

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRANSITION OF
DARJEELING TERAJ (1864-1994)

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BY

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

TITLE: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL TRANSITION OF DARJEELING TERAI (1864-1994)

The study is an attempt at analyzing the social, economic and political transformation of the plain portion of Darjeeling district, popularly known Darjeeling Terai between 1864 and 1994. The starting point is 1864, the year when Terai sub-divisional headquarter was established in Hansqua near Phansidewa, and the terminal point is the year when a portion of Terai popularly known Siliguri police station got a status of Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994. Darjeeling Terai covers an area of about two hundred and seventy four square kilometres of territory within the present Siliguri sub-division of West Bengal, which is strategically very important in the Indian geography with borders of countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Tibet (China). Siliguri or in wider aspect Darjeeling Terai emerged as one of the fastest growing region in India in regard of economic and population growth on the one hand and witnessed the great popular movements like Naxal uprising on the other hand. An overall study on different aspects of social, economic and political history of present Darjeeling Terai in the Colonial and Post-Colonial period has not yet received scholarly attention. For this reason the area of present Darjeeling Terai find a little place in the main stream social, economic and political study of historians.

In this study an attempt has been made to construct a historical outline of Terai region of Darjeeling district from 6th century A.D to till the annexation of the Colonial Government in 1850 which is almost uninhabited region filled with furious wild animals and dense forest. Here the history of Darjeeling Terai region can be studied in two different angle or dimension i.e northern bank of the river Mahananda and southern bank of the said river. The history of the northern bank of the river Mahananda or the history between Mechi-Mahananda region is an unwritten from. The reason can be traced in the historical fact that the northern bank was invaded and annexed by different foreign powers in different times. The history of the southern bank of the river Mahannanda or the history of Siliguri is much written because it was included with the Terai of Darjeeling in 1880.

The demographic changes which constitutes a major element in the society, economy and politics of Terai has been discussed in two phase's i.e pre-Independence and post-Independence period. It is true that in pre-Colonial period there were sages, saints and also furious animals in the dense forest of Terai but apart from these the Meches and the Dhimals were one of the earlier settlers who resided in the upper reaches of the Terai i.e northern part of the river Mahananda. In the lower lands of Terai i.e southern part of the river Mahananda the Koches were the earlier inhabitants of this area followed by the Rajbanshis. After the establishment of the colonial rule in Terai a large number of caste Hindu Bengalis had migrated to these areas who were mostly engaged with Government services, professional lawyer and other working sectors. After the establishment of tea plantation the Oraon, Mundas, Santhals and Nepalis had migrated. The Biharis had come in Terai, after the establishment of railway lines and communication. They were followed by the Marwaries. The refugees from East Pakistan had also migrated to this area after the partition of India in 1947 and from that time Siliguri sub-division witnessed the enormous growth of population. During post-Independence period Darjeeling Terai recorded abnormal growth in population and the police stations of Siliguri, Phansidewa and Naxalbari recorded a phenomenal growth in population. Despite the migrant's heterogeneous character in language, way of life, caste, culture formed a plural society marked by considerable socio-cultural differentiations.

After the annexation of Terai in 1850 the colonial government made various rules, regulations and land revenue settlement to govern this tract. A new type of land system developed in the colonial rule in this region called the *jotedari* system. The owner of the *jotes* was called *jotedars* and most of them were the Rajbanshis. A typical *jotedar-adhiar* relationship had emerged which is marked by multiple forms of surplus extraction and dependency in the Colonial period. It prevailed till the end of the colonial rule. But after the introduction of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 all the colonial land rules were replaced by new policies of the independent India. The colonial policy in the terai and introduction of commercial crop like tea had led to the economic transformation of the economy of the region as well as the rise and decline of the *Bengalee* entrepreneurs in the tea industry in post Independence period.

The thesis highlights the radical transformation of Terai especially Siliguri town from an educationally backward tract to an educational hub of North Bengal within a

very short period. Here an attempt has been made to look educational development in Terai's rural areas including tea garden areas. After a thorough study on urbanization of Siliguri, it became evident that the process of development in Siliguri did remain more or less constant towards the end of the colonial rule in India. A new dimension followed with the partition of India in 1947 reflected the progress of the transport system specially railways and road transport. Further, the Chinese aggression of 1962 attracted the then Central Government of India towards the strategically important place Siliguri because the distance from Siliguri to Nathula or Chumbi valley of China was closer than the distance to Calcutta. Thus for the protection and safety of the North-Eastern part of India the importance of Siliguri gradually increased.

It has taken up the rise and ethnic confrontation of various social and ethnic minority groups for the loss of their land due migration due to partition (1947) and infiltration since 1971. On the whole it has taken up the social, economic and political transition of the Darjeeling Terai from the colonial to the post colonial and independent India.

PREFACE

In 2014 Darjeeling Terai or Siliguri Sub-Division completed her one hundred and fifty years of its existence and on this occasion this study presents the history of the Darjeeling Terai, its development and transformation during the period of 1864-1994. The history of the Darjeeling Terai is a relatively neglected area of research. Though important scholars and academicians have contributed in the studies of urbanization of Darjeeling hill town and some popular writers in local magazines and periodicals have focused on the development of Siliguri town but the writings do not deal with the historical angle regarding the development of the Darjeeling Terai during the colonial and post colonial period.

The proposed studies addresses to the issues of push and pull factors for immigration in this area during the Colonial and post Colonial period, the introduction of a settled agrarian structure by the Colonial Government, rapid expansion of tea gardens and growth of modern educational institutions. It also touches the changes in politics from national movement, Tebhaga movement to Naxalbari movement in post colonial period. It also highlighted the ethnic movements like Uttarkhand and Gorkhaland which demanded a separate state.

The objective of the work is to investigate the historical transition of Darjeeling Terai in social, economic and political aspects. The partition of 1947 and the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 and the Chinese aggression of 1962 in this area have not received enough attention by the

scholars. The transfer of the lands from the son's of the soil to the migrants in this region has created a long term ethnic problem which has not been investigated so far. The historical and quasi historical work that the researcher has consulted in the preparation of the dissertation has been mentioned in the glossary.

The proposed study intends to understand the transformation of Darjeeling Terai in society, economy and politics which has been largely unexplored area of study.

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The errors, if any, have been committed involuntarily. However, the errors in fact and in judgment are, of course, my own.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Abad</i>	- Cultivated area
<i>Abwabs</i>	- Cesses
<i>Adhi</i>	- Half share
<i>Adibasi</i>	- Tribal
<i>Anna</i>	- One sixteen of a rupee, equivalent to a penny.
<i>Bagincha</i>	- Garden, here tea garden
<i>Bandar</i>	- Port
<i>Bargaders</i>	- Share croppers
<i>Benami land</i>	- Land recorded with a false name of the owner
<i>Bhadralok</i>	- Indian gentelment.
<i>Bhadramahodayagan</i>	- Gentlemen
<i>Bhat</i>	- Boiled Rice
<i>Bidhan Sabha</i>	- Legislative Assembly
<i>Bigha</i>	- One third of an acre
<i>Bustee</i>	- Slums
<i>Chaubis</i>	- Twenty four
<i>Chogyal</i>	- The little Chogyal literally means Dharma Raja. It was first conferred on Phuntsog Namgyal in 1642 when he was investe with both spiritual and temporal authority.
<i>Chowkidar</i>	- A wateaman.
<i>Corvee</i>	- A labour tax
<i>Coss</i>	- Equivalent to 2 and ½ mile.
<i>Dastur</i>	- Traditions
<i>Dehat</i>	- Villages collectively belonging to the same proprietor, the whole of an estate.
<i>Dewan</i>	- The chief executive officer of a ruling chief.
<i>Doba</i>	- Fish ponds
<i>Faquir</i>	- Poor, needy, indigent men, religious mendicants. Referred to by Rennell as a kind of sturdy beggar.
<i>Faringhati</i>	- High land
<i>Gaddi</i>	- The seat of rank or royalty, a throne or sovereign power
<i>Ganj</i>	- Mart
<i>Ghat</i>	- Steps leading to a bathing place
<i>Girja</i>	- Church
<i>Goddis</i>	- Marwaris business shop or center
<i>Gundda bahinee</i>	- A force of armed persons, usually kept by the planters previously

<i>Gurus</i>	- Teachers
<i>Hat</i>	- Open air market
<i>Jagheer</i>	- The word is a construction from the Persian jai = place and gir = holding or taking possession
<i>Jagir</i>	- Literally place-holding. A hereditary assignments of land and of its rent as annuity.
<i>Jote</i>	- A portion of unmeasured land
<i>Jotedar</i>	- Owners of a considerable unmeasured area of land and who hold land directly under Government through a lease and paid revenue to the Government
<i>Jotedary</i>	- Under the regime of jotedar
<i>Kachari</i>	- Court
<i>Kala-azar</i>	- Black Death
<i>Khals</i>	- Drains
<i>Khamar</i>	- Threshing floor
<i>Khasmahal</i>	- Land under Government
<i>Kutchi</i>	- Mud made
<i>Lathis</i>	- Sticks
<i>Mahajan</i>	- Money lender
<i>Maharaja</i>	- King
<i>Maharani</i>	- Queen
<i>Mallick</i>	- An owner
<i>Mandir</i>	- Temple
<i>Marwaris</i>	- Properly a man of Marwar of Jodhpur in Rajasthan, used in India as synonymous with <i>Banya</i> or trader and money-lander.
<i>Masjid</i>	- A Mosque
<i>Maund</i>	- 80 lbs
<i>Mauza</i>	- A village
<i>Mukhtabs</i>	- Muhammdians village schools.
<i>Nagar</i>	- City
<i>Nalas</i>	- Drains
<i>Pal</i>	- Rent- free
<i>Palki</i>	- Palanquin
<i>Panchayat</i>	- A court of arbitration consisting of five or more members
<i>Pandit</i>	- Teacher
<i>Panikhet</i>	- Irrigated land
<i>Parganna</i>	- A district, a province, a tract of country containing many villages, a fiscal division.
<i>Pat</i>	- Jute

<i>Pathsala</i>	- An aided private school
<i>Pathsalas</i>	- Ordinary village schools.
<i>Pattas</i>	- A documents of purchase or leasehold of land
<i>Peon</i>	- The term commonly use by Europeans for the Hindustani piada, a footman, a foot soldier an inferior officer of office, a personal messenger or servant.
<i>Pherees</i>	- A kind of transport based on riverine transportation
<i>Pottah</i>	- Tradition or rituals
<i>Pucca</i>	- Brick made
<i>Puja</i>	- Ceremonial worship
<i>Pur</i>	- City
<i>Purja</i>	- Ordinary peasants
<i>Rabi</i>	- A winter crop
<i>Raikats</i>	- Relatives of Koch Kings who used to guard the western side of the Koch Kingdoms
<i>Raj</i>	- The estate of Raja
<i>Raja</i>	- King
<i>Rani</i>	- The wife of Raja
<i>Rupit</i>	- Low land
<i>Ryots</i>	- Peasants
<i>Sal</i>	- Shorea Robusta, a tree yielding timber and dammar resin.
<i>Sanad</i>	- A royal Ordinance or mandate.
<i>Sannyasi</i>	- One who has abandoned all worldly possessions and affections, a Brahmin of the fourth order, religious mendicant.
<i>Sardar</i>	- Leader
<i>Saree</i>	- A long cloth worn by Indian women wrapped round the body and passed over the head
<i>Sukhaket</i>	- Un-irrigated land
<i>Tahsilder</i>	- A Government receiver of revenue.
<i>Thana</i>	- Police outpost and station.
<i>Thicca</i>	- Specific task or work on contract basis
<i>Tonga</i>	- Horse carriage
<i>Vakil</i>	- Agent or lawyer
<i>Verandah</i>	- A balcony, corridor etc
<i>Zamindari</i>	- A Zamindar is a tract of land over which the right to collect rents from the cultivators (rai-yats) has been granted by Government to an individual (the Zamindar) in consideration of affixed sum to be annually paid by him.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DISSERTATION

A.A.S.U	:	All Assam Student Union
A.I.G.L	:	All India Gorkha League
B.A	:	Bachelor of Arts (Graduate)
B.D.G	:	Bengal District Gazetteers
B.D.O	:	Block Development Officer
C.P.I	:	Communist Party of India
C.P.I (M)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist)
C.P.I (ML)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
D.C.O.D	:	Deputy Commissioner Office of Darjeeling
D.C.O.J	:	Divisional Commissioner Office of Jalpaiguri
D.G.H.C	:	Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council
D.H.R	:	Darjeeling Himalayan Railway
D.I .S	:	District Inspector of Schools
D.I.F	:	Darjeeling Improvement Fund
E.P.W	:	Economic and Political Weekly
F.P.C	:	Foreign Political Consultations
G.J.M.M	:	Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha
G.N.L.F	:	Gorkha National Liberation Front
H.E.SCHOOL	:	High English School
H.M	:	Headmaster
I.C	:	Inspector of Colleges
I.N.C	:	Indian National Congress
I.T.P.A	:	Indian Tea Planters Association
K.P.P	:	Kamatapur People's Party

M.A	:	Master of Arts
M.E.SCHOOL	:	Middle English School
M.L.A	:	Member of Legislative Assembly
N.B.U	:	North Bengal University
P.W.D	:	Public Works Department
S.C	:	Schedule Caste
S.D.O	:	Sub-Divisional Officer
S.J.D.A	:	Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Authority
S.M.C	:	Siliguri Municipal Corporation
S.P.O	:	Siliguri Planning Organization
S.R.C	:	State Reorganization Committee
T.E	:	Tea Estate
T.G	:	Tea Garden
T.T.P.A	:	Terai Tea Planters Association
U.F.G	:	United Front Government
U.K.D	:	Uttarkhanda Dal
U.N.O	:	United Nations and Organisation
U.T.J.A.S	:	Uttarbanga Taposili Jati O Adibasi Sangathan
W.B.S.A	:	West Bengal State Archive
W.W. I	:	World War First
W.W. II	:	World War Second

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INTRODUCTION

Local history has attracted the attention of scholars, historians and professional students of history. The validity of local history can hardly be of any doubt and its importance lies mainly in its contribution to our understanding of the history of the wider region of which the particular locality forms a part. Local or micro level history deals with in-depth study of a locality; a village, a region, a small town, a district or any culturally autonomous region. It provides a manageable geographical framework, approximated by processes of wider socio-economic change of the people and reaction of the masses to the socio-economic and political structure. This study is an attempt at analyzing the social, economic and political transformation of the plain portion of Darjeeling district, popularly known Darjeeling Terai between 1864 and 1994. The starting point is 1864, the year when Terai sub-divisional headquarter was established in Hansqua near Phansidewa, and the terminal point is the year when a portion of Terai popularly known Siliguri police station got a status of Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994.

One may ask why a small portion of a district or better to say a sub-division called Siliguri has been chosen. In this regard several explanations may be offered. Firstly, Darjeeling Terai covers an area of about two hundred and seventy four square kilometres of territory within the present Siliguri sub-division of West Bengal, which is strategically very important in the Indian geography with borders of countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Tibet (China). Secondly, after the five decades of the establishment of University of North Bengal no historical research works yet to be done by any research scholar in this regard. But it is a real fact that Siliguri or in wider aspect Darjeeling Terai emerged as one of the fastest growing region in India in regard of economic and population growth on the one hand and witnessed the great popular movements like Naxal uprising on the other hand. An overall study on different aspects of social, economic and political history of present Darjeeling Terai in the Colonial and Post-Colonial period has not yet received scholarly attention. For this reason the area of present Darjeeling Terai find a little place in the main stream social, economic and political study of historians.

There are no research work have so far been completed touching the thematic margin of the proposed dissertation or any completed research work have not yet been

published on the proposed topic. Though some studies have no doubt been undertaken on few issues of this region but no detail study has so far been made on social, economic and political transition of this region. The few published works available are-

1. 'The Eastern Morung: A Disputed Territory In Anglo-Nepalese Relations (1770-1816)' by Tapas Kumar Roy Choudhury (in *The Indian Historical Review*, Biannual Journal Of The Indian Council Of Historical Research), Vol-XVII, No.1-2, Vivekananda Jha(ed), , Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1993.)
2. *History and Culture of the Kirat People* by I.S.Chemjong, (Puspa Ratna Sagar, Nepal, 1967.)
3. *Economic History of North Bengal* by Manas Dasgupta (University of North Bengal, Raja Rammohanpur, 2010.)
4. *Migration between India and Nepal* by Haraprasad Chattopadhyaya (Firma KLM Private Limited, Calcutta, 1996.)

Tapas Kumar Roy Choudhury and I.S. Chemjong partially touched the history of Darjeeling Terai region. Though, Tapas Kumar Roy Choudhury in his outstanding article first time dealt with the pretext of the colonial annexation of Terai. I.S. Chemjong in his work takes some initiative to draw historical background of this region in pre-colonial period. Manas Dasgupta in his book discussed many topic related to the economic history of North Bengal about tea, trade, land revenue etc but he lightly touch a portion of Terai i.e growth of Siliguri and spend six or seven pages to discussed the opening of Terai on commercial point of view. Haraprasad Chattopadhyaya in his books explores only the Nepali migration in India and early political connection of Nepal with India. It also deals some effects of social and cultural migration and briefly discussed agitation for separate state by the Nepalis in India. In these books the Terai region of Darjeeling district has been discussed in scattered ways and beyond historical sense. Apart from these *Siliguri: Purnango Itihas* (Bengali) by Sibaprasad Chatterjee (Himalaya Publisher's, Siliguri, 2000), *Ekti Janapader Kahinee* (Bengali) by Sree Praudyot Kumar Basu (Shayma Press, Hooghly, 1990) *Siliguri Sahorer Itibritoo* (Bengali) by Bijay Chandra Ghatak (Jaghreetee Press, Jalpaiguri, 1389 B.S)- all of these book have been written by local writers and non-academicians. These works are mostly written about Siliguri and its urbanization. They are basically memoirs in character and are far away

from any historical sense. It is better to regard these works as narration of information rather than history. Moreover they are biased, exaggerate and narrative in nature. But there are some outstanding unpublished Ph.D works on Terai region mainly dealing with tea industry and commercial activities in Siliguri after Independence of India in 1947. These are

1. *The Darjeeling Terai Tea Plantation (1862-1976): A Case Study Of The Condition Of the Workers* by Ashok Kumar Ganguli (Jadavpur University, 1994)
2. *Economic Changes in Siliguri and Problems of Its Urban Development* by Ranjit Roy (N.B.U. 1986)
3. *Industries, Trade And Trading Communities of North Bengal (West Bengal) 1833-1933: A Study Of Economic History* by Sujit Ghosh (N.B.U. 2010)
4. *Siliguri : An Urban Study in Socio-Economic Considerations* by Sudipta Majumdar (N.B.U. 2001)

Though, these works are more comprehensive and evident but no one had tried to explore the continuous changes of history of Darjeeling Terai region between 1864 and 1994. Ashok Kumar Ganguli's work is based on the tea garden labourer's condition in Terai and he analysed in detail as the involving of Communist Party to mobilising tea workers. Ranjit Roy in his work investigated the economic activities of Siliguri and showed the rise, growth and development of Siliguri as a most prominent commercial town of North Bengal after the termination of colonial rule. Sujit Ghosh in his work beautifully analysed the economic activities of North Bengal from the introduction of Charter Act of 1833 to an end of the great worldwide Economic Depression in 1933. In his work he only focused some tea and transport activities in and around Siliguri and it is to be note that when Siliguri just emerged as a town in 1931 he had about to finished his investigation. Sudipta Majumdar finds out several factors for emerging Siliguri as a business centre. All of these works mainly related to somehow economic history of Siliguri Town areas and one focused on specific aspects of Terai tea industry and labour movement. Even some other articles and papers related to political involvement of the people of Terai in Naxal Movement published so far in academic journals and magazines, focus on specific aspects of this movement but no means micro-level studies undertaken in ethnic angle wise. None of the scholars touched the society, demography and agriculture, land settlement, education and anti colonial movements including ethnic

conflicts in their investigation regarding Terai region of Darjeeling. Thus Darjeeling Terai is virtually a virgin soil in this respect from researcher point of view. Here lies the relevance and importance of the present study.

The pertinent question which induced me to start the research work is the continuous changes of Siliguri sub-division in terms of social, economic, educational and political arena. On the other hand it is difficult to say specifically the composition of the population of this region in pre-colonial rule however it is an acknowledge fact that the Rajbanshis were the largest single majority group of the people in Terai in colonial period. Though, it is also evident that the Dhimals and the Meches were the majority of the population in the northern bank of the river Mahananda before coming of the tribal settlers from Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas who were mostly engaged in tea industry in Terai. The higher caste Hindu settlers who were engaged in Government sectors, legal profession, managers and accountant in tea gardens mainly inhabited in rural areas of Terai. But the most important factor is that a large number of refugees from East Pakistan, Nepalese from Nepal and lower caste Hindu and Muslims infiltrators from Bangladesh were settled this region after colonial rule and we found a new change and trend in demography of this region. The rapid change in the demographic structure of Terai within proposed period had led a deep impact upon the social, economic and political life of the region.

The whole study has been organised into Seven Chapters excluding introduction.

The first Chapter entitled “Geo-Historical Profile of Darjeeling Terai” attempts to give a description of the geographical location of the Terai areas of Darjeeling district in present West Bengal because Terai is situated in Uttranchal, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Nepal. Here an attempt has been made to construct a historical outline of Terai region of Darjeeling district from 6th century A.D to till the annexation of the Colonial Government in 1850 which is almost uninhabited region filled with furious wild animals and dense forest. Here the history of Darjeeling Terai region can be studied in two different angle or dimension i.e northern bank of the river Mahananda and southern bank of the said river. The history of the northern bank of the river Mahananda or the history between Mechi-Mahananda region is an unwritten from. The reason can be traced in the historical fact that the northern bank was invaded and annexed by different foreign powers in different times. The history of the southern bank of the river Mahannanda or

the history of Siliguri is much written because it was included with the Terai of Darjeeling in 1880.

The second Chapter entitled “Demographic Profile and Social Structure of Terai” focuses on the enormous demographic change of Terai. In this chapter the demographic changes in Terai has been discussed in two phase’s i.e pre-Independence and post-Independence period. It is true that in pre-Colonial period there were sages, saints and also furious animals in the dense forest of Terai but apart from these the Meches and the Dhimals were one of the earlier settlers who resided in the upper reaches of the Terai i.e northern part of the river Mahananda. In the lower lands of Terai i.e southern part of the river Mahananda the Koches were the earlier inhabitants of this area followed by the Rajbanshis. After the establishment of the colonial rule in Terai a large number of caste Hindu Bengalis had migrated to these areas who were mostly engaged with Government services, professional lawyer and other working sectors. After the establishment of tea plantation the Oraons, Mundas, Santhals and Nepalis had migrated. The Biharis had come in Terai, after the establishment of railway lines and communication. They were followed by the Marwaries. The refugees from East Pakistan had also migrated to this area after the partition of India in 1947 and from that time Siliguri sub-division witnessed the enormous growth of population. During post-Independence period Darjeeling Terai recorded abnormal growth in population and the police stations of Siliguri, Phansidewa and Naxalbari recorded a phenomenal growth in population. Despite the migrant’s heterogeneous character in language, way of life, caste, culture formed a plural society marked by considerable socio-cultural differentiations.

The third Chapter entitled “Economic Changes: Agriculture and Plantation Economy”. It further divided in two different sub-chapters, Settings A: “Agricultural Evolution and Classification of Land” and Settings B: “Rise and Growth of Tea Industry in Terai”. In the first part of this chapter (settings: A) an attempt has been made to know about the pre-Colonial land system and different agricultural crops which were produced in this area. After the annexation of Terai in 1850 the colonial government made various rules, regulations and land revenue settlement to govern this tract. A new type of land system was developed by the Government which is better to called *jotedary* system in this region. The owner of the *jotes* is called *jotedars* and most of them were the Rajbanshis. An attempt has also been made to explore the *jotedar-adhiar* relationship marked by multiple forms of surplus extraction and dependency in the Colonial period. It

prevailed till the end of the colonial rule. But after the introduction of the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 all the colonial land rules were superseded. One of the aims of this work in this chapter is to study the agrarian class structure, its formation and deformation from the pre-colonial period to the end of the colonial rule.

In the second part of this chapter (settings: B) focuses on the rise and growth of tea industry in Terai and its commercial importance in this region during the concerned period. Here an attempt has been made to know about the forces and factors that led to the growth of tea plantation in this region. At the same time, attempt has been made to look consolidation of the European-owned and controlled tea plantation economy- a typical form of colonial economic penetration and exploitation on the one hand and how the Bengalis gradually entered into this venture. Here an emphasis has been given upon the Colonial policy and attitude with regards to this commercial crop and analyse the different factors responsible for the beginning of the decline of the Bengali entrepreneurs in the tea industry in post Independence period.

The fourth Chapter entitled “Educational Scenario of Darjeeling Terai” highlights the radical transformation of Terai especially Siliguri rural areas from an educationally backward tract to an educational hub of North Bengal within a very short period. Here an attempt has been made to look educational development in Terai’s rural areas including tea garden areas.

The fifth Chapter throws light on the “Urbanization of Siliguri: Union Board to Corporation”. After a thorough study on urbanization of Siliguri, it became evident that the process of development in Siliguri did remain more or less constant towards the end of the colonial rule in India. A new dimension followed with the partition of India in 1947 reflected the progress of the transport system specially railways and road transport. Further, the Chinese aggression of 1962 attracted the then Central Government of India towards the strategically important place Siliguri because the distance from Siliguri to Nathula or Chumbi valley of China was closer than the distance to Calcutta. Thus for the protection and safety of the North-Eastern part of India the importance of Siliguri gradually increased.

The sixth Chapter is entitled “Political Transition: Agitation to Confrontation” in Darjeeling Terai which is the reflection of the agriculture based various social-economic groups and social classes of the Rajbanshi people for the loss of their land. It is

remarkable that throughout the colonial period Darjeeling Terai remained more or less free from any mass movement or mass conflict, though tension were not entirely absent. But it is interesting to see with the socio-political changes that took place after Chinese aggression of India in 1962 and moreover the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 Terai became one of the ethnic confrontation centres at the national as well as provincial level.

Chapter Seven notes the Epilogue or conclusion which sums up the research findings and analysis.

This research work is perhaps the first ever attempt to make a comprehensive study of the historical, social, economical, educational and political transition of the plain portion of Darjeeling district popularly known Siliguri sub-division. A wide variety of tools and techniques are available and used by the scholar in this field. However, this type of micro-level research often suffers from lack of qualitative data or primary source material but the present study is based on primary data or sources, mostly unpublished materials were consulted either in District Magistrate Office of Darjeeling, or Divisional Commissioner's Office in Jalpaiguri, or in West Bengal State Archive in Calcutta. A fruitful appendix is a very good proof to establish this comment. Besides primary sources, several books though few in numbers, on the subject have provided valuable supplementary information for the study. The researcher has also used local journals, magazines, souvenirs, news papers, historical journals, unpublished Ph. D thesis and M. Phil dissertation as well as filled surveys and interview has been used to clarify the problem.

CHAPTER – I

GEO-HISTORICAL PROFILE OF DARJEELING TERAI

Before we enter into a detailed study of our problem, we have to determine the area or field over which our investigation is concerned. This chapter will attempt to give a description of the geographical area of Darjeeling Terai and its features, whose area and shape have changed in course of time i.e. during the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period. The plains of Darjeeling district is popularly known as the Darjeeling Terai, extending from the foot of the mountainous tract of the northern border of Purnea district. It lies between $26^{\circ}36'48''$ and $26^{\circ}49'45''$ north latitude and between $88^{\circ}8'51''$ and $88^{\circ}29'$ east longitude. It forms a trapezoid with a length from north to south of eight miles and breadth east to west of ten miles, covering a total area 229.95 square miles or 147, 17019 acres, excluding the forest land. It is bounded in the north by Kurseong sub-division of the district, in the south by West Dinajpur (Now North Dinajpur), in the east by Jalpaiguri district and in the west by independent state of Nepal.¹ Darjeeling Terai situated in the foothills of the Himalayas and about eight hundred and forty two feet above the sea level is now a part of the sub-division of Siliguri in the state of West Bengal as shown in the map (Appendix A). Darjeeling Terai which is a unique in itself and has very little in common with the of Purnea and Jalpaiguri. The northern parts are high and stony, only the hollows between ridges being fit for growing paddy and other food crops with profit; the general portion, too, is more or less undulating and partakes in a less marked degree of nature and character of the northern parts; the fringe bordering on the districts of Purnea and Jalpaiguri are level to a degree but where stony ridges and undulations are by no means absent. It is not possible to divide the tract into different blocks according to the texture, level and fertility of the soil because the different kinds of soil are so much interlaced with one another and are subject to so constant changes owing to fresh deposits carried down by washings from the hills every year as to defy all attempts at such divisions .But it is true to a certain extent that the southern parts of Darjeeling Terai resemble to a certain extent the northern parts of the district of Purnea and north-western parts of the district of Jalpaiguri , but that resemblance is rather superficial.² During the colonial period there were three police stations under Siliguri sub-division i.e Siliguri, Phansidewa and Khoribari. But after the

Independence of the country in 1947 police stations were increased to six in number. The three additional new police stations are Naxalbari, Matigara and Bagdogra.

Tarai, tarei or tareiani, is defined as lowlands, swampy tract at the base of the hills, seems to be genuinely a Turanian word. As defined by Hodgson that "...if we carefully examined the Indian map many more such pre-Arian terms would probably be discovered to prove the universal spread over the continent of that earlier race, which is now chiefly confined to the Deccan. Tar in Tamil, Tal in Canarese means to below, and the affixes i.e Tar-ei and ni of Tareia-ni are the former, Tamilian, and the latter, very general, in or ni being the genitival and in flexional sign of several Southern and Northern tongues of the Turanian group of languages. The that of Cutch is a term precisely equivalent to our Tarei and is the merely aspirate form of Canarese Tal."³ Joseph Dalton Hooker, the first European who visited the Terai said that low malarial belt which skirts the base of the Himalaya from the Sutlej to Brahma-Koond (river Brahmaputra) in Upper Assam is known as Terai.⁴ For these reasons the term Terai is applicable to all the areas below the Himalayan mountainous ranges, in Uttar Pradesh⁵ and Assam⁶ or Bengal and Nepal⁷. The *Encyclopedia* describes Terai as a strip marshy malarial tract below the Siwalik hills, along the northern margins of the Indo-Gangetic plains, formed by the reappearance of the streams which have seeped underground in gravelly bhabar, at the foot of the hills. It is generally covered with dense jungle, which includes good *sal* forest in the east or with tall coarse *savannah* grasses, in the Bengal Dooars⁸ it has been largely cleared for cultivation of Tea and in Uttar Pradesh for agriculture.⁹ During the colonial period in India the western borders of Nepal touched the British district of Kumaon, and joined to it and overlapping its northern boundary the British district of Garhwal, the river Sarada fixed the boundary between Kumaon and the western district of the Nepal kingdom. Lower Kumaon was a very charming district of Sub-Himalayan hill country, the lowest slopes of these foot hills about on the plains of India and many merged into the great Terai or forest belt, which was almost continuous from the Duns of Dehra and Sirhind to the Brahmaputra. Indeed these foot-hills were clothed in sub-tropical jungle, which though not so luxurious as in the more humid climate of the eastern Himalaya.¹⁰ In between these two i.e. from Nepal Terai to Assam Terai the British-Sikkim, which were acquired by the Colonial Government during first half of the 19th century, form a well defined and distinct tracts, plain and mountain, the latter rising abruptly out of the plains to 6,000 and 10,000 feet. The mountains are a

portion of the Morung or Terai, the great band of forest running along the foot of the Himalayas.¹¹In short it is to be said that the strip land fringing the base of the hills(i.e Himalaya) is recognized as Terai (damp) in Darjeeling district and in Jalpaiguri district as Dooars (passes)¹², which is flat open forest and grass covered tract¹³ separated the plains from the foot of the hills.¹⁴On the other hand the great Himalayas, the Inner – Himalayas and the foothills and the bordering Sub – Himalayan ‘piedmont plain’ locally called Terai in Nepal and Dooars in Bhutan.¹⁵Joseph Dalton Hooker, the great naturalist who visited the Terai area in 1848 , had left an account of his visit which says that, Terai is a name loosely applied to a tract of country at the very foot of the Himalaya, it is Persians and signifies damp. Politically, the Terai generally belong to the hill-states beyond it, geographically, it should appertain to the plains of India, and geologically, it is a sort of neutral country, being composed neither of the alluvium of the plains nor of the rocks of the hills, but for the most part of alternating beds of sand, gravel, and boulders brought from the mountains .Botanically it is readily defined as the region of forest-trees, amongst which *sal* ,the most valuable of Indian timber. The Terai soil is generally light, dry and gravelly and varies in breadth, from ten miles along the Sikkim frontier, to thirty and more on the Nepalese,in the latter country it is called the Morung.¹⁶ It is to be noted that Terai region has been referred in some of the accounts either as Morung or Kiratland. Yet, Darjeeling Terai was almost an unknown area to the people living in the mainland of India before the British annexation. Hence, Morung was the old name of Nepal and Sikkim Terai (i.e Darjeeling Terai).The name is an old one, being mentioned more than once in the Alamgirnamah and in the annals of the Koch King. It is shown in Vanden Broucke ‘s ma’ as comprising the whole Himalayan tract from Bihar to Assam, and in Rennell’s map of 1779 the Nepal Terai between Muzzafarpur and Jalpaiguri is under this name.¹⁷

The name of Terai was also associated with terrible diseases like Terai fever, malaria, *kala-azar* which were of dread fear for the Europeans and many of the Europeans and natives had died from their attacks .Besides, there are heavy rainfall averaging sometimes 120 inches in the year.¹⁸ For this reason the Darjeeling Terai remained as unhealthy area as ever.¹⁹ Not only that the Terai forest, which stretched along the foot of the Himalayas through Nepal, Bengal, the Bhutan Dooars and still further east in Assam, however, the jungles are so extensive and dense, and the grass and reeds so high, that unless Tigers are marked down, it is in many places utterly useless to

look for them .Even if they are found, they could not be killed in the dense beds of reeds which frequently prove a safe asylum for the Buffalo, Tigers, Baisan, Elephant etc.²⁰ Therefore, hunters were not much attracted to the area because the penetration into the forest was not so easy.

1:1 SOME DIFICULTIES IN WRITING THE HISTORY OF DARJEELING TERAJ

The above mentioned facts make it much clear that Terai was a place where inhabitants could not reside in large numbers. Therefore, the chronological history of the area could not developed since it was always covered with dense forests and full of dangerous wild animals. In fact, Darjeeling Terai never came into prominence during ancient, medieval and even in early part of modern period. It is a well known fact that a civilization flourishes more when it comes in contact with other or more civilizations. The absence of emigration and immigration appears to have deprived Terai of any intercourse with other civilization and thus its own civilizations remained somewhat blunt. The widespread fear amongst the outsiders about the unhealthy climate of Terai is the main reason for that .It is due to this reason that when it came under the sovereignty or control of the various powers i.e Cooch Behar, Sikkim and Nepal, it did not get any importance rather it was neglected. The main motive of these powers was to collect revenue as much as they could get. Besides, it was a frontier of all the above mentioned powers, so the importance of the area in the context of development was not convinced by any of the powers. Hence, when the English East India Company annexed the Terai in 1850, no *mandir*, masjid or big ponds were found. As stated earlier, since there was no proper human habitation the development of a powerful *zamindar* or dynasty of any princely power did not come up. Therefore, in tracing the archeological remains of the area, no proper temple, mosque, *math* etc cannot be found. In fact, the non-existence of any rule of dynasty or princes and *zamindars* deprived the area of any proper architecture of temple, mosque or *math* because the kings and *zamindars* were the builders and patronizer's of such religious construction .Thus there were no proper architecture during the ancient, medieval and even in early colonial period. Though a close social and cultural connection was present between Terai, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri but it is seen that while constructing the history of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri enough evidences from archeology is available but it totally negligible in the Darjeeling Terai.²¹ Yet,there were inflow of people from other areas into this region but the accounts of the immigration

and settlement have not been documented.²² Nevertheless, when the British captured the region in 1850 it shot into prominence and contact with other parts of India began. During the Great Munity of 1857 Mr. Yule, the than Commissioner of Bhagalpur waits in Terai (mid Nov-end Dec1857) in a post between Siliguri and Pnkhabari to arrest the sepoys who were expected to hide themselves in the dense forest of Terai.²³ It is said that in early 1858 numbers of fugitive rebels took refuge in the Terai, among them who come subsequently ,were the Begum of Lucknow and his son, Brijis Kadr, Nana Sahib, Bala Rao, Mammu Khan, Beni Madho and about fifty more of the principal leaders of the rebellion. The rebels suffered greatly in Terai from sickness, and in September, 1858 Nana Sahib was said to be fallen a victim of Terai fever.²⁴ Though by the middle of the 19th century Terai was regarded as one of the parts of India's unknown world, it was gradually explored and brought into the commercial map of the country under the British rule.

1:2 OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF DARJEELING TERAJ DURING ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The authentic history of the northern bank of the river Mahananda of Darjeeling Terai commences in the limelight of modern Indian history from early part of the 18th century. So, it is impossible to unravel the tangled web of Hindu and aboriginal myths belonging to an earlier period .Because they do not form even a semblance of a connected narrative. Yet, we can only observe that the fundamental ideas on which they are based and the personages with whom they deal, are derived from the Kiranti people who lived to the east and north of the Kusi and Karatoya. The stories relate, for the most part, the struggle and conquest of Kirat, Kichak, and other petty chiefs, who were, to be said represented to have been Rais of pure Rajput descent, but who were really of Kooch origin. The earliest of the Hindu tradition refers to the Pandava war, but there are many other legends, evidently borrowed from the western people, who ruled in Mithila or northern Behar, west of the Kusi, for many centuries before the Christian era.²⁵ In this connection some passage in the Mahabharata (*Sabha-Parva,Adhyaya-30*)gives a description of the conquests of Bhima in eastern India ,furnish further information about the inhabitants of this part of the country. Bhima, it is said, conquered Mahanja king of Kausikikacheha, a tract lying between Modagiri (Monghyr) and the lands of the Pundras, which is thus identifiable with south Purnea. He also defeated Karna, the king of Anga, and conquered the hill tribes whom, he killed in the battle of Modagiri (Monghr), and

next subdued the powerful Pundra king, Vasudeva, who is described as the king of the Vangas, Pundras and Kiratas. The Pundra land appears to have been bounded on the east by the river Karatoya; on the west by the modern Mahananda, which separated it from Anga; on the south by the modern Padma; and on the north by the hills, which were inhabited by aboriginal hill tribes, such as Kiratas. Local tradition still speaks of the struggles and conquest of the Kiratas, and a Kirata (Kiranti) woman from the Morung or Terai is said to have been the wife of Raja Virat, who according to legend, gave shelter to Yudishthira, and his four Pandava brothers during their twelve years exile.²⁶

Nevertheless, it is to be said that before the coming of the Limbus in the Terai region during the 5th Century, this Kirat land was divided into eight feudal chiefs i.e Honden Hang²⁷ Yaketed Hang, Chesbi Hang, Laraso Pangbo Hang, Khesiwa Hang, Ekango Hang, Khadi Hang and Eme Hang. Eme Hang, the most powerful chief and the leader of Lepcha tribe had spread or migrated from river Deo Mai to river Tista in the east; and further Daling places of Kalimpong and Bhutan. Those who spread towards north settled Darjeeling and Sikkim. Khadi Hang, the leader of Bodo Kirat people who had spread from Mechi hill of Elam district to Terai land of Jhapa, Siliguri, Mainaguri and Mahakalaguri of present West Bengal. The rest of the chiefs had spread as far west as river Dudkoshi.²⁸ At that time, the Shah Mokwan people who were known to be originated "Tai class" of Chinese nationality came into present North Bengal and then went to the hilly place of eastern Nepal and began to settled with earlier Kiratas as mentioned earlier.²⁹ But within a very short time in the beginning of the 6th century A.D, a more powerful Kirat people Kachin or Chingpho by name invaded the land of Shah Mokwan from the northern direction. The Shah Mokwan people resist their enemies from occupying their land. But the enemies were more dangerous and stronger than the Shah Mokwan people. As a result in the battle of Hukkang³⁰, near the bank of the river Sittang the Chingphos or the Kachins killed thousands of Shah Mokwan people and drove them out from their land. Then Shah Mokwan people fixed their northern boundary in Tibet, southern boundary in the Indian plain at Jalalgarh near Purnea, eastern boundary at river Tista and the western boundary at river Dudkosi.³¹ During that period Soi Yak Lado Hang was elected as the king of *Chaubis* or Bodhey district who ruled over Chemjong, Song Yok, Vaji or Waji, Tharu, Dhimal, Koches and other tribes. He built his fort at Shanguri and fixed his northern and southern boundaries in Samba Wa and Jalalgarh near Purnea. This shah Mokwan people later decided to name their

nationality and changed the name of Shah Mokwan into Limbu.³²In this connection it is to be mentioned that, these Kiratas were connected with the Chinese, the Bhotias or the Tibetans, and other Mongoloid people. They were distinguished from the wild or primitive tribes of Austric origin who were known specifically as Nisads, Subaras, Pulindar, Bhills and Kolls. Ideologists also said that in Sanskrit, the term Kirata indicated the wild non-Aryan tribes living in the mountains, particularly the Himalayas and in the north-eastern areas of India.³³In the beginning of the 7th century A.D, a second batch of Shah Mokwan people under the leadership of Mung Maw Rong came to eastern Nepal from the south China via north Burma. They crossed Assam and reached North Bengal. They cleared the dense forest of Himalayan Terai and made their permanent settlement there and named the locality after the name of their leader Maw Rong, which later became the famous Morung or Terai.³⁴After the conquest of all the Kirat land of eastern Himalayan region, king Maw Rong Hang divided his country into four provinces or parts i.e Khombuwan, Limbuwan, Lapchan and Mawrong (Morung) and ruled the state according to feudal system. The Lapchan lied between river Mechi and river Tista in east. King Maw Rong made his capital town at Radok near Khampajong and his winter capital was at Shanguri or Jhamaguri near Bijaypur of east Nepal.³⁵ The lands conquered and annexed by him were popularly named as Morung. The king Maw Rong had no male issue, so he nominated one of his Minister (i.e Tумыangs) called Mokwan Shan to rule his kingdom after him.³⁶

During the early medieval period i.e under the reign of the Palas, the Senas and the Sultans of Gaud Terai was controlled from Gaud.³⁷ The Pal Rajas possessed the whole of Mithila and confined the Kiratas within the limits of their mountains.³⁸ After the decline of the Palas, Terai was dominated by the Senas till the death of the Lakshman Sen.³⁹ It is said that since then Maithili was adopted as official language of both the Kiratas and of the areas directly under the Sena rulers. As a result, several documents, sanads, stamped, and letters also written in Maithili, which supports this statements.⁴⁰ Except the above mentioned information no written documents are available for writing the history of Terai under the Palas and Senas. Nevertheless, though Terai was situated in the frontier place of these kingdoms it did not received much importance of the rulers. Even it is assumed that they might not have showed any urgency to dominate the place.

