1947-48 only 17.66 percent of net area shown was subjected for yielding more than one crop. This percentage was 10 in 1950-51, 7.89 in 1954-55, 18.41 in 1956-57 and 12.60 in 1958-59<sup>130</sup>.

Thus it appears that there being not much of land left as margin in the district as well as in Terai, the produce of the land will have to be increased by growing more crops per acre than is grown in late 60s in 20<sup>th</sup> century and also by getting two or more crops

out of lands which bear a single crop<sup>131</sup>. While formally a single ploughing was thought sufficient and no manuring though in large extent but after Independence most of the cultivators used plough twice, manure more freely and sow better seeds more efficiently<sup>132</sup>. In early part of 1950s the Agricultural Department of West Bengal persuaded cultivators and managed to set up 11 Demonstration Centers in the district each of 5 acres in which modern and improved methods of cultivation, seeds, manures and implements were demonstrated. As a result in 1951-52 a total of 185 acres of waste lands was reclaimed in Sliguri, Kurseong and Darjeeling Sub-Divisions, of which 35 acres in Siliguri were reclaimed with the help of tractors. In 1952-53 about 72 acres of *jotedars* lands were made in cultivated lands in Terai<sup>133</sup>.

The distribution of the general crops in the district in 1960-61 is given below

**TABLE: 3.1.20**  
**AREA IN ACRES UNDER CROPS IN DARJEELING 1960-61**

NAME OF CORPS	AREA
TOTAL RICE	8,780
(A) Aus	1,977
(B) Aman	80,803
Wheat	1,236
Barley	494
Maize	66,718
Other Food Grains	28,170
Sugarcane	494
Rape and mustard	2,718
Condiments and spice	1,236
Jute	5,931
Other fibres	2,47
Tea	68,448
Cinchona	3707
Fruit and vegetables	13,334
Miscellaneous non-food crops	5,931

[Source: *Census 1961, District Handbook; Darjeeling*, Part I, B.Roy, Director of Census Operation, West Bengal, 1961, p. 79]

The above table shows that about 30 percent of the cropped area of the district covers rice which were mainly cultivated in Terai. About one-fourth of the cropped area were covered by maize and tea each and one-tenth by other food- grains. Fruit and vegetables cover 5 percent of the total area under crops and only 2 percent of it were covered by jute, which were cultivated only in Terai. But in this connection it is interesting to note that there has been some changes in the cropping pattern during the last decade i.e 1951-1961. On the one hand, there has been decrease in cultivation like

rice, mustard and other fruit crops in Terai. But it has little increase in the field like jute, sugarcane etc.<sup>134</sup> Another important phenomena during this period of 1961-1971 was the enormous growth of agriculture laborers in Terai region. The Census Report revealed that there was an absolute rise of agriculture laborers from about 8 thousand in 1961 to 31 thousand in 1981 in Darjeeling district. The proportion of agricultural laborers to total number of workers reveals a tendency to increase definitely during the period 1961-71, but such a trend is not noticeable during the 1980s. Further, the following table (no 3:1:21) show that the number and proportion of cultivators in the Darjeeling district have decreased considerable during the period of 1961-81. All though the data on Terai for the census decade of 1971-81 are not available, the same conclusion, however, can be drawn regarding this area on the basis of 1961-71 data. Thus, whether or not, this strongly suggested a downward mobility from cultivators to agricultural laborers, expressing there by the phenomenon of proletarianisation of the rural poor. It can be said that the migration of people from other places in India or outside India mostly who migrate from East Pakistan have swelled the ranks of the landless population. From this point of view, the process indicates more the reduction of the rural poor to a straight of immeasurable misery rather than its proletarianisation.

**TABLE: 3.1.21.**  
**GROWTH OF CULTIVATORS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN**  
**SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION (TERAI) AND DARJEELING DISTRICT 1961-1981**

AGRARIAN CATEGORIES	DARJEELING DISTRICT			SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	
	1961	1971	1981	1961	1971
Cultivators	99,703	86,054	94,635	32,300	27,466
Agricultural Labourers	7,803	25,783	30,848	3,354	11,012
Total Workers	2,66,105	2,82,442	3,51,62	65,871	1,01,521

[Source: 'Agrarian Relation in a North Bengal Peasant Movement Belt: Historical Evolution', Manabendu Chattopadhyay, & Arun Kumar Chatterjee; *Man and Development*, Vol-6, No-02, 1984 pp. 35-36]

The increase in the number of agriculture laborers in the Darjeeling district took place mainly in Siliguri sub-division. One may recall that this is the region which witness one of the most intense poor peasant protest during the late 1960s, popularly known as Naxalbari Movement, will be discussed in chapter VI. It is also noticeable that productivity in this region remains low even by north Bengal standards till today. Another factor during this period contributing to the increase in the number of miscellaneous laborers in the immediate vicinity of the town of the Siliguri is the rapid

conversion of agricultural land for non agricultural purpose. Besides land acquisition by institutions by North Bengal University, North Bengal Medical College etc. and an increasing defense establishment the 'boom-town' character of Siliguri acquired mainly through its strategic location, has meant rapid expansion of brick fields, godowns and transport garages encroaching on land which was previously being used for agricultural purpose. No doubt the economic use of land for purpose other than agriculture by itself is neither unwelcome nor should automatically mean suffering for the agriculturists<sup>135</sup>.

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## SETTING – B: RISE AND GROWTH OF TEA INDUSTRY IN TERAI

When a small portion of the province of Bengal now known as the district of Darjeeling was added in the early years of the thirties in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an epoch was reached which virtually completed the history of the establishment of the British empire in India, which may be said to have commenced with the defeat by Clive of Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal, at the battle of Plessey in the year 1757. Thus political and economic expansion in India, which had begun in 1757, completed its formative phase by the Charter Act of 1833, more or less the same period when British ceded Darjeeling in 1835. Nevertheless, it is found that during the seventy five years of colonial rule (1757-1833), Britain not only won the paramount political power in India but more than half of Bengal's external commerce. On the other hand, as a result of Industrial Revolution, the British's reinforced by free trade, seemed to invest them absolute control of India's economic destiny. It is to be mentioned that the Charter Act of 1833 ended the remittance trade, but it opened India to the full impact of the Industrial Revolution. Besides this it recognize the Europeans right to own land which led to the introduction of the plantation system in India.<sup>1</sup> It is to be noticed that, at that tea was the most valuable cash crop and the Colonial Government was interested for the inauguration of tea gardens because earning from tea export it played a vital role in Britain's international trade and capital flow relations and in the maintenance of the British imperial structure.<sup>2</sup> Further as noted by a foremost historian of private enterprise in India, 'The dominance of modern industry by European business houses before the First World War was supported and reinforced by a whole set of administrative, political, and financial arrangement within India. The European businessmen very consciously set themselves apart from native businessmen; they claimed a cultural and racial affinity with the British rulers of India which was denied to the Indians who might compete with them. All this 'afford European businessmen a substantial and systematic advantage over their Indian rivals in India'.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2.1: LENDENDARY ORIGION OF THE PLANT

China has been referred to as the original source of the tea and one taken of our indebtedness to it for this great gift to man is to be found in the name we give to the plant and the beverage. The Chinese name for the tea is "Tcha" which is the course of the origin of the word "Cha" is found in the some form or other, in the most Indian vernaculars. A dialect from of the Chinese "tcha", which might be written as "tey" gives

us the form which the word assumes in the most western languages.<sup>4</sup> But there were different narratives regarding the origin of the tea in China. According to the Chinese historians, tea came to the light in the fourth century and by about 650 A.D. during the T'Sang dynasty the growing popularity of tea induced farmers in most provinces in China to cultivate tea and subsequently it became an article of commerce.<sup>5</sup> Another version of the origin of the tea plant, is that in or about the year of 510 A.D, an Indian prince and religious devotee named Dharma, third son of king Kosjusva, famed throughout the east for his religious zeal, landed in China on the Missionary enterprise. He devoted all his time and thought to the diffusion of knowledge of God. In order to set an example of piety to others, he imposed on himself various privations and mortifications, forswore sleep, and, living mostly in open air, devoted himself to prayer, preaching and contemplation. However, after several years passed in this excessively austere manner, he involuntarily fell asleep. Upon awaking, so distressed was he at having violated his oath that, to prevent a repetition of such backsliding and never again permit "tired eyelids" to "rest on tired eyes", he cut off those offending portions of his body, and flung them on the ground. Returning next day to the same spot, he discovered that his eyelids had undergone a strange metamorphosis, having been changed into a shrub the like which had never before been seen upon the earth. Having eaten some of the leaves, he found his spirits singularly exhilarated thereby; while his former vigour was restored. Hence he recommended the newly-discovered boon to his disciples and followers, so that after a time the use of tea rapidly spread.<sup>6</sup> Though in the early years of 780 A.D, LuYu Commissioned the first book on tea entitled "Chaching" a tea classic. But the first printed reference by a European writer about the tea drink was dated about 1559 A.D. Thus the knowledge of tea travelled slowly from East to West.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.2.2: BEGINNING OF TEA IN INDIA**