1:3 TERAI UNDER THE KOCHES

In the Turko-Afghan period of Indian history, except the futile expeditions of Muhammed Bakhtiyar Khalji to Tibet⁴¹ the northern frontier of Bengal had no particular importance in history. During the last decade of the 15th Century (1498), Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah, the Afghan king of Gaud invaded Kamrupa. The whole kingdom of Kamrupa was eventually conquered by Hussain Shah and subjugated to Gaud.⁴² But unfortunately for Gaud, the invasion of Kamatapur did not extend their frontier up to the eastern part of the river Karotoya. The Khen dynasty declined but the historical importance of Kamatapur was not lost. In the first half of the 16th Century, a new kingdom, Cooch Behar, found its place⁴³ in the map of North Bengal on the old side of Kamatapur Kingdom. Cooch Behar reached its high watermark of glory during the time of its first two rulers, Viswasinga and Narayanan and at that time Cooch Behar was the master of North Bengal. According to the testimony of Muslim historians, during the reign of Akbar, about 1595, Lakshman Narayan, the Raja of Cooch Behar was the sovereign of a territory bounded on the east by the river Brahmaputra, on the south of Goraghat, on the west by Trihut (present north Bihar i.e Muzaffarpur) and on the north by the mountains of Tibet and Assam.⁴⁴ According to Abul Fazl the kingdom extended from Trihut in the west to Brahmaputra in the east and the Himalayas in the north⁴⁵ and it was in this period Terai became a part of Cooch Behar kingdom, was administrated by the Raikats of Baikunthapur branch of the royal family of Cooch Behar based in the present Jalpaiguri town. On the north western part of Rangpur was situated the *Parghana* of Baikunthapur or 'Battrish Hazari'. As a permanently settled area Baikunthapur comprised approximately 450 square miles⁴⁶ surrounded by the Himalyas in the north, river Tista in the east and Mahananda in the west, the Raikats of Baikunthapur lived. They were the collateral branch of the Cooch Behar family⁴⁷ and held umbrella over the king of Cooch Behar at the time of installation. The Raikats were the hereditary grant ministers of the kingdom of Cooch Behar and ruled or used to guard its western frontier, which is known as Terai. They lived an area which was inaccessible for ordinary enemies during a great part of the year. From this reason whatever the fate of Cooch Behar was by the repeated attacks of the Mughals could be avoided in the case of Baikunthapur. But being isolated it was not possible for Baikunthapur to protect the western part of Cooch Behar for a long time. But due to some unknown reason, it became isolated from the whole kingdom and became helpless. It was not in a position to

keep under control the Terai land of the west of Mahananda river. As a result the land between the river Mahananda and Mechi (270 Sq.miles) which is known as Darjeeling Terai was annexed by Sikkim, whose presence in the history of North Bengal was not anticipated in those days.⁴⁸ Though the exact date of the annexation of Terai by Sikkim is not known, but it can be ascertained that the event did not take place before the end of the first half of the 17th century and not in any case before the accession of Phuntsog Namgyal in Sikkim, because Father Cabral and Father Diaz of the Jesuit order, passing in the course of their journey to Shigatse in 1628 through the Terai region in Sikkim to avoid the longer route through Bhutan, found Sikkim without a regular government and very unsafe for a traveler without the support of an armed escort.⁴⁹ Sikkim had extended her domination far south into the district of Purnea, and possessed the low country on the west of Mahananda to east as far upto Kisangunj. But later Sikkimese were driven by the Muslims and they confined their domination between Mechi-Mahnanda region.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, before the Sikkimese regime in the Terai area, it was about in the year of 1608 that one of the king of Shah Mokwan people or the Limbus was Lo Hang Sen of Mokwanpur laid a big army with Baja Hang Rai, another Kirat king and conquered all the Terai land up to river Mahanadi (Mahananda) of Siliguri. They also conquered a Lepcha Kirat king of Kurseong hill.⁵¹ They then fixed their eastern boundary at river Mahananda.

1:4 TERAJ UNDER THE SIKKIMESSE DOMINATION

It was during the middle of the 17th Century that Sikkim could strengthen their position under first Chinogyal Phuntsog Namgyal. It is presumed that the distracted state of affairs in Cooch Behar and the secluded life of the Raikats of Baikunthapur offered Sikkim an opportunity of expanding herself into the plains and occupying the Terai lands between the river Mechi and the Mahananda. Though, the exact date is not definitely known as we have said earlier. The Raikats were not worried by the expansion of Sikkim. Dharmadev, the thirteenth Raikat (1709-24) left Baikunthapur and settled at Jalpaiguri. Probably he was tired of the jungle life of his predecessors. But the results of the shifting of the capital was not happy for Baikunthapur in future.⁵²

The history of Terai under Sikkim since the 17th century is almost in un-written form. The dearth of the sources could be the prime reason for the unavailability of the history of this region during this age. It is to be said that Sikkim's sovereignty over Terai

was not as strong as it was expected and their administration was feeble. Being a frontier area the control of Sikkim over it was not so strong and sometimes it was so weak that Bhutanese soldiers conducted raids and loots in this area. They even carried the people of Terai to make them slaves in their homeland.⁵³ This incident states that there was no practical administration in Terai. Under this circumstance it can be assumed that in one sense the region practically enjoyed self rule. The main reason for weak administration in this region was the plain land of Terai was far from the Sikkim hills. There was trouble to contact with the Terai from the Sikkim hills especially in the rainy season and in the winter. Moreover Sikkim's financial gain from this region was not too much; may be only a few thousand rupees (although the exact figure could not be secured from any contemporary record) but the fact of that annexing this region, Sikkim could exercise control over the trade routes passing through it was an overriding factor in the subsequent struggle for occupation.⁵⁴ But apart from these difficulties Sikkim wanted to control this region for maritime trade route through river Mahananda, because through river Tista it was impossible to trade at that time. Under this situation Raja of Sikkim felt it better and easier to collect revenue creating *jotedars* and ex-officials of Cooch Behar State offices. Sikkim started collecting revenue through officials named *Choudhury* in Phansidewa area, outskirts of Siliguri they had established an office. Recruiting officers from Sikkim would have been difficult and therefore, such an arrangement was set up. In the second half of the 17th Century the Kirat chiefs of all the Kiratlands were agreed to pay the king of Sikkim a nominal tribute. The rising king of Sikkim Phunchho Namgyal divided the Kiratland into three divisions, of which one division was for the present Darjeeling including Siliguri (Darjeeling Terai).⁵⁵ After the death of king Phunchho Namgyal, his son Tensong Namgyal became the king of Sikkim state in 1670 A.D. His youngest queen was the daughter of a Limbu Kirat king Yung Ya Hang of Arun Kosi district whose name was called Thungwa Mukma. The third king of Sikkim state Chhyagdor Namgyal succeeded his father, king Tensong Namgyal in 1700 A.D. At that time Sikkim was invaded by Bhutan king Dev Zidar and took possession of eastern Sikkim. King Chhyagdor Namgyal fled away to Lhasa. The Bhutanese took the king's regent Yuk Thing Arup captive to Bhutan and ruled Sikkim for eight years. King Chhyagdor Namgyal was succeeded by his son Gyurmi Namgyal on the throne of Sikkim 1716 A.D. He ruled for 17 years, owing to the weak administration of Sikkim as mentioned earlier. About 1725 A.D a Lapcha chief Tasso Bidur by name of Chyahung estate conspired against the Sikkim's king with a Magar chief and tried to stop to pay the

revenue of the present Darjeeling Terai region. He managed many Lepcha and Magar soldiers behind him to revolt against the Bhutia king of Sikkim. But he was timely checked up and put to death by the king at a place called Badamtam of Darjelling district. Though at the end, in the year of 1741 the Limbu chiefs of northern Limbuwan ceased to regard the Sikkim king as their over lord and stopped to pay him tribute and declared themselves independent.⁵⁶ King Kamadatta Sen of Bijaypur (1761-1769) also gave autonomy to all the chief of hill area as well as Terai area extending from Bhutan to Nepal valley, in the north and river Mahananda to Betiya in the south.⁵⁷ In this connection a question arises where these Sens came in Nepal Terai or they were the descendents of the Sens of Bengal? In this context it is to be said that about 1306 A.D., the Mohammedens had destroyed Chitaur and expelled from there the Chauhan tribe, often called Sisasudhiyas. Then the Chauhans moved towards Nepal and managed to conquer some parts of south and eastern area of Nepal. Ajil Ray, son of Buddhi Ray of Chitaur was the founder of this dynasty. From Tula Sen, son of Ajil Sen, they were called themselves as Sen.⁵⁸ After the death of the Kirat king Kamadatta Sen, who was assassinated in Terai in 1769 A.D., anarchy prevailed all over Kirat state and every district claimed independence with their own king which certainly paved the way for the more able and ambitious Gurkha king Prithvi Narayan Shah to establish a Nepalese empire in this region. Raghunath Sen, a distant relative of king Kamadatta Sen, tried his best to be the king of Bijaypur Morung, but Budhi Karna Rai, who arranged everything for the assassination of the king Kamadatta Sen and went away in a hiding place, came out and usurped the power of Bijaypur. He expelled Raghunath Sen from there and began to rule Morung (1769-1773). In this way after rule of seven generations, the Kirat king of Shah Mokwan dynasty of Morung or Terai came to an end.⁵⁹

1:5 GURKHA INVASIONS IN TERAI IN THE LAST HALF OF THE 18th CENTURY

The coming of the Gurkhas in Nepal strangely coincided with the East India Company's coming to power in Bengal. Like Sikkim, Nepal was also interested in coming down towards her south in the plains.⁶⁰ The southern Terai region separating Nepal from the plains of India was also a natural barrier. It was covered with thick forests and grassy marshes. A virulent type of malaria called the "*awl*" was endemic in the Terai and people were unwilling to cross the forest regions except through established paths along perennial water courses and forest clearing. This malarial fever

of Terai was one of the main factors which prevented closer relationship between Nepal and southern neighbors.⁶¹ Nevertheless in the year of 1769, the two countries of Gurkha and Nepal were united into one kingdom under one name and one ruler, Prithvi Narayan Shah. After establishing the power in Nepal Prithvi Narayan crossed the Dudh Kosi river, the eastern boundary of his new dominations and entered the country of the Kiratas and Limbus. Then he extended his territories to the river Mechi in those days which separated the Limbu country from Sikkim. In 1772 a great battle was fought between the Gurkhas and the raja of Tanbu. Thousands of Gurkhas were slain on the field of battle. Tanbu was incorporated in the Gurkha dominions as a result of this.⁶² On the other hand the Sikkim Government was just resting from the Bhutanese invasion to its boundary, when it was informed about the occupation of Limbuwan including Morung of Bijaypur by the Gurkhas. The Sikkimese force had determined to attack the Gurkha force, and at the same time the rumors had already spread that the Sikkim prince himself came to fight the enemies and thus they started fighting. After some battles, a treaty was concluded at Bijaypur between Sikkim and Nepal in 1775 as Gurkha power was greatly reduced by continuous campaigning. By this time Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah was dead and his son Pratap Singh had succeeded him on the throne (1776).⁶³ By this treaty Nepal fixed her eastern boundary up to the river Kankai in the Terai land. Any breach of the above treaty would entail the party who broke it should give an indemnity fine of one hundred *dharnis* of gold (250 seers of gold). But the same year (1776) or next year the new Gurkha Raja Pratap Singh Shah broke the treaty and invaded Sikkim⁶⁴ and annex the eastern part of Morung i.e. from the river Mechi to Mahananda in the east (present Darjeeling Terai). This territory measuring 230 miles touched the boundaries of Purnea, Dinajpur and Rangpur and was under the Sikkim's regime at that time.⁶⁵ Thus the Gurkhas captured the Darjeeling Terai in 1779-80 without any strong resistance by the Sikkimese under the leadership of Ganguram Thapa.⁶⁶ A news reached to Ganguram that Sikkim had taken some immediate action against him. This kind of information flourished in some official documents of Sikkim but not in any British sources. Nevertheless, in order to foil this move and legitimize his hold on Morung he came into contact with the leaders of *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs*, most prominent among them was Majnu Shah who had previously secured five *jotes* from the Sikkim ruler, was given five more *jotes* by Ganguram to enlist his support.⁶⁷ In this connection it is to be noted that almost immediately after an attack into Sikkim, the Lepchas held up the Gurkhas for nine long years until in 1788 the ruling prince was defeated and fled to Tibet. When the Gurkhas

finally returned, they were able to conquer Sikkim territory up to west of the Tista river.⁶⁸

1:6 INVOLVEMENTS OF THE SANNYASIS, THE FAKIRS, THE GURKHAS AND THE ENGLISH DURING 18th CENTURY IN THE TERAI

During the second half of the 18th century the *Sannyasis*⁶⁹ and the *Fakirs* came in large numbers in Terai. But from where did they come in Terai is still unknown. Dr. Arun Bhusan Majumdar, an eminent scholar and former I.C of N.B.U said that, after the defeat of Mirqasim, Nawab of Oudh and the Mughal king in the battle of Buxar against the English in 1764, their soldiers became helpless and tried to leave the place where they be safe and wanted to get rid of the English. But the question was where the soldiers would go. At that time Oudh was not a safe place to them, and neither were even not Bihar, Orissa and Bengal. Therefore they had to select a place where the English had no influence and they decided to stay at Terai jungle which was somehow free from English influence. After coming Terai, some of these soldiers took services under the Raikats, Cooches and the Bhutanese. They became to be known as *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs*. These people later fought battles against the English in favour of Bhutan, the Raikats and the Koches. Many of them plundered Suba Bengal from this region. Mostly they are called as *Giris*.⁷⁰ Among these *Sannyasis*, many of them were engaged in trading activities and commerce with Bhutan through the route of Tibet. The prominent name in such activities are Purnna Giri Gossain, who is better referred as Purnan Giri Gossain in British records.⁷¹ This type of theory also supported by an eminent historian, Prof. Amalendu Dey in his book '*Sirajer Putro O Bangsodherder Sandhane*'.⁷² It is to be said that the *Sannyasis* came to Bengal principally to take part in bating festivals. After passing through the territory of the Nawab of Oudh, they followed a route generally through the north Bihar and the borders of Nepal Terai. The *Sannyasis* usually crossed the river Mahananda by several routes. So, it was in the late 18th century that eastern Morung or present Darjeeling Terai became the permanent home of the *Sannyasis* which was at that time under the rule of Sikkim.⁷³ Moreover to save his country from the invasions of the *Sannyasis* and the *Fakirs*⁷⁴ the Sikkim Government provided them land for settlement in order to keep peace in the region .Some of them were literary *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* in true sense but most of them were not sages or ascetic. The landowner of Purnea, Dinajpur, Rangpur used to fear them and maintained some distant from them. On the other hand the poor and needy people were much closer to them because they were the

friends of the sufferers .Among them many of them worked in King's army in lieu of wages. The East India Company observed that in the battle of Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur and Bhutan with the English there were forces composed of hired soldiers from among the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* as stated earlier.⁷⁵ Dr. Buchanan Hamilton also observes that '...they (*Sannyasis*) plundered with the utmost barbarity and when pursued went to retire to Morung in the dominations of Nepal, where they found shelter and sale of their booty.....Many still reside in Morung.'⁷⁶ But it is interesting to note that during the struggle of Prithvi Narayan Shah with Newar king, the *Gossain* and the *Fakir* merchants sided with the Newar *Raja*, Jayprakash. Even Muktananda and *Fakir* Ramdas were sent as emissaries to solicit English help on behalf of the Newar *Raja* in June 1767 against the ambitious Gurkha King, Prithvi Narayan. The Kinlock expedition was accordingly sent against Prithvi Narayan with the hope that adequate concessions for Trans-Himalayan trade and for trade in Terai would be obtained from the Newar *Raja*. After the Nepal route was virtually closed, it was found that the commodities of Bengal used also to be conveyed into Tibet through the Terai.⁷⁷ The *Sannyasis-Fakirs* attitude towards Prithvi Narayan Shah was presumably for his opinion that they (*Sannyasi-Fakirs*) sucking all the profits of Nepal. He therefore, never allow the *Gossains* and *Fakirs* who used to carry on a highly profitable trade between Bengal, Tibet and Nepal, to stay in his country. Rather they were ruthlessly expelled.⁷⁸ In this connection it is to be mentioned that in 1766, Mr. Myrtle, an English official engaged by the Company in fir trade was killed along with his men by the *Sannyasis-Fakirs* in the Terai region.⁷⁹ So, from the above mentioned facts it is evident that the entire zone was rife with discontent during the late 18th century due to the new revenue and commercial policies of the Company, which occasioned serious economic and social dislocation by unseating some established *zamindars*, depeasantizing the settled agricultural communities, endangering the textile and silk industries and ruining the economic interest of the peddlers and itinerant traders. Armed depredations by the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* within the Company's territory, were a regular feature during the 1780-86 and it continued till 1800.⁸⁰ During this period the British East India Company still could not provide internal security and administration of the region. In the August 1776, the Fauzdar of Rangpur Jainal Abedin had informed Reja Khan that for maintaining peace and internal security, though there was a *Kotwal* in Rangpur but it was difficult for maintained to pay attention beyond the area of two miles. Reja Khan ,had written a letter to Warren Hastings, the than Governor of Bengal informing him about the helpless condition of security and internal

administration of the area .Yet, Warren Hastings did not have any other option ,but to use forces against the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* to maintain law and order. The strong measures of suppression of the East India Company had gradually stopped the raids of the *Sannyasis* and *Fakirs* in the region .But in the western part of Baikunthapur a new problem was been created with the progress of Prithvi Narayan Shah and his Gurkha army who crossed the Mechi river and entered the Terai area of Darjeeling. Prithvi Narayan Shah had earlier made contact of Warren Hastings and expressed his wishes to occupy the Terai region knowing totally well about the problem faced by the Company regarding the *Sannyasis*. He had mentioned that the *Sannyasis* will no more create tensions in the region once it would be occupied by the Gurkhas. But Hastings was doubtfull and did not agree to the pretext of the Gurkhas to occupy the region in the name of the *Sannyasis*. But very soon the Company become engaged in Cooch Behar-Bhutan war and could not pay attention towards the activities of Nepal. Taking an advantage of the situation the Gurkhas occupied the region of Terai.⁸¹The frequent incursions of the Gurkhas and the *Sannyasis* in the Rangpur frontier alarmed the Britishers. Warren Hastings is said to have contemplated a campaign against Nepal, but that did not materialize. In 1784 he decided to send a friendly mission under Foxcroft to Nepal to know the real intention of the Gurkhas. But with the few months of it, the Governor General left India and nothing more was heard about the mission. The Nepal Government however, in a letter of 13th May 1786, to the Collector of Rangpur professed peace and amity with the Company's Government and also gave an apologetic explanation for the violence committed by the Gurkha Jamadar Gungaram Thapa within the territories of Baikunthapur.⁸²During the latter half of the 18th Century the Gurkha forces crossed the border of Tibet and captured 275 miles. But within a few days China and Sikkim had extended their help to Tibet which remove the Gurkha forces.⁸³ The Lasha authorities have requested the English to remain neutral. Nepal on the other hand, being encouraged by the commercial treaty with the East India Company concluded in March 1792, appealed to the Governor General for help. But the policy of neutrality pursued by Lord Cornwallis in the Tibeto-Nepalese conflict neither satisfied the Nepalese, nor the Tibetans. This dashed the hopes of a Trans-Himalayan trade route of Warren Hastings. Since the Tibeto-Nepalese war British interests in the Himalayan and reaction of China towards them became a major factor in the eastern Himalayan politics. The English realized that they had to formulate a definite policy with regard to the

northern frontier. A Himalayan frontier rather than Himalayan trade became now their objective at that time.⁸⁴

1:7 INTRODUCTION OF COMPANY'S RULE IN TERAI

The political background of Terai region mentioned above reveal how the British tried to take possession of the whole area. The East India Company could not ignore the importance of the Terai region from the very beginning for political, diplomatic ,and economic reasons.⁸⁵ From 1768-1770, when the Company first started to show an interest in the Terai, the Gurkhas had already began a campaign to establish their supremacy, not only in the Nepal but in the *moffusil* territory of North-Eastern India where administration had been transferred by the Mughal Emperor to the Company in 1765 and the Company's *zamindars* accused the Gurkhas for encroaching on their lands. In this reasons, Lord Cornwallis, in 1795, went out of his way to assure the Raja of Nepal that he was prepared to define the long uncertain border between the Terai and Purnea in conformity with the Raja's representations. At that time, the Gurkhas showed themselves anxious to have this disputes settled.⁸⁶ But from the early part of the 19th century the Company tried to strengthen their hold in the northern Himalayan range, close to the frontiers of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. As Company's relation with Bhutan and Nepal was not cordial, the English wanted to develop friendly relationship to strengthen its hold in the Himalayan frontiers and to look after the movement of both Bhutan and Nepal in the near future. Nevertheless, after some time the Gurkhas threatened British interests in the north eastern district of Kheri in the province of Avadh (Oudh) better known as Gorakhpur Terai. Lord Moira pointed to the Gurkha advance westwards towards the Sutlej and eastwards far into Sikkim as posing a certain threat to the British interests.⁸⁷ At that time it was rumored that Bhutan and Nepal separated by a small kingdom of Sikkim, were about to conclude a military alliance against the Company. The Company therefore wanted to isolate Nepal and prevent it from getting assistance from any quarter, especially China, since the latter exercised suzerainty over Nepal from 1792 onwards. Thus it was the political and military necessity of the Company to opening a relationship with Sikkim. The alliance with Sikkim seemed to promise to the Company three advantages, namely) facilitate communication with China via Tibet ii)prevent Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the Company and iii)level an attack on the Gurkha flank. In view of this advantages the Company instructed Captain Barre Latter of the Bengal Army to establish contacts with Chungpud Namgyal, the than ruler of Sikkim⁸⁸On the

other hand there was evidence to suggest that the Gurkha ambassador at the Imperial Court in Peking has asked the Chinese authorities for military aid in 1813 against the Sikkimese. So it was the most crucial question facing Lord Moira at the outbreak of the Gurkha war was what would be the Chinese attitude if the British annexed Nepalese territory, an event which the war might indeed make necessary?

So from the above circumstances in March 1815, Barre Latter, with a force of 2000, entered the Terai and established a contact with the Sikkim Darbar. Lord Moira, however, was well aware that although the Raja now governed his truncated kingdom from Gangtok, he had before the Gurkha invasion possessed as discussed earlier "...a territory to the southward, including a portion of the lowlands adjoining the Zillah of Purnea". He wanted it to be made clear to the Raja that there would be no questions of this particular piece of land reverting to the Sikkim Darbar at the end of the war. So, Latter did not find it too difficult to persuade the Raja of Sikkim to co-operate and in return for some modest supplies of ammunition, the Raja himself offered that when the British "...commence hostilities in the low country, we will attack the Gurkhas in the hills". He also made a spontaneous gesture of offering to open up a channel of communication with the administration in Lhasa. In return from Sikkim's help, David Scott assured Raja Tsug Phud Namgyal that he could really on British support in his attempts to recover the territories lost to the Gurkhas.⁸⁹In 1814 the Gurkhas raided the south-eastern part of Sikkim. Then the King of Sikkim had applied to the British Government for the help. The East India Company was looking for this opportunity and took the venture to attack the Gurkhas. The Gurkhas neither had the strength nor the capability to fight against the East India Company and were compelled to sign a treaty.⁹⁰ Thus by the treaty of Segauli, on 2 December 1815 signed between the Company and Nepal, the war came to an end. By the treaty of Segauli, under Article III all the lowland between the river Mechi and Tista (i.e Darjeeling Terai) and all the territories within the hills eastward of the river Mechi, including the fort and lands of Nagri, the pass of Nagrakot leading from the Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between Nagrakot and Nagri, were ceded to the East India Company in perpetuity to Nepal. On the other hand under Article VI, the Raja of Nepal had to promise not to molest or disturb the Raja of Sikkim in the possession of his territories, and to agree that in the event of any differences arising between Nepal and Sikkim, the dispute would be referred to the arbitration of the British Government, by whose award the two side

(Nepal and Sikkim) would be abide.⁹¹ A few months after the Segauli treaty, news reached to Company that a large Chinese force was on its way towards Nepal. Lord Moira was totally averse to involving the Company in any disputes that Nepal might have with China. But within some period the Chinese crisis was over. But still today it is unknown to us that way 2000 Chinese troops suddenly descending on Lhasa.

Following the political settlement after the Gurkha war, relations between the Company and Sikkim was further extended. During the war, the Company's intentions had been to isolate Nepal and towards that end, to use Sikkim to facilitate communication with China if the need arose. To ensure that the Raja kept to his side of the bargain until the war was successfully over, the Company decided that the Nepalese territorial conquests in Sikkim should be surrendered.⁹² Lord Moira therefore, authorized Barre Latter to hand over the territory lying between the rivers of Mechi and Tista to Sikkim on certain conditions. The Raja of Sikkim accepted the conditions by signing a treaty with the Company at Titalia on 10th February 1817. The treaty of Titalia ran into ten articles. Under Article I "The Honorable East India Company cedes, transfers and makes over in full sovereignty to the Sikkimputtee Rajah, his heirs or successors, all the hilly and mountainous country situated to the eastward of the Mechi river and to the westward of the Tista river, formerly possessed and occupied by the Rajah of Nepal, but ceded to the Honorable East India Company by the Treaty of peace signed at Segauli". The Raja for his part agreed i)not to commit aggression on the Gurkhas or any other state (Article II); ii)to submit to the arbitration of the Company his disputes with Nepal and other neighboring states(Article III); iii)to render military assistance to the Company in case of need when they engaged in war in the hills(Article IV); iv) not to allow any European or American to reside in his kingdom without obtaining the permission of the Company (Article V); v)to deliver up British- Indian dacoits who may take refuge in his kingdom (Article VI); vi)not to afford protection to the British-Indian revenue defaulters or other delinquents(Article VII); vii)not to levy transit duties on British merchandize and to afford protection to merchant and traders from Company's provinces (Article VIII).In return of this privileges, the Company under Article IX guaranteed to the Raja and his successors to preach able possession of the territory made over to him in Article 1. The parties agreed to ratify the treaty within one month of its signing (Article X).⁹³ The political significance of the treaty of Titalia could not be over emphasized. Firstly, it helped to check the Nepalese expansion towards the east. With the restoration of the

territory between the rivers Mechi and the Tista to Sikkim, the latter became be a strong buffer state between Bhutan and Nepal. Secondly, it brought Sikkim for the first time under the influence of the Company as Articles II to VIII had limited the freedom of action of Sikkim to a large extent .Thirdly, the Company gained many trade privileges , the most of them was the right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier. For the first time the Company acquired a clearly defined right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier through the territory of a friendly kingdom. Moreover, Sikkim was found to “afford a more ready communication with Lassa and China than that through Bootan”. The treaty of Titalia thus marked the beginning of British interest in Sikkim as trade route to Tibet and as a factor in India’s security.⁹⁴ But the ulterior motive of the Company behind this treaty was to establish its hold over the entire Himalayan territories. Two months after the signing of the treaty of Titalia Lord Moira, on the recommendation of Baree Latter granted to Sikkim an additional territory of the Terai,i.e the low lands lying between the rivers Mechi and the Mahananda. The Darjeeling Terai area was granted to the Raja of Sikkim under certain conditions, namely, that (i) the articles of the treaty of Titalia were to be inforce in the Terai also, (ii) that Sikkim was to surrender to the Company all the British-Indian criminals and other public defaulters who make take refuge in the Terai and to allow the police officers of the Company to pursue them in to those lands so as to arrest them and (iii)that in time of emergency the Governor General’s order to the local authorities were to be obeyed in the same manner, as those coming from the Raja of Sikkim. In a word, Sikkim allowed the Company to exercise suzerain right over the Terai.⁹⁵

1:8 THE CESSION OF DARJEELING

The English were not satisfied until they got a total foothold in the Himalayas. An opportunity come soon in 1827 when a frontier disputes arose between Sikkim and Nepal regarding the jurisdiction of a piece of land called Ontoo, which was situated in the eastern side of the river Mechi. In pursuance of the terms of the treaty of Titalia in 1817, under Article III the Government of Sikkim referred to the matter to the Company for arbitration.⁹⁶ In 1828, the Company deputed captain G.W Lloyd and G.W Grant to investigate the dispute and it was during their investigation they came across a small village called ‘Dorjeling’.⁹⁷ They realized that it was ideally located both for a Sanatorium and a military station. Their observations were brought to the notice of the Governor General, Lord Bentinck. Lord Bentinck decided to send Captain Herbert, the

than Deputy Surveyor-General for further survey of that area and the second report being actually favorable.⁹⁸ Thus in 1830 Lord Bentinck proposed to his council that they should open negotiation with Raja of Sikkim for transfer of Darjeeling to the East India Company. But at that time Charles Metcalfe, opposed the proposal on the ground that, it would involve the Company in a dispute with the Raja of Sikkim who would suspect that they had plans to annex the territory of Sikkim. Furthermore, Nepal also considered the Company's possession of Darjeeling, which was very near to their frontier as a preliminary step to British invasion of Nepal. Metcalf's opinion was to prevail for the time being, but when (in 1835) he was no longer a Member of Council, Lord Bentinck revived the question of the transfer of Darjeeling in exchange for an equivalent either in land or money and therefore Lloyd was deputed to negotiate with the Raja of Sikkim.⁹⁹ This opportunity occurred in 1834-35, when some Lepcha refugees in Nepal having been made an inroad into the Terai. The refugees were obliged to return to Nepal, and after certain terms and conditions fixed by the Company and the Raja of Sikkim, the negotiations ended in the execution of the Raja of Sikkim¹⁰⁰ of a deed of grant on 1st of February 1835 in the following way: "The Governor-General having expressed his desire for the possession of the Hill of Darjeeling, on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the Servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages. I, the Sikkimputtee Rajah, out of friendship to the said Governor-General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is, all the land south of the Great Runjeet River, east of the Balasun, Kahail, and Little Runjeet Rivers, and east of the Rungpo and Mahanadi Rivers".¹⁰¹ In 1841, the Company sanctioned an yearly allowance of Rs.3000 to the king of Sikkim in the form of compensation for transferring Darjeeling to the British and the grant amount was doubled in 1846.¹⁰² What the Chogyal immediately got in return was a gift parcel, one double-barreled gun, one rifle, one 20 yard bale of red broad cloth, two pairs of shawls, one of inferior quality and the other superior.¹⁰³ "Darjeeling provided numerous facilities for free trade in mercantile commodities and in labour; its extensive forest lands, which could be reclaimed for cultivation, attracted large number of the Lepchas and Nepalese to migrate and settle there. Such developments not only threatened the privileges traditionally enjoyed by certain Bhotia families of Sikkim-for instance, their monopoly of trade in this part of Himalayas-but also disturbed the age-old population balance and inter-tribal relations in Sikkim, and became a source of embarrassment to Sikkim in her relations with Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet".¹⁰⁴ The cession of Darjeeling says Lamb "...was

an event of the greatest importance in the history of the northern frontier of India. Not only did it place the British in close contact with the hill states, their peoples and their politics, but also it provided a constant reminder of the possibilities of trade with Tibet.”¹⁰⁵ But within few time the British experienced difficulties in reaching Darjeeling as the road from Rangpur to Darjeeling went through Terai, which was still under Sikkim. The Company naturally depended on the goodwill of the Sikkim to reach Darjeeling. This forced the British to undertake a programme for the development of Darjeeling and to take up the task of (various) road construction up to Darjeeling. Not only the government of Nepal viewed the construction with suspicion, Sikkim also did not take it with good grace till then but also disturbed the population in Sikkim¹⁰⁶ and on the Bhutan’s point of view it was threatened the traditional privileges enjoyed by the certain Bhutia families living in Sikkim, which had enjoyed a monopoly of trade. Sikkim did not appreciate the presence of the English so close to its border for it might bring them into confrontation with the Company. The English, in fact wanted a pretext to occupy the whole of the Terai region which once they had restored to Sikkim.

1:9 THE ANNEXATION OF TERAI BY THE ENGLISH EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1850

The development and urbanization of Darjeeling became a serious concern for Sikkim, because a huge number of labourers and farmers migrated from Sikkim to Darjeeling and initiated the urbanization process which led to the scarcity of labourers in Sikkim. These labourers had also accepted the citizenship of the British-Indian Government. As a result of which the Dewan Namgyal of Sikkim who was popularly known as ‘Pagla Dewan’ had placed a petition demanding the return of the labourers from the British regime of Darjeeling to Sikkim. Sometimes raids were conducted by the Sikkim to capture forcefully the workers and agricultural labourers from Darjeeling and they were sold as slaves in their own kingdom. The British Government thus cited the instances of these raids and the illegal activities of the Sikkim Government towards the labourers and farmers as a reason for their migration from the region of Darjeeling. These incidents led to the growth of tension in the Anglo-Sikkim relation during the first half of 19th Century.¹⁰⁷ By 1846, relations between Campbell and the Sikkim Darbar had steadily worsened, and finally he warned the Raja that if he persisted in his unfriendly attitude towards the British Government, they would be compelled to annex the Terai,¹⁰⁸ though it was their motivation for last decade. Then the opportunity

presented itself when Sir J.D Hooker(an English Naturalist) and Dr. Campbell, while traveling in Sikkim with valid documents were arrested on 7th November 1849 and kept confined by the Government of Sikkim. Campbell, in his diary, mentioned that he was subsequently tortured in the hopes of forcing him to agree that the British would refrain in the future from interfering in the Sikkim affairs.¹⁰⁹ The news of Campbell's arrest caused considerable panic at Darjeeling. After failing all the attempts to release them and the Raja, Chumpud Namngyal, refused to comply the demand of the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie for the release of Campbell and Hooker on the ground that the letters of the Governor-General did not bear proper seals. Therefore, the Government felt it indispensably necessary to crash the power of the Sikkim Raja and feel the power of the Government with which he had to deal.¹¹⁰ C.H Lushington was appointed to act as the superintendents of Darjeeling and was instructed to procure the immediate release of the prisoners, failing for which he had asked to advance and occupy the country. Lushington posted a huge army near the river Rangit and addressed a letter to the Raja of Sikkim demanding the release of the prisoners. Even the letter reached the Raja, the prisoners were released on 9th December 1849.¹¹¹ The next development was the *Raja* sent presents to the captives, and the Rani sent Campbell a fan and other trifles to give to his wife. Finally, they set off under guard and accompanied by *Dewan*, who calmly going to visit Darjeeling to sell ponies, for the British frontier. On 24th Dec, 1849 they reached Darjeeling.¹¹² But to punish Sikkim the British had stopped the payment of tribute Rs.6000 per annum to the Sikkim Government and under the initiative and steps taken by Dr. Campbell the British captured a large portion of Terai region of Sikkim¹¹³ which he had originally received as a free gift from the British and which was the only lucrative or fertile estates he possessed. This area bounded on the north by the rivers Ramman and Rangit, east by river Tista, west by Nepal and south by district Purnea.¹¹⁴ These annexations brought about significant changes in the relation between Sikkim and British- India. Previously the district had been an enclave in Sikkim territory and to reach it the British had to pass through a country acknowledging the rule of a foreign though dependent, potentate.¹¹⁵ Hence, the entire operation has been graphically described in the Political Consultation, 1850, an expert from which may be quoted:

“The seizure was quietly effected four policemen taking possession the treasury , which, it was said, contained exactly six rupees, and by announcing to the villagers the confiscation of the territory to the British Government. At that same time there was annexed to it the portion of the Sikkim hills(Darjeeling Terai).....a tract of country containing about 5,000 souls. The result was to confine the Raja to the

mountainous hinterland and to cut off all access to the plains except through British territory. The change was welcomed by the inhabitants, for it only involved the payment of a small fixed tax in money to the treasury at Darjeeling, instead of a fluctuating one in kind, with service to the Raja and liability to...the Dewan.”

The decision was never reversed; after the Anglo-Sikkim war of 1861 the British Government decided to reinstate the Sikkim king in power, but Morung remained for ever a part of the British territory. It is interesting to note that, even after ceding this territory by the treaty of Segauli, as mentioned earlier, Nepal maintained its claim to it and retained manned outposts in Siliguri. A letter dated 1831 from Puskar Shah, the than Executive Officer of Nepal Government here, and addressed to Bhim Sen Thapa attests that whatever might have been the original position, the Nepali officials posted in Terai continued to believe that it was a Nepal territory.¹¹⁶ In this connection one question arose in our mind that why the Company did not annex the whole of Sikkim, probably in the one hand the Company thought that the political expediency of maintaining the kingdom as a separate entity was huge. On the other hand Sikkim was not wiped out of the map because of its strategic situation between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and British dominion in India. But interestingly enough, the non annexation of the whole of Sikkim did not result in the increase of British influence there. This was due to the strength of Tibetan faction in Sikkim.¹¹⁷

Thus the process which was actually initiated in the late 1760s was completed in the late 1850 to the satisfaction of the Calcutta authorities as well as of the Court of Directors. Although during the late 18th century the British might not have contemplated the permanent annexation of the Terai, the fact that it was always occupying an important place in their frontier policy beyond doubt. Their consistency in this regard flowed partly from military considerations as Nepal was disruptive of the British northern frontier policy, but primarily because Terai was important for its timber wealth and provided an appropriate trade route to Tibet. The annexation of Terai was considered useful by the English for preventing Bhutan from establishing direct contact with Nepal and for helping India to negotiate with Bhutan, if necessary, on convenient military terms. This incident is not of paramount importance in the history of British expansionism in India, but it serves the purpose of revealing the functioning of the imperial mind in which the major motivations were power and profit. It was broadly true

in the larger context of colonial politics, but in specific situations as well as this one, all the contrapuntal are harmonized with the diapason cerebral.¹¹⁸

The Darjeeling Terai, soon after annexation, was placed under a Superintendent. It later came under the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling district from 8th May 1850. The Deputy Commissioner was fully in charge of the Darjeeling district. According to A.J Dash “After this annexations British territory in Darjeeling was continuous with the British Districts of Purnea and Rangpur in the plains and the Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plains except through British territory”.¹¹⁹ Due to the result of the Anglo-Bhutanese war (1864), Kalimpong had been brought under British administration and the district was divided into two Sub-divisions, the Headquarters(*Sadar*)subdivision with an area of 960 sq. miles including all the hills on both sides of the river Tista and the Terai subdivision with an area of 274 sq.miles which included the whole of the country at the foot of the hills. The headquarters of the Terai subdivision were at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa from 1864 to 1880 when they were transferred to Siliguri. In 1891, when Kurseong was elevated to the status of a sub divisional headquarters it included both the Terai and the lower hills west of the river Tista. The Deputy Magistrate at Siliguri worked under Sub-divisional Officer of Kurseong and looked after the Terai estate under the Deputy Commissioner. Darjeeling district including Terai was first placed under the Rajshahi division until October 1905 and after the Partition of Bengal it was again transferred to the Bhagalpur division but following territorial re- arrangements it came back again to the Rajshahi division of Bengal in March 1912. In this meantime Siliguri got status of a sub-division in 1907.¹²⁰ From 1919-1935 Darjeeling district including Terai was considered as a backward tract, under which ‘the Governor of a province under the direction of the Governor General in Council, shall have the sole responsibility of administering the backward tract and the Governor was to determine, whether any law of the provincial legislature would give effect in such area’. Between 1935 to end of the British rule in India in 1947, Darjeeling district remained a ‘partially excluded area’, for which the Governor was to consult the Council of Ministers.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that the East India Company did not have any particular policy of expansion in Darjeeling Himalayan region before 1768, but due to the circumstantial events the Company gradually went to adopt a policy of imperial expansion in the Terai region of Darjeeling. Before the annexation of Darjeeling by the British in 1835 the East India Company had two kinds of interest in the region, in

the first place a trade route through Sikkim to Tibet and secondly, to connect Nepal and Bhutan, Terai became the only region which could make a base for connecting these two kingdoms. Many historians believe that the forest and rich timber resources did not attract the British so much the trade routes towards the Terai. Terai was important to the British as it was by now necessary for the East India Company to travel from Darjeeling to Calcutta very often. Terai would reduce the time of 30 days to cross the rivers and mountains. As a part of Terai was under the rule of Sikkim Government and it often created problem while crossing it, therefore Dr. Campbell repeatedly emphasized on the annexation of Darjeeling Terai. Thus, if we critically analyze the situation, it can be derived that the release of Hooker and Dr. Campbell as captured by the Sikkim Government was just a pretext to annex Terai but the real reason was basically commercial. The most prominent among these was to established a connecting road way towards Darjeeling by establishing footholds in Terai and Kurseong. Many historians and scholars have mentioned that the Darjeeling and Terai were under the hold of Nepal from ancient period, but from the above discussion it becomes clear that Nepal had captured Sikkim Terai not as a part of its kingdom's but as a part of expedition. The annexation of Nepal was never permanent and since the treaty of Segauli (1816), many treaties and agreement were signed between Nepal and British but Nepal never placed any demand for Terai region in any of the agreement .Even if Nepal had demanded for Terai chances of acquiring it was less, because the British were very strict and strengthen their hold over the region and moreover the demand of Nepal would have been illegitimate. Furthermore, Terai was under the hold of Sikkim since latter part of the 18th Century but it was clear from the above discussion that the continuity of Sikkim's position was not maintained. During the Mughal rule the political boundary of the Himalayan region could not be properly drawn rather it was neglected but it was under the East India Company's rule that the political demarcation was cleared accomplished in 1850 by annexing Darjeeling Terai. It was due to the policy of expansion adopted by the British in India was reflected in the establishment of a clear cut political boundary in the Himalayan Terai region.

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5. During colonial period the British district in the Kumaun Division of the North-Western provinces, lying between 28⁰50'30'' and 29⁰22'30'' north latitude and between 78⁰46' and 79⁰47' east longitude covering an area 938 Sq. miles. The district was bounded on the north by Kumaun district, on the east by Nepal and the district of Pilibhit, on the south by the district of Bareilly and Moradabad and the native state of Rampur and on the west by Bijnanur (Bijnor).The chief town of the district is Kasipur, but the administrative head quarters during the summer was at Nainital. For further informations see, W. W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol-XIII, Trubner & Co,London,1887,pp.207-211.
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87. *Ibid.*p.171.
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CHAPTER – II

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TERAI

The District of Darjeeling of present West Bengal consists of three distinct tracts, viz, (i) the *thanas* of Darjeeling, Jorbangla and Kurseong i.e. the whole of the hills except the Kalimpong outpost, most of this was ceded by the *Raja* of Sikkim in 1835, (ii) the Kalimpong outpost taken from Bhutan in 1865 and (iii) the Terai i.e. the Siliguri *thana* annexed from Sikkim in 1850.¹

The Geographical and religious structure of the Terai region with its multi-racial and multi-lingual character reminds us of the Indian diversity in races, culture and language. This feature has, therefore, provoked many scholars to refer North Bengal as 'little India'. Prior to the Colonial period the regions of North Bengal were covered with dense forests and it was an area of *Kala-Azar*, Malaria and ferocious and dangerous animals. Various sources state that there was the practice of agriculture among the inhabitation of people in this regions.² The records declare that the Terai had a scanty population with very rare settlements, mostly tribal. The Report of 1839 states that there were of inhabitation of few Mech population in the Darjeeling Terai when the British received Darjeeling in 1835 as a gift from the *Raja* of Sikkim.³ According to Campbell, the first Superintendent of Darjeeling, there were 400 Mech families in Terai in 1839.⁴ When the British ceded Darjeeling in 1835, the Terai area was covered with deep forest. It was a dump and most un-healthy place of Northern Bengal. The area was sparsely populated like Eastern Nepal, Dooars and Assam and was inhabited mainly by the few wild aborigines, like the Meches, the Dhimals and the Koches. The Meches, Dhimals and some Tharu people lived in the depths of the upper region of the Terai forest and they did not engage in hired services. They acquired almost as much immunity to protect themselves from the deadly fevers like *Kala-Azar*, Terai fever, Malaria etc, which was so prevalent in this region at that time. It is necessary to note that the earliest epidemics of Malaria reported in Bengal were from the district of Jessore in the first decade of the 19th century.⁵

Besides the tribal, the Koches or the Rajbanshis came to Terai with the expansion of Koch Kingdom in this region beyond the river Mahananda during the middle of the

16th century. Hooker mentions that the Koches, a Mongolian race, inhabited the open country of the district of Darjeeling replacing the Meches of the Terai forest. The Koches are not very dark and formed the once- powerful house of Cooch Behar. Latter the upper classes have adopted the religion of the Brahmins and the lower orders have turned into Mohammedens.⁶

The demography thus consisted of the indigenous population like Mech, Koch, Rajbanshi and others. The Mech are considered as a branch of the *Baras* of Darrang area of Assam. The name is almost certainly a corruption of the Sanskrit word *mleccha*, i.e, an outcast from the Brahmanic point of view, a non- observer of caste regulation.⁷ Buchanan observed that the Mech and Kacharies, one of the primitive race of Assam were the same people and at least of common origin. The large tract of country called Mechpara in the Gowalpara district of Assam was their original homeland. Therefore they migrated into the westerly direction and made their home in the Terai areas as far as the river Konki in Nepal. At that time they came into contact with the Rajbanshis, Dhimals, Tharus, Limbus, Kirantis, Lepchas, Murmis, Bhutias and the other peoples.⁸ The eminent scholar of North Bengal, Dr.C.C. Sanyal said that the Meches were of a Tibeto- Barman speaking Indo- Mongoloid tribe, who migrated into India through Patkoi hills between India and Burma and gradually spread themselves into the whole of modern Assam, North Bengal and parts of East Bengal. Furthermore, he commented that the Meches went towards the west along the foot of the Himalayas up to the river Mechi between India and Nepal and settled on the north bank of the river Mechi. They crossed the river and established themselves in the deep Forest of Darjeeling Terai and Baikunthapur of Jalpaiguri .⁹

There were other races in the Terai region mostly the Dhimals and Tharus. Hodgson describes the Bodo and Dhimal tribes as of the same race and there appears no reason for separating them in a work of this nature, as their customs, religion appear nearly identical. However, he admits that the comparison of language does not support so close a connection and the name of deities are different.¹⁰ The Tharus are aborigines of the Himalayas who used to cultivate low valley from which Malaria drove the ordinary population. It appears that the Tharus for fear of Muslim enemy left Northern part of Bengal and migrated towards Terai regions. Though they always claim that they originated from Chitor of West India, their physiognomy proves that they are no other

than Koch Kirat people. The Tharus of Kochila family of Morung and Saptari districts of southern part of Nepal seems to be the survivors of Koch Kirat people of Northern part of Bengal who must have migrated from Northern Bengal to entire area of Terai regions.¹¹ Campbell also pointed out that the Meches and Dhimals were inhabited in the Terai area at the lowlands of the foot of the mountains. These yellowish Mongolian people were not Hindus, Buddhists, nor Mohammedens. But the Tharus were mostly Buddhists or Mohammedans.¹² Therefore it is very difficult to state the actual number of people residing in the Terai region of Darjeeling in the pre-colonial period. But we come to know from A. Campbell that in 1850-51, just after annexation of Terai there were 36,000 souls.¹³ Among these 7,320 were Meches and 3415 were Dhimals and the rest were the Koches and other tribes with some Muslim people who lived in the lower Terai.¹⁴ After the annexation of Terai, the British Company introduced a progressive land tenure system. Under this system the Government was considered as the proprietor of the estate. No intermediaries or *zamindars* were present between the Government and the *ryots*. Lands were given free of tax for initial five years. Jungles or arable lands were cleared rapidly to expand cultivation and for this reasons many people of the adjacent areas were attracted to migrate in Terai.¹⁵

But the most important factor which contributed to increase the density in population in Darjeeling Terai was the growth of tea industry under the British. With the opening of as many as twenty two tea gardens in Terai in the first year of its introduction in 1862 a large number of labourers were imported from Chotanagpur and Santal Parganas. Labourers from Eastern Nepal also come to the tea gardens in search of employment. In the hills of Darjeeling most of the gardens labourers recruited were from the Eastern Nepal.¹⁶ Whereas in the gardens of Terai besides Nepalese imported labourers were also engaged. This was the picture in the initial stag, but the scenario radically changed in the subsequent period with the opening up of more gardens. This also enhanced the number of population. Bengalis also came into Darjeeling from the neighboring districts and from other parts of lower Bengal. Most of them took to agriculture as their mode of living and settled down permanently in the Terai. They had free intermixing with the other inhabitants of the plains. The other Bengali peoples took to the principal profession, *munshis*, domestic servants etc.¹⁷ Regarding this process for the establishment of tea industry some *bazaars* or *hats* were started in Terai where Bihari people began to sell some essential commodities to the outsiders as well as the earlier

inhabitants. As a result, according to the first Census of 1872 the total number of population in 274 sq. mile of the Terai was 47,985 and the total number of villages was nineteen in this region. Each sq.mile had 41 houses and number of population was 175. There were 11,111 houses and each houses consists less than 5 persons. The Census of 1872 pointed out that though the Rajbanshis were the majority of the population consisting of 23015 (in hills: 109) persons and the number of Mech and Dhimal were 893 and 873 respectively in Terai.¹⁸ Among the other races the Oraons were 1648 in number, who migrated from the Chotanagpur regions to the tea gardens areas as labourer as stated earlier.¹⁹ There were some Muslim people who lived in the lower portion of Terai region with the Rajbanshis “is to be accounted for by immigration from the Districts to the South”. Though the Mohammedans were 6248 (Male: 3566, Female: 2682) in the district but they were principally found in the Terai region.²⁰ It is to be assumed that the Marwari of North West India, who were claiming to belong to the great Vaisya or trading cast of ancient India came in Terai after the second half of the nineteenth century. The Marwari communities were mainly composed of Agarwala and Oswals. Besides this, large number of Bihari people also came here at the same time. They mostly belonged to Teli, Halwai, Baniya, Hazam, Chamar, Dom, Sonar and other Castes. The following table gives the data of immigrant into the Terai region of the district after 1850.

TABLE NO 2:1

TBIBES AND CASTES FOUND IN DARJEELING AND TERAI IN 1871

Sl. No.	NAME OF THE CASTE	PLACE WERE THEY COME	NUMBER IN HILLS	NUMBER IN TERAI
01.	Kshatriya (Warrior)	Northern India	117 Persons	28 Persons
02.	Marwari	North-West India	10 Persons	-
03.	Agarwala	Do	09 Persons	09 Persons
04.	Oswal	Do	13 Persons	21 Persons
05.	Teli (Oil pressers and sellers)	Bihar	111 Persons	301 Persons
06.	Baniya (Traders & Merchants)	"	67 Persons	163 Persons
07.	Napit (Hajjam)	"	405 Persons	30 Persons
08.	Kamar (Blacksmith)	"	393 Persons	63 Persons
09.	Halwai (Sweet Makers)	"	47 Persons	43 Persons
10.	Kahar (Palanquin bearers)	"	45 Persons	30 Persons
11.	Chamar (Leather dealers and Shoe maker)	"	221 Persons	64 Persons
12.	Dhoba (Washerman)	"	63 Persons	22 Persons
13.	Sonar (Goldsmith and Jewelers)	"	349 Persons	22 Persons
14.	Kurmi (Cultivators)	"	245 Persons	15 Persons
15.	Mihtar (Sweepers)	"	173 Persons	53 Persons
16.	Kayastha (Writer castes)	Bengal	36 Persons	08 Persons
17.	Barui (Pan growers)	"	285 Persons	57 Persons
18.	Namosudra or Chandals (Cultivators and Fishermen)	"	-	292 Persons
19.	Ganesh (Weavers)	"	-	890 Persons
20.	Tanti (Weavers)	"	12 Persons	632 Persons
21.	Sanyasi (A sect of Saivate religious)	"	267 Persons	36 Persons
22.	Kaibartta (Adopted Agriculture and Fishing as their profession)	"	-	125 Persons
23.	Goala (Milkman)	"	74 Persons	346 Persons
24.	Hari (Sweepers)	"	2 Persons	759 Persons
25.	Vaishnav (A sect of Hindu professing)	"	-	222 Persons
26.	Kandu (Sellers of perched or cooked vegetable food)	"	26 Persons	64 Persons
27.	Brahmans	Nepal	1002 Persons	98 Persons

[Source: *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol. - X, W. W. Hunter, Trubner & Co, London, 1876, pp.81-84.]

It is revealed from the above table no 2:1 that the composition of population in the Darjeeling Terai from the early part of the sixties in the 19th century consists mainly trading community from the North-Western India, lower class people from North-Bihar, middle class people from neighboring areas of Bengal and upper class people from Nepal. Except the Lepchas and Meches there were no emigrations from the district. In 1871, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling similarly observes that the Meches who were migratory tribes had crossed the river Tista in Terai and migrated into the neighboring district of Jalpaiguri.²¹ For this reason within the next two decades the Mech population of the district reduced drastically while in the case of Jalpaiguri it was increasing. On the other hand Major George E. Bulger, mention in his travelogue, that Terai was inhabited by two main races namely Maches and Dhimals, who are said to be remarkably healthy. They are pastoral and agricultural tribes and are described to be industrious, honest, inoffensive and cheerful. After reaching Punkabaree, the northern hill portion of Terai region, where he first saw the hill men, Lepchas and Sikkim-

Bhutias, the barden-bearing race of this portion of Himalayas.²² Hodgson also said that the Dhimals, who were connected with the western part of Terai region and the tract lying between the river Konki and Mahananda was still known as Dhimali. The number of Dhimals were not exceed than 15,000 souls are confined to within the portion of *sal* forest lying between the Konki and the river Dhorla or Torsha, mixed with the Bodo or Mech, but in separate villages and without intermarriage.²³

The census of 1872 in this region is considered to be inaccurate by the authorities due to the severe cold weather and unscientific methods of counting. As a result the figure, found in Census of 1872 to have been considerably below the truth. Moreover in the case of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri etc. the enumeration of 1872 was carried out by rough and ready methods and under very imperfect supervision. On the whole of Bengal province there was an increase of 10.89 percent population, during last nine years (1872-1881), giving an average annual increase of 1.21 percent.²⁴ The phenomenal growth of the population in Darjeeling Terai since 1872 were due to two main causes, the development of the tea industry and the influx of settlers to exploit the wasteland in this region.²⁵ Nevertheless, in 1881 the population of Terai was increased to 63, 241 persons and the people lived per square mile were 233. Among the above population the Males consists 35,410 persons and Female 27,831 persons.²⁶The following table will exhibit the real picture-

TABLE NO 2:2
POPULATION OF DARJEELING TERAI IN 1881

Name of the Sub-Division	Area Sq. Miles	Number of villages	Number of houses	Total population	Total Male	Total Female	Proportion of male population	Number of persons per sq. mile	Number of persons per village	Number of houses per sq. mile	Number of persons per occupied houses
Siliguri Or Terai	271	737	12,185	63,241	35,410	27,831	55.9%	233	86	46	5.2

[Source: *The Imperial Gazetteer Of India*, Vol-XIII, W.W.Hunter, Trubner & Co, London, 1887, p.211]

In the district as a whole there was an increase of 63 percent population between the years of 1872-1881 but due to notoriously Malarias character and the high rate of mortality it was comparatively very high than the hills of the region.²⁷ The increase in mortality had affected the population but on the whole the increase of population in Terai during this decade was about more than 31 percent.²⁸ At that time the people of various castes who were found in Terai as given below, though it was an incomplete one-

TABLE NO 2:3

ETHNIC GROUPWISE POPULATION IN TERAI 1881

Name of the Caste	Male	Female	Total
Bhuimali and Mehter	539	540	1079
Bhutia	292	130	422
Brahman	500	130	630
Dami	75	33	108
Gharti	126	103	229
Gurung	981	935	1916
Kaibarta	194	135	329
Kami	373	257	630
Khambu	1314	1459	2773
Koch	6119	5014	11133
Lepcha	592	532	1124
Limbu	416	108	524
Mangar	832	514	1346
Munda	129	126	255
Murmi	500	502	1002
Newar	318	189	507
Oraon	2360	2272	4632
Rajput	366	143	509
Surki	109	43	152
Sunnwar	67	34	101
Yokha	33	24	57
Buna	644	526	1170
Shaik	4002	2299	6301

[Source: *Final Report On The Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p.08.]

The above table no 2:3 gives a picture of the caste and ethnic classification of population of Terai in 1881. But the Report prepared by Sasi Bhusan Dutta in 1897 was incorrect regarding population of the region was considered. In this report he has mentioned that the total Koch population in the Terai were 11,133 persons but the Census report 1881 puts total Koch population of Darjeeling district as 30,381²⁹ who were mainly inhabited in the Terai region of this district. So, it can be stated that the Koches formed about 50 percent population of the Terai region. The report mentioned that 177 persons per sq. miles were inhabited in the Terai region in 1872.³⁰ But it varies from the Hunter's assessment which was 175 persons per sq. mile.³¹ In this connection it is to be noticed that "the Census reports of 1872, 1821 and 1891 enumerate Koches, Rajbanshis and Paliyas under one head Koch".³² It was to be said that the Census of 1891 for the first time took a satisfactory count because in the previous Census there was an immense concealment of females. Many of them fled on the Census night over the frontier into Nepal. Laborers absconded from tea gardens from panic and other causes.³³

The growth of Darjeeling district in the past twenty years was the most remarkable expansion of population than any other part of Lower Province in Bengal. The population of the district in 1872 was 94,712 persons, while in 1891 Census it amounted of 223,314 persons, showing an increase of 136 percent. Great of this growth of inhabitants was in the whole district, more clearly, it was very much marked in the hill area than in the Terai or sub-mountains tract, which was conterminous with Siliguri *thana*. In Terai, the population has increased from 47, 985 persons to 72,997 persons or by 52 percent during last nineteen years.³⁴ The population grew due to the establishment of tea plantation industries in this region. Though the first experimental tea gardens were established in 1860, but it was in the year of 1862 commercial tea garden named New Champta at Khaprail in Terai was established by an Englishman named James White. During the next three decades the number of tea gardens had increased abruptly. The most important factor which contributed to the growth of population in Terai was the employment of Santals, and Chotanagpuri tribal as laborers in tea gardens.³⁵ With the growth of the tea garden the Colonial Government paid attention to the development of the roads and communication because the transport system from the tea gardens to the port was very poor at that time. Therefore, they paid their attention for the improvement of not only the roads but also the railways, so that the tea leaves could reach the port for trade without any difficulties. Though, the development of railways in Terai or Siliguri had started much earlier than any other region in northern part of Bengal. Yet in 1881 was not before Siliguri was connected with Calcutta by railway through the present Bangladesh. This helped to give an impetus to the tea industry in Terai. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the tea gardens were established within the period of 1890 in Terai (except which were established by the Indian Tea Planters).³⁶ Thus modern Siliguri town and urbanization of the Terai owes much to the development of railways and land connection. The Census report of India in 1891 gives a statistical description of migration between the district of Darjeeling and other neighboring part of this said district as given below:

TABLE NO 2:4

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF DARJEELING IN 1891
A. DECADAL POPULATION VARIATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT 1872-1881

THANA	POPULATION IN 1891	PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION WITH 1881	PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION BETWEEN 1881 - 1872
DARJEELING	60,963 Person	+ 61.1	96.7
KALIMPONG	26,631 "		
JOR BANGALA	18,078 "		
KURESEONG	44,645 "	+58.5	-
TERAI OR SILIGURI	72,997 "	+17.0	31.8
DISTRICT TOTAL	2,23,314 "	+43.2	2.88

B: MIGRATION BETWEEN DARJEELING AND OTHERS NEIGHBOURING AREAS

DISTRICTS	IMMIGRANTS		EMIGRANTS	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Jalpaiguri	2097 PERSON	1880 PERSON	1347 PERSON	894 PERSON
Purnea	6271 "	4832 "	327 "	230 "
Lohardaga	1871 "	1726 "	-	01 "
Chutia Nagpur	732 "	309 "	01 "	02 "
Darbhanga	845 "	193 "	-	01 "
Muzaffarpur	2045 "	315 "	06 "	08 "
Saran	3191 "	272 "	02 "	03 "
North Western Provinces	1565 "	414 "	-	-
Sikkim	3110 "	2946 "	-	-
Nepal	47,799 "	40,222 "	-	-
Bhutan	540 "	571 "	-	-
Total	70,066 PERSON	53,626 PERSON	1683 PERSON	1139 PERSON
Total	123692 PERSON		2822 PERSON	

[Source: *Census Of India 1891, Vol -III*, C.J.O' Donnell, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.66]

The above table no 2:4 shows that in the year of 1897, 88,021 person's resident of Darjeeling was born in Nepal i.e. more than one third of the total population of the district. They were almost all found in the tea gardens in the hills. The people who came from Lohardaga and Chutia Nagpur were immigrated to Terai as tea gardens coolies, whilst the 11,103 persons from Purnea were mostly settled in Terai Governments farms, known as the Terai *jotes*. On the other hand, it is to be noted that, in the Darjeeling hills no Chotanagpur and Lohardaga tribal were found except two gardens of Kalimpong Sub-division.³⁷ The immigrants who came from Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan largely settled in

the hilly areas of the district of Darjeeling, a few number of Bhutia and Nepali immigrants also settled in Terai.³⁸ The immigrant from Jalpaiguri were mainly settled in the Terai region. However, in 1880 some portions of Jalpaiguri district came in the jurisdiction of Darjeeling district. So, there may be some confusion regarding the migration between Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri district. After the introduction of railways in Siliguri the Bihari people of North Bihar, particularly from the district of Saran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga started to immigrate in Darjeeling. Among them some people went to Darjeeling for trading and other works. These people attended *hats* or *bazaars* in Siliguri, Bagdogra, Naxalbari, Phansidewa, Matigara etc. While trading and conducting commerce in the Terai many of them chose to settle in Siliguri. During the last part of the eighties in the nineteenth century a large number of road construction were under taken in this region and the Biharis worked there as labourers. Some of them, though little in number were engaged in agricultural work in Terai. Many served as “*Chaukidars*” in the tea gardens of Terai, but their main business was to sell various commodities to the working class people who were mostly settled in the tea garden areas. Latter some of them become *jotedars*. The people of North West province were engaged in money landing business both in the hills and in the Terai.³⁹

In the hills, including Kalimpong because of healthy weather and comparatively low death rate the growth of population was very high. On the other hand, in notoriously Malarious belt of Terai it was comparatively low. In the district as a whole there was an increase of 63 percent between 1872 and 1881 and 43 percent in the period between 1881 and 1891. The rate of expansion was far more rapid in the hills than in the Terai. In the hills the growth of population in these nineteen years was 222 percent, while in the Terai it was only 52 percent. Therefore, the Census of 1891, clear that the growth of the population during these nineteen years was phenomenal.⁴⁰ The following table give the total information regarding population of the Darjeeling Terai in the year of 1891.

TABLE NO 2:5
POPULATION OF TERAI IN 1891

NAME OF DIVISION	AREA S.q MILE	NUMBER OF VILLAGES	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL MALES	TOTAL FEMALES	NUMBER OF PERSON S.q MILE	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES PER S.q MILE	NUMBER OF PERSON PER OCCUPIED HOUSES
SILIGURI	271	400	14,975	72,997	41,868	31,129	288.5	59.5	4.6

[Source: *Census Report of the District of Darjeeling, 1891*, No-1512G, Dated 15th March, 1892, Darjeeling (D.C.O.D)]

Among the above population, the Bengalis comprise almost exclusively in Terai. They were mostly found in Siliguri *thana*. Out of the 47,435 Bengalis; 46,968 were found in Siliguri i.e. 67 percent of the population of that *thana*. In this connection it is to be mentioned that all the Rajbanshis of Terai were considered here as Bengalis. In the Census of 1881 there numbers were 51,267 and if these figures were correct, there had been falling off the indigenous population of Terai. Mr. J. M. Ritchie, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling says “I believe that many of these are really Bengalis, and that many of the Hindi speaking population in the other *thanas* are Nepalese. The rest are up-country laborers and shop-keepers. The labourers work on roads in the Terai, drives pack ponies, and do much miscellaneous work”. The Urdu and Hindi speaking population shows a rise from 7,657 to 20,899 in between the year of 1881 to 1891. Though, these figures comprise other than Hindu and Musalman plainmen i.e. semi-Hinduised aboriginals. The Bhutia and Tibetan speaking people were 230 persons in Terai in 1891.⁴¹ Yet the table no 2:6 will exhibit the persons who were engage in different segments of this district.

TABLE NO 2:6
OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF POPULATION IN DARJELING DISTRICT IN 1891

DIFFERENT HEADS	AREA IN Sq. MILES	OCCUPIED HOUSES	PERSONS			NUMBER OF PERSON PER Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF HOUSES PER Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF PERSON PER OCCUPIED HOUSES
			MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL			
TEA ESTATES	242	20,256	47,135	42,449	89,584	370.1	83.7	4.4
GOVERNMENT FERMAS	382	19,013	52,741	44,974	97,712	255.7	49.7	5.1
FOREST	439	752	3805	1586	5391	12.2	1.7	7.1

[Sources: *Census Of India, 1891, Vol-III, C.J.O'* Donnell, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.67]

Among the above population there were 13,712 persons engaged in the tea industry in Terai. 177 persons in the railways and 1920 persons in the road construction; 87 peoples were engaged in forest. In the agricultural fields 30,246 males and 24,539 females were engaged.⁴² In this connection, the small size of the household amongst the tea garden labourers, whose families include few dependents, except children is noticeable.

In 1901 the greatest density of population, viz, 775 persons to the square mile was found in Central Bengal, then, followed by West Bengal with 591 persons and East Bengal with 514 persons per square mile. North Bengal with 428 persons per square mile had suffered for the inclusion of Sikkim, Darjeeling and the newly acquired part of Jalpaiguri. If these areas be left out of account its density rises to 551 persons per square mile. The density was greatest in the east and decreased towards the west and north. In Terai the density was about the same as in Jalpaiguri, but it gradually diminished towards the north and in the Darjeeling Sadar Sub-division there were 184 persons inhabited per square mile.⁴³ The pressure of the population on the soil was greatest in the Terai, where there were 279 persons reside in per square mile.⁴⁴

TABLE NO 2:7
COMPARATIVE POPULATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT AND TERAI IN 1901

DISTRICT AND THANA	AREA IN S.q MILES	NUMBER OF		POPULATION IN 1901			URBAN	RURAL	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	NUMBER OF PERSONS PER S.q MILES	TOTAL POPULATION AT PREVIOUS CENSUSES		
		TOWNS	VILLAGES	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE					1872	1881	1891
DISTRICT TOTAL	1,164	02	569	2,49117	133005	116112	21,393	2,27724	61,327	214	94712	155179	223314
SILIGURI OR TERAI	253	-	284	70,466	39,037	31,429	-	70,466	16,044	279	47,985	63,241	72,997

[Source: *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, pp.02-03]

From the table no 2:7 it is evident that the population in Terai decreased in between the years of 1891-1901. When the district received 11.5 percent growth rate during last decade the population of Terai decreased rather than increase -3.5 percent.⁴⁵ So, it was unusual phenomenal regarding demographic scenario of the district. The reasons behind this slow growth or decrease population during last decade can be assumed for the following reasons. L. L. S. O'Malley observed that in many localities

where Malaria has long been prevalent and become endemic. In some parts of Terai, the incidence of Malaria was very high.⁴⁶ Another reason was the *Kala-Azar* which led to number of deaths and created a panic among the workers and labourers of the region. L.A. Waddel mentions in his travelogue '*Among The Himalayas*' that "In this poisonous atmosphere no laborers can be induced to settle. Each fresh batch of imported coolies soon flees panic-struck before the Black-Death (*Kala-azar*), Black-water Fever and other Malarial pestilences which lurk in every brake and lay their avenging hands on every intruder who invades their reeking solitude".⁴⁷ But in Siliguri or Terai, the mortality has been exceptionally very high. During 1890-1900 as a whole give an average death-rate of 59.8 per 1,000 per annum, and in 1900 it exceeded 71 per 1,000. On the other hand the average birth-rate was only 19.4 per annum. There was a great demand for labour of all kinds and wages are far higher than in any other parts of Bengal. The than Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling observed that there was no district in the Province where the people are so well off.⁴⁸ For this reasons, in several Bengal districts the local labour has to be supplemented by the influx of immigrants from Bihar and Orissa, and the demand being in excess of the supply, wages are regulated thereby.⁴⁹ During this period, the tea industry, however, on which the growth of the district mainly depended, had been passing through a serious crisis. Prices have fallen greatly during 1895-1900 and many gardens were no longer able to work at a profit. Some few were closed and others have reduced their labour force, so that the increase due to extension of cultivation during the earlier years of the last decade of the 19th century has been to a great extent discounted by the subsequent reductions of establishment. Terai suffered the decrease of 2531 persons during last decade, about two thirds were accounted for by the fact that in 1891 a large number of temporary immigrants were employed there in the construction of roads and railway lines. The tea gardens have added 11 percent to their population, but the settlers in the "Terai *Khas Mahals*" have decreased by nearly 5 percent. Having regard to the heavy death rate, the loss of population in Terai must have been far greater than it was but for immigration from outside.⁵⁰ The following table no 2:8 gives a decadal population variation of Darjeeling district.

TABLE NO 2:8
DECADAL POPULATION VARIATION OF DARJEELING DISTRICT 1891-1901
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

POPULATION	1901		1891	
	MALE	FEMAL	MALE	FEMAL
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,33,005	1,16,112	1,23,046	1,00,268
IMMIGRANTS	71,289	53,102	78,978	58,079
EMIGRANTS	3,128	2,566	3,298	1,528
NATURAL POPULATION	64,844	65,576	47,366	43,715

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I*, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p.63]

The table no 2:8 revealed that total volume of immigration is less than it was in 1891, but the foreign-born still number nearly half the total population of the district. A very large proportion of them are permanent settlers on the tea gardens and in Terai *Khas Mahals*. The earlier immigrants were gradually dying out and their place had being taken by the next generation, i.e their children born in Darjeeling district⁵¹. Though, the total number of persons born in Nepal but enumerated in this province were 1,61,495 persons or slightly less than in 1891. Nearly half of the total numbers were found in the district of Darjeeling and nearly three quarters of the remainder were found in Sikkim, Cahamparan and Jalpaiguri.⁵² The following table will show real migration scenario of Darjeeling district in early year of 20th century.

TABLE NO 2:9
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1901
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DISTRICT	IMMIGRANTS		EMIGRANTS	
	MALE	TOTAL	MALE	TOTAL
Jalpaiguri	4,141	2,248	2,012	960
Purnea	8,965	5,203	221	170
Saran	2,851	2,438	04	02
Mozaffarpur	1,765	1,385	15	07
Sonthal Parganas	2,961	1,602	41	16
Ranchi	7,931	4,444	03	03
Central Prov. and States	267	106	17	13
United. Prov. and States	2,285	1,372	44	30
Sikkim	2106	1,004	1,909	1,017
Nepal	76,301	42,486	–	–
Tibet	1,038	620	–	–
Assam	113	53	741	452
Elsewhere	13,667	8,328	687	458
Total	1,24,391	71,289	5,694	3,128

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I*, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p. Appendix I]

From the preceding table no 2:9 it can be observed that, in Terai it received numerous settlers from the adjoining district of Purnea and Jalpaiguri who were engaged in cultivation and a large number of colliers from Ranchi and Santal Pargana, who were attracted by the wages given in the tea gardens. But the great bulk of the immigrants come from Nepal, chiefly as labourers on the hill tea gardens.⁵³

In this connection it is to be mentioned that Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Purnea are well known to be unhealthy and have suffered since 1891, not only from Malaria but also from several epidemics of Cholera.⁵⁴ On the other hand Santhal Pargana had faced a severe famine and a heavy storm burst over the northern slope of the *Damin-i-Koh* in September 1899. As a result, at least 182,190 persons must have left the district during this decade (1891-1901). Most of these have left the district permanently for the Barind and other parts of Bengal or for Assam. The number of emigrants to Assam registered at Ranchi during this decade were 47,764 of whom nearly 20,000 were registered in the two years 1897-98 and 1899-1900.⁵⁵ The most striking features of migration in the Santal Parganas were firstly, its great volume and secondly, the strong tendency of the people to move eastwards.⁵⁶ Probably not more than a third were permanent settlers. The Santals, Mundas and Oraons who have made clearances in the jungles of North Bengal including Terai. The *zamindars* allow newly-cleared land to be held rent free for the first three or four years, and this exactly suits the taste of these unsophisticated aborigines, who do not mind the physical work involved in breaking down the jungle, but have a very great aversion to the payment of rent. They remain hold of the land until the rent is demanded and then move on. So, it is very uncertain to state that how many were come to stay in this region or Terai.⁵⁷ In 1901, the number of Oraons, Munda, Santals, Turia, Dhimal, Mech etc in Terai may be found from the following table no 2:10:

TABLE NO 2:10
CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE FOUND IN TERAI IN 1901

CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Rajbanshi (Koch)	–	–	29,178
Oraon	4,169	3,280	7,449
Munda	2069	1714	3,783
Santhal	882	726	1,608
Murmi	–	–	587
Dhimal	314	293	607
Khambu	–	–	562
Mech	–	–	343
Turai	136	73	209
Mahali	92	82	180
Kharia	69	68	137

[Source: *Census Of India, 1901*, Vol-VI, Bengal, Part-I, E.A. Gait, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, pp.118-126 And *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, pp.04-05]

In 1907 the Sub-division head-quarter was established in Siliguri. The people from different parts of the sub-continent had centered on Siliguri particularly due to tea, timber and transport trade. The attraction of the business prospect removed the fear of Malaria from the hearts of business loving people. Along with tea and timber, companies like Mark Mayer, Landen Clark, Railey Brothers etc related with jute business were established in this region. From the beginning of second decade of 20th century, the northern bank of the river Mahananda developed due to the growth of tea industry and the southern bank developed due the expansion of commercial activities.⁵⁸ The Census of 1911 shows a decline in the rate of increase, the actual addition of population in the district being 16,433, or 6.65 percent. The main reason behind this slow growth during this decade that there was only a limited area in which there was a room for an increase of population. Over one-third of the district was covered by reserved forests, while the tea gardens extend over about one-seventh of its area. All the land suitable for tea cultivation, within the area reserved for it, has been taken up. Therefore the tea gardens received no considerable increase of population during this period. The tea gardens labors possessed however, one-fifth of the total population of the district. In that period, it was shown that the tea garden population was slightly reduced, but this loss was more than counter balanced by the access of new settlers for ordinary cultivation. Nevertheless, the population of Terai was increased in 1911 “but it has not yet entirely made good the loss that occurred between 1891 and 1901, and the number of its inhabitants is still slightly less than it was 20 years(in 1891) ago.”⁵⁹ In 1911 the

population of Terai was 72,246⁶⁰ and which was slightly less than the population of Terai in 1891. Among them 40,399 were Males and 31,847 were Females and the number of persons per sq. miles was 286.⁶¹

TABLE NO 2:11
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1901-1911
(NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DARJEELING	1911		1901	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,42,094	1,23,456	1,33,005	1,16,112
IMMIGRANTS	67,102	50,056	71,289	53,102
EMIGRANTS	5,863	4,553	3,128	2,566
NATURAL POPULATION	80,855	77,953	64,844	65,579

[Source: *Census of India, 1911*, Vol-V, Part-I, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Sikkim, L.S.S.O' Malley, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1913, p.102]

The table no 2:11 thus revealed that the numbers of immigrants had decreased in the year of 1901 and on the other hand the number of emigrants had increased in 1911. The main reason was that there was some space available for settled habitation and the tea gardens has been passing through a serious crisis as stated earlier. However apart from this the most populous part of the district was Terai.⁶² The development of the jute and tobacco trade was increasing the demand for labour, which was not fully met from local sources. Therefore, a large number of labourers comes from Bihar and United Provinces, Santal Pargana and Chota Nagpur plateau; who found employment in different kinds of labour, e.g. as domestic servants, police constables, railway servants, field-labours leather-workers, *palki*-bearers etc.⁶³ In 1911, the numbers of Oraons immigrated in Terai were 1357, Munda 404 and Santals 362 persons.⁶⁴ In this context it is to be said that the number of tribal people is less than who emigrated from Terai during this decade. Among these immigrants the sex-ratio was fairly balanced and their migration, were therefore be called as semi-permanent. But despite their leaving the majority settled down and used to go home for an occasional visit only.⁶⁵

TABLE NO 2:12
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAJ IN 1921

DISTRICT, SUB-DIVISION & THANA	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF		NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER SQ MILE IN 1921
		TOWNS	INHABITED RURAL MOUZAS		1921			1911	1911-1921	1901-1911	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	BOTH SEX			
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,164	2	302	65,008	1,49,094	1,33,654	2,82,748	2,65,550	6.5	6.6	243
TERAJ OR SILIGURI	254	-	64	18,272	41,619	34,168	75,787	72,246	4.9	2.5	298
SILIGURI	91	-	24	6350	14,384	10,710	25,094	72,246	4.9	2.5	276
NAXALBARI	87	-	21	5393	11,752	9,955	21,707				249
PHANSIDEWA	51	-	16	4532	10,575	9,434	20,009				392
KORIBARI	25	-	03	1997	4,908	4,069	8,977				359

[Source: *Census Of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Bengal, Part-II, W.H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1923, pp.456-457]

This growth of population in 1921, as shown in table no 2:12 was possible because of trade and commerce facilities, and development of tea industry. Teraj used to hold at suitable and convenient places, a number of weekly and bi-weekly *hats* or markets belonging to Government and *Jotedars*. The most important of them being those at Matigara, Naxalbari, Panighata, Siliguri and Phansidewa which, in comparison, with density of population, were extraordinary flourishing centers of trade. All the *hats* and tea gardens were linked up by roads, some of them well metalled and fit for use throughout the year by all manner of vehicles. The northern branch of the Eastern Bengal Railway had its terminus at Siliguri from where the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway branches went out in three directions, viz, towards Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Purnea and thus taps the most important centers of trade in Tibet, Nepal, North Bengal and the hills.⁶⁶ For this reason, during 1911-1921 when the Darjeeling district received the increase of population about the same 6.5 per cent, Siliguri had gained 4.9 per cent against the 2.5 per cent of the previous decades as mentioned in the above table(2:12).⁶⁷ The population of Teraj mainly consisted of the Bengalis while the picture of the rest of the district was quite different.⁶⁸

TABLE NO 2:13
MIGRATION STATEMENTS OF DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1921
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)

DISTRICT DARJEELING	1921			1911	1901
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	BOTH SEX	BOTH SEX
ACTUAL POPULATION	1,49,094	133,654	2,82,748	2,65,550	2,49,117
IMMIGRANTS	62,215	48,137	1,10,352	1,17,158	1,24,391
EMIGRANTS	6,530	4,713	11,243	10,416	5,696
NATURAL POPULATION	93,409	90,230	1,83,639	158,808	1,30,420

[Source: *Census of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Part- I, W. H. Thompson, Bengal, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1923, p. 68]

There was migration across the Nepal frontier and more than half of the immigrants came from Nepal, though the actual number of people who were born in Nepal has decreased by 15.7 per cent. Since 1911 tea cultivation was not spreading as it was in 1901, because most of the land which was suitable has now been taken up. At that time the Nepalese people of Darjeeling hills were to go into Jalpaiguri and Doars. It was for that, they were not try to mix with the people of Terai. On the other hand due to demand of labour force immigrants come from Purnea into Terai in large numbers. The people also come from other parts of Bihar and the United Provinces. Though, the numbers of Bengali immigrant were few at that time. Apart from this the numbers of immigrants has increased only slightly in between 1911-1921 compared with the increase between 1901 and 1911.⁶⁹

The following caste, tribe or races who were mostly found in Darjeeling Terai in 1921 is given below:

TABLE NO 2:14
CASTE, TRIBE OR RACE FOUND IN TERAI IN 1921

NAME	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Rajbanshi	12,194	10,997	23191
Dhimal	244	261	505
Santhal	1896	1171	3607
Oraon	5070	5062	10,132
Munda	2604	2718	5322
Khambu	139	177	316
Kharia	295	275	570
Bagdi	66	22	88
Baidya	143	118	261
Barui	427	51	478
Bauri	14	30	44
Bhumali	22	03	25
Chamar	297	141	834
Dhoba	311	129	440
Dom	187	97	284
Dosadh	255	106	361
Goala	705	313	1018
Kibarta	164	155	319
Kamar	66	64	130
Lohar	694	534	1228
Bhuiya	431	293	724
Numasudra	29	02	31
Malakar	187	100	287
Koch	90	51	141
Nuniya	227	208	435

[Source: *Census of India, 1921*, Vol- V, Bengal , Part- II, W. H. Thompson, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1923, pp. 09-10]

Among the above population (mention in table no 2:14), and the population which have already mentioned in the table no 2:12, the Bengali speaking people at that time in Darjeeling district were 38,106 (M- 20,836 and F- 17,270), Hindi and Urdu speaking persons were 21,236 (M-14,084 and F- 7,152), Kherwari 9,338 (M- 4,957 and F- 4,381) Kurukh 10132 (M-5070 and F- 5062) Malto 27 (M-27 and F-00), Gujrati 38 (M-28 and F-10), Marathi 424 (M-215 and F-209), Punjabi 63 (M-50 and F-13) and Rajasthani 1,256 (M-1098 and F-159).⁷⁰The people who were used Eastern Paharia or Khaskura language as their daily use were 63,936 (M-32,728 and F-31,208) in 1921, who were mostly settled in the hill region of the district of Darjeeling. The Muslims, who were mostly found in the Terai region of the district of Darjeeling their number in 1891, 7863 persons and in 1921 their number was decreased in 6,889 persons.⁷¹

After having serious degradation in tea industry in Darjeeling as well as in Terai in 1920-1921 it looked better by 1922-1923 and it was prevailed till 1926-1927 due to satisfactory condition of tea in Terai, the planters recruited more laborers from Chotanagpur. But from 1927 to 1931 the condition of tea was again unsatisfactory⁷² and therefore it may presume that labour recruitment in tea industry might have been stopped. So, in 1931 the number of new person in Terai were 4,471.