The discovery of indigenous tea in Assam in 1823 led to the tea industry in India. However, the Calcutta Agricultural Society differs from the above opinion. It has consistently held that in early 1770's, the ships of the East India Company frequently brought tea plant in the country by way of curiosity. Col. Kydd, a resident of Calcutta and a famous botanist, saw the tea plants growing in his garden in 1780. This information was sent to Sir Joseph Bank and in 1782 his garden was handed to Botanical Garden of Calcutta. In 1788 Sir Joseph Bank recorded the existence of indigenous tea growing wild in Cooch Behar and Rangpur districts of Bengal and suggested the cultivation of this

plant in this region. Thus, the wild teas of Cooch Behar confirmed the first discovery of indigenous tea in India.<sup>8</sup>

However, it is found that the first thought of the possibility of producing tea in India came from the Britishers themselves. In the connection a question arises that, way did the British take initiative to inaugurate tea garden industries in India? In this context, it is to be mentioned that the British very systematically took the plan to inaugurate tea garden industries in India. It may be noted that, tea had a great demand in the European market and the East India Company started shipping tea from China to England as early as 1689.<sup>9</sup> From 1715 the East India Company took complete control of the tea export trade from China and in 1721 it obtained monopoly rights in that trade which lasted till 1833. During the period of monopoly, tea developed into a very popular drink not only in England but also in the other American colonies. Imposition of the taxation upon tea was one of the main causes of the American War of Independence. But regarding tea trade, it is quite pertinent to mention that during that time the East India Company was simply a buyer from China. The East India Company knew very little about the collection of the tea by the Chinese merchant from distant villages. Thus up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century China was the only supplier of tea to Europe. So, the 18<sup>th</sup> century tea trade was controlled by the Chinese merchant and the Britishers had to depend upon the Chinese for the tea trade. In this context it is to be mentioned that the trade agreement between the East India Company and the Chinese Government was valid till 1833 and the East India Company was apprehensive if the Chinese Government would not agree to extend the trade agreement. As tea was a very profitable article, the Britishers in India were in search for tea production which would free them from their dependence upon the Chinese. Thus in 1833 with the loss of monopoly rights in the trade, serious attempts were made to find an alternative source for the supply of tea.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, a real progress started in 1834 by Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor General. To investigate the possibilities of cultivating tea in India he appointed a committee called "Tea Committee". This committee consisted of Mr. James Pattle, Mr. G.J. Gordon and Dr. Lumqua, a Chinese doctor, at a salary of Rs.1000 per month. The committee issued a circular to the local officials calling for information and on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1834, the Tea Committee reported to the government about the indigenous tea plant of Assam and about the possibility of its commercial success.<sup>11</sup> Following this report, tea was successfully planted in Assam and within a very short time with the

pioneering zeal of Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, tea industry took firm root in North Bengal. It is to be mentioned that the development of the tea industry was closely associated with the growth of western market for tea and colonial government encouraged and supported the tea plantation with foreign capital and enterprise. Thus, it is clear that though tea was associated with great advancement of commerce but it also was typical foreign investment of the 19<sup>th</sup> century capitalist exploitation. It is quite pertinent to mention in this connection that though with a favorable background tea was introduced in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century but from the late eighteenth century, earnest efforts were taken by the Britishers in India for the cultivation of tea<sup>12</sup> as stated earlier.

### **3:2:3 FEATURES OF DARJEELING TERAIS TEA INDUSTRY**

Behind the spectacular growth and development of tea industry in the plain land of Darjeeling foothills known as Darjeeling Terai, topography and other physical features played a major role which deserves to be mentioned here. The greater part of Darjeeling Terai is low flat land having little gradient. There is a narrow belt of fairly high rolling land running from the east to the west on the southern part of Terai. There are also a few ill-defined plateaus close to the hills. The early tea gardens set up on the western bank of the river Mahananda and extended up to river Mechi on the west. Numerous rivers and streams run across the entire region in every direction and one will find *sal* forests and tribal villages amidst tea gardens.<sup>13</sup> The Mahananda, the Balasun and the Mechi are the principal rivers in Terai. The rivulets like Panchani, Rohini, Champta and Chenga and the three principal rivers mentioned above made any part of the region accessible throughout the whole year. The natural advantages helped transporting tea chests and other materials from the gardens. Yet the rivers being very shallow are unable to carry away the surplus rain water in the rains quickly causing thereby water logging in some parts of the plains. In places where the river beds are higher than tea areas water logging damaged the tea plants. Though the rainfall in Terai abundant which varied from 106 to 175 inches up to the year 1925 and for denudations of the hills and plains of thick jungles and forest it gradually came down of subsequent period, particularly in the south.<sup>14</sup> However in Terai, rainfall varies considerably from north to south as well as from east to west. In comparison to the Dooars, the climatic condition of Terai is more unfavorable to tea, mainly due to prolonged drought following heavy rainfall. Yet the soil of Terai in general is rich and fertile and the acidity status of the soil did never pose any problem for tea growing. But climate of Terai was unfavorable to human habitation owing frequent

outbreak of malarial fever, *Kala-azer* and black water fever, particularly in the northern Terai region which is about eight hundred and forty two feet above the sea level. Rate of mortality was high, about forty-three persons per one thousand mainly due to Terai fever.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand Mosquito had ruined several tea estates in the Terai in its early stages.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this portion of Terai was formerly covered with dense forest and jungles and abundance of tigers, rhinoceros, deer's and many other distinct species. It is in these reasons, that many early tea gardens of Terai were established even before setting up of any gardens in the Dooars.<sup>17</sup>

According to the last survey which was conducted by the Tea Board of India in Terai (1980), the above Terai tea district had only 46 tea gardens, except one tea garden which was situated in the North Dinajpur district, the rest 57 tea gardens exist in Darjeeling Hills. Most of these Tea estates (20) in Terai belong to the size group of 200 to 400 hectares and constituted 58 percent of total area. The area of only 18 tea estates vary from 100 to 200 hectares of land and constituted 25.7 percent of total area under tea.<sup>18</sup>

### **3:2:4 ESTABLISHMENT OF TEA INDUSTRY IN DARJEELING DISTRICT**

The seeds of tea plants believed to have been procured for Darjeeling district in the hills by the end of 1835. The seedlings were found to be of both China and indigenous Assam variety and were grown in the green house of the Superintendent of Darjeeling, Dr. Campbell<sup>19</sup>, well known as an architect of modern Darjeeling. Griffiths, however gives a different account and stated that "In 1841, Campbell brought China tea seed from the Kumaon and planted them in his residence at Darjeeling at a height of nearly seven thousand feet."<sup>20</sup> But many of the seedlings were badly affected by the frost and hail. Yet, as, O'Malley added that "...the plant thrived readily at this altitude, and others began to follow Dr. Campbell's example".<sup>21</sup> The Government distributed seeds to those who desired to grow tea plants on experimental basis. If we accept both the accounts then it must be admitted that culture of tea plants began in the hills of Darjeeling in the forties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost a decade after Assam experiment. Yet the government seemed to be a fit reluctant in taking up the task of tea growing considering political instability of the region and was more interested in undertaking similar projects on the North-West and in the Punjab proper.<sup>22</sup> In spite of this initial delay at the official stage on political ground results of the experiment made in Darjeeling very much impressed the Governments.