TABLE NO 2:15
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAI IN 1931

DISTRICT, SUB-DIVISION AND THANA	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF			POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER Sq. MILE IN 1931
		TOWNS	INHABITED RURAL MOUZAS	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	1931			1921	1921-1931	1911-1921	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL				
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,221	06	531	71,191	1,70,131	1,49,504	3,19,635	2,82,748	11.9	3.8	330
TERAI OR SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	278	01	262	17,172	45,090	35,168	80,258	75,787	5.9	4.9	289
SILIGURI	124	01	99	6,939	20,789	15,179	35,968	55,778	6.0	4.9	290
KHARIBARI	90	-	96	5,380	12,783	10,362	231,45				257
PHANSIDEWA	64	-	67	4,853	11,518	9,627	21,145	20,009	5.7	11	330

[Source: **Census of India, 1931**, Vol-V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part- II, A.E. Porter, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1932, p.260]

The above mentioned population (in table no 2:15) increased in 1931, was due to some extent for the introduction and expansion of the broad gauge railway lines in Siliguri. A. E. Porter stated that “.....the extension of the broad gauge railway to this place (Terai) probable accounts for the greatest part of the increase, but an accurate estimate cannot be made owing to the fact that Kharibari P.S which is now shown separately, was not separately shown in 1921 and it is reported that the bulk of the increase of population almost certainly comes from outside from such places as Muzaffarpur, Patna and Darbhanga in Bihar and from the hills.”⁷³ In Terai the number of Tharu people in 1931 were 231⁷⁴ and Meches were 346, among them 181 were Male and 165 were Female.⁷⁵ The number of Dhimals were 375, Rajbanshi 26,969, Santal 4299, Oraons 12,412 and the Mundas were 5,062 souls^{75a} who mostly settled in Terai region of the district, apart from this the Negesia and Turi, who were come from Chotanagpur in Terai were 358 and 117 respectively.⁷⁶ The other tribes and non-tribes races and castes who were mostly found in Darjeeling Terai were as follows:

TABLE NO 2:16
PROMINENT TRIBES AND NON-TRIBES RACES AND CASTES FOUND IN TERAI IN 1931

NAME OF THE GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Kherwar	6,537	5,033	11,570
Bhumij	46	43	89
Ho	02	03	05
Kora Or Koda	414	40	454
Korwa	105	119	224
Kharai	815	231	1,082
Malto	59	37	96
Bhumali	—	—	50
Bhuyia	—	—	66
Chamar	—	—	633
Dhoba	—	—	209
Dom	—	—	111
Dosadh	—	—	170
Ghasi	—	—	217
Hari	—	—	548
Kaibartta (Jalia)	—	—	71
Koch	—	—	122
Malpahariya	—	—	1,801
Muchi	—	—	156
Musahar	—	—	234
Namosudra	—	—	42
Methor	—	—	196

[Source: *Census of India, 1931*, Vol-V, Bengal and Sikkim, Part- II, A.E. Porter, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1932, p.190 And *Census 1951, The Tribes And Castes Of West Bengal*, A. Mitra, West Bengal Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1953, pp.95-110]

The number of Marwaries of Darjeeling district was 1473 in 1931. Among them 1,196 persons were Males and 277 persons were Females, the number of Punjabis was 127 (M-97, F-26), who were scattered in all over the district.⁷⁷ Though, their number in Terai is not found. Most probably their immigration was temporary in the district, because the preponderance of male population over female in this connection is noticeable.⁷⁸

From 1931 onwards Terai began to attract more and more immigrants, the bulk of whom were traders, white-collared employees and transport workers from the Indian plains, who came in the wake of urbanization of Siliguri an entrepot market and the most important transport node in north-eastern India.⁷⁹ In 1941 there were 9,756 new persons increased in Terai.

TABLE NO 2:17
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF TERAI IN 1941

DISTRICT AND SUB-DIVISION	AREA IN Sq. MILES	NUMBER OF			POPULATION IN				PERCENTAGE OF VARIATION		NUMBER OF PERSONS PER Sq. MILE IN 1941
		TOWNS	VILLAGES	NUMBER OF OCCUPIED HOUSES	1941			1931	1931-1941	1921-1931	
					MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	TOTAL			
DARJEELING DISTRICT	1,192	06	578	82,138	1,99891	1,76478	3,76369	3,19,635	17.7	13.0	316
TERAI OR SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	258	01	194	21,222	50,674	39,340	90,014	80,258	12.2	5.9	349
SILIGURI	124	1	74	10,217	24,663	17,700	42,363	35,968	17.8	6.00	342
KHORIBARI	70	-	62	5,614	13,411	10,805	24,216	23,145	4.6		346
PHANSIDEWA	64	-	58	5,391	12,600	10,835	23,435	21,145	10.8	5.7	366

[Source: *Census Of India, 1941*, Vol-IV, Bengal, R.A. Dutch, Government Of India Press, Simla, 1942, p.65]

The table no 2:17 shows that, the Siliguri Sub-Division had an area of 22 percent of the district area but it received or consist 24 percent population of that district. The density of population was thus slightly higher than that of that district. Even the density of population throughout the sub-division was not equal .During this decade (1931-1941) the Kharibari *thana* showed the lowest rate of increase and the Siliguri *thana* the highest. It was because the forest and waste land of that area were well cultivated and much being under tea. On the other hand the high rate of increase in Siliguri was no doubt due to abnormally rapid expansion of the Siliguri urban area. This expansion has taken place in spite of unhealthy and insanitary conditions and has no doubt been due to Siliguri's increasing importance as a focus of communications.⁸⁰ The 1941 Census figures gave the Male population as 1,76,478 persons and the Female population as 1,76,478, i.e. just over 88 females for every 100 males. In the hill areas of the district it was about 92; but the number of females for every 100 males in Terai was only 78. So, these figures perhaps indicate that the population of the hill areas was more permanent than that of Terai.⁸¹

Hence, the Census of 1941 gave for the last time, detailed ethnic group wise population figures for the district. Among the Bengalis the Scheduled Caste Rajbanshis i.e. a composite caste formed by some former ethnic group like the Koches, Paliyas, Kantais etc. were the majority, their numbering were about 17,991, besides 5,655 persons belonging to other Bengali Hindu Scheduled Caste group. They together accounted for 6.2 percent population of the district. High caste Bengali Hindus, numbering 13,830 and the Bengali Muslims, numbering 6,280 formed 5.3 percent total

population of the district. Taking Bengalis of all social denominations together, it was found that in 1941 they formed 11.5 percent of the population of Darjeeling district. Members of tribes who were mostly found in the Terai, namely Oraons 12,433, Mundas 4,993, Santals 4,045 and others, together numbered 27,155 were accounted for 7.2 percent population in 1941. The Hindi-speaking Hindus from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, numbering 21,996, Urdu-speaking Muslims from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh numbering 2,448 and the Jains and Hindus from Rajasthan, numbering 2,416, together numbered 27,894 were accounted for 7.4 percent of the population of the district in the same Census year.⁸²

TABLE NO 2:18
POPULATION OF TERAI AND DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1941

GROUP, RACE, TRIBE OF CASTE	SILIGURI OR TERAI	DARJEELING DISTRICT	PERCENTAGE IN SILIGURI	PERCENTAGE IN THREE HILL SUB-DIVISION
MUSLIMS	6,924	8,728	7.7	0.6
SCHEDULED CASTES	47,511	50,750	52.7	1.1
PLAIN HINDUS(OTHERS THEN S.C)	29,644	39,276	32.9	3.4
NEPALIS	5,572	2,54,608	6.2	86.8
OTHER HILMEN	73	20,083	0.0	7.0
INDIAN CRISTIANS	359	730	0.5	1.0
BRITISH	45	884		
ANGLO-INDIANS	16	935		
EUROPEANS	09	228		
ASIATICS	56	588		
TOTAL	90,209	3,76,810	100.0	99.9

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteer : Darjeeling*, A.J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, pp.62-63]

It is to be note that the number of Rajbanshis in 1941 as recorded in the Census has decreased by 9000 in total from 1931. A. J. Dash describes it as “ faulty declaration of Census slips”. Probably, for this reason the Dhimals and the Koches were not traceable in the Census of 1941.⁸³ About half of the Rajbanshis were recorded as the inhabitant of the Kharibari *thana*. The numbers of the aboriginal Meches were 275 in Terai in 1941. A very few Muslims were found in the tea areas of the Terai and they were most numerous in the rural areas of Phansidewa (2,520 persons) and Kharibari *thana* (905 persons). About 2,900 of the Santals in the Siliguri sub-division lived in non-tea garden areas and only about 1,000 within tea gardens. It may be presumed that all were recruited for tea garden works most of whom were still employed as labourers. The number of Mundas who lived in tea garden areas were 2,666 persons and other areas of the Terai were 1805 persons. In the case of Oraons it was 5137 and 6867 respectively. The Oraons (13 percent) and the Munadas (3 percent) together formed about eighteen percent population of the sub-division.⁸⁴ The Marwaris, who were mostly settled in

Siliguri town were 343 persons in 1941. The Hindi-speaking Hindus were mainly Beharis. They were most numerous in the Terai, though in the tea areas their number were 10,711 persons and in other rural areas were 3,824 persons.⁸⁵

The population in Terai increased by fifty two percent during the period of 1872-1891 and beside tea industry, one of the reasons behind this increase was the extension of railways up to Siliguri in 1881. The easy means of transport helped drag give, a large employment seeker to the growing areas of Terai. With the opening up of most of the tea gardens in Terai by the first two decade of the twentieth century the numbers of migrants, further increased. Most of these migrants were Marwari traders of Rajputana, poor peasants of Bihar and Orissa. Expert artisans, such as Punjabi carpenters also arrived there while Bengali migrations of various Bengal districts come in Terai for clerical jobs and accounts keepers works. As driver of pack ponies, domestic servant, as workers in road construction works, as barbers and masons, as scavengers and sweepers. Terai offered new avenues to earn their bread who had no means of livelihood in their native land. Thus with the turn of the 19th century, as per census report of 1901, Terai had a density in population, two hundred and fifty three persons per square miles of territory and garden laborers formed one fifth of its total population within the next decade, 1901-1911, the density in population on Terai further shown up to two hundred and eighty six people. It was observed in the said Census Report that pressure of the population on the soil was greatest in Terai despite its unhygienic condition and unusual death rates wooing to bivalent diseases like *Kala-Azar* and malaria. In 1921 it came to two hundred and fifty four persons per sq. miles. With occasional fall, as it was shown in 1921 the density was found to be on the increase in the subsequent decades during the period under reviews.

DEMOGRAPIC CHANGES IN TERAI IN POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD:

In the period 1941-1951 while Darjeeling district, for instance recorded an increase in population by 18.3 percent, Terai or Siliguri sub-division registered an increase of 29.4 percent. During the forties and fifties following the partition of India and Bengal a large number of people deserted the wrest while East Pakistan now Bangladesh and come to various parts of the Indian dominion as refugees. Such displaced persons also came in Siliguri town in large numbers⁸⁶ and in 1951 the population in Darjeeling

Terai recorded to be 1,16,475 souls (Siliguri 68,280, Kharibari 24, 876 and Phansidewa 23,319 persons).⁸⁷ In Terai, Rajbanshis once constituted the bulk of the native population, but due to the settlement of displaced persons in massive scale during 1947-1971 numerical superiority of the Rajbanshis was crushed.⁸⁸ This had produced far reaching effects in the socio- political history of the entire zone as will be seen later.

Needless to mention the bulk of the displaced persons were the middle class Bengali Hindus. Quite a large number of them were fairly educated and about one third of total Bengali Hindu refugees from East Pakistan had settled in the neighborhood of Siliguri town, but the rest belonging to the lower stratum settled in the remote areas of Terai as cultivators in Siliguri sub-division. As many of them were experts in paddy growing task, the yield in the agricultural produce substantially increase. During the period between 1947-1951 besides the Hindus the population the Mohammedans were also increase.⁸⁹ In 1951, 1.44 percent of the population in Darjeeling district was belongs to Mohammedan population⁹⁰ and most of them were settled in the plain areas of the Darjeeling district, named Terai as agricultural labourers and cultivations. Between 1946-1951, a total of 15,738 persons, among them 8,931 Males and 6,807 Females were immigrated from the former East Pakistan into Darjeeling district. In 1950 alone, following the disturbances in the East Pakistan, the largest number of displaced Hindu Bengali families arrived and settled in the Terai belt.⁹¹ The stream of such arrivals continued up to 1960 and consequently the number of settlers in Terai swelled beyond imagination. A. Mitra pointed out that, the II World War also gave a great fillip to recruitment in the armed services and between 1945 and 1950 was the most prosperous quinquennium that the district has even seen. It was for that the war brought prosperity in every way to tea, to agriculture and contractors of military supplies. In this connection it is to be mentioned here that Darjeeling was also one of the first districts where full rationing was introduced early in 1944 over a wide area. It was this that, there was very little migration in the hills after the partition but Terai saw some between 1949-1951.⁹²

The partition (1947), based on the distribution of majority community, would naturally lead to the existence of minority community, as well, both in East Pakistan and West Bengal. Exodus emerged as a part of the problem faced by this minority community, when, millions of people fled from their ancestral homes with whatever they could slavage. The exodus from East Pakistan were ceased entirely with migrants

continuing to come for relief and rehabilitation over a long stretch of time. This series and large scale migration in both North and South Bengal was caused by the casualties and oppression happened over the minority Hindus in East Pakistan by orthodox Muslim. It can be clearly learnt from the All Bengal Refugee Convention held at Calcutta University on 11th June 1950, that the minorities in East Pakistan were spending their lives in miserable conditions.⁹³ Presiding over the convention, Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee pointed out that the harassment and outrage of Hindus in East Pakistan between 1st May to 31st May, 1950 are as follows:⁹⁴

Murder	-	32
Abduction with or without rape	-	23
Rape	-	05
Missing Girls	-	04
Outraging Family modesty	-	06
Dacoity	-	202
Robbery	-	35
Theft	-	15
Extortion	-	76
Arson	-	16
Stabbing and Grievousheapt	-	05
Forcible occupation and trespass	-	123
Wrongful conferment	-	02
Defiling Hindu temples	-	16
Total		630

During post Independent period there was going on a series of communal-riots in East Pakistan and each of the every riot forced the Hindus to be migrated in their mostly affinitative Bengal. Though after the Libration of Bangladesh in 1971 the Government was changed their but the mind of majority community did not change .It should be kept in minds that the influx from East Pakistan to West Bengal was not balanced by a counter efflux from Indian part.⁹⁵

In the post-colonial migration in North Bengal got a new impetus instigated by the political ups and downs in boarder, most important in this context is the Chinese occupation of Tibet. For a long time China was demanding her suzerainty over Tibet .But when the Civil War in China came to an end and the Communist Government was established in China, Tibet was annexed by China in 1949. With this annexation of China the Tibetans were started to migrate in India, particularly in West Bengal. However, these Tibetan refugees were given place in Southern Bengal, but latter for geographical and climatic reasons they settled in Darjeeling. Thus a large bulk of Tibetan migrants

settled in Darjeeling also Siliguri sub- division. Though the main bulk of Tibetan refugees began arriving in India from 1959. For instance ,out of 6,292 Tibetan refugees who settled in Kalimpong between 1959-1967, only 606 persons were found living there in November 1977.⁹⁶ This indicated that they scattered all over the district including Terai region.

Another important feature regarding the immigration in Bengal as a whole, particularly in North Bengal was the *Bangal Khedao* movement in Assam which started in early 1960s. The Assamese from the felling of marginalization started the movement to quit Bengalis from Assam. This also led to the large influx of Ahom-Bengalis into Bengal, particularly in Darjeeling Terai.⁹⁷

In the initial stage the number of immigrants settled in Darjeeling Sadar sub-division was higher than in Terai sub-division mainly due to health ground, as stated earlier. But after the partition of India the scenario radically changed rammed by sudden influx. During the period of 1951-1961 only four to five percent people migrated to the hill area of Darjeeling but it was abnormally high in the Terai.⁹⁸

TABLE NO 2:19
VARIATION OF DENSITY (PERSONS PER sq. mile) IN DARJEELING AND TERAI 1931-1971

PLACE	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
HILL AREA OF DARJEELING (933.3 S.q. MILE)	256	307	352	434	514
DARJEELING TERAI (323.3 S.q. MILE)	287	323	405	680	938
WEST BENGAL(34194 S.q. MILE)	533	679	769	1021	1296

[Source: 'Demographic Pattern of the Hill Areas of Darjeeling District: A Study of the Census of 1971', Manas Das Gupta, *The Himalayas: Profiles of Modernization and Adaptation*, S. K. Chaube, (ed), Starling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi, 1985,p.53]

The Census of 1961 recorded 35.90 percent increase in population of Darjeeling district. The increase in population in three sub-division i.e. Darjeeling, Kerseong and Kalimpong was only nominal, but it was abnormally high in the fourth sub-division Terai which has shown a spectacular increase of population to the tune of 68.04 percent. In 1961, in Phansidewa and Kharibari police stations in Terai increase in population was recorded to be 55.47 percent and 46.24 percent respectively. This high increase has been shared both by the tracts under command of agriculture and rapidly growing urban areas centering round Siliguri. The police station of Naxalbari has even shown the rate of

growth of population as 82.84 percent which was followed by Siliguri police station with a growth rate of 77.96 percent. Besides there two police stations, the highly industrialized and urbanized police station of Durgapur in Burdwan district and five other police stations of 24 Parganas district have shown a higher growth rate of population in West Bengal.⁹⁹ Besides the Hindu Bengali displaced persons who come in Terai by 1961 a good number of Hindi-speaking traders also came in Terai in search of employment, of which a section started petty business.¹⁰⁰ They helped increase in the number of population in Terai. One common trends among the new arrivals from outside and within India was, most of them preferred to settle in the rural areas i.e. in the plains of Terai except hill, despite health hazards and higher mortality rates. The following table will exhibit urban and rural rate of their settlement.

TABLE NO 2:20
PERSONS ENUMERATED IN DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1961

PLACE	PERSON	RURAL	URBAN
BIHAR	40,287	26,046	14,241
MADYA PRADAESH	2,206	2,068	138
ORISSA	2,231	1,962	269

[Source: *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Bisweswar Roy, Directorate Of Census Operations ,West Bengal,1961, pp.61-62]

It deserves to be mentioned here that when in 1956 some areas of Purnea district were transferred to Darjeeling district. This addition of land also helped Terai to raise its population. The portions which come from Purnea were dominated by Mohammedan people. Therefore this also enhanced the Muslim community in this region.

TABLE NO 2:21
MIGRANTS CLASSIFIED BY PLACE OF BIRTH AND DURATION OF RESIDENCE
IN DARJEELING DISTRICT IN 1961
 (NO EXCLUSIVE STATEMENT FOR TERAI IS AVAILABLE)
 PERCENTAGE OF IMMIGRANTS CLASSIFIED BY DURATION OF RESIDENCE IN THE DISTRICT IN YEARS

WHERE BORN	NO. OF MIGRANTS	LESS THAN 1	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 AND OVER	PERIOD NOT STATED
BORN OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT BUT WITH IN THE STATE OF ENUMERATION	13,521	16.95	33.42	17.18	13.39	16.71	2.34
BIHAR	40,287	9.71	26.72	23.33	14.80	24.05	1.39
SIKKIM	5,961	4.50	16.78	20.95	20.33	35.90	1.59
NEPAL	41,109	6.84	20.32	17.56	16.13	36.85	2.31
PAKISTAN	38,162	25.37	24.13	17.44	21.03	11.44	.57
TIBET	4,717	-	-	-	-	-	-

[Source: *West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Amiya Banerjee, Barun Dey and Others, Superintendent of Printing, Calcutta, 1980, p.110]

It will be seen from the preceding table no 2:21 that only 11.44 percent or 4,364 out of a total of 38,162 persons from East Pakistan residing in the district of Darjeeling in 1961 had come to settle there before the partition of the country.¹⁰¹ In 1961 it was found that 21,794 persons or little over 57 percent of the total of 38,162 persons lived in the urban areas of the district mostly in Siliguri, while 16368 persons or a little less than 43 percent had settled in the rural areas in Terai. However, a little percentage might have settled in the hills.¹⁰² On the other hand it is so difficult to say how many Bihari people lived in the Terai areas of Darjeeling district in 1961. Though, it may be presume that they are scattered in all the places of Darjeeling district as stated earlier. The following table no 2:23 will show at a glance the population in Darjeeling Terai in 1961 excluding Siliguri urban areas (Siliguri Municipality):

TABLE NO 2:22
NUMBER OF INHABITED VILLEGES, AVERAGE POPULATION PER VILLAGE AND
NUMBER OF VILLAGES PER HUNDRED SQUARE MILES OF TERAI IN 1961

SUB-DIVISION OR POLICE STATION	AREA IN Sq. MILES (RURAL)	NO. OF INHABITED VILLAGES	TOTAL PERSONS (RURAL)	MALE	FEMALE	AVERAGE PERSON PER INHABITED VILLEGES	NUMBER OF INHABITED VILLEGES PER 100 MILES (RURAL)
TERAI	317.3	297	1,54377	83954	70,423	520	94
PHANSIDEWA	120.6	90	58,573	31,581	26,992	651	75
SILIGURI	61.5	66	27,654	15,179	12,475	419	197
KHARIBARI	55.4	70	25,957	14,135	11,822	371	126
NAXALBARI	79.8	71	42,193	23,059	19,134	594	89

[Source: *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Bisweswar Roy, Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1961, p.34]

Census Reports indicate that during the last sixty years period of 20th century Darjeeling's growth of urban population showed a phenomenal increase. In 1931 due to the inclusion of more areas under urban command, the urban population added more than half the number of what the district had in 1921. The people of this district appear to have more predilections for town life, as almost every fourteen persons of this district is a town dweller. Population in general of the other North Bengal district seems to be less inclined for town life. It is least in Malda where only four percent of the populations are town dwellers.¹⁰³ From this period the enormous demographic change had occurred in and around Siliguri urban areas, which will be discussed in chapter V.

By 1971, population of Terai increased further. It was estimated to be 301,799 persons of whom 1,67,090 Males and 1,34,709 Females, and density was 360 persons per sq. kilometer, much higher than the average density of the whole district which was only 254 persons per sq. kilometer. In other words, Siliguri sub-division covering only 26.5 percent of the total area of the district accounted for 38.6 percent of the total population, which was due to the fertility of its soil as also the widespread industrial and commercial activities in and around Siliguri.¹⁰⁴ Apart for these, the importance of Terai was further enhanced by the Sino-Indian war of 1962. Along with the heavy military concentration in the Terai Forest area, new railway station came into existence in Siliguri. Due to this trade and commerce flourished. Transport became a very important

occupation for a large number of people.¹⁰⁵ The following table (no 2:23) shows the population distribution of Darjeeling Terai in 1971 is as follows:

TABLE NO 2:23

THANA WISE DISTRIBUTION AND DENSITY OF POPULATION IN TERAI IN 1971

SUB-DIVISION OR POLICE STATION	AREA IN S.q. K.M	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	DENSITY PER S.q. K.M
SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION	837.4	3,01,799	1,67,090	1,34,709	360
PHANSIDEWA	312.4	71,885	38,252	33,633	230
SILIGURI	174.8	1,34,392	77,443	56,949	760
KHARIBARI	143.5	44,723	23,584	21,139	312
NAXALBARI	206.7	50,799	27,811	22,988	246

[Source: *West Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Amiya Banerjee, Barun Dey and Others, Superintendent of Printing, Calcutta, 1980, p.98]

The above table no 2:23 shows that when the entire Terai region received density 360 persons per sq.km. Siliguri police station recorded more than double persons per sq. km. Another interesting thing regarding Siliguri town is that while in the urban areas of the three hill sub-division the women compose 44.82 percent of the population it was only 42.41 in Siliguri town. It was for the reason that most of the immigrants into the urban areas of the hills, except traders from Bihar and Rajasthan, were permanent settlers, where as a great number of immigrants in Siliguri town were traders, skilled or unskilled workers and day laborers who were non-permanent residents. In the rural areas of Siliguri sub-division, especially in the tea gardens, more non-permanent residents were found.¹⁰⁶

TABLE NO 2:24

DECADAL CHANGES IN DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN TERAI 1971-1981

POLICE STATIONS	1971			1981			PERCENTAGE OF DECADAL VARIATION		
	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN
NAXALBARI	50,799	50799	-	81175	72467	8708	59.80	42.65	-
SILIGURI	134392	36908	97484	232610	78232	154378	73.08	111.96	58.36
PHANSIDEWA	71855	71855	-	107464	107464	-	49.49	49.49	-
KHARIBARI	44723	44723	-	51646	51646	-	15.48	15.48	-

[Source: *Census Of India 1981 (Series 23, West Bengal) District Census Handbook, Darjeeling*, Part XIII-B, Director Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1987, p.10]

According to the Census of 1971, Darjeeling district was inhabited by 781,777 persons. However, in 1981 the state of West Bengal experienced an increase in population of 23.17 percent over the base population of 1971. During this period Darjeeling district has gone up 2,42,492 i.e 31.02 percent over its population. Likewise the district has increased by 23.36 percent rural and 56.57 percent urban population against 20.36 rural and 31.73 percent urban population in the whole state. The Census Reports indicates that the high increase in urban population in the district is explained by the fact that the population of Siliguri Municipal Town recorded 1,54,375 persons i.e an increase of 56,894 new persons over the decade (1971-1981).¹⁰⁷ The above table no 2:24 shows that during this period Siliguri police station recorded 111.96 percent increase in population growth, which is better to say an abnormal. Besides Kharibari, the other two police station in Terai region i.e Naxalbari and Phansidewa also recorded a phenomenal growth in population. The main reasons behind this population growth were the continuation of migration from Bangladesh after 1971 and *Bangal Khedao* movement in Assam as stated earlier.

TABLE NO 2:25
DECADAL CHANGE IN DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION 1981-1991 IN SILIGURI SUB-DIVISION
(Darjeeling Terai)

NAME OF POLICE STATION	1981			1991			PERCENTAGE OF DECADAL VARIATION 1981-1991			PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION	
	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	TOTAL	RURAL	URBAN	1981	1991
NAXALBARI	81175	72467	8708	102537	90473	12064	+26.32	+24.85	+38.54	10.73	11.77
MATIRARA-INVESTIGATION CENTRE	77165	77165	--	84760	80057	4703	+9.84	+3.75	--	--	5.55
SILIGURI	155445	1067	154378	223747	6797	216950	+43.94	+537.02	+40.53	+99.31	+96.96
PHANSIDEWA	107464	107464	--	140045	140045	--	+30.32	+30.32	--	--	--
KHARIBARI	51646	51646	--	64012	64012	--	+23.94	23.94	--	--	--
DISTRICT	1024269	742116	282153	1299919	903859	396060	+26.91	+21.79	+40.37	+27.55	+30.47

[Source: *Census of India 1991 (Series-26, West Bengal), District Census Handbook: Darjeeling*, Part XII-B, Directorate of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1992, p. xxi]

During the last decade of the 20th Century Siliguri sub-division witnessed the enormous growth of population. Apart from Siliguri's rapid urban growth the main reason behind this were the 'Anti- Foreigner Movement' which was started in the early part of the 80s of the 20th Century in the North-Eastern part of India especially in Assam and Meghalaya. This drove out the Bengali speaking persons bound to search their new

settlement which was nearly identical with their religion, caste, custom etc and in this regard Siliguri was their first choice. On the other hand the political disturbance in those areas (N.E. India) persuaded the business community mostly Marwaries and Biharies to set up their new commercial hub, and in this connection after 1962 Sino-Indian war Siliguri became the transit point of entire North-East India on the one side and hills and Dooars on the other. As a result a large number of shops and godown were opened in both side of Hill Cart Road, Sevok Road and Bidhan Road of Siliguri. In this connection numerous Medicine Shops and Store business are noticeable .Bhutan also drove the Nepali speaking people, who were popularly known as ‘Bhupali’ made their settlement in the rural areas of Terai. A rehabilitation camp was made by UNO in Jhapa of Nepal Terai to gave some short of shelters of these Bhupali migrant. But after dissolved the camp they were mostly settled in Naxalbari and Kharibari areas. The communal violence of Bangladesh in the latter part of the 80s in 20th Century bound to migrate the minority Bengali Hindus and Bihari Muslims to settled themselves in North Bengal. In course of time, due to job opportunity they made their permanent settlement in and around of Siliguri’s urban areas. Between 1951 and 1991 the Hindu population of Bangladesh declined by about 12%. The above table no 2:25 reveled the real picture of the enormous growth of population in Siliguri urban areas, which will be discussed in chapter V.

The above narratives indicate how once a sparely populated and unknown wilderness like Terai was peopled by migrants coming from different parts of India under the Company’s Rule. The stream of outsiders continued there even after the termination of the British rule. Though, migration was very high mainly due to economic reasons, yet the tea gardens dragged the bulk of migrants for its own growth, development and survival. Despite the migrants heterogeneous character in language and way of life, they formed as will be seen later a composite class and helped generating a historic peasant class movement in the subsequent period for the redress of their grievance. The story will be told in chapter VI.

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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 18th 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*¹.

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 Society². 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.³ 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 home⁴. 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.”⁵

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 them⁶. Therefore, they hardly had any concept of property on soil.⁷ The Sikkimese rulers recovered from them an annual payment of one rupee per agricultural implement, and extracted *corvee*^{7a} 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 light⁸. 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 Provinces⁹. 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.”¹⁰ 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”¹¹. 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 like¹². 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^{12a}. 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 cultivated¹³. 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 Government¹⁴. In revenue language, the village is known as *mouza* in Terai¹⁵. 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."¹⁶ 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)¹⁷. 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.”¹⁸ 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 ¹⁹. 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 ²⁰.

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 ²¹. 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 ²². Though various rules had been issued from time to time in different districts, for the disposal of Government Waste Lands. But, in 1861, and 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 to burden to the Government, and it was recommended that it should 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.”²³

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 come enforced in Darjeeling Terai. Though, the fifteen *mouzas* under Siliguri Police Station and three *mouzas* under Phansidewa Police Station^{23a} 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 price²⁴.

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 31st March 1895 by the Government Order No. 3791-1545 L.R, dated 30th November 1888; fourth, in 1897 the Settlement was renewed for period of twenty years, and last, the next settlement took place in 1919-1925²⁵. 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*²⁶. 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 Terai²⁷ 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. 35041²⁸. 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 waste²⁹. 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 cultivation³⁰. 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 population³¹.

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*”³². 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 ³³. 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 19th 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, 29th December 1874, p. Appendix-A And *Report of Govt. of Bengal, Agricultural Department*, Cooch Behar Division, No. 144T, dt. 21st August, 1873, p.53(W.B.S.A)]

W.W. Hunter gives a list of agricultural implements ³⁴ 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 fields³⁵. 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 fishing³⁶. 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.³⁷

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 Terai³⁸. 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 1st class, 2nd class and 3rd 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 st class	R	A	Rupit 1 st class	R	A	
		1	8		2	0	
02.	Rupit 2 nd class	1	4	Rupit 2 nd class	1	8	
03.	Rupit 3 rd class	1	6	Rupit 3 rd class	1	4	
04.	Faringghati 1 st class	0	8	Faringghati 1 st class	0	10	
05.	" 2 nd class	0	6	" 2 nd class	0	8	
06.	" 3 rd class	0	4	" 3 rd 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, 20th 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 class³⁹. 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 fallow⁴⁰. 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 st class	11,537	1 st class	14,727
Rupit { 2 nd class	19,826	Rupit { 2 nd class	15,118
3 rd class	6,266	3 rd class	7,719
1 st class	2,276	1 st class	4,88
Faringhati { 2 nd class	11,989	Faringhati { 2 nd class	7,556
3 rd class	4,673	3 rd 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
Total	2891	36911.15	--	277	45962.49	--	268	41402.67	--

[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 cultivation⁴¹. 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 always⁴². 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
PARGANA: PATHORGHATA							
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
PARGANA: HATIGHISA							
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 desirable⁴³. 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.⁴⁴

During the last half of the 19th 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 19th 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 19th 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.⁴⁵

3:1:2 CLASSIFICATIONS OF TENANTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOTEDARY SYSTEM OF TERAJ 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*”⁴⁶. 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 parts⁴⁷. On the other hand Rajat Kanta Ray and Ratnalekha Ray, said that during the 19th 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 – raiyat⁴⁸. 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 districts⁴⁹. 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)”⁵⁰. 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 legislation⁵¹

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 19th century⁵². 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*)⁵³. Mr. Edgar gives the following interesting account of the revenue system and land tenure of Sikkim during second half of 19th 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.”⁵⁴

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* ⁵⁵. In this connection it is to be noted that during the first half of the 19th 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 ⁵⁶. 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.”⁵⁷

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 rent⁵⁸. 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 Bihar⁵⁹. 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 here⁶⁰.

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 renewal⁶¹. 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 out⁶².

The concept of *jotedar* in Terai, historically, one who held land directly under Government and paid revenue to Government⁶³. 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 different⁶⁴. 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 agriculturist⁶⁵. 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*⁶⁶. 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 mortgage⁶⁷.

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 ⁶⁸. 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 30th 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, 20th 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 1st November 1897 to on or before the 31st October and the other on or before 31st January⁶⁹. 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-receiver⁷⁰. 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 19th 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 19th 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*⁷¹. 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 19th century they were also armed with the formidable legal rights⁷². 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*⁷³. 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”,⁷⁴. 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”⁷⁵. It is to be mention here that the rights of the *thiccadars* were nowhere defined in the *jotrdars* leases⁷⁶.

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				
				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*⁷⁷ 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 years⁷⁸. So on the

basis of above table the agrarian structure of Darjeeling Terai as follows till the end of the 19th century is as follows^{78a}:

In Darjeeling Terai Jotedar	Other Parts of North Bengal Zamindar
↓	↓
Thiccadar	Jotedar
↓	↓
Dar-thiccadar	Chaukidar
↓	↓
Adhiar	Dar-Chaukidar
↓	↓
Agriculrural 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, 17th 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*⁷⁹.

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 ⁸⁰.

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 ⁸¹. 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 7th October 1924⁸².

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 years⁸³. 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 acres⁸⁴.

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 1894-1895⁸⁵. 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”.⁸⁶

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 soil⁸⁷. 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 1894-1895⁸⁸. 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 19th 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*⁸⁹. 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 raiyats⁹⁰. 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 landlords⁹¹. 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 Naxalbari⁹². 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”⁹³.

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 known⁹⁴. 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*⁹⁵. 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*⁹⁶. 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 cultivation⁹⁷. 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 raiyats⁹⁸. 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 TERAJ AND ITS NEGIBOURING 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*⁹⁹. 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 3rd 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 ¹⁰⁰.

After the settlement of 1919-1925 there has been no settlement till Independence ¹⁰¹. 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 ¹⁰².

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 ¹⁰³. 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 15th April 1955 ¹⁰⁴. 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 whole¹⁰⁵. 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 maunds¹⁰⁶. 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 20th 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 years¹⁰⁷. 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 follows¹⁰⁸ :

<u>Terai (Siliguri Sub-division)</u>	-	<u>258 sq. miles</u>
(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 area¹⁰⁹. 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 Bhutia¹¹⁰.

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 expenses¹¹¹. 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 area¹¹².

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 ¹¹³. The names of the various agricultural implements used in Terai and their respective names are as follows ¹¹⁴:

- (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 ¹¹⁵. 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 ¹¹⁶.

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 ¹¹⁷. Compared with the settlement of 1894-1895, it is to be find that during the early part of the second decade of the 20th 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 20th 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 ¹¹⁸. 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. ¹¹⁹

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 ¹²⁰. 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 case¹²¹. 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 life¹²²

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

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 poverty¹²⁴.

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
Total	5,75,321	1,70,037	7,45,358

[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 country¹²⁵. 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 government¹²⁶. 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 independence¹²⁷ 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 region¹²⁸.

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 1947-48¹²⁹.

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 1958-59¹³⁰.

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 20th century and also by getting two or more crops

out of lands which bear a single crop¹³¹. 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 efficiently¹³². 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 Terai¹³³.

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.¹³⁴ 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 agriculturists¹³⁵.

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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 19th 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.¹ 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.² 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'.³

3.2.1: LEGENDARY ORIGIN 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.⁴ 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.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.⁷

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.⁸

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 1689.⁹ 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 18th century China was the only supplier of tea to Europe. So, the 18th 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.¹⁰ 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 24th December 1834, the Tea Committee reported to the government about the indigenous tea plant of Assam and about the possibility of its commercial success.¹¹ 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 19th 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 19th century but from the late eighteenth century, earnest efforts were taken by the Britishers in India for the cultivation of tea¹² as stated earlier.

3:2:3 FEATURES OF DARJEELING TERAI'S 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.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ On the other hand Mosquito had ruined several tea estates in the Terai in its early stages.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸

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. Campbell¹⁹, 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."²⁰ 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".²¹ 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 19th 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.²² 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.²³ 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."²⁴ 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.²⁵ When W.B. Jackson, Esq. C.S. Judge of the Sadar 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ One of these must be Martin's plantation at Pankhabari, which was noticed by Jackson.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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.³¹ 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.³² 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."³³

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".³⁴ 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 1st April, 1866 to 31st 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 20th July and on or before 12th January. In the case of Jalpaiguri it was to be paid on or before 1st September and 1st 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 lease 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.³⁵ (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 4th February 1894,³⁶ 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 19th 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.³⁷ 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.³⁸ 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 TERAI
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. Publishing 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.³⁹

The first Tea Garden in Terai was established in 1862 at Champta, near Khaprail by Mr. James White.⁴⁰ He also set up the Matigara Tea Estate during the same year.⁴¹ In fact he owned the largest tea garden in the district at Singell near Kurseong⁴² 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.⁴³ 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”.⁴⁴ 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”.⁴⁵ 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 19th 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.⁴⁶ 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 19th and 20th 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.⁴⁷ 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 st April 1866	888	Tirhana (Touzi No-709) and M.M Terai Tea garden Touzi No- 902
2	Davis (Patharghata & Naxalbari)	-	1 st 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 st 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 st Jan, 1865	1873-1-11	Mohurgang Tea Estate Touzi No-492.
10	Scanlan(Barogharia & Patharghata)	L. NO. 14	1 st April 1867	315	Mohurgang Tea Estate, Touzi No-493.
11	Partidge (Besarbati)	L. NO. 18	1 st April 1866	141-1-30	2 nd Fallodi T.E. Touzi .No-50
12	Davis(Besarbati)	L. NO. 19	1 st 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 st 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 st July 1866	58	Sahapur T.E.Touzi No-869
18	Edoo (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 31	1 st March 1866	228	Belgachhi T.E. Touzi.No- 874
19	Scanlan(Besarbati)	L. NO. 34	1 st Dec 1866	60	Kalabari Tea Estate, Touzi No-877
20	Maller (Naxalbari)	L. NO. 35	1 st 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 st 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 tea⁴⁸, 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.⁴⁹ This was an instance to show to what extent affluent 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.⁵⁰ 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.⁵¹ 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 19th 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.⁵² The table below will exhibit the name of important tea gardens establishing during seventies and eighties of the 19th century in Darjeeling Terai.

TABLE NO 3:2:4

TERAI TEA DISTRICT IN 1886

SL. NO.	NAME OF T.E OR COMPANY	NAME F CULCUTTA AGENT OR SECTARIES	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.⁵³ 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 19th 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.⁵⁴ 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.”⁵⁵

3:2:6. RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEA INDUSTRY IN DARJEELING TERAI DURING THE FIRST HALF OF 20TH 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.”⁵⁶ 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”.⁵⁷ 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.⁵⁸ On the other hand during I.W.W the Colonial Government prohibited to established tea gardens on “*Khas Land*” in Dooar’s region.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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 1917.⁶¹ 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 1914.⁶²

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.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

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) Singhiahora 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 20th 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 19th 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 28th June 1930 and in the same year these two Tea Estates were merged into one and renamed it as Mohurgong Gulma Tea Estate.⁶⁷

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 30TH 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 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 Bosanta Bose, followed by T.B Banerjee. In the initial stage it was started with eight members though later the number was increased.⁶⁸ The two rival bodies, therefore, began to function in Terai and their efforts, though from two separate platform, 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.⁶⁹ 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 own up. 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 then the European concerns who can successfully fight out against adverse circumstances because of this ‘boom’, the Reserve Fund. But his year’s depression (1931) has affected all concerns from or less and to save these concerns from peril, it has began generally proposed that a general reduction of pay at 25 to 30 percent of the employees including the managers effected in no times.....”⁷⁰

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 marketeering 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.⁷¹ 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.⁷² 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 20th 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 20th 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 19th 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.⁷³ 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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CHAPTER – IV

EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO OF DARJEELING TERAI

The annexation of Darjeeling Terai by the British in 1850 coincided with the opening of modern western education system in India i.e 1854. The records, both official and private, throw little light on the progress of education in Terai region of the district of Darjeeling. So due to the unavailability of sources of the region of Terai regarding education, therefore, the study is based on the sources available of Darjeeling district as a whole, as no separate exclusive educational report regarding Terai region during colonial period. Available records indicate that till the arrival of the Christian Missionaries no serious effort was made to educate local, indigenous people by the Government. Yet the Missionaries brought with them the science of education, the art of printing and the doctrine of the Bible.

4:1 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF DARJEELING TERAI DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

After the establishment of political authority in India in 1858, the British turned their attention towards the growth of modernization and westernization by introducing western education system in India. By the Charter Act of 1813 the Company was allowed to introduce western education and the Act provided Rs.1 lakh for the establishment of elementary schools and English education in India. This sum was to be sanctioned annually to promote education. The greatest importance of the 1813 Act was that the Company for the first time acknowledge state responsibility for promotion of education in India. The Act also allowed the Christian Missionaries to enter into India without any restrictions but the advantages had taken principally by those who were came from the United Kingdom only. But the Charter Act of 1833 brought missions from other countries also on the scene; prominent among them were German and American missions. The Educational Despatch of 1854,¹ generally considered as the 'Magna Carta' of English Education in India, formed a landmark in the history of modern education in India. It had contributed much to the organization and stabilization of the Indian education system followed a period of the rapid westernization of the educational system. As such there were missionary, non-missionary and official educational efforts that played a part in the educational activities of India. It also outlined a comprehensive plan which laid down various suggestions on mass education i.e primary education on the one hand and higher education on the other. This formed the

Universities in Calcutta (January, 1857), Bombay (July, 1857) and Madras (September, 1857). But the growth of western education in Bengal was basically centred around Calcutta and its nearby areas, it did not affect the districts of Northern parts of Bengal i.e Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Dinajpur and Malda. It is noticeable that this Despatch rejected the 'Downward Filtration Theory'² and adopted a coordinate system of education from lowest level (primary level) to the highest stage (university stage). Nevertheless, when the British took over the district of Darjeeling, popular education was practically unknown. A few of better classes had private tutors for boys, a few who could read tried to hand on this accomplishment to their families and in Buddhist Monasteries novitiate monks taught to chant Tibetan texts. But of real general education there was none and no schools worthy of the name were in existence.³

Till the 1860 there was only one school in the district of Darjeeling, the Government English at Darjeeling hill attended by 33 students.⁴ So, during the second half of the 19th century there was no proper development of education system in Terai region of the district of Darjeeling. Even during the early part of 20th century the growth of educational institutions and system were very poor. The establishment of few elementary school during the latter half of 19th century in Siliguri, Bagdogra, Phansidewa and other parts of Terai was largely due to the initiative of the Scottish Church Missionaries. But the schools established by the Scottish Missionaries primarily consisted of the students from financially well established families like the *jotedars*. The cultivators of Terai, in general were very reluctant to send their children to these schools.⁵ On the other hand the children from the tea gardens did not have the opportunity to study in these schools. Nevertheless, whatever their object might be, the Christian Missionaries were undoubtedly the pioneers in the field of education in the hill and the Terai region of Darjeeling district. The Missionaries were channelized the education in Darjeeling district in two direction i.e i) to spread elementary education among the illiterate and ignorant people in the hills and Terai as a means of ultimately winning them to Christianity and ii) to provide educational opportunities in the healthy, salubrious climate of Darjeeling to the European and Eurasian children who could not be sent to England.⁶ But the initial difficulties of the Christian Missionaries were many; i.e i) differences in language, customs and mentalities ii) poor socio-economic condition was another great obstacle. For the poor agriculturists or tea plantation workers, with hand to mouth existence, education was a luxury they could hardly afford during this time,⁷ iii) the nature of work in the plantation areas is such that no children

can hope to continue study in school. Moreover as the main teaching period of time in the schools coincides with the peak plucking season, most of the school going children were either withdrawn from the school permanently or remain absent for a long period, iv) girls were not sent to schools because a girl is useful to work at home in looking after younger brothers and sisters, v) geographical factors were no less important in influencing the growth and development of education. Lack of population concentration in one particular area made the choice of location of school difficult. Attendance in school, even when established became a problem; particularly during the month of monsoons when incessant rain was followed. This made communication very difficult in those days. Again the long cold winter months had its own disadvantages. Biting cold and inadequate clothing stood in the way of regular attendance to school by the children. Thus, one can well imagine the almost uphill task of the Missionaries to bring home to the people the benefits of even a rudimentary education.⁸

Till 1874 all the schools in Terai were managed by the Scottish Christian Missionaries.⁹ In short it is better to be said that prior to the coming of the Scottish Missionaries nothing worth mentioning had been done to promote education among the people of the Darjeeling district. However, viewed merely from the educational aspect, their work in the Terai was marked with more success in the hills. In 1873 Reverend William Macfarlane, the then Superintendent of the Scottish Mission in Darjeeling, observed that “The boys in the Terai schools are far ahead of those in the hills, as regards the progress made in school. In fact, as regards education, the Terai seems to be very like the rest of Bengal”.¹⁰ One of the reasons presumably for this developments was due to the interest taken in education by the principal *jotedars* in their neighbourhood areas of Terai. Though ‘The Report on Public Instruction of 1876-77’ pointed out “...the district belong to the same category in regard to education as backward parts of Chotanagpur.”¹¹ However the available records indicate that the first educational institution established in Terai region was Phansidewa M.E School in 1865 (Appendix-H). Though, the Hunter’s Statistical Account of Bengal states that there was a school in Bagdogra which in March 1873 had constituted 21 students and received Rs.14 from the Government.¹² But the Census Reports and District Gazetteers mentioned that very few people inhabited in Bagdogra and it was filled with dense forest and wild animals. In such a situation it’s difficult to get 21 students in this school if there was any. While on the other hand, the Settlement Officer of Darjeeling Terai mentioned about the establishment of Phansidewa school in 1865 and it was a only M.E

school at that time.¹³ Furthermore, the School Inspector visited in 13th June, 1936 has mentioned in 'Visitors' Book' of Phansidewa M.E School that the establishment of the school in Phansidewa was in 1865.¹⁴ Thus it seems that the first school in Terai was established in Phansidewa in place of Bagdogra. But by the whom and which circumstances it was established, is still unknown. Till 1879 the school flourished and continued to impart education to the students of Terai but gradually the condition of the school started to deteriorate.¹⁵ Babu Bhuban Chandra Sen was appointed as a Headmaster of this school during the early part of the 20th century. At that time the area of the school compound was 1.5 acre or 4.5 *bighas*. The school had two buildings, one of which had corrugate iron roof with *kutch*a floor and the other one was totally *kutch*a. Apart from this there were two boarding houses attached to the school, one for the Hindus and the other for the Mohammedans. The Hindu boarding had 6 boarders and the Mohammedan boarders were 10 in August, 1919.¹⁶ In the early part of the thirties in 20th century the then S.D.O of Siliguri Khan Bahadur Munshi A.H.M. Abul Haq, Dr. Anathbhusan Dey, the then Assistant Surgeon of the Phansidewa Charitable Dispensary, five local *jotedars*, most prominent among them were Maulavi Md Tafil Hussain and Bhoj Narayan Choudhury were helped in a construction in the new building of school located at opposite to the previous building in Phansidewa *bazaar*. The then Headmaster was Ghanashyam Chakroborty. There are no reference of girls students at this time and the total number of teaching staff were 5 (among them 2 were Hindus and 3 were Muslims) with one Headmaster.¹⁷ In 1929 two students were passed out M.E. Examination from this school. In 1930-31 there were 51 students in this school, apart from 14 Mohammedan students there were 37 Hindu students who were divided under following heads¹⁸:

Basak-01,
 Modak-04,
 Saha-06,
 Nath-09,
 Banik-01,
 Rajbanshi-09,
 Mahiswa Kaibarta-02,
 Malha-01,
 Hari-01,
 Muchi-01,
 Santal-02.

It is also mentioned in this Report that though Phansidewa was a Muslim populated area but most of the Muslim students were come from the eastern part of the river Mahananda i.e Siliguri. This figure indicates the ignorance of local people regarding importance of education. A very few *jotedars* from Phansidewa *bandar* give some financial help to the school in time to time though there were more than 200 *jotedars* who inhabited in Phansidewa area. In the year 1930 a Rajbanshi student from this school received monthly Rs. 4 as a 'Grade I' scholarship for four years.¹⁹ Babu Kanteswar Roy, a *jotedar* of Hawdabhita and Mlv. Musarat Ahmed of Jalpaiguri had constructed the new Hindu and Muslim hostels respectively. Babu Anantalal Saha of Phansidewa had made some contribution for the development of school library.²⁰

The following table will exhibit the student strength of Phansidewa M.E. school for the year 1910-1962

TABLE NO 4:1
DISTRUBTION OF STUDENTS STRENGTH OF PHANSIDEWA M.E SCHOOL FROM
1910-1962

Year	No. Of Pupils	Hindus	Muslims
1910	59	-----	-----
1911	62	--	-----
1918	84	44	40
1919	76	46	30
1920	68	46	22
1930	51	37	14
1931	65	41	24
1932	72	41	31
1933	69	41	28
1935	96	-----	-----
1936	105	61	44
1938	104	-----	-----
1947	73	36	37
1949	200	-----	-----
1950	135	93	42
1951	209	-----	-----
1962	152	-----	-----

[Source: 'Visitors Book', Phansidewa M.E School, Phansidewa, District: Darjeeling]

The Census Report of 1872 speaks of this educational backwardness of the district of Darjeeling. In 1872 the total population of the district was 94,172 persons. The proportion of children of both sexes was 32 per cent of the total district population. Yet only 548 pupils mainly boys and a few girls were attending the 19 schools run by the Scottish

Mission in 1871-72. The percentage of children attending schools was incredibly low, about 1.9 percent only. In 1876-77, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling observed that “Education in Darjeeling is backward and struggling. The people of Terai are hopelessly indifferent and we have scarcely been able to get beyond primary schools and *pathsalas* in that part of the district.”²¹ At the end of the year 1872-73 there were altogether 29 schools in the district, namely, 1 H.E. school, 3 M.E. schools, 23 lower primary schools, 1 normal school and 1 girls school. Though, in 1870-71 it was only 19 in number.²² But how many number it was established in Terai is not known. In 1871-71 the Scottish Church Missionaries had established some primary schools in Terai. Among these, four schools were established in Phansidewa, Kharibari, Heatmoori and Devigang in Terai. Here, the *jotedars* Sham Lal Laha, Bhogodutt Dass, Rasiklal Sarkar and Jay Bahadur Singh in the four respective places were in-charge of management of these schools. These schools were in a satisfactory condition, but not so every school in the Terai. The school at Matigara was particularly in an unsatisfactory condition. At Naxalbari, none of the *jotedars* were willing to undertake any responsibility or management of the schools.²³ Mr. Macfarlane states that “... as regards education, the Terai seems to be very like the rest of the plains of Bengal.”²⁴ But within few years things were reverse and the educational progress in the hills of the district was more marked than in the Terai region or plain portion of the district.

Till 1874 all the primary schools in the Terai were managed by the Scottish Mission as states earlier. Between 1870-1874 the schools had considerably increased in number from 1 to 24. But due to financial difficulties in running these schools the Scottish Missionaries handed over these school to the Government.²⁵ The reason to give up the control of these schools presumably was religious or it is better to be said that their main target i.e. proselytization could not be fulfilled in the plains. As the people, in the Terai, in contrast with those in the hills, refused Bible teaching, it was difficult to get the children in the hills to schools, but once they were in school they did not object to the Bible teaching. But on the other hand in the Terai it was just reverse. There were no difficulty in getting the children to school, but both the teachers and parents objected to Bible teaching.²⁶ The Church of Scotland Mission openly accepted this in following manner: “Had our object been purely educational we should never have given up these schools, but are here not primarily or principally for education but for Christian Missionary purpose and for that reason it was advisable to give up these schools.” this was in 1874. Later in 1895 when a

proposal was given by the Scottish Missions to resume the management of primary education in Terai it was not immediately granted by Government.²⁷

Nevertheless, after 1874 education in Terai became the responsibility of the Government. In 1879 a Sub-Inspector was appointed for the inspection of the Terai school.²⁸ So this was the first steps had taken by the Colonial Government to promote education among the pupils of Terai .As a result , in 1878-1879 the Terai had 10 schools with 166 students ,in 1880 it had increased to 14 schools with 217 pupils, of these 13 were aided by the Government.²⁹ Apart from average income Rs.9-50 per month these schools received aid from the primary grant allotted to the district which amounted Rs. 5 per month and from a local source called the 2 percent improvement fund .Later the 1 *anna* cess fund was instituted to which the *jotedars* had to contribute on account of education. However, these proved inadequate for the remuneration of the Gurus .The first class schools with an attendance of 18 boys or more were to receive Rs.8 per months, while the second grade schools with less than 18 attendance were to received Rs. 6 per month. The Deputy Commissioner of the district suggested the introduction of the chief Guru system with the payment of rewards to teachers for success at periodic examination. If a class men fit to make chief Gurus could be found, their appointment in some way could have removed the existing defects. Further the Deputy Commissioner's remarked that no school could exist unless the Government supported entirely the Guru was quite significant. He also states that there was not much difficulty in getting a few students when a school was established but it was difficult to maintain the Guru by private sources. In 1881-82 the total district primary grant was Rs 1200, out of which Rs.420 were allowed to the Terai schools. These schools were managed by the special agency of a Sub-Inspector while the Deputy Inspector of Jalpaiguri was charged with their supervision.³⁰ It may be note that till independence of India in 1947 the control of education in the district of Darjeeling was exercised by the Inspector of Schools of the Rajshahi Division whose office was at Jalpaiguri .He controlled and inspected the high schools of the district directly. Under him and directly responsible for primary and lower secondary education as the District Inspector of Schools .In course of time, for primary education, the later was assisted by two Sub-Inspector at Darjeeling and at Kurseong , one Assistant Sub-Inspector at Kalimpong and an Inspecting *Pandit* for the Terai region of the district.³¹

The number of primary schools continued to increase in Terai , in 1886-87 there were 27 and in 1887-88 there were 31 in number. During 1880-82 the marked decrease in

the payment of local fees could be noticed. It came down from Rs.136 to Rs.93 and then to Rs.12 only per annum. The main reason for this that the *jotedars* were declined to pay 1 *anna* educational cess. Despite this progress the educational condition in Terai was in a backward state. The reasons for this backwardness were the scattered state of population, their indifferent to the benefits of education and the lack of supervision.³²In 1880-81 only three *pathsalas* in Terai were sent candidates, how many had appeared is not known but only 2 students obtained scholarship .In 1884-85, 25 schools presented 191 students of whom 172 passed, among them 2 were girl.³³Between 1880-1890 the slow growth of education in the district as well as in Terai continues ,in this decade there had been an addition of 22 schools and only 612 students .The total population of Darjeeling in 1881 was 155645 persons .The figures of 1887-88 show that only 10 percent of the school going age were at school.³⁴During the end of the 19th century primary schools were established at Naxalbari (1893), Khaprail(1893) , Panighata(1897) , and Siliguri (1900) . Bholu Singh and Emma Mark were the in charge of Naxalbari (in Patanjhar) and Siliguri schools respectively.³⁵Till the end of the 19th century there were only 26 schools with 49 pupils in Terai of which the only higher educational institution was Phansidewa M.E. School.³⁶ During this period the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling Mr.Greer expressed deep concern at the backward and unsatisfactory condition of the state of education in the Terai and sanctioned Rs. 500 for the construction of a new school building at Siliguri ³⁷to improve the situation. In this connection he wrote a letter to the Inspector of Schools, Rajshahi and Burdwan circle proposed the establishment of a middle vernacular school at Siliguri. Being treated a special case the Deputy Commissioner expressed the hope that the joint supervision of the Inspector and Deputy Commissioner would improve matters .The proposal gained support of Dr. Martin, the then Inspector of Schools of Jalpaiguri , on the ground that grant-in-aid M.E. school had been tried in Siliguri but had failed for want of local support.³⁸However, despite this educational backwardness in Terai Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri were the two progressive educational areas in Bengal.³⁹The Census Report of 1891 revealed that in Darjeeling district out of per 10,000 population 202 Hindu males were ‘Learning’ and 1179 were ‘Literate’⁴⁰ and in case of Hindu women it was 11 and 27 respectively. Mohammedan were far ahead in case of education in the district of Darjeeling till the end of 19th century. Among them per 10,000 Mohammedan people 208 males were “Learning” and 1287 were “Literate” and in case of women it was 34 and 75 respectively.⁴¹ The Census Report also states that educational progress in Darjeeling district i.e per 10000 population among the Muslims was the highest in place in respect of whole of Bengal

district i.e Northern ,Eastern and Western Bengal.⁴² The main reason behind this was the scanty Muslim population of Darjeeling district including the immigrant Muslims who were came from the advanced tracts of the province.⁴³ However the Census Reports of 1901 indicates that till the end of the 19th century the “Literate” persons of per 1000 males was 119 in the district , though it was 114 in 1891 and 64 in 1881.In case of per1000 females it was 4 in 1881,5 in 1891 and14 in 1901.⁴⁴ This statistics indicates that there is no such progressive advance in the case of female education in the district.

4:2 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF DARJEELING TERAI DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY

In the beginning of the 20th century there were 40 primary schools in Terai with an attendance of 660 boys, the percentage of those of school-going was therefore approximately 11 percent .The Census statistics of 1901 shows that when in Terai only 1 person in 35 could read and write and in the rest of the district 1 person in every 12 could do so.⁴⁵ In 1901 the total population of Darjeeling Terai were 70,466 souls (Male:39,037 and Female:31,429), among them 1747 Hindus (Male:1694 and Female:53),317 Mohammedans (Male:310 and Female:07) and 21 Buddhist (Male: 21 and Feamble:00) were registered as literates. The percentage of literate person among the Hindus, Muslims and Buddhist ,the three principal religion of the Terai was therefore 2.9 percent , 4.3 percent , and 3.3 percent respectively.⁴⁶ Even education in Siliguri *thana* areas did not develop very much .The Census Report of 1901 revelled the total population of Siliguri urban areas were 784 persons .⁴⁷ The settlers were mostly the employers of Railway, businessmen and traders both the Bengalis and non-Bengalis and the indigenous Rajbanshis . The non-Rajbanshis mostly came from the eastern and southern part of Bengal. The climate of northern Bengal was unhealthy and damp and it was difficult to the migrants to adjust in the new climate. Yet, they migrated to the region for employment and job necessity. After settling in this region they looked for educational institution. May before this reason a Government-aided M.E school was established Siliguri in 1898, was known Siliguri M.E School near modern Kanchanjanga Kirangoan (Stadium). Mr. Kshitish Chandra Bhattacharjee was the first Headmaster of Siliguri M.E.School.⁴⁸ The Terai Jotedars Association were sanctioned a scholarship of Rs 6 a month tenable for two years at the Jalpaiguri Zilla School by the students of the M.E.School at Siliguri.⁴⁹ In 2nd January 1918 the school was upgraded to H.E school under the initiative of the *jotedar* of Siliguri Rai Saheb S.N.Bhattacharjee and Mr.H.M.Farrokh , the then S.D.O of Siliguri , Babu D.N.Dasgupta, a medical practitioner

and many others .Apart from “Kshatriya Samity” of Siliguri ,”Terai-Jotedars Association” and “Terai Tea-garden Managers Association” made some big donation for its improvement .Within two years of its establishment the school was provisionally recognised to the Calcutta University with effect from 1920 and the provincial recognition having its term extended from time to time continued up to the year 1934.⁵⁰ Babu Karuna Kumar Sarkar was the first Headmaster of Siliguri H.E School .Till 1946 Siliguri Boys High School was the only prominent H.E school in Terai which got its high school status in 1957.⁵¹ In 1907 a very few positive step was taken by the Colonial Government in the direction of improving education system in Terai. The construction of Guru Training Schools at Bagdogra and Phansidewa at an estimated cost of Rs 4050 each was some of them.⁵² Another instance when the Colonial Government extended help to spread education among the masses in Darjeeling Terai was sanctioned the allotment of Rs. 2400 for the construction of two upper primary and one lower primary school in Matigara and Dumriguri in 1908. Fully aware of the backwardness of the Terai people generally and specially in education, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling expressed his concern to the Commissioner of Bhagalpur Division as to how far their efforts would be successful. Instead of relying on the people for funds he suggested the payment of the additional amount to be made from the saving of the D.I.F on understand that any amount paid by the local men would go to recoup that fund.⁵³

The third Middle English school was established in Terai was Kharibari M. E. School, though the exact date is unavailable due to absence of any contemporary official documents. However, the Settlement Officer of Darjeeling Terai states that till the end of the first quarter of the 20th century there were only one H.E school, two M.E schools ,five upper primary schools ,thirty six lower primary day schools for girls and six *maktabs* for Mohammedan boys in Darjeeling Terai.⁵⁴ But now one question may arise that he referred one High English School i.e Siliguri H.E school and among two M.E school one is Phansidewa M.E school but what will be the another one ? Siliguri Bengali Girl’s school (later known as Jyotsnamayee Girl’s High School) was established in the year 1929 and it got the affiliation of M. E. School in the year 1940 and the others school were established much later .So in this connection it may presume that the missing school is Kharibari M. E. School which was established in 1909 but the number of pupils studying in the school is unavailable in any sources. Nikhilchandra Bhattacharjee, the then Assistant Surgeon of the Kharibari Charitable Dispensary was the real founder of this school.⁵⁵ However, according to Badrinarayan Sinha, who had studied in this school for six years, in the later part of

thirties in the 20th century says that the total students of the school were 40 in number .It may be note that he was the first graduate in the Terai region among the Rajbanshi community and had received his B.A degree from the Ananda Chandra College of Jalpaiguri in 1955.⁵⁶In January, 1945 the school was upgraded to H.E school and received a X class high school status in 1949. Medical practitioner like Dr. Chandi Charan Banerjee and *jotedars* of Kharibari like Babu Nirad Bihari Ray Sarkar , Babu Tilok Chandra Ray Sarkar, Barun Kumar Bhaumik, Amrita Lal Ray Sarkar, Brajogopal Singha, Balendranath Ray Sarkar, Hargobind Nath, Meghnath Ray and many others worked for patronizing and took played an active role for the development of the school. ⁵⁷It has also to be mentioned that Santi Ray Sinha was the first Post Graduate Rajbanshi women of Terai who had received her M.A degree (in Sanskrit) from Calcutta University in the year 1961.⁵⁸ Further in the latter part of thirties of 20th century the education loving people of Siliguri realized the necessity of a Bengali Girl's School, and for that reasons, 30th July 1929 in the ground of Anandamayee Kalibari , the then a centre of cultural activities of Siliguri an important assembly was called. From the decision of this meeting the establishment of Siliguri Bengali Primary School was passed. It was decided that due to unavailability of place, scarcity of money; the school is to be started from the *kachari* room of the house of Haripada Majumder who was the member of this school committee and also the contemporary renowned *jotedar* of Siliguri .A governing body was formed under the president ship of Mr. F. O.Ben, the then S. D. O. Of Siliguri and Prodyot Kumar Basu as secretary with other members like Dr. Debendranath Dasgupta, a medical practitioner, and *jotedars* like Birendranath Ray Sarkar, Digendranath Ray Sarkar, Haripada Majumder, Jorge Mabart, Karnabhadur Sardar with many others. Though this school was a girl's school yet the start of this school was with both boys and girls. The number of pupils was also so poor, some of them were Rabi Dasgupta, Jagonnath Sarkar , Kanak Basu, Usha Ray etc .After some years the *zamindar* named Narsingha Roy donated his land in Babupara when the school at present located. In 1940 this school got Government affiliation as Middle English Girls School and gradually in 1952 it turn into Junior High School and in 1956 it was a High School and in 1963 it converted into Higher Secondary multipurpose school. The school was named after the wife of the tea planter Shri Tarapada Bandhopadhyay as he had donated huge sum of money for the development of this school.⁵⁹ Though the first girls school of the district was established in Darjeeling hill, more than twenty years before the establishment of any girls school in Terai, on 1st September 1908 named Maharani Girl' School , also known as Maharni Balika Vidyalaya.⁶⁰

The Survey and Settlement Operation of Darjeeling Terai in 1919-1925 states that there were one high school, 2 M.E schools, 5 upper primary schools, 36 lower primary schools, 18 lower primary night schools for boys, 2 lower primary day schools for girls and 6 *maktabs* for Mohammedan boys during the first quarter of the 20th century. The total number was therefore 70 which was not an exact figure.⁶¹ The Census Reports revealed that at the end of the second decade of the 20th century the total number of "Literate"⁶² persons in Terai region of Darjeeling district were 4319 in number or 5.70 percent. Of these 4059 males and 260 females, in other words for every female who is able to read and write was therefore 15 males. In Terai the percentage of male and female persons was therefore 9.75 and .77 respectively. The persons who were able to read and write in English in Terai were 884 in number, among them 864 male and 20 females. The total number of literate person in Siliguri *thana* areas was 8.85 percent, the percentage of male and female literate person was therefore 14.28 and 1.58 respectively. In the case of Phansidewa *thana* it was 4.06 percent, among them males were 7.31 percent and female were 0.42 percent.⁶³ In respect of education the Hindu dominated Kharibari *thana* was more progressive than two other rural areas of Terai i.e Phansidewa and Naxalbari. Though in Kharibari it was altogether falls 5.76 percent, among them 10.14 percent male and 0.47 percent female in Kharibari. It may be noted that during this period the total population of Kharibari mainly consisted of the Bengalis Hindus (8092 persons out of 8977 persons), more than 90 percent of the total population, while the picture of the rest of the plains portion of the district was quite same except in Phansidewa *thana*. The literacy rate of Naxalbari police station was quite low than any other police station in the Terai, it was altogether 3.52 percent, among them 6.24 percent males and 0.32 percent females.⁶⁴ The main reason behind this was the ignorance of tea garden labourers regarding education and it was covered with densely jungles which is recently under cultivation of tea. The following table no 4:2 will exhibit the real picture of education in Terai at the end of the second decade of 20th century.

TABLE NO 4:2

EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS OF DARJEELING TERAJ IN 1921

Sub-Division	Police Station	Total Population			Number of Literate Persons			
					Literate		Literate in English	
		Total	Male	Female	Males	Females	Males	Females
Siliguri Sub-Division (Terai)	-----	75,787	41619	34168	4059	260	864	20
	Siliguri	25,094	14384	10710	2054	169	571	17
	Naxalbari	21707	11752	9955	734	32	142	----
	Phnsidewa	20009	10575	9434	773	40	116	02
	Kharibari	8977	4908	4069	498	19	35	01

[Source: *Census of India, 1921, Bengal*, Vol-V, Part II, W.H Thomson, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1923, pp.482-483.]

Most probably in 1933 a primary school, named Dumriguri Primary School was established in Gosainpur near Bagdogra with 30 pupils. The number of pupils increased from 30 to 37 in 1934, 47 in 1936 and 50 in 1941. Some of the names of the students who studied in this school during those period were Tarinee Prasad Roy, Bipin Chandra Roy, Priyonath Roy, Jaganaath Roy and many others. The then D.I.S of Jalpaiguri under Rajshahi Division in February 1944 after an inspection converted this school into Dumriguri M.E school. The President of the Governing body of this school was the then S.D.O of Siliguri and Secretary was Moulavi Rahimuddian Ahmed. In 1947 Gyanendra Mohan Saha was appointed as the Headmaster of this school. Due to the partition of India in 1947 and the reorganization of the boundary between India and East Pakistan the number of students began to decrease in this school. In 1950 under the initiative and leadership of Jalahari Sarkar and with cooperation of Shri Narasingha, Rajonikanta Singha, Ramdulal Singha, Kali Prasad Singha and others the school was shifted to the Atharkhai region in Shivmandir. It is to be notated that the Dumriguri Basic School was already located in Shibmandir where the new school was shifted. In September, 1957 the son of Shri Narasingha, a renowned *jotedar* of Tarabari Shri Prahlad Singha had donated 6 *bighas* and 1 *bighas* of land for Dumriguri Basic School and Dumriguri M.E. school respectively. In 1963 the Dumriguri M.E school was upgraded as a Class 4 Junior High School and in 1966 it was upgraded as a

High School .To recognise the contribution of Shri Narasingha towards the development of this school the Managing Committee of this school with the permission of the West Bengal Board of Secondary Education renamed the school as Narasingha Vidyapith from July 1973.⁶⁵

The sixth school which was established in later part of the thirties in the 20th century was upgraded as a Naxalbari M.E school from January 1944.⁶⁶ Some of the students who studied in this school during the early part were Nur Nahar Begam , Indulal Hauqe , Khargo Mohan Singha , Ambikabala Devi and many others .It must be note that during this period Naxalbari was mainly inhabited by 500 families like Bengalis, Biharies, Nepalies, *Adivasies*, the indigenous Rajbansis and others.The local people namely Nand Prasad, Atul Biswas, Sakalram Tirky, Fatickchand Biswas, Jiten Singha and others were very enthusiastic to provide some educational facility for their children though they themselves were not very much educated .In latter part of the thirties they started a *pathsala* for imparting basic education to the students of Naxalbari. The *pathsala* was started in the house of Nandprasad. The *pathsala* continued for some years and then it was shifted to a place near located Naxalbari Police Station. The school was renamed after Nandprasad who had contributed Rs. 1000 and provided the space for the *pathsala* in its initial stage. A well known timber merchant of Naxalbari, Altuf Hussian who was an original inhabitant of Gorukpur, Siwmangal Sing, Brojan Bose and many others who helped in the construction of this school. The land which the school has located at present belongs to Gafur Mian, a policeman who did not have a family settlement. In 1947-48 the Naxalbari M.E school was upgraded as a Class 4 Junior High School and in 1953 it was upgraded as a High School. Under the patronage of Sakalram Tirky and Lalmohan Saha of Jalpaiguri two hostels for the students was constructed.⁶⁷On the eve of the independence of India in 1947 some of the prominent personality of Siliguri namely Abonindranath Bhattacharjee, Bijay Chandra Ghosh, Dr.Gopal Chandra Dutta, Dr.Brojendra Kr Basu Roy Choudhury, tea planter Satish Chandra Kar, Jogodish Chandra Bhattacharjee, the members of Mitro Sanmalinee, a centre of cultural activities of Siliguri, the T.T.P.A and the *jotedars* of Naxalbari-Khoribari areas had taken initiative to start a girls school near Siliguri Boys High School, it was located as the same place where District Additional Library is been located at present. It may be note that the District Additional Library was formerly known as Harosunder Library, in the name of famous *jotedar* Harosunder Majumder. Under the leadership and initiative of Bimala

Kanta Lahiri, the the S.D.O of Siliguri the girls school was shifted from the former place to a new location near present Siliguri College.⁶⁸

A.J.Dash says that in pre-independence period there were 70 primary schools for boys, 4 for girls,13 *maktabs*, three boys Middle English schools, one girls Middle English schools, one Junior Madrasah and one High school for boys in Terai.⁶⁹ But the above discussion shows that there were four boys M.E schools in Terai instead of three as mentioned by Dash. The number of pupils receiving instruction in the Terai as on 31st March 1944 was as follows :

TABLE NO 4:3
PUPILS RECEIVED EDUCATION IN TERAI IN 1944

In Terai	Boys	Girls
In Primary Schools and <i>Maktabs</i>	1272	220
In Secondary schools :	----	-----
H.E schools for Boys	316	00
M.E schools for Boys	230	24
M.E schools for Girls	24	61
Junior Madrasah for Boys	57	17

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, A. J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947,p.269.]

According to the Census Report of 1941 there were 52915 persons “Literate” in the district in all the ages. Among them the numbers of the Hindus were 26794, Muslims were 1772, Christians were 2537, and the Tribes were 16458 in number.⁷⁰ But how many of them were stayed in Terai is not known as there is no exclusive statement regarding any Sub-Division of the district. Though the number of school going children were 37.5 percent and 8.2 percent of males and females pupils respectively in Terai according to Census Report of 1941.On the other hand it was 73.7 percent and 28.0 percent in the hill areas of the district of Darjeeling.⁷¹ This figure shows that about hundred years of colonial rule in Terai it remained a backward tract in regarding education.