Between 1840-1852, Dr. Campbell and Major Crommelin opened experimental nurseries in Darjeeling and at Lebong.<sup>23</sup> O' Malley, on the other hand quotes a report prepared by Mr. Jackson in 1852 on Darjeeling, wherein it is stated that "I have seen several plantations in various stages of advancement, both of the Assam and China plant, and I have found the plant healthy and vigorous, showing that the soil is well adapted for the cultivation. In the garden of the Superintendent, Dr. Campbell, in Darjeeling, in the more extensive plantations of Dr. Withecombe, the Civil Surgeon and Major Crommelin, of the Engineers, in a lower valley called Lebong, the same satisfactory results have been obtained: the leaves, the blossom and the seeds are full and healthy; the reddish clay of the side of the hill at Lebong seems to suit the plant better than the black loam of Darjeeling. This has been the result at an about Darjeeling itself, at a height of 7000 feet." Dr. Hooker adds "... that is too much moisture and too little sun at Darjeeling to admit of the cultivation on a large scale becoming remunerative: this objection, however, does not apply to the lower sites of Pankhabari and Kurseong by Mr. Martin, and the plants are now in a highly-thriving condition. In this tract of country, between the Morung and Darjeeling, every variety of elevation and aspect is to be found, and there seems to be little or no doubt that tea cultivation in the tract would answer."<sup>24</sup> This was how Darjeeling Terai was chosen for tea cultivation and not Darjeeling proper (*Sadar*). Yet experiment continued in Darjeeling proper in the subsequent period.

In 1851, the first factory was constructed in Darjeeling. Captain Masson (1852) purchased some seeds from the Government nursery and planted them in the upper Tukver area. The same year i.e. in 1852 plantations were started both at Steinthal and Alubari by Mr. Wernicke, the pioneer to introduce tea in the district of Darjeeling on commercial basis and Mr. Stolke.<sup>25</sup> When W.B. Jackson, Esq. C.S. Judge of the Sader Dewanny and Nizamut Adawlut, Calcutta, came to Darjeeling in 1854 he noticed only one tea plantation in Darjeeling. He also thought that there was not very good prospect for tea in the upper regions of Darjeeling.<sup>26</sup> Hunter stated that in 1853, two or three gardens existed in Darjeeling region, but neither their names nor their location have been furnished by him.<sup>27</sup> One of these must be Martin's plantation at Pankhabari, which was noticed by Jackson.<sup>28</sup> Hunter ascribed that the real date of the commencement of the tea industry in Darjeeling district may be taken at 1856-57. According to him, of the existing gardens in the Darjeeling district, only two date as far back as 1856, viz, that of the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea company, and one owned by the Darjeeling Land

Mortgage Bank.<sup>29</sup> It may be noted that during this period, in 1855, tea plants had been sown and raised at Tukvar by Captain Masson, at Kurseong by Mr. Smith and by Mr. Martin on the Kurseong flats and by Captain Sampler, the agent of the Darjeeling concern, in the area lying between Kurseong and Pankhabari.<sup>30</sup> In 1856 Alubari tea garden was opened in the Darjeeling hills, and thus tea industry was established in the Darjeeling hill on a commercial basis. It is found that after 1853 within three years, tea cultivation and tea industry began in Darjeeling and since 1856 more and more tea companies registered for tea garden and tea industry in Darjeeling region. In 1859 the Dhutaria garden was started by Dr. Brougham, and between 1860-1864 four gardens at Ging, Ambutia, Takdah and Phubsering were established by the Darjeeling Tea Company and the gardens at Tukvar and Badamtam by the Lebong Tea Company.<sup>31</sup> During the four years following 1870, the tea industry in Darjeeling continued to develop at an even greater pace than before and by 1874, the number of plantations had increased from 56 to 113.

The tea map of Darjeeling curves out its location mainly in the North-Western, Northern and South Central parts of the district. However it was from 1860 that tea plantations were established in Darjeeling Terai with which we are directly concerned in this chapter. It was from Darjeeling hills, that the tea cultivation spread out in Darjeeling Terai under the initiative of the British planters.<sup>32</sup> By 1860 land for tea in the Darjeeling hills was exhausted and the planters turned towards Darjeeling Terai's waste land to extend their cultivation in the foothills. Griffith also said that "It was natural that the thoughts of Darjeeling Planters should turn towards the possibility of the tea cultivation in the foothills of the Himalayas, but in the earlier sixties the only available land under British rule was in the Terai Sub- Division."<sup>33</sup>

### **3:2:5 INTRODUCTION OF TEA INDUSTRY IN DARJEELING TERAI**

On the subject of the leases of land in Terai J. Geoghegan reports "... the rules which has been laid down, in regard to cultivation leases in Cachar and Assam are applicable to similar leases in the Darjeeling Terai, that is to say, much leases may be granted at current rates for certain period renewable at the end of those periods at rates not exceeding 50 percent on the rental of the land if cultivated for ordinary crops".<sup>34</sup> In Darjeeling Terai planters were agreed to accept the grant of waste land which was executed in "Form C" on agreeing to some conditions laid down below-

1. That the land would be generally free only the first five years, from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1866 to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1871 and that on expiry of the period it would be leased for the period of 20-30 years would be assessed at six *annas* per acre. The right conferred upon him by executing a land deed are heritable and transferable if permitted by the Deputy Commissioner.
2. The rent would be paid to the Deputy Commissioner in two installments i.e on or before 20<sup>th</sup> July and on or before 12<sup>th</sup> January. In the case of Jalpaiguri it was to be paid on or before 1<sup>st</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> March respectively.
3. That in the event of failure on the part of the lessee to clear off the dues within the stipulated time the Government might recover the amount from him by the sale of lessee's either movable and immovable property and that lessee should have no right to raise any objection to it and further that in the event of violation of any terms and conditions the Government should have the exclusive right to renew the land deed.
4. That the lessee or his manager should reside in or near the land granted to him and register the name of his manager or managers in Deputy Commissioner's Office and should erect and maintain boundary marks and lines to earmark the land sanctioned to him, and he should not sublet land to any other persons.
5. That the lessee would pay the same rate of revenue if additional plots of land were granted to him subsequently.
6. That the lessee should not obstruct outsiders over the use of navigable rivers and streams which might pass through his state and must also allow them to use a portion of land over 20 yards in width on either side of the river or streams for the purpose of towing boats and steamers.
7. That in the event of disputes regarding the boundaries of his states the decision of the Collector should be final and the lessee should have no right to prefer an appeal in the court of revenue.
8. That the lessee should have no right either to establish a new market or *hut* in his neighborhood or to divert the natural flow of any stream or spring in his

area to his own favor without the prior permission of the concerned Deputy Commissioner.

9. That the lessee should agree to bear the expenses incurred in connection with surveying the land leased to him.
10. That the lessee should always cooperate and assist any Government officer deputed by the Government to survey the land.
11. That after expiry of the thirty years period the lease might get his land re-allotted in his name at moderately increased rate of revenue, not exceeding one half of the gross rental for arable land earmarked for rising staple crops or as fixed by the Government which it might deem proper.
12. The lessee should be bound to furnish the Deputy Commissioner with information as to the births and deaths of the resident in his tea garden and periodical progress of reports on the tea cultivation showing outturns of tea in the manner prescribed by Government.
13. In the event of the provisions of the *Chaukidari* Act [VI(B.C) of 1870 as modified by Act I (B.C) of 1871, Act I(B.C) of 1886 and Act I (B.C) 1892] being introduced by the orders of the Local Government in any tea garden and the lessee should be bound to furnish proper and fit accommodation for the residence of such *Chaukidar* (or *Chaukidars*) as it may be found necessary to appoint in each garden to carry out the duties imposed under the Act. Future, the lessee should be bound to see that the said *Chaukidar* or *Chaukidars* receives his pay punctually in accordance with the provision of the Act.<sup>35</sup> (Appendix-G)

After expiry of the first leases for thirty years as per terms of the Waste Land Rule of 1864 lands were surveyed again and resettled for another periods of thirty years in 1898 as per new Waste Land Rules of 1874 published in the Calcutta Gazette of the 4<sup>th</sup> February 1894,<sup>36</sup> as already discussed in the first part of the chapter. It deserves a mention in this connection that it was from the eighties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that most of the Tea Planters began to purchase *jote* lands to expand their tea estates built on Waste Land grants. In fact all land in Terai as pointed out earlier, came under *jotedars* in the subsequent period and the later formed an intermediary class between the Government and the lease. But some anomalies created in fixing the revenue of a Tea Estate, part of

which was on the waste land and remaining *joteland*. The question came before the Government at the time of granting resettlement of Tea Estates in 1898. The planters in their turn pointed out that as their industry was then under the pressure of depression, any increase in the rates of revenues would adversely affect them, and on this point they pleaded reconsideration of the entire issue. It was under the above condition that the land revenues of the Tea Estates were not enhanced while granting resettlement of land in 1898, and rates that existed before 1898 was maintained in all the estates where only tea and no other crops was cultivated as per term of waste land deeds.