4:2:1 EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TEA AREAS OF DARJEELING TERAI DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20th CENTURY

It is a general believe that the education of the people living in poor socio-economic conditions gets surely hampered or emasculated. The people do not evince favourable response or keenness to education as poor economy does not afford leisure time to seek knowledge other than what they basically need for living life. However, it was from the very beginning of the tea plantation in Terai, that the tea workers in Terai did not receive education for various reasons as stated earlier. In short, it can be said that since 1862, when the first tea garden was established in New Champtra near Khaprail in Terai to thirties in 20th century the children of the workers of tea gardens in Terai did not have any education. The most discouraging factor, as observed and experienced by the early educational workers, was the vehement opposition from the planters themselves to the opening of schools in the gardens even for imparting mere elements of reading and writing.⁷² The dedication of the Church of Scotland to the cause of promoting education in the Terai areas of Darjeeling was a fact that was fully recognised by the colonial Government. Though whatever education had been imparted or was now being imparted in the Terai was almost entirely the work of the Scottish Missionaries till the end of the third quarter of 20th century but it was the Roman Catholics who were entitled to the greatest credit to promote education in the tea garden areas of Terai. Though there were some schools in Terai but generally the worker's children were not admitted there due to their low financial status. In 20th June, 1906 there was a conference held at Darjeeling to promote education among the tea gardens in Terai. Mr.G.W. Steward, the then Secretary, Terai Planters Association was a representative in that occasion.⁷³ During the later part of the 19th century under the initiative of there were some school established in the tea garden areas of Terai. Mr. Macfarlane was the pioneer in this field.⁷⁴ Due to this kind of initiative taken by the Scottish Missionaries and some tea planters, during the first decade of the 20th century in Terai out of 26 tea estates, 5 had schools on them and 7 had school near them; but how near was not clear from that report.⁷⁵ The following table will exhibit the number of children of school going age on the plantation areas of Darjeeling Terai during early part of the 20th century and the number of them that were receiving or had already received education in different tea estates:

TABLE NO 4:4**PUPILS WHO HAD ALREADY RECEIVED OR RECEIVING INSTRUCTION IN TERAJ TEA GARDEN AREAS IN THE FIRST DECADE OF THE 20th CENTURY**

Name of the Tea Estate	Number of children of school going age	Receiving	Already Received
Deomani T.E	05	---	---
Hansqua T.E	15	---	---
Kamalapur T.E	29	---	---
Kristopur T.E	25	---	---
Lohagar T.E	112	---	---
Manjha T.E	32	---	---
Matiram T.E	13	02	---
Matigara T.E	03	03	---
New Champta T.E	63	---	---
Naxalbari T.E	20	---	---
Simulbari T.E	40	---	03
Bagdogra T.E	39	---	04

[Source: Proceedings of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, General Department, File No:1E/1 5, Dated: August, 1906 (W.B.S.A)pp.90-91]

According to the Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for the year 1909-10, there was but little progress in respect of tea garden schools in the district of Darjeeling. The number of schools rose from 38 in the preceding year to 42 in 1909-10, but the number of pupils showed an increase of 15 only. The Report also marked that great deal remained to be done in regard to the extension of the education among the tea workers and suggested that it would be continued until the garden authorities induce to take a genuine and active interest in this field.⁷⁶ Generally the schools in the tea gardens gets Rs. 12 per month from the Government on the condition that the manager of the tea estate contribute Rs. 8 per month and provides a place and furniture. During next few years there was a fall in the number of pupils and decrease in the number of schools in Darjeeling district tea garden

areas. The reasons for it has been attributed to the general depression in the tea market .The planters of the district did not take much interest in the welfare activities of the tea garden areas like education , health etc as these were managed by the missionaries. Though later period it was transferred to the planter themselves.⁷⁷

However, the Roman Catholic Missionaries were the prominent among the all to spread education in the tea areas of Terai region in the district of Darjeeling .The available record indicates that in 1902, Father Andre Grignard, the first Roman Catholic Father was paid a visit in Terai. In 7th June 1904, Louis Birsai, aged four years, son of Patras and Bikni in Saptiguri near Bidhannagar under Phansidewa police station was Baptised by Father L. Bodson in the house of Paulus Catechist. This was the first written record available of the work of the Roman Catholic Christian Missionaries in Terai. Father Bodson also Baptized some persons in Atal, Simulbari, Singhijhora and Tirrinanah tea estates.⁷⁸ But it was the early thirties of 20th century that systematic and organised work of the Roman Catholics were started in the Terai tea gardens. Though there works were mostly concentrated in European gardens like Phargumiah, Gangaram, Hansqua, Gayaganga, Singhijhora, Atal and many others. But it was not so easy for them to entered in the Indian gardens in Terai. Mr Yacob Beck, said that in Kamla T.E the missionaries were faced some difficulties and they were assaulted by some people because the manager of the said garden did not like the Christian Missionaries.⁷⁹ In this connection it may be note that first brick built or *pucca* church in Terai was made in Gayaganga in 1934, though the construction of the church was started earlier and first Catholic Father was appointed in Terai in June 1933. So, after the establishment of this church the Roman Catholic activist started to established schools, dispensary⁸⁰ and other welfare activities in Terai in the subsequent years. In the early thirties of the 20th century Roman Catholic Church established a Primary School in Gayaganga⁸¹ T.E. In January 1932 Father Dennis Truyen, a Roman Catholic wrote in a letter “ ...Gayaganga is my finest centre. The garden has built us a pretty brick chapel, which is also to serve as a school house, provided we can obtain a school master from Chota Nagpur.” Though one year ago he had mentioned in his dairy that “I have not been able to keep alive a single school in the Terai” Nevertheless, Yacob Beck came from Chotanagpur in the beginning of 1932 to teach in the Little Girja Line School which Father Truyen has left his legacy to the Terai. Mr.Yacob Beck continued his teaching in this school until his retirement in 1978.⁸² In this school only the Catholic Christian workers children were used to go there for studies, though there number were very few .Perhaps the children of the sub-

staff in Terai tea garden areas were sent to this school, as they had received some preliminary education in the Chotanagpur areas. Therefore, they realised the importance of education.⁸³ When Father Bossaers, who had died in malaria in 1945 and another Roman Catholic had reached Gayaganga in Terai in January 1933 he had found three schools in Terai, one of them was the Chapel-School in Gayaganga T.E. There were then three masters namely Yacob Beck, Lucas and Pascal. In that mean time in 1935 Father Bossaers established another school near Bogivita ⁸⁴ *jote* in Gayaganga T.E for educate the children of tea gardens. It was this little thatch house which began classes on 7th February 1935 can be considered as the ancestor of the modern St. Peter's High school. During the 40's of the 20th century this little thatch building served the whole Terai tea areas like a small light in the field of educational darkness. It got recognition as an Upper Primary School from the Government in 1941 and class VI in 1951. During this period all the students who have already finished class VI from this school bound to go Ranchi to continue their education. In January, 1963 it became a high school know as St. Peter's High School ⁸⁵ which was the only Hindi medium school in Terai till the establishment of a Hindi high school in Siliguri in 1956. In the forties of the 20th century the tea planters established some primary schools in the tea garden but the result was not satisfactory one. In 1963, Father William Bourke was the first fulltime headmaster of St. Peter's because when the school began the H.M was always the assistant parish priest, a man who was pulled in many different directions during the day.⁸⁶ In 1935 another school for girls was opened by the sisters of Roman Catholic community like Marie Hiltraud, Mery Charles, Mary Lutgardis and Gerard Majella. But "...that first year, our school was wiped out by kala-azar! We had no school building of course; so the first classes were held on the *verandah* of the convent. Our first pupils were four orphans, but by the end of the year, only one girl was left alive. Agnesia by name." had mentioned sister Gerard Majella.⁸⁷ Dash pointed out that during forties of 20th century "Few gardens run efficient schools of their own and some are without schools altogether."⁸⁸ In 1946 Rege observed that "There (in tea garden areas of Terai) has, however, been no virtual improvement in education."⁸⁹ Even the Halder Committee observed that "The equipments in school are meagre and tutors are also not sufficiently trained. The sentiments of working class are, however, not very much in favour of any education."⁹⁰ "The problem is a serious one, as soon as they are able to do anything useful, children are put to work on the garden to earn money and supplement the family resources instead of being sent to school" stated by Dash in his BDG of Darjeeling.⁹¹ On the other hand the Colonial Government was indifferent to the need of improving the quality of education among the tea garden workers

in Darjeeling district. Thus it is better to be said that “Illiteracy under the British regime in Tea gardens belt in strict sense of the term was hundred percent. This was revealed when the National Government after Independence, undertook a survey work to determine the percentage of literacy in the working class on nationwide basis in 1948 that only 2 percent of the workers was found to be literate in moderate sense of the terms in the entire district of Darjeeling.”⁹²

In the colonial period the growth of educational institutions was much higher in Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and even in the hill areas of Darjeeling while on the Terai areas of Darjeeling it was still occupied with dense forest and wild animals. When Jalpaiguri was established in 1869 the entire area of Darjeeling Terai including Siliguri was filled with jungle, even when Jalpaiguri was a flourishing colonial town in North Bengal, Siliguri had not yet developed a town. Moreover, in Jalpaiguri the tea planters played a very positive role in patronizing modern education but the tea planters of the Terai region did not take much initiative in promoting the growth of western education in their areas. Though there was some exception. On the other hand the British Government also were an important agent in spreading western education in the hills of Darjeeling while in the Terai they were not so active in disseminating modern education. In the case of princely states of Cooch Behar the *Maharajas* and even *Maharanies* had played a very progressive role which was not present in Terai areas of Darjeeling. When the Jenkins school (1857) was established in Cooch Behar, Siliguri was practically a jungle. Under the patronage and encouragement of Suniti Devi, the Queen of *Maharaja* Nipendranarayan a school for girls named Suniti Academy (1893) started in Cooch Behar. The growth and spread of education under the patronage of *Maharajas* and *Maharanies*, as it was in Cooch Behar was not in any other part of Bengal except Calcutta. But in the beginning of the 20th century with the change of the demographic structure as it has been discussed in detail in chapter II, it is noticed that there was a huge influx of tribal population from Chotanagpur region and Santal Parganas to workers as tea garden labourers, agriculturalist, and to clear the jungle for the construction of roads and the railway lines in Terai. These tribal populations were more interested in economic subsistence and growing their family than in providing education to their children. Generally this tribal population is found in the tea garden plantation areas of Terai where the educational development is very poor and even in the present time the condition has not improved drastically. The Scottish Missionaries have played the role of pioneer in the growth of education in tea garden areas of Terai but the contribution of the

Roman Catholic Missionaries is further more significant. The Roman Catholic Missionaries had come to Terai during the first decades of the 20th century and established St. Peter's and St. Merry high schools in 1930s. Though the establishment of schools, hospitals and other charitable works are part of their proselytizing activity but their urge in the uplifting the educational condition of the Terai which was covered with dense forest and wild animals is highly appreciable. The Gayaganga St. Peter's school established by the Roman Catholic Missionaries in fact, served as a banyan tree providing its shade and spreading its branches and roots all throughout the Terai region of the district of Darjeeling. The branches of the school were named Bhimbhar near Bidhannagar of Phansidewa(1963), Hatighisa near Naxalbari(1967) , Pradhannagar near Siliguri (1970), St. Joseph High School near Matigara (1971) and many others. With the immigration of the tribal population who were earlier educated in the Missionaries school in the Santhal Parganas and Chotanagpur areas wanted to continued their education in such institutions when they came in Terai. The main reasons behind the success of the Roman Catholic Missionaries regarding imparting education in Terai was they were loved here because the people of the Terai recognised them as one of their own. Many similar tribal's were converted into Christianity with the growth of missionaries activities in this region but the activities of the missionaries were many times protested by the indigenous population either Hindus or Muslims or belonging to any other animist religion. There are many instances of such protest against the conversion activities of the missionaries which already have mentioned in earlier. Yet, in spite of their proselytizing and conversion in this region the contribution of Roman Catholic Missionaries and Scottish Missionaries cannot be ignored and under estimated.

4:3 EDUCATIONAL GROWTH OF DARJEELING TERAİ IN POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Due to the partition after Independence of India Siliguri emerged as an educational centre of North Bengal. During the later part of forties and fifties following the partition of India and Bengal a large number of people deserted the west while East Pakistan now Bangladesh and come to various parts of the Indian dominion as refugees. Such displaced persons were also come in Siliguri town in large numbers. As a result of these population growth there was a need to the establishment of more educational institution in Terai , thus gradually there were the establishment of Terai Adarsha Vidyalaya(1949), later known as Terai Tarapada Adarsa Vidyalay as Tarapada Banerjee, a renowned tea planter of Terai had donated sum of Rs 40,000 for the development of this school,⁹³ Chittaranjan High school (1950) in Bagdogra, Nilnalini Vidyamandir (1955), Siliguri Hindi High school (1956), Bani

Mandir Railway High school (1956)⁹⁴, Hakimpara Balika Vidyalay (1958), Queen's school(1959), the first English medium school in Terai was established by Capt. P.Jacobs , later known as Margaret (Sister Nivedita) English school (1961),⁹⁵ Krishnamaya Memorial Nepali High School(1960), the first Nepali medium high school in Terai which was established as a primary school in an unknown place near modern Sevok Road in Siliguri ⁹⁶, Dr.Rajandraprasad Girl's High school(1964) in Siliguri, Samsia High Madrasa (1965) for Mohammendan pupils near Desbandhupara in Siliguri and many others.

After the establishment of schools there was the necessity of the establishment of education for the higher level like colleges and University. So far the aspiring students had to either go to Calcutta or to the other districts of North Bengal like Cooch Behar (in A.B.N.Seal College) and Jalpaiguri (in A.C.College) for the higher education. The necessity was soon transformed into reality with the establishment of Siliguri College after Independence. In 1950 under the initiative and leadership of a law year, Abanindra Nath Bhattacharjee, a tea planter of Terai, Satish Chandra Kar, *jotedars* like Birendranath Roy Sarkar and many others were started the college in Siliguri Boy's High school compound. It was continued next two years until it was sited in 21*bighas* acquired land for the establishment of a college just behind of Siliguri Boys High school under the initiative of Refugee Relief and Rehabilitation Department of West Bengal. In 1956-57 it came under Government Sponsored College Scheme and it was upgraded to a degree college in Science. It may be note that it was take one century to established a college in Terai after the annexation of the Colonial Government of the plain areas of Darjeeling in 1850.Yet, during next few decades more colleges were established in Terai like Siliguri College of Commerce(1962), Siliguri Mahila Mahavidyalaya (1981) in Siliguri urban areas⁹⁷ and Kalipada Ghosh Tarai Mahavidyalaya (1988) and Siliguri B.Ed College(1989) in rural areas of Terai.⁹⁸

The Census Reports of 1961 exhibits the real statistics in the progress of education of Darjeeling district as well as in the Terai region. On the result of 1961 Census Darjeeling district occupied the seventh place amongst the districts of West Bengal in terms of literacy. In the district of Darjeeling only 287 persons for every one thousand of its population have passed the literacy test in 1961⁹⁹ and on the other hand in West Bengal as a whole only 293 persons out of every thousands could do so. Though the people in the hill tracts of the district have come off with better literacy standard than Terai or plain areas, except the Siliguri police station. The police station of Darjeeling follows Siliguri very closely. The

growing urban influence around Siliguri has obviously played an important role in showing such a high figure of literate and educated persons in this police station. The women living in Siliguri *thana* seem to be much more advanced than those in other areas of the district as evident from the percentage of female literate of 34 per cent in this police station whereas it was only 26 per cent in Darjeeling *thana*. In Terai the percentage of literacy was 27.4 per cent, among them male and female persons was therefore 35.3 and 17.3 per cent respectively. Total number of literate person in Siliguri *thana* areas was 43.1 per cent, the percentage of male and female literate person was therefore 49.5 and 34.0 respectively. In the case of Phansidewa *thana* it was 13.6 per cent, among them males were 21.4 per cent and female were 4.4 per cent. In the case of Kharibari and Naxalbari *thanas* it was 16.1 per cent (Male: 25.5 and Female: 4.8 percent) and 14.6 per cent (Male: 26.7 and Female: 9.9 per cent) respectively. In this period the urban areas of Terai under Siliguri police had recorded 53.3 per cent literacy rate among them 57.8 per cent were males and 46.3 per cent were females.¹⁰⁰ Compulsory free primary education scheme has been introduced in Siliguri and Phansidewa areas of Terai from 1961-1962 and book grants, boarding charges, special stipends, examination fees have also been liberally granted to deserving pupils from the backward communities to promote education.¹⁰¹ The schedule caste population inhabiting the district of Darjeeling comprise 13.19 per cent of its population and in Siliguri subdivision they were accounted for nearly 58.79 per cent (in Phansidewa : 18.95 per cent , Siliguri : 14.20 per cent, Kharibari : 13.02 per cent and Naxalbari : 12.62 per cent) of the district total scheduled caste population. Among them Rajbanshis were the most literate community in the district as well as in Terai. In the rural areas the percentage of literacy among them was 24.68 per cent while in the urban areas it was 22.56 per cent. Further, in the rural sector 31.67 per cent of the Rajbanshi males were literate without any educational level, about one-thirteenth of them have passed the primary or Junior Basic standard and only 0.57 per cent was Matriculates. They were followed by Namasudra , another scheduled caste community of Terai, every fifth Namasudra living in the villages of the district was literate but their men were more advanced in this respect, 32.34 per cent and females 8.98 per cent.¹⁰² It may be note that in 1951 census 15,894 persons belong to Rajbanshi community and 667 persons belong to Namasudra community were enumerated in Darjeeling district almost entirely found in Terai.¹⁰³ In the case of scheduled tribe population, it was accounting for only 15.44 per cent of the total inhabitants of the Darjeeling district. Preponderance of scheduled caste population is observed in the Terai areas of the district where they accounted for 58.59 per cent (in Phansidewa : 23.03 per

cent, Naxalbari : 14.51 per cent, Siliguri : 12.72 per cent and Kharibari : 8.33 per cent) of the total tribal population of the district. Only 15.32 per cent scheduled caste population in the district have been able to pass the census enumeration test laid down for literacy. Oraon, the largest scheduled caste population in district were found 9.33 per cent literate in the rural areas of Terai.¹⁰⁴

As an endeavour of spreading education in North Bengal and Terai region of the district of Darjeeling, one of the most revolutionary event was the establishment of University of North Bengal on 1st November, 1962 amidst Chinese invasion. Dr.B. C. Roy the then Chief Minister took a great initiative in establishing the University. One of the famous utterances of Dr.B.C.Roy was: “The entire area of North Bengal comprising the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Malda and West Dinajpur were vulnerable from political point of view. In addition to Pakistan, there were Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal which bordered on Tibet and China. It was therefore strongly felt that this area should at once be developed socially, economically and from educational points of view without any loss of time.” Malda as an option was not at all unfavourable as their were vast empty stretches of land and most importantly it was much closer to the capital of West Bengal, Calcutta. On the other hand Jalpaiguri was a place of tea planters who had both, the capital as well as the zeal for knowledge. Moreover, last but not the least Cooch Behar, the city of the Royals of North Bengal would have provided an ideal environment for growth of modern education as it is very much of its cultural lineage. But instead of all these options Dr.B.C.Roy chosen a place which was 8 k.m away from Siliguri and not so far from Bagdogra named Atharkhai. Prof.B.N.Dasgupta took charge as the first Vice Chancellor of the University. On the November 2nd 1962 seven teachers who were recruited came to the low cost building for the opening ceremony but the Vice-Chancellor declared “the University is closed sine die” because of the Chinese aggression and it was temporally shifted to Siliguri College. When the University started classes in Siliguri there were only 45 students in six departments namely English, Economics, Political Science, Physics, Mathematics and Geography. In this connection it may be note that on 18th November 1968 a Medical College was started with 35 students within the N.B.U campus though in 1972 the college was shifted to Kawakhali now known as Susrat Nagar which it is presently located.¹⁰⁵

The growth of population in Terai from sixties of the 20th century followed by the seventies and eighties as already discussed in Chapter II, Siliguri transformed into an

educational hub of the adjoining districts of North Bengal. During this period under the Government initiative few Nepali and Hindi medium schools were established which gave a different dimension regarding the educational scenario of the area. From the later part of the eighties of the 20th century due to institutional and personal initiative various English medium schools and institutions were started which converted Siliguri into an educational centre of North Bengal. This kind of education in different medium like Bengali, English, Nepali, and Hindi is not much visible in any other parts of West Bengal. This gave a unique character to the district educational system. Recently in the Terai region with the growing interest among the tribal people regarding education through Hindi medium a college was established near Naxalbari, named Hatighisa Hindi College(2015), the second Hindi medium college in West Bengal after Government General Degree College (Hindi Medium) at Banarhat (2014).

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Known as Wood's Despatch because it was drafted by Sir Charles Wood, the then President of the Board of Control, who later became the first Secretary of State for India.
2. This meant that the allocated funds for education would be spent to educate limited number of pupils from the upper and middle classes who were expected to assume the task of educating the masses and spreading modern ideas among them. Education and modern ideas were thus supposed to filter or radiate downward from upper classes to general people or masses. This 'Downward Filtration Theory' remained the British policy till the end of the British rule even though it was officially abandoned in 1854.
3. A. J. Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.265.
4. W.W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol-IV, Trubner & Co, London, 1885 (Second Edition), p.138.
5. Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta , *Final Report on The Darjeeling Terai Settlement*, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1898, p.05.
6. Chhanda Chakraborty, 'Christian Missionaries and the Development of Education in Darjeeling and Terai Region in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century: The Story of Liaison between Evangelism and Imperialism' ,*Omnibus Of North Bengal*, Vol-I, Anita Bagchi (ed), B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi,2015,p.129.
7. Chhanda Chakraborty, "The Role Of The Christian Missionaries In Promoting Education Among The People Of Darjeeling District In The 19th Century", *Occasional Paper*, No-1,Department Of History, North Bengal University,1986,p.03.
8. *Ibid*.p.07.
9. L.S.S. O'.Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1907, p.176.
10. *Ibid*.p.175.

11. Chhanda Chakraborty, "The Role Of The Christian Missionaries In Promoting Education Among The People Of Darjeeling District In The 19th Century", *Occasional Paper*, No-1, *Op.Cit.*, p.07.
12. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol- X, Trubner & Co, London, 1876, p.193.
13. Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, *Op.Cit.*, p.05.
14. 'Visitors Book', Phansidewa M.E School, Phansidewa, District : Darjeeling.
15. Annual Report of the Phansiewa M.E School Read on the 19th February 1930, School Record, Phansidewa M.E school.
16. Report of Ramesh Chandra Das, Assistant Inspector of Schools, Rajshahi Division, Jalpaiguri, Dated 23rd August 1919, Divisional Commisionarate Office of Jalpaiguri , Collector Avenue, Jalpaiguri.
17. Annual Report of the Phansidewa M.E School, Read on the 29th June 1932 at the Meeting held for the purpose of distribution of the prices for the year 1931, School Record, Phansidewa M.E school.
18. Annual Report of the Phansiewa M.E School Read on the 19th February 1930, School Record, Phansidewa M.E school.
19. 'Visitors Book', Phansidewa M.E School, Phansidewa, District : Darjeeling.
20. Note of Inspection of the Phansidewa H.E school made by B. Lahiri, Esq, M.A., B.C.S, Sub-Divisional Officer, Siliguri, Dated:30.03.47.
21. Chhanda Chakraborty, "The Role Of The Christian Missionaries In Promoting Education Among The People Of Darjeeling District In The 19th Century", *Occasional Paper*, No-1, *Op.Cit.*, p.07.
22. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol- X, *Op.Cit.*, p.188.
23. *Ibid*.pp.193-194 and Chhanda Chakraborty, "The Role Of The Christian Missionaries In Promoting Education Among The People Of Darjeeling District In The 19th Century", *Occasional Paper*, No-1, *Op.Cit.*, p.09.
24. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol- X, *Op.Cit.*, p.194.

25. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development Of Education In Selected Districts Of West Bengal With Special Reference To The Nineteenth Century*, Unpublished Ph. D Thesis, N.B.U., 1988, p.45.
26. *Ibid.* pp.132-133.
27. *Ibid.* pp.133-134.
28. W.W. Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, Vol- X, *Op. Cit.*, p.195.
29. Report on Public Instructions 1878-79, p.6 and Proceedings(A) of Lt. Governor of Bengal, September 1887, General Deptt. Miscellaneous, File No.138, pp.1-4 (W.B.S.A).
30. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education In Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op. Cit.*, pp.46-50.
31. A. J. Dash, *Op.Cit.*, p.270.
32. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education in Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op. Cit.*, pp.47-49.
33. Report of Public Instructions, File No: 34,23rd December,1885, pp.18-22(W.B.S.A).
34. Chhanda Chakraborty, "The Role Of The Christian Missionaries In Promoting Education Among The People Of Darjeeling District In The 19th Century", *Occasional Paper*, No-1,*Op.Cit.*,p.15.
35. *Ibid.* pp.17-18.
36. Babu Sasi Bhusan Dutta, *Op.Cit.*, p.05.
37. *Ibid.* p.05.
38. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education in Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op. Cit.*, pp.49-50.
39. C. J. O'Donnell, *Census of India, 1891*, Vol-III, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893, p.215.
40. In 1881 and in 1891, the classification was adopted regarding education had divided into three classes i.e 'Learning', 'Literate' and 'Illiterate'. Those who were under instruction, either at home or at school or college, were entered as 'Learning'. Those who were not under instruction, but able both to read and write, were recorded as

‘Literate’ and the remainder of the population as ‘Illiterate’. It was found , however , that the return of the ‘Learning’ i.e children under instruction , was vitiated by the omission of children who had not long been at school , as they were entered as ‘Illiterate’ and also of more advanced students who were classed as ‘Literate’. There were thus, great discrepancies between the Census returns of the number of ‘Learning’ and the corresponding statistics of the Education Department. It was therefore decided in 1901 to confine the entry in the enumeration schedules to the two main categories of ‘Literate’ and ‘Illiterate’, the former being those who were able both to read and write and the latter those who did satisfy this standard. No other criterion was laid down and the standard to be adopted in deciding whether a person could read and write was left in the hands of the enumerators. For further details see, L.S.S.O’ Malley, *Census of India, 1911, Vol-V, Part-I, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1913, pp.356-57.*

41. C. J. O’Donnell, *Census of India, 1891, Op. Cit., p.223.*
42. *Ibid.* pp.223-224.
43. L.S.S.O’ Malley, *Census of India, 1911, Vol-V, Part-I, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1913, p.359.*
44. E. A.Gait, *Census of India 1901, Vol- VI, Part - I, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1902, p.307.*
45. L.S.S.O’ Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling, Op.Cit., p.175.*
46. *Darjeeling District Gazetteer, Statistics, 1901-1902, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1905, p.02 and p.19.*
47. *Ibid.* p.40.
48. Report of the Siliguri H.E. School, On the occasion of The Silver Jubilee Celebration, held on the 8th May, 1943.
49. Proceeding (B) of Lt. Governor of Bengal, March, 1905, File No-57/1, pp.165-167 (W.B.S.A).
50. Report of the Siliguri H.E. School, On the occasion of The Silver Jubilee Celebration, held on the 8th May, 1943.

51. Sobujer Katha, *Smaranika* (Bengali), Golden Jubilee Celebration, Siliguri Boys High School, Siliguri, 1969.
52. Proceeding (B) of Lt. Governor of Bengal, June, 1907, General Department, Education, File No-10/1 T, pp.144-149 (W.B.S.A).
53. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education In Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op.Cit.*, pp.50.
54. Babu Jogesh Chandra Mitra, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operation in Darjeeling Terai 1919-1925, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1927, p.19.
55. *Samotal*, Vol-14, Issue-24, by Monthly Newspaper, Atul Krishna Biswas (ed) Dadabhai Printing Press, Kharibari, Darjeeling, Dated: 31.12.92.
56. Interview with Badrinarayan Sinha, Age-94, ex-student of Kharibari M.E. School, Kharibari, Dated: 12.06.2011.
57. School Report, Kharibari High School, 1945-1951 and *Uttarbanga Sambad*, a daily newspaper, Siliguri, dated: 12.11.2007.
58. Interview with Santi Ray Sinha, Age-89, ex-students and teacher of Kharibari High School, Kharibari, Dated: 09.07.2011.
59. Mukulika, *Smaranika* (Bengali), Platinum Jubilee Celebration, Jyotsnamoyee Girls High School, Siliguri, 29th January, 2005.
60. It was established by a Bengali women named Hemlata Devi (Sarkar), daughter of Pandit Shivrath Shastri, one of the leaders of Brahma Samaj. In this establishment she was assisted by Suniti Devi, *Maharani* of Cooch Behar, one of the daughter of Keshav Chandra Sen, the leader of Sadharan Brahma Samaj, *Maharani* Sucharu Devi of Mayurbhanj, sister of Suniti Devi and also the *Maharani* of Burdwan. As a mark of honour to those *Maharanies* or Queens the school was named as Maharani Balika Vidyalaya. For more details see Anjashi Sarkar, *Voicing Contentious Silences Other Narratives on History and Society*, Abhijeet Publications, New Delhi, 2015, pp.52-60.
61. Babu Jogesh Chandra Mitra, *Op.Cit.*, 1927, p.19.
62. From 1911 a definite standard was adopted and an instructions were issued that only those should be returned as "Literate" who were able to write a letter to a friend and

- read the answer to it. For further information see W. H. Thompson, *Census of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Part I, Bengal, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1923, pp.284-285.
63. W. H. Thompson, *Census of India, 1921*, Vol-V, Part II, Bengal, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1923, pp.482-483
 64. *Ibid.* p. 483.
 65. Korak (Bengali), Annual Magazine of Shri Narasingha Vidyapith, *Astham Borso* (Eight's Year), 1992 and Admission Register of Dumriguri Primary School , Bagdogra , 1932-1942
 66. Memo No:Meb 1244(4) C Rajshahi dated 2nd May, 1944 , School Record Naxalbari M.E School, Naxalbari.
 67. Subarno Jayanti Bisash Sankha (1943-1993), in Bengali, Nandprasad High School, Naxalbari, 29th January, 1993 and Korak (Bengali), Annual Magazine of Nandprasad High School, 3rd Year (1987-88) and 5th Year (2008-2009). It may be noted that the name of the Annual Magazine of Shri Narasingha Vidyapith and Nandprasad High School is the same named Korak (Bengali).
 68. *Smaranika* (Bengali), Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1996-1997) , Siliguri Girls High School, Siliguri, 1997
 69. A. J. Dash, *Op.cit.*, p.269.
 70. R.A. Dutch, *Census of India, 1941*, Vol-IV, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, p.36.
 71. A. J. Dash, *Op.Cit.*, p.269.
 72. Dick B. Dewan, *Education in the Darjeeling Hills An Historical Survey : 1835-1995*, Sharda Enterprises, Kalimpong, 2008 (Reprint), pp.175-176. First Published in Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi , 1991.
 73. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education In Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op.Cit.*, p.97.
 74. L.S.S.O'. Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*, *Op.Cit.*, p.172.
 75. Chhanda Chakraborty, *Development of Education In Selected District of West Bengal with Special Reference To the Nineteenth Century*, *Op.Cit.*, p.93.

76. Dick B. Dewan , *Op.Cit.*, pp.177-178.
77. *Ibid.* pp.178-179
78. Gayaganga Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1933-1983), Gayaganga, The Ajanta Press, Siliguri, 1983, pp.28-31.
79. Interview with Father William Bourke, Age 92 Years, Ex. Headmaster and colleague of Mr. Yecob Beck, St. Peter's High School, Jisu Asharm, Matigra, Darjeeling, Date:11.09.14.
80. First dispensary was established in tea garden areas of Terai in Gayaganga in 1938. A. J. Dash, BDG of Darjeeling , Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947,p.278.
81. Gayaganga is derived from the name gaay means holy cow and Ganga i.e the name of the holy river of the Hindus .But some old inhabitants of this region said that these were the names of the first two workers of the tea garden when it was founded
82. Gayaganga Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1933-1983), *Op.Cit.*, pp.15-16.
83. Interview with Mr Pius Prachar, Age-91 Years, S/O Mr.Illias Lakra who had linked with Gayaganga Church and St.Peter's school is more than half a century.In 6th February 1926 he was born in Ranchi and after receiving some basic school education from St.Ignasias Gumla school in Ranchi he came in Terai in 1949.Gayaganga, Darjeeling, Date:11.10.14.
84. Bogivita: Bogi is a corruption of *bagincha* means grove or garden and vita or bhitta means a place souended by walles. Bogivita is better to be said as Garden-Wall. Other vitas of Terai are Howdavita in Darjeeling Terai and Kankarvita in modern Nepal Terai.
85. Gayaganga Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1933-1983), *Op.Cit.*, p.16.
86. Interview with Father William Bourke, Age 92 Years, Ex. Headmaster, St. Peter's High School, Jisu Asharm, Matigra, Darjeeling, Date: 11.09.14.
87. Gayaganga Golden Jubilee Souvenir (1933-1983), *Op.Cit.*, p.07.
88. A. J. Dash, *Op.Cit.*, p.121.
89. D.V. Rege, *Report on the Enquiry into Conditions of Labour in Plantations in India*, Labour Investigation Committee, Simla, 1946, p.191.

90. S.K Halder, *Report on an Enquiry into the Living Conditions of the Tea Plantation workers in Darjeeling Terai*, West Bengal, 1948, p.07.
91. A. J. Dash, *Op.Cit.*, p.269.
92. P.P.Rai, Trade Unions : Problems and Prospects vis-a-vis Sociological Development of the Labourers, a paper submitted in a seminar on the issues of 'Labour Market Development in the Eastern Himalayas', Gangtok, Sikkim, 1987.
93. *Smaranika* (Bengali), Golden Jubilee Celebration(1999-2000), Terai Tarapada Adarsa Vidyalay, Siliguri.
94. For details see Nabajyoti Chowdhury, *Growing Glory*, Nabajanma Prakashan, Siliguri, 2004, pp.48-51.
95. The Silver Book, Margaret (Sister Nivedita) English School, Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri, 1991 and Unpublished record regarding 'Margaret (Sister Nivedita) English school, Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri', collected from Dr. Manoj Laha, Ex. Headmaster, Margaret (Sister Nivedita) English school, Pradhan Nagar.
96. Daily Students Dairy, Krishna Maya Memorial Nepali High School, Siliguri.
97. *Uttarbanga Sangbad*, Daily News Paper(Bengali),Dated:01.11.2010,Siliguri.
98. Souvenir, Silver Jubilee, Siliguri B.Ed. College, August 2014, Kadamtala, Darjeeling.
99. In 1961 Census, the enumerator was instructed to record a person as illiterate if that person could neither read nor write or merely read but was unable to write in any language. A person who could both read and write with understands was treated as literate. The test for reading was ability to read any simple letter in print or in manuscript. The test for writing was ability to write a simple letter. If a person could both read and write and also had passed a written examination or examinations as proof of an educational standard attained, the highest examination passed by the person was recorded in the enumeration slip as literate. Further information see Bisweswar Roy, *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1961 p.51.
100. Bisweswar Roy, *Census 1961, District Census Hand Book: Darjeeling, Part-I*, Directorate Of Census Operations, West Bengal, 1961, pp.51-53.

101. *Ibid.* p.55 and p.71.
102. *Ibid.* pp. 64-67.
103. A. Mitra, *Census 1951, West Bengal , The Tribes and Castes of West Bengal* ,West Bengal Government Press, Alipore, 1953, pp.110-113.
104. Bisweswar Roy, *Census 1961, Op. Cit.*, pp. 69-71.
105. *Reflections*, Golden Jubilee Celebration 1962-2011, University of North Bengal, Raja Rammohunpur, Darjeeling, May 2011, pp.09-11 and *Uttarbango Sambad*, Daily Newspaper, Dated:16.05.2011, Siliguri.

CHAPTER – V

URBANIZATION OF SILIGURI: UNION BOARD TO CORPORATION

Siliguri is termed by newspapers as the ‘uncrowned capital of North Bengal’ lies between 26^o 43’ north latitude and 88^o 26’ east longitude and 392 feet above sea-level was a village in south of Kurseong sub-division near the left bank of the river Mahananda constituted 748 souls in 1901. The village is situated on fairly high ground and its name means “the stony site”, presumably because the bed of the Mahananda close by is a mass of broken stone brought down from the hills.¹ Dozey also states “Siliguri or the stony plain, according to tradition derived its name from the stores which once lay in myriads on the bed of the Mahanady river which flows to the north of the town.....It is roughly in the centre of the Bengal Terai, which was acquired from Sikkim in 1850.”² Though, it is a modern name of this place; the earlier writers, travellers, historians called it as Sannyasikata or Baikunthapur or Battrish Hazari. A dense jungle touching modern Siliguri is still known as Baikunthapur Forest Range. In Hunter’s *Statistical Account of Bengal* Siliguri’s alternative name was Sannyasikata. Moreover in his *Statistical Account of Bengal* he did not mention the name of Siliguri in several times. E.G. Glazier, the then officiating Magistrate and Collector of Rungpore described this area in following manner “In 1789, we have an account of a large body of bandits who had occupied the Bykuntpore forest, laying at the apex of the district right under the hills, whence they issued on their predatory excursions. The forest was composed of tree jungle interwoven with cane, and was impassable, except by narrow winding paths, known only to the dacoits, who maintained in the forest twenty-two posts, each under a separate leader. Mr. McDowall got together a force of 200 *burkundazes*, and held all the entrances into the forest, some months elapsed before any decisive result was obtained; several skirmishes ensued, and the robbers were at length starved out and escaped into Nepaul and Bootan; but great numbers were captured, including their leader Kirpa, and several of his principal associates. Within twelve months, in this and other parts of the district, our energetic Collector arrested and brought to trail 549 dacoits.”³ J.D. Hooker in his travelogue described “Siligoree stands on the verge of the Terai, that low malarious belt which skirts the base of the Himalaya.”⁴ Hunter also noted this place was less inhospitable than the northern part of the river Mahananda and chiefly inhabited by the Koch peoples.⁵ In the words of L.S.S. O’ Malley it is “A tract of reeking moisture and rank vegetation, it has always been dreaded by Europeans, who used, in the days before

the railway, to hurry through it as fast they could travel, and if possible in the early morning, in order to get beyond the fatal fever zone.”⁶ Actually in pre-colonial period this place was considered to be a no man’s land situated near the border of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Koch Kingdom. The refugees of justice or the *Sannyasis* were used to take shelter in this dense forest of Baikunthapur till the end of the 19th century.

5:1 BAIKUTHAPUR TO SILIGURI

As stated earlier in Chapter I that the Raikats of Baikunthapur were the collateral branch of the royal family Cooch Behar. During the time of its first two rulers Viswasingha and Naranarayan Raikat Siswasinhga, a step brother of Maharaja Viswasingha had constructed a house near Siliguri, that part of the country being given to him as “petbhata” (appanage) during the middle of the 16th century.⁷ C.C. Sanyal also ascribed this theory in his book entitled *The Rajbansis of North Bengal* and stated “His (Siswasinhga) capital was first built at Siliacguri (Siliguri) in the village of Debgram.....The capital was called Niz-Baikunthapur.”⁸ In course of time the Baikunthapur Estate was temporarily included in the Dewani and received the benefit of Permanent Settlement. Nevertheless, in 1621 under the reign of Mahi Dev, the 5th *Raikat* of Baikunthapur signified his dependence by refusing to hold the umbrella over the Cooch Behar *Raja* at the coronation of Birnarayan and also refused to pay the annual tribute. In 1773, under the reign of Derpa Dev, the 13th *Raikat* of Baikunthapur with the help of some bandits from Morung basically called *Sannyasis* and in collaboration with the Bhutias continued attack on the territory of Cooch Behar and nearby East India Company’s properties. Captain Stuart was sent to subdue the rising and he defeated both Derpa Rev and the *Sannyasis* and took possession of some parts of Baikuthapur Estate. In the year 1774, after a treaty of Bhutan with East India Company the *Raikat* Derpa Dev was placed as an ordinary *zamindar* and was assessed of rupees thirty two thousand per year. The *Zamindary* was thereafter named *Batrishazari*.⁹ In this connection it is to be mentioned that during the political struggle between Raikat Derpa Dev and Rudranarayan, the Raja of Cooch Behar, Derpa Dev had brought five thousands soldiers-*Sannyasis* in his capital Baikunthapur. Derpa Dev had captured the fort of Rahimganj with the help of these *Sannyasis* in his confrontations many *Sannyasis* were killed and this changed the name of the place from Baikunthapur to Sannyasikata.¹⁰ And after the formation of Jalpaiguri district on 1st January 1869 with the incorporation of Baikanthapur region and later due to some administrative reasons the Colonial Government in 1880 a part of the southern Mahananda river as stated earlier in Chapter-I

became a part of the district of Darjeeling popularly known modern Siliguri and the town of Siliguri came into being when the administrative headquarters of Terai sub-division was transferred from Hansqua near Phansidewa to Siliguri at the same period. As a result of this gradually Siliguri contains a sub-jail, the *kachary*, post office, the S.D.O bungalow, a dispensary¹¹ and many new administrative offices.

Historically the origin of the word Siliguri is unknown. In ancient folk writing and literature the reference of Siliguri is not been made. Even in modern Bengali literature the reference of the word Siliguri does not work frequently. It seems that it first appeared in the writing of Rabindranath Tagore. In 1887 Rabindranath Tagore had written a letter to his daughter Indera Devi while travelling to Darjeeling mentioned the name of ‘Shiliguri’ instead of Siliguri. In Bengali literature Siliguri has been first mentioned in a poem written by Bhudhadeb Basu titled *D.H.R* which was published in the ‘*Jayashree*’ dated 1346 B.S He described Siliguri in the following manner:

“....O kichu noi. Railgari asche samatal theke,
Shiliguri theke Kolkatar jatrider niye.”¹²

[Free English translation: Oh! It is nothing but a train coming from the plains, it bringing the passenger of Kolkata from Siliguri.]

The development of Siliguri as a town is clearly linked with the development of Sanatorium town of Darjeeling, tea industry in this region as already stated in Chapter IV and the then political changes in the country and in the neighbouring countries. Prior to that Siliguri was a small market centre on the trade route of wool from Tibet. The hill resort of Darjeeling was chosen as a Sanatorium by the British and the importance of Siliguri lay in its being the transit station for onward journey from the plains to the hills.¹³ In an Eastern Bengal State Railway handbook published in the first quarter of the 20th century describe this place as “The village (Siliguri) is the terminus also of the cart road from Kalimpong and Sikkim, and is thus the focus of the local trade- but is known to the traveller only as a stepping stone on the way to the hills.”¹⁴ Siliguri then a hamlet gradually acquired a few shops to cater the needs of the transit passengers. The roads and railway connecting Siliguri with Darjeeling were developed next. Actually the geographical location of Siliguri served as a gateway to Darjeeling hills on the one hand and also as a door to Dooars area gave Siliguri its importance. During the thirties of the 19th century there were only two routes existing northward from plains or Terai into Sikkim. One was by the “Nagree” pass and the other by the “Sabbook Golah”. A third

route by the Mahananda was mentioned as having been deserted and overgrown with jungle. The pioneers who come to open up Darjeeling just after it had been ceded in 1835 were confronted with an arduous journey from Calcutta before they reached the hills. A guide to Darjeeling published in 1838 mentioned 98 hours as the time the journey took from Calcutta by *dawk* as follows:

54 hours Calcutta to Malda.