But during the second decade of the twentieth century the tendency of purchasing *joteland* among the planters was found to be on the increase. This alarmed the Government and Mr. F. D. Ascoli, the then Officiating Secretary to the Board of Revenue in a letter expressed his concern over the matter and wanted from the Government a specific a rule prohibiting the planters to convert *joteland* where from Government reasonably would claim higher revenue, into waste land meant for rice cultivation and not for tea, as stated earlier part of this chapter. Accordingly restriction was imposed on the sale of *jotelands*. It was declared that a lessee should not convert any portion of the *joteland* into tea cultivation without prior sanction of the Government. Despite this, the use of *joteland* for the purpose of tea cultivation continued even in the subsequent period mainly for two different reasons. Firstly, the available waste land in Terai was exhausted and no more wasted left vacant. Naturally, demand for the settlement on the *joteland* on the increase and most of the such lands were brought by the European tea planters of Terai. Secondly, demand for *joteland* was farther increased during the first decade of the twentieth century when Indian planters, mainly Bengali affluent class of Jalpaiguri came forward in the line and established some tea gardens in Terai. In this connection it may be noted that regarding this restriction observed a Bengali planter imposed a condition that previous sanction of the authorities was to be obtained for purchase of *joteland* outside the tea grant. This left the Tea Estate proprietor at the mercy of the local Dewans and their associates who demanded high tips from the buyer to effect any sale deed.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, being unable to get leases on wasteland they purchased and converted *joteland* in to tea gardens. Sibsankar Mukherjee pointed out that, in the interest of tea industry the Government began to consider whether restriction on the purchase of *joteland* for opening up new plantation was to be revolutioned in the subsequent period.<sup>38</sup> Around 1920 conversion of *jotelands* in to Tea Estates was

permitted by the Revenue Board of Bengal and during 1920-1925 many tea gardens were opened on the *joteland* in Terai side by side with those already established on the wasteland.

This indicates how the Government promoted cause of the tea industry in Darjeeling Terai. No doubt that the policy of converting *joteland* into waste land was a serious one from the economic point of view. *Joteland* mainly being arable lands and was suitable for growing rice and other staple crops and by allowing the planters to grow tea on them instead of rice and other crops they indirectly patronized the native planter community to compete with the European planters in growing tea but directly contributed towards a gradual fall in the production of staple crops in Darjeeling Terai. Yet such conversion of *joteland* had partially helped finding a way out of tackling migratory habits of imported labourers. A part of *joteland* was given to the labourers to settle on them permanently, but any grant of waste land to them would not have attracted them so easily. Besides, surplus *joteland* in the hands of planters where tea growing was yet to be under taken was given to the local workers to produce rice and other staple crops under “*Barga System*” and the planters received a part of the produce from there, such an agreement was made in the Naxalbari Tea Estate. The following table will indicate the extent of surplus *joteland* processed by the planters of Darjeeling Terai as on 15.04.1955:

**TABLE NO 3:2:1**  
**RESUMPTION OF TEA GARDEN SURPLUS LANDS IN DARJEELING TERA**  
**TEA DISTRICT (IN ACRES)**

NAME OF GARDEN	TOTAL AREA	AREA RESUMED	CLASSIFICATION OF RESUMED LAND		
			FOREST	KHET	OTEERS
Ashapur	410	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Atal	1404	418	Nil	418	Nil
Bagdogra	696	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A
Belgachi	2165	203	193	10	Nil
Bengdubi	111	64	Nil	64	Nil
Bhojnarain	871	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Bijoynagar	1043	246	13	233	Nil
Chandmoni	775	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Dagapur	703	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Fulbari	874	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Fulbari Patan	767	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Gangaram	2478	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Gayaganga	1442	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Hansqua	958	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Kamala	1878	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Kamalpur	245	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Lohagarh	959	144	109	34	01
Manjha	764	144	144	Nil	Nil
Marapur	372	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Marionbari	1452	226	226	Nil	Nil
Matigara	538	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Matidhar	2408	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A
Merryview	1185	82	92	Nil	Nil
Mahargong	2167	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
NewChampta	1041	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Nischintapur	628	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Naxalbari	2268	650	528	116	06
Ord Terai	1500	70	70	Nil	Nil
Pahargumia	2524	597	267	330	Nil
Panighata	3706	1304	1264	Nil	40
Putnibari	533	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Khoribari	882	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Sahabad	1783	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A
Saidabad	1830	N.A	N.A	N.A	N.A
SatisChandra	398	08	Nil	08	Nil
Sanyasithan	534	20	Nil	20	Nil
Simulbari	2187	879	600	279	Nil
Singajhora	371	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Tirrihana	1758	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

[Source: *Tea Gardens Of West Bengal*, Tusar Kanti Ghosh, B.R. Publising Corporation, Delhi, 1987, pp.125-130]

It is difficult to trace the exact dates of the establishment of the tea gardens in Darjeeling Terai, because the detail history of the gardens is not available due to lack of documentary evidence. Moreover, in the initial stage the gardens were started within a small area, but due to course of time it ownership change frequently. On the other hand it was difficult to trace due to amalgamation of some Tea Estates with the big Tea Estates or Companies. Further, Sib Sankar Mukherjee pointed out that, most of the Terai tea

gardens changed their hands particularly after the Independence, though it was started in the early thirties of the 20th century.<sup>39</sup>

The first Tea Garden in Terai was established in 1862 at Champta, near Khaprail by Mr. James White.<sup>40</sup> He also set up the Matigara Tea Estate during the same year.<sup>41</sup> In fact he owned the largest tea garden in the district at Singell near Kurseong<sup>42</sup> and his success in the field attracted many to try their luck in Terai and a mass fortune in its wild eeriness. There was another factor which revolutionized the speculative worth in connection with tea industry. By 1861, the tea industry in India proved itself to be a profitable venture specially in the light of the success achieved by the Assam Company, the Jorhat Company and for the rich dividends they could pay their share holders. In 1861 the Assam Company earned 11 percent on its capital after paying for everything out of revenue, including the opening out of their new areas in Cachar and on the north bank, a 10 percent dividend was also paid in that year.<sup>43</sup> This successes encouraged people who had capital to invest but knew nothing of the tea industry. Many began to believe that even a “fool could run a Tea garden”.<sup>44</sup> Griffiths recorded the contemporary crazy outlook of speculators who wanted to become suddenly rich “The Companies with or without tea lands, sprang up over night; shares rose to fantastic heights; lands were cleared without any consideration of their suitability or the availability of labour; and highly placed civil servants threw up their post to become planters”.<sup>45</sup> In experienced persons were employed to manage gardens. An ordinary sea men, a Captain’s of Army and other professional men were appointed as planters to run tea gardens. It was during this period of boom that many tea gardens sprung up in Terai. In 1866 as many as twenty two gardens were floated on the waste lands at the rate of only six *annas* per acre. Available records indicate the name of some Tea Gardens which were established during the last part of the sixties in 19<sup>th</sup> century. These were-

1) New Champta, 2) Hansqua, 3) Morapur, 4) Panchanoi, 5) Simulbari (Central Terai Tea Company Ltd), 6) Manja, 7) Lohagarh, 8) Belgachi, 9) Panighata, 10) Pahargumia, 11) Singhijhora, 12) Sannyasithan (Hindu Tea Company), 13) Tirhana, 14) Ord and 15) Marionbari and most of the gardens still survive. But many other gardens which were set up during that period such as, 16) Adalpur, 17) Borochema, 18) Chotachenga, 19) M.M Terai 20) Mechi, 21) Sahapur, 22) Kalabari, 23) Sathbhैया, 24) Dum Duma etc. failed to survive the depression that followed and might have either become extinct or amalgamated into other financially strong gardens.<sup>46</sup> The following

table will indicate that due to amalgamation some tea gardens which were established in 1866 were not found in the letter period of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**TABLE NO 3:2:2**

**NAME OF AMALGAMATED GRANT OF DAVIS OR ORD TERAI TEA ESTATE, TOUZI NO-905**

GOVT. KHAS AREA	TOUZI.NO.	JOTE NO	NAME OF GRANT OR JOTE	LEASE OUT AREA (ACRES)	TOTAL AREA (ACRES)
12.60	905	-	M.M TERAI T.E	556.50	569.10
0.51	912	-	KADMA T.E	195.69	196.20
9.33	902	-	ORD TERAI T.E	434.05	443.38
8.02	983	-	PANIGHATA T.E	243.43	251.45
-	-	181	KADAMA JOTE	70.26	70.26
30.46	-	-	-	1,499.93	1,530.39

[Source: Based on **Tea Lease Register, Vol-IV**, An unpublished Government documents collected from the D.C.O, Darjeeling and also quoted in *The Darjeeling Terai Tea Plantation (1862-1976):A Case Study Of The Condition Of the Workers*,Ashok Kumar Ganguli,Ph.D Thesis(Unpublished),Jadavpur University,1994, p.155]

Most of the leases granted during this period were found to be in the name of Englishman. There was one exception in this regard. It was during this period that Bipradas Pual Chowdhury, a *zamindar* of Maheshganj in Nadia district, and the first Indian to receive engineering degree from Manchester University of England, came to Darjeeling district and started his career as Tea Planter. Bipra Das braved the hazards and hardships of desolate Terai in the hope of reward and the prospect of valuable tea crops from his cultivation .Thus he established Gayabari, Tindharia and Mahurgong tea estate in the district. All three gardens he used to manage personally from his bungalow on Tindharia. It is noted that he used first steam engine of locomotive type on huge wheels in his factory on Mohurgang.<sup>47</sup> He was the only concern floated on Indian capital and run by Indian management. The tea industry of Terai recorded a steady during the seventies when small concern were amalgamated with the big tea estates and began to earn profit after initial losses. However, the table below (no 3:2:3) will indicates the extent of west land grants made by the Government during the period under reference.

TABLE NO 3:2:3

**WASTE LAND GRANTS BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE TEA ESTATES  
OF DARJEELING TARAI IN 1864 WHICH WERE RENEUED IN DEC, 1894  
(AFTER EXPIRE OF THIRTY YEARS)**

Sl. No.	Name of grant	Lease number Of grant	Date from Which settlement Was affected	Area settled	Name of garden in which the grant is comprised
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Davis (Patharghata)	L.NO. 1	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	888	Tirhana (Touzi No-709) and M.M Terai Tea garden Touzi No- 902
2	Davis (Patharghata & Naxalbari)	-	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	2828-1-16	Boroehenga or Indian Tea Assciation. Touzi No- 262 & 900, and M.M Terai- 903
3	South by Panighata	L. NO. 3	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	783	Selim T.E. Touzi No- 771
4	South by Panighata	L. NO. 4	DO	180	Do, Touzi No-770
5	Davis (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 5	DO	526	Lohargarh T.E. Touzi No-261
6	Davis (Patharghata)	L. NO. 6	DO	1169-24	Central Terai Tea Co. Ltd.
7	Maller (Naxilbari)	L. NO. 9	DO	1709-2-32	Morapura T.E Touzi No-889 & Chenga T.E Touzi No- 901
8	Maller (Barogharia)	L. NO. 10	DO	13	Panchnai Tea Garden
9	Scanlan (Barogharia)	L. NO. 13	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan, 1865	1873-1-11	Mohurgang Tea Estate Touzi No-492.
10	Scanlan( Barogharia & Patharghata)	L. NO. 14	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1867	315	Mohurgang Tea Estate, Touzi No-493.
11	Partidge (Besarbati)	L. NO. 18	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	141-1-30	2 <sup>nd</sup> Fallodi T.E. Touzi .No-50
12	Davis(Besarbati)	L. NO. 19	1 <sup>st</sup> Oct, 1866	107	New Terai Tea Asso. Touzi .No-862
13	Davis(Patharghata)	L. NO. 20	DO	955	Tirhana T.E. Touzi.No-863 & M.M Terai Tea Estate Touzi No- 905
14	Davis (Hatighisa)	L. NO. 21	DO	460	Mechi T.E. Touzi .No-865)
15	Partidge (Besarbati)	L. NO. 22	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	67	Marianbari T.E. Touzi No-865
16	Manirabad	L. NO.24	DO	27	Marianbari T.E. Touzi No-867
17	Chepro(Barogharia)	L. NO. 26	1 <sup>st</sup> July 1866	58	Sahapur T.E.Touzi No-869
18	Edoo (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 31	1 <sup>st</sup> March 1866	228	Belgachhi T.E. Touzi.No- 874
19	Scanlan(Besarbati)	L. NO. 34	1 <sup>st</sup> Dec 1866	60	Kalabari Tea Estate, Touzi No-877
20	Maller (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 35	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1866	38	Manjha Tea Estate Touzi No-889
21	Maller (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 36	Do	225	Manjha Tea Estate Touzi No. 890
22	Fitzzerald	L. NO. 15	1 <sup>st</sup> March 1866	14330-2-35	Sathbye (859H) Awal 859J Taipoo (859P) New Chumpta 888A Patanjhar896 Panchanai 908, M.M Terai 914, Salim T.E. 888, Hindu Tea Co.859 D, Doomdooma 0/859 ,Kristopur T.E 859L Demoni 859 I, SinghiaJhora T.E. n 859, Hansqua-R859, Lower Darjeeling Tea Co. Ltd. 859,Pahargumia E.m. b ½ m.

[Source: Based on **Tea Lease Register**, An unpublished Government documents Collected from the D.C.O, Darjeeling and also quoted in *The Darjeeling Terai Tea Plantation (1862-1976): A Case Study Of The Condition Of the Workers*, Ashok Kumar Ganguli, Ph.D Thesis (Unpublished), Jadavpur University, 1994, pp.156-158]

During seventies improved machines and technology were introduced in most of the well- managed tea gardens and this necessitated investment of large sums of money. But opening up of Suez Cannel in 1869 brought India much closer to British capitalist

class and many of them came forward to invest a bigger amount in Indian tea industry in order to earn fabulous profits out of purchasing shares. We, therefore, find twenty-four tea estate of Limited Liability, seventeen new concerns yet unregistered, seventy proprietary estates, and six estates managed by Land Mortgage Bank of England which being a Sterling bank offered fund against mortgage of landed property in the British colonies. Mr. Cloud Bald, author one of the best known work on Indian tea<sup>48</sup>, came to Terai from Glasgow, and devoted himself in the cultivation of tea in the Lohagarh T.E in Terai, perhaps only to acquire practical knowledge in the matter of growing plants and manufacture of world wonderful beverage, tea. He also took pioneering role in Adulpur Tea Plantation.<sup>49</sup> This was an instance to show to what extent affluents and elites in Britain were influenced by the Indian tea industry. The Indians also did not lag behind in this respect. Babu Kamal Krishna Halder, a resident of Barrackpur was the *Tahasildar* manager of Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Mahatab Chand of Burdwan in Darjeeling, established Kamalpur Tea Estate in 1870. He came to the hills with Maharajadhiraja in 1850 and managed to acquire small bits of land from Lepches and build up a huge property for Burdwan Raj Estate in the district. Still late 1950s Kamalpur tea estate was managed by his descendants.<sup>50</sup> The Hansqua Tea Estate was established by Mr. Arthur Currie in 1865, which comprised of 165.75 acres. Mr. Currie sold this property to Messrs R.D. Hamilton and C.F.A Doney in 1913. Mr. D.F. Clive was the manager of this garden from 1913 to 1917. During 1920 to 1930 the area was further extended by 350.98 acres. Following some misunderstanding Mr. Doney sold his interest to Mr. Hamilton in 1916 and left to his own country England in the very next year.<sup>51</sup> Mr. George Watt Christism of Scotland came in Darjeeling in early sixties and established Putnibari T.E, which started functioning in 1881. On the other hand Davenport, Percy Brown and Dudgeon started Putong and Panighata Tea Estates in the early part of seventies in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Bagdogra Tea Estate was started in 1880 in an area of 482 acres by a British company formed with Miss. E. Southern, Mr. H.F. Southern, Mr. E. Southern, Major. N.J. Daniel, Mrs. J.C. Baldock and Mr. Patrick Charles Arbathnot.<sup>52</sup> The table below will exhibit the name of important tea gardens establishing during seventies and eighties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Darjeeling Terai.