16 hours Malda to Dinajpur.

20 hours Dinajpur to Titaliya.

8 hours Titaliys to the foot of the hills.

The whole journey to Darjeeling lasted five or six days and the discomfort and expenses were graphically described by Sir Joseph Hooker who in 1848 at a cost of Rs. 240 had occasion to perform the journey from Karagola Ghat on the Ganges to the foothills.

The first measure taken to improve communication was the deputation of Lieutenant Napier to construct a road from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This was carried out from 1839 to 1842 and the road now known as the Old Military Road, which is still to be seen from Pankhabari to Kurseong and thence on to Dow Hill and Ghum. The section of this road is also now known as the Matigara-Kurseong road. This road was not practicable for wheeled traffic and the development of Darjeeling and the cost of transporting military stores led to search for an alternative road. The result of this search is known as the Hill Cart Road which starts from Siliguri and ends in Darjeeling town. The construction was started in 1860 and the road was completed in 1869. The specification was a road 24 feet in breadth with a general gradient of 3 in 100 and maximum gradient of 1 in 18. Meanwhile decision was taken to construct a road from the Ghat of Ganges to Siliguri at a cost of Rs.14,68,000. This road is 126 miles long and connects Sahebganj to Siliguri. Therefore, Siliguri became the terminal points of the Ganges Darjeeling Road and Hill Cart Road. Importance of Siliguri as it became a junction on the two roads one leading to the north and the other to south.

In 1860 the East Indian Railway had been extended up to Sahebganj and thereafter it was only necessary to travel by road north of this point in order to get to Darjeeling. The journey to the foot of the hills could be performed from Karagola either by *palki* or bullock cart and by *tonga* from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This route from Karagola passed through Purnea, Kishanganj and Titaliya to Siliguri. In 1878 the

Northern Bengal State Railway was opened for traffic up to Jalpaiguri and by the end of that year it had been extended to Siliguri. In 1881 the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company had opened its steam tramway for traffic up to Darjeeling. Up to 1915, the rail journey to Siliguri was broken at the Ganges where the broad gauge line ended and the river crossing was performed in a ferry steamer to the metre gauge system north of the river. The Ganges was bridged in 1915 and the broad gauge system gradually extended northward so that now traveller can reach Siliguri with a night journey of nine hours and be in Darjeeling within 13 to 14 hours of leaving Calcutta.¹⁵ The *tonga* service as said earlier served travellers and traders for long time and the disadvantages of such means of communication led to proposal for the laying of a steam tramway from Siliguri to Darjeeling, Mr. Frankil Prestage, the then agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway Company approached the Government of Bengal with a detailed scheme in 1878. Sir Ashley Eden, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, appointed a Committee to examine the project and this Committee gave the positive report in this manner. Thus in 1878 a firm of Calcutta, namely Messrs Tom Mitchel and Ramsey was appointed as constructors for laying line. The work was started in 1879 and within 1880 the rail line was extended from Siliguri to Tindharia. The original name of this line was *Siliguri-Darjeeling Tramways* but in 1881 the name was changed and became popular as *Darjeeling Himalayan Railways*. Mess Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co of Calcutta was the first managing agent of this company.¹⁶ This *Darjeeling Himalayan Railways* was extended to Kishanganj and the distance between Siliguri and Kishanganj was only 70 miles. However, Siliguri was not connected with the Dooars areas but within some period the work was taken up by the *Bengal Duars Railway* and in 1902 Siliguri was connected with Bagrakot and Assam. The tea gardens in the Terai and Darjeeling were now able to export tea and import coal and foodstuffs via Siliguri. All the trade through Tista valley and with Sikkim and Tibet passed through Siliguri. The Hill Cart Road from Darjeeling and mainline of the D.H.R carry the greater part of the produce of the Sadar Darjeeling Kurseong division.¹⁷ The Siliguri- Kishanganj line as stated earlier leaves the main line at Panchanai Junction, three miles from Siliguri, where it turns westwards and passes through Matigara, one of the biggest hat in entire region. The lines then runs up to Naxalbari, about 14 miles from Siliguri which is near the border of Nepal, an out let for rice and timber from the country. This line further extended towards south-west station named Galgalia, about 29 miles from Siliguri, just inside the Bihar border and only a mile from the boarder of Nepal. This is one of the paddy collecting centres from Nepal.

A branch of this lines further runs southwards passing through Thakurganj, which is again a rice centre and also touching Aluabari, a fairly large centre for jute collection.¹⁸ An Assistant Settlement Officer of Darjeeling Terai states that this railway system has increased the facility of exporting jute from the Terai and importing rice and other articles from Calcutta and the neighbouring districts. He also mentioned that it was due to the extension of the railway that the cultivation of the jute had been increased by more than double during the last decade of the 19th century.¹⁹ In this connection it is to be mentioned here that at that time the construction of roads in Darjeeling district were very expensive and not easy due to several streams and river which was one of the factors for hurdles of road construction. However the Colonial Government took several initiatives to construct bridges over the important rivers to connect plains with the hill. In 1892-1893 a bridge was constructed over the Panchanai river on the 4th mile of Darjeeling Hill Cart Road and was opened for both car and railway traffic.²⁰ Moreover, bridges over the river Balasun and the river Balasun rendered great facility for well communication system of plains with hills.²¹ Thus by the early part of the 20th century Siliguri became a very important junction station for going south i.e Calcutta, to north i.e Darjeeling, to west i.e Nepal and furthermore to the east i.e Dooars and Assam. In this way Siliguri and the whole of Terai became the nodal centre for all communication and the most important point of export of tea to Calcutta and then to other international markets by the end of 19th century.

5:2 EMERGENCE OF SILIGURI: UNION BOARD TO MUNICIPALITY

In the beginning of the 20th century Siliguri was just a village but an important village for its geographical location. Even L.S.S. O' Malley never termed Siliguri as town, in 1907 he stated that in the district of Darjeeling there are only two towns namely Darjeeling and Kurseong but by the end of the said century it emerged as the most important town of the North Bengal.

In 1907 the Sub-Divisional headquarter was established in Siliguri. The people from different parts of the Sub-Continent had cantered around Siliguri particularly due to tea, tourism, timber and transport. The attraction of the business prospect removed the fear of malaria from the hearts of business loving people. Besides tea and timber companies like Mark Mayer, North Bengal Jute Mill, Rsim & Co, Landen Cleark, Raily Brothers and others related with jute business were established in Siliguri.²² These business activities in the southern bank of the river Mahananda had played very important role for the rise of Siliguri as a commercial centre of North Bengal. These

commercial activities also changed the demographic structure of Siliguri as already discussed in chapter II. In 1915 a “Sanitary Committee” was formed in Siliguri. The first President of this Committee was a renowned lawyer Surendranath Bhattacharjee and Secretary Kartik Chandra De.²³ To clear the garbage from non-sanitary latrines and clean the roads were the main responsibilities of this Committee. Actually its initial activities involved overseeing the sweeper in the disposal of night soil near the banks of Mahannanda and Phuleswari rivers and later on Tikiapara. The method of disposal was simple; digging the ground, depositing and covering it. In 1925 an Anglo-Nepali Christian named George Mahbert Subba was elected as the President of this Committee and under his Presidentship provision was made for night lamps on wooden poles on the major roads. Lalit Mohan Dhoni popularly known as Khapachand was the main architect of this job. In Siliguri transport by modern vehicle started after the I.W.W in 1919. It was first time used by Mr. Stephen, who had four motor vehicles which took passenger to Darjeeling. The fare of each passenger to Darjeeling was Rs.19. However, even the bus service of the Terai areas of Darjeeling started in 1925 in the route of Siliguri-Naxalbari.²⁴ The name of the first passenger bus was “Siliguri Motor Service”. The owner of the bus was Ganeshram Prasad and the first driver of the said bus was Md. Faridh.²⁵ Moreover before the formation of Municipality in Siliguri there was only one rikshaw which was pulled by a Bihari person named Janakiram. But after the formation of Municipality there was existence of 450 licensed by cycle in Siliguri town.²⁶ Nevertheless, apart from this Siliguri was not so much populated in 1920s. Sree Satyendranarayan Majumder, a great revolutionary who came in Siliguri in 1920 from Mathabhanga of Cooch Behar wrote some passages in his auto-biography about the isolation of Siliguri during those days. According to him at that time the population of Siliguri was about 3000 to 4000 soul and most of them were belong to the Bihari community.²⁷ Some of them opened shops nearby to cater the needs of the growing population. Some of the Bengalis came with the Maharaja of Burdawan and some came from Rangpur and other adjoining district to serve as clerks, in the Railway stations, tea gardens, jute godowns, saw mills and other various activities. The Marwaris worked as money lenders apart from doing some commercial transaction.²⁸ The exorbitant rate of interest rapidly snow balled the original amount of debt making repayment of the total amount next to impossible. As debts remained mostly unpaid, the Marwaris started acquiring land near Siliguri railway station in lieu of the sum lent. The land holdings near the Town Station now, almost totally belong to the Marwaris who have adopted a

policy to sell the land to the Marwaris only. The land value has increased tremendously. In Khalpara, the Marwari dominated area the land value per *khata* (720 Sq. Feet) was less than Rs.10 in 1920 and after the partition of India in 1947 the land value has raised enormously.²⁹ It may be note that during this period the Burdwan Road, Station Feeder Road, Hill Cart Road and Hospital-Court Road till prison had stone and brick surface roads. The other areas of the present Corporation area had a sporadic habitation, uninhabited land and jungles. Khalpara with many other areas of Siliguri was covered with water and water-hyacinth for most of the year.³⁰ With these growing population the barter economy of the rural areas of Terai transformed into market economy. Siliguri gradually emerged as the best centre for buying and selling agricultural commodities. A weekly market was opened in Siliguri.³¹ An Assistant Settlement Officer during the first quarter of the 20th century observed that “There is no town properly so called in the Terai.” He further stated that in comparison of the thinness of the population there were extraordinarily flourishing centres of trade in Terai. *Hats* were gradually developed in Matigara, Naxalbari, Panighata, Siliguri and Phnsidewa. Apart from jute Siliguri was the largest markets for the consumers of essential commodities.³² Though the population of Siliguri till the thirties of the past century had increased gradually but its overall development was not noteworthy, yet till the first decades of the 20th century there was only one single private owned two-storied *pucca* building named “Harihar Kutir” owned by a lawyer and *jotedar* Harasundar Majumdar³³ on the station Feeder Road. Apart from some Government buildings like railway quarter, hospital etc almost all the houses were made out of wood which was easily available and in this earthquake-prone region the practice of making brick houses was restricted by the Colonial Government which proves that Siliguri though had by then a larger population; there had been little improvement in its performance. Siliguri for the first time in 1931 was declared as IV class town by the Census of India.³⁴ According to the Census Report of 1931, the total number of population in Siliguri town was 6067 persons among them 4182 males and 1885 were females. Siliguri town covered an area of 3.6 sq. miles and the density of population was 1685 persons per sq. mile and the total number of occupied houses was 1604 in numbers.³⁵ In 1941 it had a population of 10,487 which shows a 73 percent increase over the previous Census of 1931, among 7121 males and 3366 persons were females. With an area of 3.6 square miles, it has a population density of 2913 persons per square mile.³⁶ Among them the total number of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe population was 839 (excluding Nepali tribes) in Siliguri town. Out of these 140 were

belong to the Rajbanshis and the three major tribal population of Terai were 14 souls belong to the Santal, 05 were the Mundas and 02 were belong to the Oraon community. Nepali speaking population consisted 856 souls (with 256 persons remain unstated) and out of them 05 were Manger, 39 were Newar, 34 were Tamang, 49 were Gurung and 54 were Sunawar was the prominent.³⁷ The following table (no 5:1) will exhibit the real picture:

TABLE NO 5:1
POPULATION OF SILIGURI TOWN IN 1941

Details of the race, caste and tribes of the population of Siliguri Town.

Muslims		1961
Scheduled Castes		839
Menials	523	
Rajbanshis	140	
Others	150	
Sandals (Tribes)	14	
Meches (Tribes)	0	
Oraons (Tribes)	2	
Mundas (Tribes)	35	
Christians (Tribes)	0	
Others (Tribes)	5	
Plains Hindus (Other than Scheduled Castes)		6758
Bengalis	3302	
Marwaris	303	
Punjabis	114	
Hindi-speaking	2968	
Others	71	
Nepalis		856
Rai	31	
Sherpa	3	
Chettri	200	
Sanyasi	0	
Brahman	46	
Bhujel	1	
Yogi	3	
Christains	1	
Others	9	
Caste unstated	256	
Manger (Tribes)	65	
Newar (Tribes)	39	
Tamang (Tribes)	34	
Damai (Tribes)	6	
Gurung (Tribes)	49	
Limbu (Tribes)	18	
Kami (Tribes)	20	
Sunawar (Tribes)	54	
Yakha (Tribes)	0	
Sarki (Tribes)	8	
Gharti (Tribes)	0	
Others (Tribes)	13	
Other Hillmen		12
Bhutia and Tibetan	10	
Lepcha Buddhist	2	
Bhutia Christian	0	
Lepcha Christian	0	
Others	0	
Indian Christians		42
British		4
Total		10487

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, A. J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.86.]

This urban expansion has taken place in spite of unhealthy and insanitary conditions and has no doubt been due to Siliguri's increasing importance as a focus of communications. The town's population is just under 12 per cent of the population of the Sub-division.³⁸ In March 1938 Union Board was formed for replace the Sanitary Committee. The first President of this board was lawyer Laksminarayan Majumdar. He was followed by George Mohbert. Till 1949 George Mahbert was the President of this board.³⁹ It was the only Union Board in the Darjeeling district and has the usual nine members of whom six were Hindus and three were belong to the Muslims. The Board spends about Rs. 1,400 on Chaukidars and establishment and for other purposes raised Rs. 5,400 in taxation and received grants of about Rs. 1,600 in 1940-41. The following table (no 5:2) will exhibit the main items of expenditure for the year 1940-41:

TABLE NO 5:2

EXPENDITURE OF THE UNION BOARD OF SILIGURI IN 1940-41

Item	Rs.
Roads	350
Drainage	325
Conservancy	4500
Sanitation	540
Schools	400
Dispensaries	200
Miscellaneous	1300

[Source:*Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, A. J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.245.]

A.J Dash observed that though Siliguri from the late thirties of the 20th century witnessed rapid urbanization but the drainage and water supply were quite inadequate.⁴⁰ Most probably it's haphazard and without having proper direction are the main reasons for these defects.⁴¹ In 1938 the conservancy of the Siliguri *bazar* area was handed over to the Union Board for which a contribution of Rs. 2,000 was made by the D.I.F.⁴²

5:3 SILIGURI: MUNICIPALITY TO CORPORATION

The Siliguri Municipality was established on 24th May, 1949 as per the Gazette Notification of the Government of West Bengal dated 29th April 1949 under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932. Initially, it was located in an abandoned small tin roofed single storied house of Mohammad Khudabox on the Hill Cart Road, opposite of the present

Meghdoot Cinema Hall. The first Chairman of the Municipality was appointed by the Government. In those days the S.D.O by virtue of the post used to be the Chairman of the Municipality. Accordingly the first Chairman was the then S.D.O of Siliguri Sachindra Mohan Guha and the Vice-Chairman was Briendra Nath Roy Sarkar. Besides the above the other State Government nominated Commissioners were Abanindranath Bhattacharjee, Pradut Kumar Basu, Bimal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Digendranath Roy Sarkar, Manturam Agarwala, Bindheawari Misra, Rampada Chattopadhaya, Dr. Khirodh Nath Chattopadhay, Dr. Gopal Chandra Ghosh and George Mahbert. According to the rules of that day three-fourth of the Commissioners were elected and the rest one-fourth were appointed by the Deputy Commissioner. The Chairman used to be a Government servant, but this procedure was abolished in 1956.⁴³ On 26th October 1952, the then Governor of West Bengal, Harendra Kumar Mukhopadhaya laid the foundation stone of the “Poura Bhawan” at its present location near Siliguri court which was inaugurated by Bireswas Majumdar on 26th January 1960.

The first elected Chairman under the new amendment Act was Jagadish Chandra Bhattacharya. Thereafter, leaving aside administrator Chairman on few occasion, the successive Chairman of the Siliguri Municipality were Jiban Krishna Dutta, Krishnendra Narayan Choudhury, Swapan Kumar Sarkar, Asok Narayan Bhattacharya and Bikash Ghosh. In 1994 with the conversion of Siliguri Municipality to Siliguri Municipal Corporation (S.M.C), the nomenclature of Chairmen changed to Mayor. The Siliguri Municipality started with 8 wards and gradually increased to 19 in 1964, 30 in late 80s of the past century and finally 47 in 1994 when it was elevated to the status of a Corporation.⁴⁴ It had no Standing Committee function in the decades of 1950s and 1960s. The administrative set up of the Municipality comprised of five departments namely General Administration, Collection, License, Public Works and Sanitation and Public Health.⁴⁵ Till the early 70s of the past century the main responsibility of the Municipality was to clean the road, providing electric light, providing sanitation and others various reforms. In December 1974 Krishnendu Narayan Chaudhuri was elected as the Chairman of the Municipality. In this period due to enormous growth of population in Siliguri Municipality various steps were taken by the Municipality. Rehabilitating the Harijans at Ashrampara, constructing roads, supplying water, providing sanitation, lightening the main roads, watering the roads in summer was done

during this period. The major development plans which were taken during this period are as follows:

- i) Proper town planning and water sewage system, to include Shaktigarh, Dabgram, New Jalpaiguri, Hyderpara, Ghogomali and some other adjoining areas of Darjeeling district but administratively belong to Jalpaiguri district came under Siliguri Municipality.
- ii) To set up a Central Bus terminus in the vacant land of Burma Shell, Caltex and Standard Vaccam Oil Company on the southern side of the Town Station.
- iii) To set up markets at Pradhan Nagar, Rabindra Nagar, Babupara and also at Road Station triangle.
- iv) To build up a stadium at Tilak Maidan which was at that time was owned by the Defence Department and a proposal was adapted to made a fly-over near *kachari* road.

Under the Chairmanship of Swapan Kumar Sarkar the foundation stone of the Kanchanjunga Krirangan was laid in place of Tilak Maidan and consequently some development plans was taken like to reform the roads adjoining the Maidan, to construct a second rail gate beside Town Station and prepare the connecting roads and broadened Kachari road, Station Feeder Road, Burdwan Road, Bidhan Road and Sevoke Road. The plan to bifurcate the only broad road of the city i.e Hill Cart Road, from Road Station to Howrah Petrol Pump was undertaken during this period. The road was decorated by sodium vapour lamps and tube lights and foot path was constructed. Vapour Lamp was also used in adjoining roads of the Municipality and on Bidhan Road, Haren Mukherjee Road, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Road, Station Feeder Road and Sevoke Road. Some parks, libraries, markets, community halls were established by the Municipality. In 1982 a plan was approved to construct an Electric Crematorium and to beatify the Kiran Chandra Shamshan Ghat. Under the tenure of Ashok Narayan Bhattacharjee beautification works of the main roads were done, community toilets were constructed and few bridges were built. Adult education centres were set up in various colonies and various literacy educational plans were undertaken. In the Assembly Election on 20th May 1991 Ashok Bhattacharjee was elected an MLA and became the Municipal Affairs and Urban Development Minister of West Bengal. In his place Bikash Ghosh became the Chairman of the Municipality. Though, in this mean time the West Bengal Assembly on 12th May 1990 officially announced to give Municipal Corporation status to Siliguri in

place of Municipality. In the first election of S.M.C on 15th May 1994, the “Left Front” won the election and Bikash Ghosh was elected as the first Mayor of the S.M.C.⁴⁶

One of the major factors of this transformation of Siliguri is the Sino-Indian War of 1962. As a result of this to provide security of North-East India, a different outlook towards Siliguri had developed by the than Central Government of India. For the national security a number of Military Offices and Divisions were setup. Along with this a number of Military a number of Military stations and Camps for soldiers of the Indian Army, Air Force, B.S.F and S.S.B were established in this region. In connection with this a number of development programmes and economic assistance were provided which helped in the development of this area. Further, the partition of India in 1947 disconnected North-East India from Northern India similarly the central part of Bengal (West Bengal) was separated from northern part of Bengal. In order to solve this problem the than Government of India had set up the Assam Railway Link Project in November, 1947 as a result of which North Station was established in Siliguri which popularly known as Siliguri Junction. In later period with the formation of New Jalpaiguri railway station in 1964 the impotence of Siliguri further increased. Moreover, due to partition of India the geographical importance of Siliguri increased because it became a central place of North Bengal with Balurghat and Malda in western side and Cooch Behar and Alipurduar in eastern side. But before the partition Siliguri as a commercial town was not that important as was Hili (in West Dinajpur) and Haldibari (in Cooch Behar). Due to partition the importance of Hili and Haldibari declined because the trade and commerce of these areas was connected with the districts which now formed a part of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), while the commercial vacuum was filled by Siliguri which emerged as a centre of trade and transport activities.⁴⁷ Thus it can be said that during this period “Siliguri is passing through a process of rapid industrial and urban growth because of the vantage point it enjoys as nerve centre of trade and other communication between the north-eastern states and the rest of West Bengal and Bihar.”⁴⁸ On the other hand the than Divisional Headquarter of North Bengal Jalpaiguri according to Dr. Chandidas Lahiri, after partition of India, due to reorganization of the boundaries between India and Pakistan, the commercial importance of Jalpaiguri declined and within four decades the commercial importance of Siliguri had largely increased.⁴⁹ But before partition, for fancy goods and large amount of purchase the residence of Siliguri had to go to Jalpaiguri.⁵⁰ Even to by school text books Jalpaiguri was the only nearest options in those days.⁵¹ The

devastating flood of Jalpaiguri in October, 1968 further declined the importance of Jalpaiguri for a couple of years while on the other hand trade and commerce was flourishing in Siliguri. Infected traders migrated from Jalpaiguri to Siliguri to conduct trade because Jalpaiguri became basically a sleepy town as Siliguri was in the pre-Colonial period. According to Dr. C.C Sanyal the flood of 1968 completely washed out the hundred years old town Jalpaiguri.⁵² Apart from these after the independence of Burma in 1948 and beginning of the military regime in Burma in 1962 under General Ne Win, a large number of Bengalis migrated to Siliguri with many others part of India⁵³, the Indo-Pak War of 1965, the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the Anti-Foreigner Movement or “*Bengal Khedao Andholan*” during the late 70s and early 80s of the past century in Assam and North-East India, the communal violence of Bangladesh during the early 90s in 20th century as already stated in Chapter II helped for the enormous change in the demographic structure of Siliguri town and persuaded rapid urbanization in Siliguri. Actually in the post-partition period of India in 1947 the rapid growth of commercialization in Siliguri is the development of the town as an important traffic and transportation function of North Bengal as well as North-East India. Not only does all road traffic to and from Assam and from frontier areas pass through the town but it is also a major rail road terminus in North Eastern India.⁵⁴ Further after the building up of Farakka Barrage in 1971, train communication became an uninterrupted feature between Siliguri and Calcutta. It may note that New Jalpaiguri became the first railway station in India to have all the three gauges i.e. broad, middle and narrow gauge rail lines.⁵⁵

Due to above circumstances in the post-1947 period Siliguri’s population started increasing at a very fast pace beginning with the settlement of thousands of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan following the partition of the country. As a result during 1951-1961, Siliguri town witnessed a 101.5 per cent population growth. This unprecedented influx to Siliguri town was mainly due to the urbanization process which started taking place prior to Independence and expansion of the territory sector. According to 1961 Census Report Siliguri Municipality covered an area of 4.97 sq. miles and were inhabited by 65,471 persons. Further according to the said Census Report the town had a total number of 464 factories and the establishment of employing about 4814 workers. The principal industries of the town were the rice and flour mills, bakeries, fruit, plywood industry, furniture industry, automobile servicing industry, soap manufacture, sodium silicate manufacture, aluminium utensils manufacture and tea

industry. The whole area is rapidly developing into an industrial complex. The growth of the towns had started centring round the railway station area with the setting up of godowns and dwelling-cum-commercial establishments. This core of the town has poor accessibility by road and also suffers from bad drainage. The open space in the west and south has rapidly been filled up by large-scale industries like rice-mills, saw mills and setting up of houses for industrial workers. The others areas were mainly residential with a few office buildings interwoven in between the residential houses.⁵⁶ After the construction of the pipelines by the Burma Oil Company in Siliguri town wake came a demand for better housing and the company paid local landlords to built brick and cement houses with modern sanitary fittings. Till then Siliguri did not know of septic tank.⁵⁷ Further for rehabilitation of these refuges the then State Government had sanctioned Rs.1,50,000 to the Siliguri Municipality to construct new roads, make sanitary arrangements and arrange water supply in the refugee concentrations within the municipal limits. In addition the Refuge Rehabilitation Department opened a market on a three acres plot of land at an expense of more than Rs.10,000,00 for the benefit of about 800 refugee traders and named after the then Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy as Bidhan Market. Half of the eight refugee colonies were within Siliguri Municipality and the persons staying there were mostly employed in urban occupations pertaining to the tertiary sector of the economy.⁵⁸ But apart from this it was late realization on the part of the Siliguri Municipality to envision a development plan in the context of the fast pace of urbanization of Siliguri town. The obvious result was the unplanned, haphazard growth with its bearing on the public and utility services. Though, it was after fifteen years of the establishment of the Siliguri Municipality that on 13th June 1964 Siliguri Planning Organization was established under the Development and Planning Department of the Government of West Bengal. For the purpose of future land use pattern of Siliguri, the S.P.O prepared an Interim Development Plan for Siliguri in 1965. This plan also sought to provide a futuristic mapping of the Environmental Impact assessment of the town. Later on 1967, the S.P.O prepared a Comprehensive Development Plan of the town. However, in due course, it was rightly felt that SPO was unable to deal effectively the manifold urban problems facing Siliguri primarily due to two reasons, in the first place, the SPO was recommending authority and not an implementing authority and secondly, the area of the town was not confined to administrative jurisdiction of Siliguri Sub-division as urbanization process resulted in its expansion to the neighbouring Jalpaiguri district. Thus on 1st April 1980 Siliguri –

Jalpaiguri Development Authority was established under the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act of 1979. The earlier S.P.O got subsumed into this newly formed S.J.D.A. The S.J.D.A prepared an Outline Development Plan in 1986 for 260 sq.km of the S.J.D.A area which included the whole of 15.5 sq.km of Siliguri Municipality. This plan got the approval of the State Government in 1992. Further in 1994 Siliguri Municipal Corporation and S.J.D.A jointly planed out an “Approach Paper” on urban development of Siliguri.⁵⁹ But the most interesting aspect regarding this spectacular urban population growth of Siliguri is that there has been without any support by any type of large scale industries. There is practically no big industry in and around in Siliguri which could be ascribed as the main reason for the high growth as in the case of Durgapur. At least on the surface it appears that this growth does not have any production base. This is primarily an out an out commercial centre which cater the growing need of the neighbouring states or countries like Bhutan, Nepal on the one hand and all the states of North East India. Actually Siliguri pull in population movement. This induced migration from rural areas of Siliguri and some adjoining areas of Jalpaiguri. A large percentage of workers are engaged in non-agricultural activities. Moreover in comparison between Kalyani and Siliguri is interesting because the towns are quite different in character. Kalyani is a service town and created in 1950 with a deliberate policy for attracting immigration from the congested Metropolitan Calcutta. In contract Siliguri has developed marketing and distribution centre for North Bengal region, lower Assam, North Bihar, Sikkim and Bhutan. Variations in productivity and economic structure in these two towns has resulted in different urban growth rates in these two areas and nature and extent of their impact on the social and economic structures have been quite different.⁶⁰ Durgapur and Kalyani was mainly industrial town and Siliguri a commercial town rather called it a commercial centre and for this reasons on the basis of 1961 Census data Siliguri has been functionally classified as trade and transport town with accentuation of trading in 1971.⁶¹ During the period 1955-1956 to 1964-1965 the number of Limited Companies increased from 37 to 63 in Siliguri. The number of wholesale establishment increased at the same period from 448 to 881. This also helped for the growth of commercial taxes from Siliguri.⁶² During the period between 1961 and 1971, as already stated in Chapter II, Siliguri Municipality recorded more than double persons per sq.km. as regards to the previous decade. Another interesting thing regarding Municipality is that while the urban areas of the three hill sub-division the women compose 44.82 per cent of the population it was only 42.41 per

cent in the Municipality areas. It was for the reason that most of the immigrants into the urban areas of the hills, except traders from Bihar and Rajasthan, were permanent settlers, where as a great number of immigrants in Siliguri town were traders, skilled or unskilled workers and day laborers who were non-permanent residents.⁶³ Siliguri Municipality with an area of 15.54 km² has 1, 54,378 souls in 1981 i.e an incensement of 56,894 new persons over the decade (1971-1981). This area and population of the town share about 26 per cent of the total urban area and 55 per cent of the total urban population of the district of Darjeeling respectively. The remaining 45 per cent of urban population are shared by other towns of the district.⁶⁴ The following table (no 5:3) will exhibit the Siliguri Municipality in 1986 at a glance:

TABLE NO 5:3**WARDWISE POPULATION OF SILIGURI MUNICIPALITY IN 1986**

Ward No.	Name of the Councillor	Occupation of Councillor	Area of the Ward	As per 1981 census
1	Dilip Roy	RSP (Party Whole timer)	Diseal Colony, Mahananda Colony, Gurung Basti, Mallaguri etc.	22600
2	Jagadish Bhupal	Businessman	Khalpara, Tumul Para, Jyotinagar, Goalpatty, Karbala Basti etc.	9231
3	Binimoy Moulick	Businessman	Mahanandapara, Sevoke Road (Part)	4966
4	Samarendra Sarkar	Businessman	Mahanandapara (Part), Dangipara, Fakirtola etc.	3885
5	Rajendra Kumar Baidya	Businessman	Sevoke Road, Khudirampally, Seth Sreelal Market, Bidhan Market etc.	3450
6	Jatindra Nath Dutta (Kalubabu)	Service	Asrampara, Panjabipara, Harijan Colony	9484
7	Ujjwal Chowchury	Party Whole Timer (CPI)	Bibekanandapally, Purba Bivekanandapally, Nitampally	9022
8	Bikash Ghosh	Professor	Hakimpara, Palpara, Ghoshpara	5607
9	Dibish Ch. Roy	Advocate	Collegepara, Hakimpara (Part), Lichubagan	5423
10	Birendra Chanda	Librarian	Subhashpally, Rathkhola, Rabindranagar, Netajeepally, Daspara etc.	7132
11	Santi Chakraborty	Service	Subhashpally, Durgadas colony, Subhasnagar Colony, Jyotinagar, kshudiram Colony etc.	7302
12	Nikhil Guha	Teacher	1 no. Dabgram, Aurabinda Pally, Rathkhola (Part)	5812
13	Rabin Pal	Businessman	Bharatnagar, 1 no. Dabgram colony	5096
14	Vijoy De	Service	Bharatnagar (S), Deshbandhupara (Part), Sramik nagar, Prankrishna colony etc.	12700
15	Ramkumar Agarwala	Businessman	Khalpara, Sarbahara Colony etc.	5606
16	Kanailal Joshi	Teacher	2 no. Jyotinagar, Tumul Para, Goyalpally etc.	15128
17	Plaban Basu	Advocate	Milanpally	9382
18	Swapan Kumar Sarkar	Professor & Advocate	Babupara, Panitanki Colony, Laketown	3448
19	Kamakhya Som	Teacher	Deshbandhupara, Himachal Sangha, Laketown (Part), Desbandhu Colony	8492

[Source: *Siliguri Purabarta*, Biren Chandra (ed), Siliguri Poursabha, Siliguri, 1986, pp.76-78.]

The classification of the wards on the basis of population reveals that population in majority of the wards i.e twelve out of nineteen were below the average population of the wards and it was high in just two wards. It also reveals that the wards lying mainly at the centre were smaller in size as well as in population than those were situated on the periphery of the Municipality. It may note in this connection that the Ward I had covers largest area (about 3.48 km²) because a large portion of it was occupied by railway territory whereas Ward IV had covered only 0.26 km². So there was a wide difference in sizes between the largest and smallest wards. Moreover it was cleared from the Municipal data that most of the wards i.e Wards XII to Ward XIX were smallest and were located around the centre of the town. The area of the wards was largest towards the north, west and south-east. According to Census of 1981 the density of population in Siliguri Municipality was 9934 persons per km² which was more than double of the district urban average as stated in Chapter II. In comparison with other Class I towns of West Bengal like Kharagpur (7359 persons per km²) and Burdawan (4582 persons per km²) Siliguri had recorded higher population density. Actually in case of Siliguri's urban areas about 5 times change was recorded in 1951 as compared to 1941. This is due to influx of immigrants from East Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947. Further noticeable took place during 1971-1981 due to immigration from Bangladesh.⁶⁵ This rapid urbanization brought *bustee* culture in Siliguri and the year of 90s of the past century saw 48 recognised *bustee* in Siliguri. Though the Siliguri Municipality had no *bustee* at least till 1967 as reported by the then Chairman of the Municipality.⁶⁶ The growth of urban population in Siliguri Municipality in the decade 1981-1991 was 46.83 per cent which was noticeable increase but compared to that of the previous decade i.e 1971-1981 it was less than 58.36 per cent. But one important factor was that Debgram in Jalpaiguri district comprising an area of 21.80 sq. km was annexed to the urban area of Siliguri, showing both Debgram and Siliguri as one unit and later this additional area along with the Municipal area of Siliguri formed into a one single unit named Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994. Though in the time of 1991 Census Debgram had treated as a separate town, showed a striking increase of population of 92.29 per cent which reflects that the people who immigrated from Assam mainly settled down in Debgram area as a result of which Debgram increased so fast in population.⁶⁷ Though, it is also true that 1981 Census proposed "Siliguri however has great growth potential with an almost phenomenal growth of Dabgram on one side, and the growth of Uttar Bagdogra on the other. In between fall North Bengal University and Bagdogra Airport which may

vary well serve as link with core city of Siliguri in near future. The Railway colony of New Jalpaiguri is also too near to Siliguri to be left out.”⁶⁸

In considering the community – wise composition of the population of each ward the major community was found in the Municipality can be derived under nine major categories namely Bengalis, Bihari, Marwari, Punjabi, Nepali, Oriya, Tribal, Muslims and others. As per census of 1991 the Bengalis comprises 64.25 per cent of the total inhabitants of the Municipality and the two other important communities were the Biharis (16.25 per cent) and the Marwaris (6.55 per cent). Regarding the specific localities it needs to be mentioned in this connection as a point of further classification that particular forms of *patti*, *colony*, *para*, *bastee* and *nagar* appear in many cases. The meaning between them is not only different other than the fact that at any instances some of them like *colony* and *nagar* generally indicate a newly settled area of the refugees while *bastee* means usually, but not necessarily a slums. In Siliguri the word *para* for a locality mostly stands for a locality developed earlier, quite often indicating the type of people living in. Such as Babupara means locality inhabited by gentlemen, Hakimpara means locality inhabited by the administrator, which actually even now true as the office and residential quarters of S.D.O and other administrators is situated in that locality. All of them together make the old part of the city or the original nucleus around which later development took place giving rise to outward expansion of the Municipality through decades.⁶⁹ Actually after the partition of India in 1947 as a result of migration from East Pakistan by the Bengalis as well as Biharis, Marwaris and many other communities houses were began to built up in the many unsettled parts of the town and the earlier *jotes* were changed into *para*, *bustee*, *colony*, *nagar* etc. But the most interesting facts during post- partition urbanization in Siliguri was that it was not supported by any type of large or medium industries as like Durgapur, Kalyani and many other cities of West Bengal. Rather it better to called it as the main centre of trade and commerce and Siliguri emerged as a commercial town and not as an industrial town.

Thus the tremendous growth of Siliguri from a Sanitary Committee (1915) to mere class IV town in 1941 with a population of 10,487 heads and registering an increase of 209.72 per cent in one decade alone between 1941 and 1951 when urban population for West Bengal as a whole increased by only 32.58 per cent in 1961. Between 1941 and 1991, the population of Siliguri rose from a mere 10487 to 216950 which meant an increase of 1015.19 per cent over a period of five decades against 197.68

per cent in the urban population of West Bengal as a whole. In other words it may say that during this period the urban population of West Bengal increased by hardly 3 times while in case of Siliguri it was increased over 20 times which cannot be accounted for without in-migration and also more in the form of massive then slow infiltration.

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CHAPTER – VI

POLITICAL TRANSITION: FROM AGITATION TO CONFRONTATION

The political picture of Darjeeling Terai region is an area yet to be explored in academic research. Neither the scholars nor the people of the region here showed any kind of interest in constructing the political movement atlas in the Darjeeling Terai. As has been already discussed in Chapter V, the Darjeeling Terai never came into the limelight before the Chinese invasion in India of 1962. It does not mean that it was a sleepy political region, rather it can be said that a strong under-current of discontent of the poorest of the poor people was gradually seething in the social map of the Darjeeling Terai. The seeds of the discontent were there but could not get any avenue for outburst. Though the Chinese attack not had only prepared the ground for conflagration but also opened-up the flood gates of discontents. In this connection, it is needless to say that, geographically Darjeeling Terai is closely attached with the boarder of Nepal, Bangladesh, China on the one hand and served as a vital link of communication with the states of North East India. This is one of the major points of socio-political-ethnic upsurge in the Darjeeling districts as well as in Terai areas. But other forces were also active in supplying fuel for confrontation which will be discussed in the following way.

Due to its peculiar geographical location the area became a hunting ground of disgruntled peoples of different regions, neighbouring states and countries. The deep jungle, forest, unhealthy condition, dreaded diseases, as already mentioned in Chapter I – were all factors responsible for socio-political isolation of the rural areas of Darjeeling Terai region. Here rural areas meant the tea and agricultural belt of Terai because, though Siliguri is a part and parcel of Darjeeling Terai, it slowly turned into an urban centre in the post-partition period. There was a classic example of transformation of a sleepy hamlet- Siliguri from a Union Board to Municipal Corporation within a very short period in the previous chapter (Chapter V). But this transformation of Siliguri effected very little in the life style of rural areas of Terai region of the district of Darjeeling. Before entering into a thread-bear discussion on the political landscape of Darjeeling Terai, it would be useful to cast the eyes to the turmoil phase of the colonial period. The political participation of Terai people into the main stream, anti-colonial and nationalist freedom struggle movement was not very much highlighting but there were some

example to see their consciousness regarding Independence, unless, it would be difficult to understand the backdrop of the volatile situation of the post-independence period of the rural areas of Darjeeling Terai.