TABLE NO 3:2:4

## TERAI TEA DISTRICT IN 1886

SL. NO.	NAME OF T.E OR COMPANY	NAME OF CALCUTTA AGENT OR SECRETARIES	AREA UNDER TEA CULTIVATION ACRES
1	Adulpur Tea Co Ltd. Adulpur	Lloyd & Co	115
2	Anwal Tea Estate, Anwal	"	170
3	Bagdogra Tea Estate	"	128
4	Cambrian Tea Asso., Cambrian	Williamson Magor & Co	152
5	Chenga Tea Co Ltd., Chenga	Lloyd & Co	210
6	Chumpta Tea Asso, Roopun,	"	105
7	Gyabaree Tea Co Ltd, Gyabaree	"	136
8	Indian Terai Tea Co Ltd.Chenga	Williamson Magor & Co	307
9	M.M Terai Tea Estate	Schoene Kilburn & Co	226
10	Matigarah T.E. Doomragon, Putanjhar, Matigurah	Lloyd & Co	3011/2
11	Mahurgong T.E. Mahurgong	Jardina Skinner & Co	185
12	Manjha Tea Co Ltd. Manjha	Williamson Magor & Co	160
13	New Terai Association	Schoene Kilburn	375
14	Ord Terai Tea Estate	"	240
15	Sath Bhaia T.E. Sath Bhaia	Lloyd & Co	115
16	Second Failodhi Tea Co.Ltd. Failodhi	"	208
17	Singhiahjhora T.E.	Williamson Magor & Co	100

[Source: I.T.A Report of 1886 quoted in *The Darjeeling Terai Tea Plantation (1862-1976): A Case Study Of The Condition Of the Workers*, Ashok Kumar Ganguli; Ph.D Thesis (Unpublished), Jadavpur University, 1994, p.163]

From the early sixties steady growth and development of the tea gardens in the Terai region of Darjeeling district was noticed and the process continued up to the eighties of the Nineteenth Century. One striking feature behind this spectacular growth was that most of the gardens during the period, 1862-1900, were owned and managed by Englishmen and backed by English capital. In case of only three to four tea estates we find investment of Indian capital and were owned and managed by Bengalis.

Some of the notable English planters of the periods were Charlie Wallick and Alan Davys of Pahargumiah Tea Estate, George Edward of Tirrihana Tea Estate and Murray, an outstanding personality among tea magnets. All George Edward, Michael Pemberton and Lakri rendered invaluable services to promote the cause of tea industry in Terai. But the most important figure in the planter's world was Mr. Robertson who came in Terai during the time of the First World War, came to be known as the king of Terai.<sup>53</sup> A.C Rickets and P.C Gilliam also deserve a mention as their work in Terai during and after the First World War were no less valuable in the field.

Of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tea gardens most of the following still exist: New Champta, Matigara, Lohagarh, Hansqua, Morapur, Dagapur, Mahurgong, Panighata, Belgachi, Manja, Taipoo, Bagdogra, Sannyasithan, Kiran Chandra, Shinghijhora, Pahargumiah, Atal, Gangaram, Tirrihana, Simulbari, Ord Terai, Fulbari Pattan etc. The following table will exhibit tea garden opened during 1866 to 1905, showing area under cultivation and the outturn in tea production in the respective year, but the table concern the whole of Darjeeling district.

**TABLE NO 3:2:5**  
**COMPARATIVE TABLE OF TEA OPERATION IN DARJEELING DISTRICT**  
**FROM THE YEAR 1866-1905**  
**(NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)**

YEAR	NUMBER OF GARDEN	EXTENT OF LAND UNDER CULTIVATION (IN ACRES)	OUT TURN OF TEA(IN LBS)
1866	39	10,392	4,33,715
1867	40	9,214	5,82,640
1868	44	10,067	851,549
1869	55	10,769	1,278,809
1870	56	11,046	1,689,186
1872	74	14,503	2,938,626
1873	87	15,695	2,956,710
1874	113	18,888	3,927,911
1880	155	28,367	5,160,314
1882	154	25,105	6,596,456
1885	175	38,499	9,090,289
1895	186	48,692	11,714,551
1905	148	50,618	12,447,471

[Source: *A Statistical Account Of Bengal*, Vol- X, W.W. Hunter, Turbner & Co, London, 1876, p.165; *Darjeeling: The Sanitarium of Bengal Its Surroundings*, R.D,O' Brien, W Newman & Co. Ltd, Calcutta, 1888, p.54, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, L.S.S.O' Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1907, p.74]

The above table indicates that in 1873 and 1905 the number of gardens shown decreased but the outturn of tea did not. Again in 1905 the number of garden through shown decreased but area under actual cultivation and the total production of the tea both were on the increase. The reason behind this was amalgamation of small tea gardens with the big tea estates. Thus, in Terai Satbahaiya T.E came under Atal T.E, Dumduma T.E became a division of Pahargumia T.E, Mumi T.E also become a division of Gangaram T.E, Deomoni T.E and Kristopur T.E formed into a single garden and changed their name now it known as Kiranchandra T.E etc.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless manufacture of tea from its inception in 1866 to 1905 recorded an increase. Though after 1905 the industry came to be stable position and was regarded as thriving branch of Indian commerce. J.N. Stuart, in an annual meeting of (Indian Tea Association) I.T.A in 1911, boastfully pointed out: “We stand in the fortunate position of a ship, which after long period of stormy days, is resting at anchor in a sheltered harbour.”<sup>55</sup>

### **3:2:6. RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEA INDUSTRY IN DARJEELING TERAI DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 20<sup>TH</sup> CUNTURY**

So far we have given role of the English entrepreneurs and British capital behind the development of tea industry in Terai and only passing remarks have been made with regard to the Indian role. Hence on elaborate narrative is necessary here. Between 1910 to 1925 as many as fourteen to fifteen tea gardens were opened by the Indians, mostly Bengalis, in Terai. They brought *jotelands* from the local Rajbanshi *jotedars* and planted them with teas. B.C. Ghosh pointed out that “The gardens in Terai which were completely under Indian managements were...Purchased from the European planters who considered such properties as un-remunerative.”<sup>56</sup> Simulbari, Fulbari, Thanjhore tea garden are the examples in this regard. Ghosh added further that “The Indian gardens were much smaller than the English owned gardens”.<sup>57</sup> Indian gardens were smaller in size mainly because they failed to get waste land in favorable terms and had to by costly *jotelands* to plant teas. They also preferred maintaining small gardens as those were easy for supervision and could be run with the help of a small local labour force. There is limited experience and financial capacity were the primary reason why most of the Indian gardens were smaller than those of the gardens managed by the English entrepreneurs.

Yet a question may arise in our mind regarding the cause of eagerness of the Indians to established gardens in Terai. In this connection it may be said that from 1907

onward there was an encouraging improvement in the field of tea industry. The years 1911, 1912 and 1913 were also good for the tea industry. Even the First World War also considered to be a time of prosperity for the Indian tea industry.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand during I.W.W the Colonial Government prohibited to established tea gardens on “*Khas Land*” in Dooar’s region.<sup>59</sup> These gave an opportunity to the Indians to establish tea gardens in Terai because at the one hand there was a huge and uncultivated arable or jungle land in Terai and on the other hand the unhealthy weather of Terai made European uncomfortable to stay in Terai. At the time, during the early years of urbanization in Siliguri who migrate in Terai, basically those who were engage in timber business, later establish tea gardens in this region.

In this period one of the important Indian planters of Darjeeling Terai was Khan Bahadur Munshi Rahimbax of Noakhali district who invested large sums of money in buying of land, emerged as a landlord in Terai and financed member of Indian tea concern in Dooars. After his death, his son-in-law Musaraf Hussain Khanbahadur, who once held a ministerial portfolio in Bengal came to Terai and established four tea gardens in this region. Hence, in 1907 he purchased *jotelands* in Terai and by 1910 established Naxalbari Tea Company.<sup>60</sup> Three years after he established Sukna Tea Estate (1913) Like his father-in-law he also financed Indian tea gardens such as Merryview T.E, which was established by Prasanodev Raikat in Baikuntapur region in 1917.<sup>61</sup> After the termination of W.W I, in 1919, Musaraf Hussain Khan Bahadur established Saidabad T.E (1920). The name of another family, which deserves a mention here was ‘Roy’ family of Jalpaiguri, who originally came from Dacca district. Tariniprasad Roy, earned a large sum out of his legal profession and acted as promoter of many tea gardens in Jalpaiguri, and himself establishes Kamala T. E in 1914.<sup>62</sup>

In 1917 Nischintapur Tea Estate was established in northern part of Mahannanda river by a Bengalee planter of Dinajpur. Khoribari Tea Estate was set up the Mitras of Darjeeling in and around 1917 and in 1921 Sahabad Tea Estate was set up by a *Zamindar* family of Nadia district, and so was the case with Bijlimani and Matidhar Tea Estates.<sup>63</sup> In 1922, Tarini Prasad Roy and his son S.P. Roy started Chandmoni T.E near Siliguri. Though it has no existence now, the whole area covered with a shopping mall and a big township, named *Uttarayan*. Jogesh Chandra Ghosh started Bijjoynagar T.E in Terai in 1924, and later some other tea gardens in Dooars.<sup>64</sup>

Kazi Ismail Haque of Kisanganj established Azamabad T.E in Terai. The *jotedars* of Terai set up Bhojnarayan T.E in 1925. Bhojnarayan Chowdhury was one of the prominent among them. Satish Chandra Kar of Siliguri wanted to establish a tea garden in southern Terai and proposed Kazi Daulat, son of Kazi Ismail, a *jotedar* of Dinajpur to join him in establishing the garden. The garden that came into being was first named as Daulatpur Tea Estate, on the basis of 49:51 ratio of shares between Satish Chandra and Daulat, but later having purchased all the shares by Satish Chandra, he converted the garden into a proprietary one and named it as Satish Chandra Tea Estate.<sup>65</sup> Kiran Chandra Bhattacharje, who came in Terai from Pabna district established Kiran Chandra T.E in 1923. Apart from this Naliniranjan Ghosh, a Lawyer of Jalpaiguri established Thanjhora T.E, a tea planter Jalpaiguri Tarini Prasad Roy set up Sarada T.E, Asapur T.E was established by some bank employers of Bagura district, Debijhora T.E was established by Neogi family of Jalpaiguri and Girish Chandra T.E was established by an employer of Kamalpur T.E Mr. Girish Chandra Paul.<sup>66</sup>

Amongst the Indian planters the names of the following persons deserve mention T.P. Banerjee, Bijoy Basanta Bose, Saradindu Bose, Jitendra Mohan Dutta, Kusum Dutta, J.N. Biswas, K.A. Bari, Madhusudan Bose, Parfulla Chandra Mitra, Prasanna Ghosh, Ila Pual Chowdhuri, Gopallal Sanyal, Sarat Chandra Bose, Aswani Lahiri, etc. The table below will exhibit year-wise opening up of India tea garden in Terai from 1862 to 1926.

TABLE NO 3:2:6

## INDIAN TEA GARDENS IN DARJEELING TERAI FROM 1862-1926

Year	Tea Estates					
1862	1) New Chupta		2) Matigara			
1865	1) Hansqua		2) Mohargang			
1866	1) Morapur T.E	4) Atal T.E	7) Belgachi T.E	10) Trihanna T.E	13) Sannyasithan or Hindu Tea Company	
	2) Simulbari T.E	5) Pahargumaih T.E	8) Marionbari T.E	11) Dagapur T.E		
	3) Manjha T.E	6) Panighata T.E	9) Ord Terai T.E	12) Taipoo T.E	14) Singhiahjhora T.E	
1867	Nil					
1868	Nil					
1869	Nil					
1870	1) Kamalpur T.E.					
1871	Nil					
1872	Nil					
1873	Nil					
1874	Nil					
1875	Nil					
1876	Nil					
1877	1) Lohargarh T.E.					
1878	Nil					
1879	Nil					
1880	1) Bagdogra T.E.					
1881	1) Putinbari T.E.					
1882	Nil					
1883	Nil					
1884	Nil					
1885	Nil					
1886	Nil					
1887	Nil					
1888	Nil					
1889	1) Gangaram T.E.					
1890	Nil					
1891	Nil					
1892	Nil					
1893	Nil					
1894	Nil					
1895	Nil					
1896	Nil					
1897	Nil					
1898	Nil					
1899	Nil					
1900	Nil					
1901	Nil					
1902	Nil					
1903	Nil					
1904	1) Thanjhora T.E					
1905	Nil					
1906	Nil					
1907	Nil					
1908	Nil					
1909	Nil					
1910	1) Naxalbari T.E.					
1911	Nil					
1912	Nil					
1913	1) Sukna T.E.		2) Fulbari T.E.			
1914	1) Kamala T.E.					
1915	Nil					
1916	1) Gaya Ganga T.E.					
1917	1) Nischintapur T.E.		2) Khoribari T.E.		3) Merryview T.E.	
1918	Nil					
1919	Nil					
1920	1) Saidabad T.E.					
1921	1) Matidhar T.E.		2) Bijlimoni T.E.		3) Sahabad T.E.	
1922	1) Candmoni T.E.					
1923	1) Kiran Chandra T.E.					
1924	1) Bijohnagar T.E.					
1925	1) Bhojnarayan T.E.					
1926	1) Satis Chandra T.E.					

[Source: Compiled on the basis of consulting records of respective Tea Estates and Filed Survey.]

There were, some European entrepreneur in Terai during the first three decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among these, Mr. Hamilton who established Gayaganga T.E in 1917 and who purchase Hansqua T.E in 1913, as stated earlier and appointed his nephew Mr. A.Robertson as the manager of the garden. The green leaves of both the garden were manufactured at the old Hansqua factory which was situated at present side until new factories were constructed at both the garden in 1926. On the other hand the Mohurgaong Gulma Tea Estate was also a product of the British planters. At first it was divided into two parts under two separate administrators of two Tea Estates i.e Mohurgong T.E and GulmaT.E. The first one was set up by Mr. Lewis Prince Delves Broughten, the Administrator General of Bengal and also the Administrator of Tea Estate. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century Mr. Naffer Chandra Paul Choudhury, who came from Nodia district purchased Mohurgong T.E. Gulma T.E was sold to Paul Choudhury family on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1930 and in the same year these two Tea Estates were merged into one and renamed it as Mohurgong Gulma Tea Estate.<sup>67</sup>

The following table will exhibit the names of other tea garden which were established by the European Tea Planters, including which have already discussed.

TABLE NO 3:2:7

EUROPEAN GARDEN IN DARJEELING TERAIS AS ON 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 1923

NANE OF GARDEN OR COMPANY	NAME OF CALCUTTA AGENTS OR SECRETARIES	AREA UNDER TEA CULTIVATION
Ahamedabad Tea Co. Ld	Gladstone Wyllie & Co	385 Acres
Atal Tea Co. Ld	McLeod & Co	701 Acres
Bagdogra Tea Estate	Begg, Dunlop & Co, Ld	324 ½ Acres
Belgachi Tea Co. Ld	Davenport & Co	490 Acres
Eastern Terai Association Ld	Do	427 Acres
Gulma Tea Co. Ld	Do	436 Acres
Gungaram Tea Co. Ld	Duncan Brothers & Co	776 Acres
Gungaram		581 Acres
Ord		359 Acres
Moonee		
Lohagar Tea Co. Ld	Octavius Steel & Co. Ld	419 Acres
New Chumta Tea Co. Ld	Davenport & Co	588 Acres
New Terai Association Ld	Kilburn & Co	880 Acres
Pahargoomeah Tea Assc. Ld	Do	861 Acres
Putinbarrie Tea Assc. Ld	Duncan Brothers & Co	300 Acres
Simulbarrie Tea Estate	National Agency Co .Ld	570 Acres
Singhia Jhora Tea Estate	Shaw, Wallace & Co	256 Acres
Taipoo Tea Association	Williamson, Magor & Co	334 Acres
Tirrihannah Co. Ld	Bagg ,Dunlop & Co. Ld	
Marionbarrie Division,		35 ½ Acres
Tirrihannah Division,		755 ½ Acres

[Source: *Detailed Report of The General Committee of The Indian Tea Association For The Year 1922*, Criterion Printing Workers, Calcutta, 1923, p.364]

Indian planters in Terai were led by Bijay Basanta Bose of Thanjhora T.E, Saradindu Bose of Deomani T.E Abdulbari Khandakar of Naxalbari T.E, Jitendera Mohan Dutta of Atal T.E, T.P. Banerjee of Simulbari T.E Kusum Dutta were organising and establishing Terai Indian Planters Association, in protest against the later's indifference towards promoting the cause of native planters in Terai. The Indian Tea Estates were handicapped by poor road communication system and time to time official harassment and hence arose the necessity of an organized body of their own to put pressure on the *Zillaparisad* and P.W.D. The Terai Indian Planters Association, established in 1928, rendered invaluable service towards the Indian planters' grievances in Terai. The first Chairman of this institution was Bijoy Basanta Bose, followed by T.B Banerjee. In the initial stage it was started with eight members though later the number was increased.<sup>68</sup> The two rival bodies, therefore, began to function in Terai and their efforts, though from two separate platforms, directly contributed towards the growth and development of the Indian tea industry as a whole.

For the unprecedented depression in tea market that began in 1930 a ban was put by the international body towards further extension of tea cultivation and that restricted the Indian planters to invest anymore in tea industry.<sup>69</sup> Liberty observes in its column on 26th June 1931 that "Owing to an abnormal fall in the price of tea, there is every chance of many Tea gardens owned and managed by Bengalis, situated in the Terai, being worn out. The most characteristic drawback of most of the native concerns is that in times of good profit, the authorities declare even cent percent dividend without maintaining any Reserve Fund for future consequences and that's why the native concerns show a tendency to suffer much more than the European concerns who can successfully fight out against adverse circumstances because of this 'boom', the Reserve Fund. But this year's depression (1931) has affected all concerns from or less and to save these concerns from peril, it has been generally proposed that a general reduction of pay at 25 to 30 percent of the employees including the managers effected in no time....".<sup>70</sup>

### **3:2:7 CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP IN TERAI TEA GARDENS AFTER INDEPENDENCE:**

During the last several years the tea industry of Terai has been beset with various difficulties. Even the establishment of an auction centre at Siliguri did not have a great positive impact on marketing of Terai teas. Hence, about forty five years after Independence (1951-1990), the numbers of new tea gardens were established in the

Terai, very few tea gardens were opened in Darjeeling hills and Dooars. Though, the rapid growth of small tea garden in this connection is noticeable. The area under cultivation of tea in West Bengal rose by 27.13 per cent over last 40 years i.e 1951-1990 was .62 percent annually. The increase is 47.98 per cent i.e one per cent annually in Assam and 31.47 per cent or .70 per cent annually in the whole of India during the same period. In contrast to this, the area under cultivation in the Terai region rose by 58.03 per cent i.e 1.19 per cent annually over the same period of time. But as a whole it is better to say in area under the cultivation of tea in all tea growing regions of India was stagnant. One important reason for this poor rate of expansion possibly was the impact of West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, of 1953 under section 6(3) of the act about 29,000 hectares of land belong the estates and constituting 29 per cent of total area under tea cultivation in the state was vested with the State Government. Available records indicate that the estates are left with very little suitable land for the extension of plantation.<sup>71</sup> The following table will exhibit the real picture:

**TABLE NO 3:2:8**

**GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEA INDUSTRY IN INDIA AFTER 1947**

District\State\Region		1951	1961	1971	1980-1981	1990	% Increase over 1951
Darjeeling	No. of Garden	-	99	97	103	102	-
	Area under tea(in hectares)	16569	18605	18245	19239	20065	21.00
Terai	No. of Garden	-	47	48	53	82	-
	Area under tea(do)	8402	9344	10769	11314	13345	58.00
Dooars	No. of Garden	-	155	151	154	163	-
	Area under tea(do)	54609	54756	59485	63418	67760	24.00
West Bengal	No. of Garden	296	301	295	305	347	-
	Area under tea(do)	79580	82750	88499	93971	101170	27.00
Assam	No. of Garden	785	744	750	777	848	-
	Area under tea(do)	155674	162367	162325	203038	230363	47.00
All India	No. of Garden	6214	9499	12051	13390	12861	-
	Area under tea(do)	316640	331229	356516	383629	416563	31.00

[Source: *Tea Statistics 1990-91*, Tea Board of India, Calcutta, pp.4-10.]

After Independence in 1947 there were two changes occurred regarding the ownership and control in Terai Tea Gardens, firstly, Indianization took place after 1947 by purchasing the foreign tea gardens by the Indian merchant community and secondly, the Indian sector ownership and control passed from one Indian community or group to another. Sibsankar Mukherjee pointed out that in the case of Jalpaiguri town it was shifted in favor of the Marwari community. He further observed that the second and third generations of the pioneers Bengali planters have to earn more profits as their predecessors did. They never felt the urge for building up a reserve out of profits earned

to be utilized for investment in the future. Moreover, the establishment of Central Tea Board in 1950 and the Tea Board of India in 1953 completely shook the complacent air of the planters. They realized that the changed political situation and mixed economic policy introduced by J.L. Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India would not allow the private plantation sector to pursue its own policy without any government control and regulation, which was sustained in control period.<sup>72</sup> The following table will exhibit the name of some Bengali tea gardens in Darjeeling Terai which were transferred to other communities or companies in post Independence period.

**TABLE NO 3:2:9**  
**CHANGES IN THE OWNERSHIP OF THE TEA GARDENS IN TERAI AFTER 1947**

NAME OF THE GARDEN	PLACE	OLD OWNER	NEW OWNER
Atal T.E	Naxalbari	Sudhir Chatterjee	Rowsanlal Agarwala
Azamabad T.E	Bagdogra	Nawab's of Jalpaiguri	Garg Tea & Co
Bijlimni T.E	Bidhanagar	Nalini Ranjan Sarkar	Rowsanlal Agarwala
Debijhora	Bidhanagar	Neogies Of Jalpaiguri	Grag Tea & Co
Kamalpur	Bangdubi	Badal Bhattacharya	Jayanti Praased Agarwal
Kharibari T.E	Naxalbari	Mitra's of Jalpaiguri	Ajit Prasad Agarwal
Nischintapur	Matigara.	Sen&Co.	Pawan Garg with M.R. Das
Simulbari	Sukna	Banerjee & Co.	Santosh Bansall
Sahabad	Bagdogra	Santu Saha	Birla Group
Sannyasithan	Bagdogra	Rabi Mitra	Daga Group
Saidabad	Bagdogra	Nawabs Of Jalpaiguri	AjitPrased Agarwall
Kamala	Bagdogra	S.P. Roy	Suresh Agarwal
Matidhar	Bidhanagar	Nalini Ranjan Sarkar	Rowsanlal Agarwal
Manjha	Naxalbari	Mitra's of Jalpaiguri	Kishan Kr. Kalyani

[Source; *Parbattya Uttar Banga, Prasanga Darjeeling Nama-I*; Ananda Gopal Ghosh, Sudip khasnobish, Supam Biswas, N.L. Publishers, Siliguri, 2013, pp.99-100]

Yet there are some Bengali tea gardens in Darjeeling Terai i.e Bijaynagar T.E, Ashapur T.E, Naxalbari T.E, Mohurgong Gulma T.E, Kiron Chandra T.E, Satish Chandra T.E, Fulbari T.E etc. In this connection a question may be arose that why the numbers of the Bengali owners of tea gardens declined. It can be analyze that the non-Bengali owners mostly Marwaries and Biharies were engaged in different business

activities and their capital was invested in various business areas along with tea gardens. On the other hand the Bengali entrepreneurs were largely depended on the tea gardens for their financial existence. Moreover the Bengali tea gardens owners had led their life with luxury and extra vagrancy by which they lost their money and social fame. They also lost their money in various legal cases and complications arising from property inheritance between brothers, partners etc. Further it is being seen that the Bengali planters during its decline mostly belong to the third or fourth generation of the business. It is however doubtful, that the rising non-Bengali tea garden entrepreneurs mostly belong to first generation and their condition in third or fourth generation could be the same as the Bengalis.

The above discussion showed the growth and development of tea industry in Darjeeling Terai and it is found that the tea plantation industry was purely an European exercise and the Colonial Government gave active support and sponsorship for the rapid growth and development of this industry. It is to be noted that the tea garden industries in Darjeeling hill as well as in Terai till the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century was almost entirely in the hands of the European. Besides being the European tea plantations, some sorts of native capital began to pour in the tea plantation of Terai at huge level from the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. During colonial period the enterprising Bengalis both Hindus and Muslims were responsible for advancing and development of tea industry in Terai. Nevertheless, the Colonial Government not only introduced tea in Darjeeling Terai in the sixties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but for the first time in the history of India initiated 'a scientific forest policy'. The successful introduction of plantation crop like tea resulted in the clearing of large forest, necessitating the conversion of remaining forest tract for ecological reasons. The Colonial Government noticed the danger of the reckless destruction of the forest reserves and consequently the planning of 'regeneration of trees' was given a high priority. A venture was opened at Sukna in Darjeeling Terai region for this purpose. It should be acknowledged that the tea plantation industry had played a valuable role in the economy of northern part of North Bengal as well as in Terai. In this connection a North African proverb says-'Water is Life, Milk is Food and Tea is Happiness'; let tea give pleasure not to drinkers alone but let it also give prosperity by raising quality of life of the people of those areas in North Bengal where efforts are being made to raise tea and create employment and income generation activities associated therewith.<sup>73</sup> The district of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri grew and developed due to tea

garden industries and these two districts were well known to the world for the tea garden industry. The unprecedented development like a railways, road and transport, shops, *hat* and *bazar* and overall i.e the urbanization was primarily due to the impact of tea garden industries in Terai, will be discussed in chapter V.

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