6:1 ANTI-COLONIAL MOVEMENTS IN TERAI

During the last quarter of the 19th century Siliguri with the establishment of railways and plantation economy emerged as an important colonial economic centre. There was a huge inflow of population from the South and South-Eastern parts of Bengal with the development of colonial infrastructure like railways, *kachari*, hospital, telegraph and post office and other administrative departments. So due to job opportunity a considerable number of educated middle class had settled in this area but their participation in the national movement was negligible. Most probably the middle class depended on the British administrative structure for their existence which can be counted as the main reason for their aloofness. As has been already discussed in Chapter II, many tribal like Oraon, Santal, Munda had migrated to this region to work in the tea gardens and as agricultural labourers. The two indigenous groups in Terai area of Darjeeling like Mech and Dhimal had were forced to migrate towards Jalpaiguri and Nepal Terai respectively. They were forced to give up their tribal culture and living style with the expansion of railways, tea industry and deforestation. On the other hand the major indigenous people of Terai i.e. the Rajbanshis were mostly economically affluent *jotedars* and rich agricultural farmers had already coming to an understanding with the Colonial Government. Belonging mostly to the agricultural community the Rajbanshis did not have the urge to participate in the national movement. For agricultural peasant their immediate master were the *jotedars* and the *jotedary* system which prevailed in Terai during colonial period provided a strong socio-political structure which did not allow to penetrate any kind of nationalist feeling. The importance of the Terai besides the tea gardens and frontier region it was strategically important because British recruited the Gorkha soldiers who travelled from Nepal to Darjeeling through Terai. Therefore, the British were keen to take steps to check the growth of national movement in Terai. Furthermore Darjeeling was a 'Non-Regulated' area; the Deputy Commissioner had the power to banish any suspected person from the area within the notice of 24 hours. The lawyers of the region, who were basically settlers, did not want to disturb their colonial masters in defending the natives.¹In spite of these factors there was a growth of

nationalism in this region though late and in scattered form but it affected the people of Terai.

During the last quarter of the 19th century the predominant section of the population of Terai i.e. the Rajbanshis were not much affected by the expansion of the tea gardens. In fact the tea tribal of Terai namely Santal, Munda etc. had migrated from Chotanagpur and Santal Pargans to this region and cleaned the jungles and converted the fallow lands into an agricultural one. On the other hand a good number of Bengali capitalist had invested in the tea gardens from the first decade of the 20th century as said earlier (in Chapter III-setting B). As a result there was a tendency for acquiring land for tea cultivation, apart from the Government *khas* land and forest land most of the agricultural land was the Rajbanshis.² Due to thin population and abundance of land both the buyer and sellers of the land was beneficiary and there were happy dealings. Yet the different magazines and periodicals of the Rajbanshis had expressed in numerous articles about the disadvantages and worse effects of tea gardens in the Terai region of Darjeeling. There were protests against the establishment and growth of the tea gardens in the writing of the Rajbanshi periodicals and the reason was mainly economic condition the community. It is important to cite an example of such writing (in Bengali):

*“Teraite ekta nutun sara pariachhe. Nutun cha bagan hoitechhe. Ehate janasadharaner subidha hoibe, r paramukhapekshi hoe thakite hoibe na. Arthalovei kok kinba daye pariayi hok Teraibaseer dristi ekhan arther dike pariachhe. Kajei companyder o jamir avab haitechhe na. Tahara jaler mato artho dhalitechhen Kintu Ami boli; he Teraibasi dhanee bhadramahodayagan, apnader toh arther pipasa mitilo. Kintu oi j; apnader bikrito jomita shata shata krishijibira rahiachhe, jara cha baganer kaj ghunakshareo jane na, nirakshar, langal o garu jorai jader jeebika nirbaheer ekmatra sambal ba upai ebong jara purba purush theke dukkho kaster shata nirjatan sajjho kariao apan apan matribhumi ba janmabhumi vitatuku pranpane aglaia dharia rahiachhe- tahader janno kono byabastha kariachhen ki? Cha company hoitechhe.Tader ekhan chiradiner mato janmabhumi ba paitrik bhumir maya kataia ekhaan hoite annotro saria parite hoibe.”*³(Appendix-J)

[Free English translation: There is new change in Terai. New tea gardens are opened. The common people will be benefitted, and they will not dependent on others. Either out of greed for money or due to compulsion the people of Terai has sided towards money.

So there is no absence of land for tea garden companies. They are circulating money like water..... But I say that, you, the rich *bhadramahodayagan* of Terai have already fulfilled your thirst for money. But there are many agricultural labourers who are cultivating the land and attached to it as their ancestral homeland without any knowledge about the work in the tea garden, those who only depend on plough and cattle, *bhadramahodayagan* have you thought any alternative subsistence for them? With the expansion of the tea gardens they have to leave their motherland and migrated to some other places for their livelihood.]

From the above discussion it is clear that the Rajbanshi *jotedars* had sold their lands to the newly rising Bengali capitalist class who were tea garden owners as a result of which the Rajbanshi cultivators had become landless. Actually the then Rajbanshi social leaders wanted to detach their community from the tea gardens by propagating the high tradition, aristocracy and racial pride of the community.⁴ Again it is found that due to the expansion of the tea gardens in the Terai there was a huge cutting down of trees and clearing of jungles. As a result of this deforestation of the region the ecological balance was significantly disturbed. Monsoon and rainfall had decreased. Due to the huge transfer of agricultural lands to the tea garden owners as already said in previous chapter (III setting B) , decreasing rainfall the Rajbanshi *jotedars* had expressed their discontent regarding the deforestation and disturbed ecological balance to the British Colonial Authority in the revenue bid meeting.⁵ Moreover, the above mentioned incident proves the fact that the Rajbanshis of the Terai were equally aware and concerned about the environment issues of the region. It is interestingly to note that such incident of environmental awareness and protest meeting for it had occurred in the early 20th century and it was the only protest against the Colonial Government in the entire North Bengal till that period. On the other hand the British Government had also shown eagerness to maintain the ecological balance because cutting of trees in the high altitude of the Himalayas, deforestation to a limited extent for the tea garden expansion and bricks houses in the Terai and hills were forbidden. The construction of houses was restricted and passages to flow water were built. In fact, British clearly understood that deforestation would lead to less rainfall and the expanding green colonialism in terms of tea gardens would also decline.⁶

During the days of the Non-Cooperation Movement the entire Darjeeling district including Terai region remained almost silent. However, some activities were noticed in

Darjeeling hill under the leadership of Dalbahadur Giri,⁷ who was the first men to deliver a lectures in favour of the said movement among the Nepali community and also known as '*Parbatya Gandhi*'. In Siliguri, some persons also avoiding 144 under the leadership of Sieu Mangal Singh, a petty businessman hailed from Bihar. The people of Terai, irrespective of their ethnic and linguistic identities had participated and raised their voices against the British and they were arrested. To felicitate these unknown freedom fighter a meeting was held in front of the Siliguri court which was spontaneously attended by the people of the region. Further, when these national leaders were put to trail in Siliguri court and transferred to Jalpaiguri to Siliguri prison the town station of Siliguri were covered with many people and the men and women eager to take a look at their leaders filled with nationalism.⁸ Due to Chittaranjan Das's illness Gandhiji took the responsibility to visit him in Darjeeling in 1925 and on his way back to Jalpaiguri on 9th June Gandhiji was a guest of Sieu Mangal Singh.⁹ At that time Gandhiji had addressed a meeting held in Tilak Maidan (known as Kanchanjunga Stadium) describing the objective of Non-Cooperation Movement. The people of Terai soon became engrossed in the (write in Bengali) songs:

“Gandhi Raja ailoo dyashe,

Larai kare Shyal Dase.

Porio na reshmi churi

R bilaitee saree.”¹⁰

[Note: Shyal Dase i.e C.R.Das.]

[Free English translation: Gandhi Raja came into our country; C.R. Das is fighting with the British Government. Do not wear colourful fine bangles and discard foreign *sarees*.]

After few days of Gandhiji's visit to Darjeeling on 16th June C.R. Das had expired in Darjeeling and his dead body was brought from Darjeeling to Sukna station and from Sukna station to Siliguri Town station. A huge crowd had gathered irrespective religion, race and creed displaying national unity and a spirit of anti-colonialism. A stationary shop was established during this period in Siliguri under the name of C.R. Das better known as '*Deshbandhu Bhandar*'.¹¹ During the Non-Cooperation Movement another important leader from Terai was Laban Singh popularly known as '*Swadesi Dacoit*'.¹² The local people called him so because he used to lead dacoity in the residence of rich *jotedars* and *Mahajans* only and distributed the wealth among the poor and needy.¹³ The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-1932 though affected the Darjeeling

district and Terai area much later but impact was not completely absent. In an interview taken by Ananda Gopal Ghosh from the freedom fighter Samarendra Dutta Roy that there were 65 members from Darjeeling participated a meeting during the Civil Disobedience Movement in Calcutta. They were under the leadership of Sieu Mangal Shing. However, most of them were residents of Kalimpong.¹⁴ Besides these there was Nagendra Nath Roy from Tarbandha better known as '*Tarbandha Gandhi*', Harshabardhan Das of Phansidewa, Pathar Singha of Thikni Kata *jote* who also contributed and participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement.¹⁵ In 1930s (8th May, 1934) witnessed the rise of extremism in the national movement in Dajeeling. One incident of revolutionary extremism i.e an attempt to murder Sir John Anderson, the then Governor of Bengal in the Race Course Ground near Lebong of Darjeeling created a sensational development of nationalism among the people of Terai.¹⁶ In spite of the severe police investigation they were unable to arrest the major suspects namely Ujjal Majumdar and Monoranjan Banerjee. They were successful to flee from Siliguri by train named North Bengal Express to Calcutta.¹⁷ Though they were later arrested by the police. But the incident led to different farms of suppression by the police in the town of Siliguri. The police led raids and searches in the residences of Lakhinarayan Majumdar, the then President of the Siliguri Union Board, Annanda Charan Bagchi, Bhagabatil Lal Agarwala, Sieu Mangal Singh and others.¹⁸ Furthermore, Bengali youths both girls and boys within the age of 14-40 were to have 'Identity Cards' which were either red, yellow and white. The holders of red card cards had to appear in the police station every day. White card holders were the least suspect but the yellow cards holders were to appear before the police station once a week. They were not free from suspicion.¹⁹ Birendra Roy Sarkar, the then secretary of the '*Terai Jotedars Samittee*' had strongly protested against this system and in 14th May 1934 Siliguri Bar Association and a group of Rajbanshi people had organised a protest meeting. In the early thirties of the past century (1931) Sieu Mangal Singh and Satin Sen of Barishal had claimed to form the Darjeeling District Congress of Siliguri. Though, in 1925 Congress Committee of Darjeeling was formed in Kalimpong as said earlier and the establishment of a separate branch in Siliguri led to differences between the two sections of Congress Committee in the district of Darjeeling. Ultimately in November 1931 the leadership of Provincial Bengal finally approved the Congress Committee of Siliguri as the headquarter of the Darjeeling district Congress office.²⁰ Nevertheless, in spite of above differences, opinions and circumstances, one important incident occurred in Matigara areas of Terai during Civil-Disobedient

Movement. Sieu Mangal Singh, the pioneer Congressite leader and freedom fighter of Terai delivered his lecture in favour of the Indian freedom struggle in the Matigara *hat*. The poor peasants and the tribal tea workers of Darjeeling Terai generally used to follow his lecture silently but one day these peace loving people revolted and looted the *goddis* of the *Mahajans*. Though there was no violent political motivation behind this incident but a large number of police was posted and many male and female workers were arrested and they were put in jails for a long time.²¹

The people of Terai were immensely enthusiastic and courageous to participate in the Quit India Movement. But there is a little controversy regarding the starting date of the Quit India Movement in Siliguri sub-division.²² Though, on the eve of the movement the British Government had arrested Sieu Mangal Singh and Brjendranath Basu Roy Choudhury on 16th August 1942. After the arrest of the primary leaders Bireswar Majumdar, Pratul Maitra, Dhirendranath Roy and many others took over the charges to organise Quit India Movement in Siliguri. On 9th (or 8th) September 1942²³ the well known Congressite leader as well as father of Naxalite leader Charu Majumdar, Bireswar Majumdar took the leadership to organise a procession²⁴ of 1000 men and women shouting slogans ‘*Engraj Bharat Charo*’ (English Leave India), ‘*Union Jack Nipat Jao*’ (Union Jack Decline) etc in Siliguri town. The procession went around the town and then protested in the Siliguri police station. The procession turned violent gradually as some men in the rally carried *lathis* and bamboo sticks and others started to throw stones and bricks to the police station. The situation further deteriorated and, therefore the then Sub Divisional Officer K.K.Ghosh ordered to fire to the crowd.²⁵ The Government Officials said that in this incident 4 persons were killed and 14 persons were wounded.²⁶ But according to an eye witness in that incident 7 or 8 people were killed by the police.²⁷ Among the martyrs of the incident the body of Chabila Singha and Mahabir Singha were identified and the persons who were wounded in this incident were Kartik Ghosh, Hajari Beniya, Mahadev Banedial and many others. Haridas Majumdar, Manmohun Roy, Santosh Kumar Das, Sabitri Sengupta, Baradakanta Bhattacharjee, K.N. Chatterjee (Babupara), Asutosh Biswas, Bijaykrishna Ghosh (Deshbandhupara), Sunil Kumar Mukherjee (Millan Pally), Adhir Kumar Sanyal and Nirmal Bhusan Roy (Mahananda Para), Chittadayal Chakrobatry (Hakimpara), Dr. Brojendranath Basu Roy Choudhury’s daughter Srimati Sita Basu Roy Choudhury, Srimati Kalidasi Sengupta, Dr. Gopal Chandra Ghosh and many others had participated and contributed in the this rally

against the British during Quit India Movement in Siliguri. Further names of the student of Siliguri Boy's high School who participated in this rally were Dilip Kumar Roy Sarkar, Upendranath Das and Dipendranath Roy is prominent.²⁸ Besides these names there were others from outskirts of Siliguri town namely Chaitanya Sannyasi and his wife Abueshwari Sannyasi of Mallaguri, Tarkchandra Roy Sarkar, Amritalal Roy Sarkar and Balendranath Roy Sarkar of Kharibari, Kunjalal Malakar of Atharkhai, Chandrakanta Singha and others had participated from Terai region in the Quit India Movement.²⁹

Meanwhile there was the outbreak of W W II followed by the Bengal Famine of 1943. The Colonial Government tried to enact a law by which food grains could be collected (procurement) from the *jotedars* of the Darjeeling Terai to provide the famine stricken areas. The *jotedars* of Terai at this hour became very angry and they were protested against the anti-Colonial Government as because they were the worst sufferers by this decision. In this situation to protect them, the *jotedars* of Terai formed the '*Terai Mangal Samiti*'. The first elected President of the *Samiti* was Digendranath Roy Sarkar from Siliguri and Nagendranath Roy Sarkar from Tarbandha as Secretary. Besides this Amar Roy from Ambari, Tarakchandra Roy Sarkar from Kharibari and many others became the members of the '*Terai Mangal Samiti*'.³⁰ In fact, the *Samiti* aimed to create a harmonious relationship between the *jotedars* and the tenants or agricultural labourers and maybe it was somehow successful because the Tebhaga Movement had not effected very much in Terai of Darjeeling district.³¹ An eminent sociologist Partha Mukherjee observes that the first peasant committee under the inspiration of the Communist workers was established in the Darjeeling Terai in a place called Patharghata in 1946. Even as the Tebhaga Movement came to an end in Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur districts, this newly established committee under the leadership of the three brothers Atin, Nripen and Souren Bose and Bandhan Oraon made for cible demands for two-third share of crops for the *adhiars* on the *khamar* of Bhagwan Dayal Singh, a big *jotedars* who hails from Uttar Pradesh. The police were called, seven arrests were made, and the leaders were forced to sign a bond under section 107 of Indian Penal Code undertaking to refrain from such illegal activity in that region.³² On the other hand according to Kalipada Dhar, a veteran fighter of Terai states that the Tebhaga Movement was restricted up to Kamlabagan and Phansidewa areas in Terai.³³ But the official records declares that Tebhaga Movemnt was

organised by the Communists in December 1946 and it had spread to 4, 5 and 6 no Union of the Siliguri town, Bagdogra and Naxalbari under Kharibari *thana*.³⁴

Actually due to the feudal structure of social and economic system and scanty population the growth of national movement and its participation was not so strong before the 1942 Quit India Movement. In the Siliguri *thana* and nearby areas the participants mostly were the middle class gentry. There were also women and participants from the lower classes like workers, agriculturalists which is remarkable. Though the people of Terai were not so politically conscious in the pre-Independence period yet there were four men to sacrifice their lives and took to martyrdom during the time of Quit India Movement. It however revealed the growth of political unity and served as a preparing ground for further movement in the Terai.

On the other hand the northern part of the river Mahananda in Terai there was a wide extent of tea gardens just like a fortress. To access into the tea gardens was difficult and due to strong vigilance by the *bagan chaukidars* no secret political activities could be done in small size tea gardens of Terai. Even some of the planters used to keep 'gundda bahinee' to eliminate ruthlessly any attempt to organise any political movement in the tea gardens. The 'North Bengal Mounted Rifles', a regiment maintained by the British planters was unceremoniously disband on 14th August, 1947 i.e the day before Indian Independence.³⁵ However, the late formation of INC and Communist Party of India's wings in Terai was responsible to organise any political movements in this area. Moreover, the Congress Committee of Siliguri was dominated by the Indian Tea Planters and rich *jotedars* of Terai. These influential *jotedars* and tea planters did not allow the INC activist to perform any activities in the tea gardens as well as agricultural belt in Terai as they were performing in Assam and the Dooars region. This indicates the different outlook of the INC during the colonial period over the class cooperation. The so-called Bengali *bhadralok* class of Siliguri town, particularly for their superior mentality kept aloof themselves from the Rajbanshis and the tribal of the tea garden.³⁶ During the mid- forties of the past century, the Communist cadres of Darjeeling Terai were engaged to mobilise the peasants and the tea workers under one umbrella. Among them Bhupen Bhowmik, and the three Bose brothers were prominently named Souren, Biren and Athin. At that time forty workers and their families of a European tea garden of Terai named Ganggaram were evicted and the evicted families of the said garden appealed the Communist cadres of Terai for help. But no such help, even a protest could

be done by the Communist against the authority of the said garden.³⁷ This incidence indicates that till the Independence of India the Communist could not hold strong roots in the rural areas of Terai. Though after this incident Bhupen Bhowmik with the help of a *sardar*, Jaladhar by name tried to form an union for the workers of Merry View Tea Estate. But the management of the garden came to know all these secret developments and they took some measures against the participants. Sabrati Mia, a leading initiator in this respect was suspended immediately and was driven out from the garden. The commissions of *sardar* Jaladhar for his supplying collie in the garden was stopped, and he was told not to enter the garden in near future.³⁸ Thus an effort to form an union in the tea areas of Terai could not be materialise. In the meantime the General Election came closer and the Siliguri Bidhan Sabha was formed including Rajganj of Jalpaiguri and Siliguri *thana* region. A peasant leader of Tebhaga Movement Radha Mohan Barman contested in the election in favour of the Communist Party of India against the INC candidate of Jalpaiguri Raja Prasanna Dev Raikat. Raja Prasanna Dev Raikat won the election but it gave the Communist to form a '*Kisan Samiti*' in the Darjeeling Terai. This type of incidents in the Terai create ideological differences among the Communist cadres in latter period and a group lead by Charu Majumder, Kanu Sanyal and many others formed a historic Naxalbari Movement in the Darjeeling Terai after Chinese aggression in 1962 will be discussed in the up- coming parts of this chapter.³⁹

6:2 POLITICAL TURMOILS IN TERAJ AFTER INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

But after partition and Independence of India the slow but steady transformation in the demographic pattern of Darjeeling Terai radically changed the political scenario in this area. The helpless refugees of East Pakistan had taken shelter initially in the Siliguri and surrounding areas but later on in the disconnected villages of Terai. In this connection it may be note that before the partition of India in 1947 the people of Bihar, Nepal, North-West Provinces of India, and other parts of India, as already discussed in Chapter II , had come here and settled permanently, though in Siliguri proper. This resulted the birth of a un-seened and un-exhibited demographic change in the Terai areas as because it was a sharply populated area. Naturally these silent demographic changes did not exhibit the eyes of people. But, after the Chinese invasion, the then Central Government of India, first time realise the important of this 'chicken neck' i.e. Siliguri, the gate way of North East India. So, with the opening of the defence establishment by the Government created a new Terai, its uni-linear demographic composition suddenly

transformed into a multi linear one. The beneficiaries of these new changes were mostly the migrant, the new settler and the refugees of East Pakistan, not the indigenous people who were mostly the Rajbanshis and the tea tribes of Terai. In this transition phase of Terai, it is necessary to throw some light on the political activities of both the national and regional parties upon the Terai. The INC was definitely a premier political organization of this area but under any circumstances the activities of the Communist Party of India could not be neglected as already discussed earlier. The Tebhaga-Telangana presents uprising had left a long shadow upon the workers of the Communist Party of the region. As already state in Chapter III that the region of Terai was an agricultural and vis-a-vis a tea-belt one. Naturally the CPI of the late 40s, 50s and 60s of the past century had actively espoused the grievances and distresses of the tea tribes as well as the poor agricultural present cultivators. The poverty stricken people of the rural Terai area had deeply impressed by the ideological programme of the CPI. The life style of the Communist cadres had also a deeply impact on the Rajbanshis and the tribal workers in the tea garden areas of this region.

Apart from partition the facts which brought in its baggage's both the element of progress and regress was the historic abolition of the *zamindari* system in 1953. It was definitely a progressive measure for liberating the exploited peasant cultivators from the hands of the landed gentry but what was more interesting is that this abolition of *zamindari* system was also become an important factors behind the ethnic unrest in the rural areas of North Bengal as well as in Terai. The abolition of *zamindari* system was a common demand of all the political groups and parties but undoubtedly the abolition was blessings to the post-partition migrated peasant from East Pakistan, though this is a general observation. On the other hand the result of this abolition in the northern districts of North Bengal i.e Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri on the one hand and, erstwhile princely state of Cooch Behar was responded in different manner. The *jotedars* or landed gentry of these areas did not well come it, equally it is true that they had the worst suffers of the abolition of the *zamindari* system. The ground reality was that the Rajbanshis i.e. the single largest ethnic group of this region was mostly depend upon agriculture. This is the main reason that the Rajbanshis did not see any interest in modern education, banking, and industries including tea garden.⁴⁰ Obviously, when the *zamindari* system was abolished and Estate Acquisition Act was passed in 1953⁴¹ the landed gentry of this area was lost their lands because the Government fixed the upper selling of the quantity of

land per family 25 acres including orchards, ponds etc. So the indigenous Rajbanshi people become pauper over night. This drag give both the positive and negative elements of the abolition of *zamindari* system in the rural areas of the Darjeeling Terai very much clearly. So the abolition of the *zamindari* system had given the birth of a new kind of agitational politics as outset and finally the confrontational politics. There after various national and state wise incidents which also effected in the Terai area is to be discussed in this phase.

The administrative structure of Terai was changed after the implementation of States Reorganisation Committee Report in 1956 by the Parliament of India. According to this some areas of Chopra police Station under Bihar were included with Darjeeling Terai. As a result of this a new problem was created. The *jotedars* of Bihar whos ancestral homeland incorporated with West Bengal could not get any compensation like its counter parts in West Bengal. Sampad Roy, a leading anti-Naxalite political leader of Chaterhat had told Dr. Ananda Gopal Ghosh in his conversation that “I could not get any compensation from the Government of West Bengal for losing the land of my forefathers. Neither the Bihar Government nor the Government of West Bengal did pay any heed to our problem.” In addition to this certain other kinds of disadvantages like tax, measurement of land etc was also created among the cultivators who were come to Darjeeling Terai area after 1956. It was a grievance of the Terai *jotedars* who came from Bihar particularly after the States Reorganization Act of 1956. In lieu of this the ‘*Banga-Bihar Sanjuktikaran Birodhi Aandolan*’ had also rocked in the political map of West Bengal but there was little response against in the rural areas of Darjeeling Terai.⁴² On the other hand the Estate Acquisition Act of 1953 was not operated in full form in the early phase in North Bengal. Naturally the *jotedars* who were mainly the supporters of INC in the rural areas of Terai had tried to keep the *khas* land or vested land in their hand by converting these land to the relatives, servants and many other persons. This way they had tried to avoid to the crisis but after the installation of the first non- Congress United Front Government (UFG) in West Bengal on 2nd March 1967, comprising CPI, CPI(M) and Bangla Congress, a breakaway group from Congress the scenario had changed drastically. It is decided to expedite the implementation of land reforms. Harekrishna Konar, veteran CPI (M) peasant leader, as land revenue minister announced a programme of quick distribution of surplus land among the landless. He also called for peasants’ initiative and organised forced to assist the process of the implementation.⁴³

This brought a tremendous change in the rural politics of northern Bengal. The Communist i.e the CPI and CPI (M), the two major partners of the UFG had formed a committee in the rural areas of North Bengal to restore the '*khas jomi*' or vested land from the hands of the *jotedars*. This attended to the birth of a serious and violent political clash in the rural areas of North Bengal as well as in Terai. Apart from this the collection of levy on rice was also polluted the social atmosphere of the rural areas of northern part of North Bengal. In this regard it would be mentioned the name of Dinesh Chandra Dakua, a veteran leader of CPI (M) who had written a book named '*Uttarer Golpo*'. In this book he had drawn a pen-picture on the economic sufferings of the *jotedars* of the northern part of North Bengal.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the collection of levy on rice was also responsible for the birth of discontents among the *jotedars* because the Government had demanded levy on rice production in accordance with the quantity of land. For example, if a *jotedar* had 75 *bighas* of land, the officials under the rules laid down by the Government demanded 4 mounds of rice in each *bigha* of land. It means the *jotedars* was forced to give levy on rice roughly 300 mounds. But the basic point is that the area is basically non-irrigated and the *jotedars* did not know the system of using fertilizers in raising the production. Though at that time the productive capacity of per *bigha* of land was roughly 4-5 mounds in these areas but the Government Officials demanded 4 mounds of rice in each *bigha* of land as said earlier. This was possible for the landed gentry and cultivators of the Burdwan, Birbhum, Hoogly etc areas because these are irrigated zones and the prosperous peasants and landed gentry was accustomed in using fertilizer for increasing their production.⁴⁵ But this 'stream roller of socialism' of the first UFG had greatly supplied the fuel for *jotedars* discontent. All these factors contributed to birth a new political alignment in northern part of North Bengal. These disgruntled *jotedars* had laid the foundation of a new political party in latter phase, known as Uttarkhanda Dal will be discuss later phase of this chapter.⁴⁶ In the meantime the Communist China had invaded India in 1962 and Darjeeling Terai became one of the affected epicentres of such event. Another incident, however not directly effect in Darjeeling Terai was the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. But the most important event during this period which gave birth, a strong confrontational politics in Darjeeling Terai was the historic Naxalbari Movement in 1967.

6:2:1 THE HISTORIC NAXALBARI MOVEMENT IN DARJEELING TERAI

The Naxalbari Movement⁴⁷ described by People's Daily, the mouth piece of the Chinese Communist Party as 'a peal of spring thunder' that 'crashed over the land of India'⁴⁸ was started in a small and sleepy hamlet under Siliguri sub-division known Naxalbari and then some parts of two other police stations of Darjeeling Terai namely Kharibari and Phansidewa comprising almost 1,67,000 souls according to the Census of 1971.⁴⁹ Though, within a short time it was spread in the different nukes and corners of the sub-continent as socio-economic struggle to fight for the rights of landless peasants against the rich landed classes like the *jotedars* and the moneylenders – the class widely seen as exploiting the poor people. The movement also became popular amongst the lower working classes in tea gardens, factories, Government and public under taking sectors and many other fields.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, it is also noted that the soil of the Naxalbari was fertile for the upsurges of various peasant agitation from the fifties of the past century as said earlier.

After the split in Communist Party in India in 1964,⁵¹ the Siliguri, Sub-divisional Committee in course of time took up more pro-Chinese stand within the CPI(M).⁵² Charu Mazumder, one of the major leader of this committee and it had been clear for some time, at least since 1965, that his ideas about agrarian revolution and armed struggle, apparently based on Mao Zedong's thought, were different from the official CPI (M) position. He did not believe that land reform was possible through legal methods, but argued this path only deadened the revolutionary urges of the peasants. To be politically meaningful, land had to be seized and defended through violent means. To concretize their ideas, Charu Mazumder, Kanu Sanyal, Jangal Santhal, Khokan Majumder, Khodan Mallick, Punjab Rao, Kadam Mallick. Panchanan Sarkar, Souren Bose and many other comrades organised a peasant conference in Azmababad T.E in Naxalbari police station only sixteen days after the UFG had come to power in Bengal.⁵³ A 42 year old-delegate, who has spent 14 years of his life in jail described the 'Link' correspondent about this March conference in this manner: "There were 500 delegates at the conference and some observers. Many come with bows and arrows. A discussion began on the tactics of the movement and its objectives. In the course of the discussion it was revealed that among those whose lands had been forcibly occupied were some workers of the Bijaynagar tea estate. According to evidence collected by Left Communist leaders, 25 workers of the Merry View tea garden had also fallen victims to forcible occupation of land. Some 20 of

them were Left Communists.” Further he said in this conference Kanu Sanyal told “Everything will depend upon our committee. It will decide to whom to give and to whom not to give land. We shall not give the smallest piece of land to those who are not with us.”⁵⁴ By this time after the defeat Jangal Santhal, the official candidate of the CPI (M) from Phansidewa constituency in the General Election held in 1967 the peasants leader thing that their own party had now come in to the power because the Congress Party in the state lost to CPI (M) and its UFG allies as already stated. The leaders declare that not a single peasant would be allowed to starve as long as there were paddy stocks in the houses of the *jotedars*. The rampage that followed many erstwhile Rajbanshi *jotedars* flees their homes for safer refuge.⁵⁵ According to the sources in between April and May 1967 around 15,000-20,000 peasants became full-time activists, peasants committee formed in the villages became the nuclei of armed guards, who occupied land, burnt land records, declared debt cancelled, delivered death sentences on hated landowners and set up a parallel administration in some areas of Terai.⁵⁶

During the end of March, 1967 the authority of Sanyasithan T.E forcibly tried to evacuate the peasants from the land of Jabar Ali with the help of police. But within a very short time 200-300 peasants and some tea garden workers had assembled there and the authority became helpless. Actually after this incidence the peasants organised a procession and raised their slogan against the *jotedars*.⁵⁷ On 7th May 1967 “a sub-divisional conference of the peasants” was held in Badurjhuli or Bandarjhuli under Buraganj Gram Panchayat. In this conference various leaders promote the peasants for an agrarian struggle and Kanu Sanyal, one of the prime architects of this movement said “from tomorrow *jamindari* and *jotedary raj* will be ended.” The peasants spontaneously replied in an active manner and on 8th May an armed struggle was started in the areas of Hatighisha, Buraganj and Chowpukhuria under Naxalbari police station and some other parts of Darjeeling Terai. Crops were forcibly taken; some small *jotedars* left their houses, paddy was confiscated and it was distributed among the poor peasants.⁵⁸ On 24th May 1967 in Bangaijote village under Naxalbari police station some agricultural tribal people viz Santal, Oraon, Munda and also the indigenous Dhimal peasants along with some women and children had taken a long march with slogans like ‘*langal jar, jomi tar*’ i.e ‘who till the land, the land belong to him’[free English translation] against the *jotedars*. To suppress this procession police had fired and six women and one child had died in this incident.⁵⁹ A Sub- Inspector of West Bengal police was hit by arrows to

which he ultimately succumbed, Mr. Wangdi by name. But Amit Bhattacharya said that 11 persons including 8 women and 2 children were killed by the police. They were Dhaneswari Devi, Fulmani Devi, Gaudrau Saibani, Nayaneswari Mallick, Samaswari Saibani, Simaswari Mallick, Sonamoti Singh, Surbala Barman - the eight martyrs and Kharsingh. The two babies were about six months old each who were tied behind the backs of their mothers and whose bodies were pierced by bullets.⁶⁰ Tridib Chowdhury, the then M.P from West Bengal said that 10 tribal people were killed by the police and also express his eagerness about this incident.⁶¹ During course of time the Naxalites also killed 9 *jotedars* in their insurgency and most of them were the Rajbanshis.⁶² This led the foundation of the 'Resistance Group' under the leadership of Sampad Roy, a Rajbanshi *jotedar* of Chaterhat to protect the *jotedars* of Terai.⁶³ These gradually changed the political atmosphere and became one of the major factors in the far reaching ethnic confrontation in Terai.

The confrontation was taking its roots, a bloody and topsy-turvy situation was engraved the entire Darjeeling Terai region. The CPI (M) leaders could easily see that the Naxalbari peasants were being led into a suicidal confrontation with the state. The state level CPI (M) leader, in this situation could not further sanction the action of the Naxalbari Comrades. Persuasion was tried first and then Harekrishna Konar, the then Land Revenue Minister of the West Bengal Government went to Siliguri and, according to his version, got the leaders to agree to surrender all persons wanted by the police and to stop all unlawful activities and to cooperate in the legal distribution of land in consultation with local peasant organization. The local leaders denied any agreement and, anticipating repression, began to incite the peasants against the police. After this, things took their predictable and inexorable course, with vicious circle of attacks on police, police reprisals, and further clashes and so on. The CPI (M) was in an unenviable position, trying for some time to steer a middle course between support for rebels and police repression, and making further attempts at conciliation by sending a cabinet mission of the UFG. It appears from some sources that peasants did want to negotiate but were brushed aside by Charu Mazumder. The CPI (M) had to ultimately condemn and expel the dissident leaders or resign from the Government. It chose the former and this triggered the process of the coming together of the extreme left forces, first into a committee to help the Naxalbari peasants and later the formation of the CPI(ML)⁶⁴ in April 1969.

Sunil Sen observes that “It would be fatuous to think that the peasant struggle in Naxalbari suddenly flared up in 1967. The fact is that Naxalbari witnessed continuous peasant movement since 1946.”⁶⁵ Even Amiya Kumar Samanta says “The Terai agitation of 1967, it appears, was influenced by the general political climate of time and moulded by the attitude of the local political leaders. Charu Majumder is regarded as the main inspiration behind the agitation.....Majumder’s political attitude was greatly modelled by the Tebhaga movement in 1946-48 in which he had participated....The course of the Tebhaga movement left an indelible mark on the mind of the Majumder and he was convinced of the necessity of arming the peasantry for a more effective peasant struggle.”⁶⁶ Actually during the Tebhaga Movement of 1946 the *bargadars* were first drawn their protest against *jotedars*. Again in after 1955 there was a movement in Terai for the occupation of *benami* land. Moreover Charu Majumder and other leaders anti establishment attitude have no doubt influenced the poor peasants of this region. According to Promode Sengupta “The greatest contribution of the armed peasant rising of Naxalbari is that it has unmasked the revisionist, parliamentary leadership of the Indian Communist parties and unhealed the prime necessity for armed revolution before all. The armed rising of Naxalbari peasants was most significant episode in India’s revolutionary mass movement. Naxalbari started a new era in the liberation way of the Indian masses.”⁶⁷

One interesting facts came out during the field survey that thousands of peasants were arrested, punished or tortured during this period and, therefore, no cultivation work in the field was done by many peasants. This naturally affected their financial condition. They had no money to pay dues of the pleaders, purchase seeds for further cultivation or even purchase food for their family members. Firstly they had to sale their ornaments, cattle and goats but finally they had no other alternative but to sale their lands for fulfilment of their essential necessities and for trail in court cases. During this time some tribal workers of the tea garden in Naxalbari region had purchased their lands and became the land owner. On the other hand, many peasants of this region did the same and they were alienated from the lands and became landless. These rural people were largely Rajbanshis and later became agricultural workers under the *adibasi* workers or plucking tea leaves in *chai bagan*. In mostly happened in Buraganj region and the buyer were mainly Christian’s tribal people who did not participate in the Naxalbari Movement. This is one of the true ironies in the history of Darjeeling Terai.⁶⁸

6:2:2 UTTARKHANDA DAL AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN DARJEELING TERAI

But it is very interesting to note that at the initial stage, the effort of the Uttarkhanda Dal (U.K.D) to form party units like *Anchalik Committees*, *Thana Committees*, *District Committees* etc was confined only in two districts of North Bengal i.e Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. Thus, it may be said that the U.K.D had no any penetration or giving in interest in other three districts of West Bengal viz. Darjeeling, erstwhile West Dinajpur and Malda at this stage of its organizational activities. In this connection it is also interesting to note that till the beginning of 1980s and onwards, the leader of the U.K.D radically changed their aims and objectives and for the first time demand for a separate state of '*Kamotapur*' consisting of five district of North Bengal viz. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Terai areas of Darjeeling, West Dinajpur and Malda within Indian Union. Thereby, the U.K.D, completely dominated by a section of an ethnic group of North Bengal i.e the Rajbanshis in the post- Independence West Bengal added a new dimension in the political scenario of Darjeeling Terai as well as North Bengal will be discussed in this phase briefly.

Historically it was found that the first demand for the formation of a separate state for the scheduled caste people of the northern region of Bengal in modern period towards the end of the colonial rule was made by Sri Jogendranath Mondal, the leader of a East Bengal schedule caste community in a public meeting held in Kharibari in Darjeeling Terai on 4th May 1947. In this meeting he strongly opposed the proposed partition of Bengal and stated that "if it is being implemented at all, then we demand a separate state viz. '*Rajhasthan*' in the name of Rajbanshi people. The proposed Rajbanshi state (province) will consist of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur district as well as Purnea district of Bihar and Goalpara district of Assam".⁶⁹ But it is very much interesting to note that the native state Cooch Behar, the citadel of the Rajbanshi community was not included in the proposed '*Rajhasthan*' province of Sri Jogendranath Mondal. Historians and the Rajbanshi intellectuals say that as Sri Mondal was an outsider and belong to a non- Rajbanshi scheduled caste community of Eastern Bengal., so he did not include Cooch Behar state in his proposed state of '*Rajhasthan*'.⁷⁰ But at the same time it is also true that the political fate of the native state of Cooch Behar was not decided till then and also it was not decided whether it would remain independent or join in India or Pakistan. Again, another question may be put here that why did Sri Mondal only include the Rajbanshi inhabited area and not other non-Rajbanshi scheduled caste area

including his own district Barishal is a fact of great mystery even today. However, the first demand for a separate state for the Rajbanshi community was raised by the Cooch Behar Hitasadhani Sabha, a local group or party, controlled and dominated by the Hindu and Muslim Rajbanshi *jotedars*. Though, in the different stages the *Hitasadhani Sabha* had changed their demands and concept of separate state which was totally different from that of the U.K.D.

Again in May 1955, when the two members of the State Reorganization Committee (S.R.C) viz Dr. Hridaynath Kunzou and K.M. Pannikar visited Darjeeling, the '*Sarba Sampradaya Zella Sangathan*', demanded the formation of a separate state consisting of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Sikkim.⁷¹ It is to be mentioned that the S.R.C was formed in August, 1953 by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Justice Fazal Ali and other two members' i.e Dr. Hridaynath Kunzou and K.M. Pannikar. However, it is also evident that at that time A.I.G.L separately placed the demand. But both the demands were out-rightly rejected by the members of S.R.C.⁷² Apart from the above mentioned political developments within the state of West Bengal, the same demand was raised outside the state of West Bengal when the S.R.C was formed in 1953. But it is very interesting to note that this demand was put forward not by any political organization but by the Government of Bihar. The Bihar Government demanded the creation of a new state to be known as '*Uttarakhand*' consisting of three district of North Bengal i.e Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to the S.R.C. However, when in the second week of May, 1955, two members of S.R.C which has already been mentioned visited Darjeeling and invited the then leaders West Bengal to express their views on Bihar's claim. But the then Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. B.C. Roy succeeded to convince the members of the S.R.C to keep these three districts within West Bengal.⁷³

Nevertheless, the first massive gathering in the Darjeeling district of the U.K.D was held in the Terai region, at Atharkhai known Shibmandir on 3rd July 1970. The meeting as presided over by Taranikanta Roy and the Dal's flag was hoisted by Yogendra Nath Battacharya, the then vice president of the UKD. The other important leaders who were present in this gathering are Girija Shankar Roy, Atin Roy, Suren Barman, Babunath Barma, Md Waezuddin Ahmed, Rabindranath Sarkar, Joynath Singha, Rameshwarlal Agarwal, Bisheshwar Chakraborty, Kalindra Nath Barman and many others. It is to be mentioned that Girija Shankar Roy and Rabindranath Sarkar were the

prime leader to strike the roots of the U.K.D in the Darjeeling Terai region especially at Patharghata, Salbari, Gosainpur, Bagdogra and in Phansidewa.⁷⁴ During this period the U.K.D apart from submitted memoranda to the State Government and semi Government institutions with their demand notes tried to propagate its ideas, objectives, programmes and other things through folk songs, poems and many other touchy methods in Terai. In this regard, it was found that a representation of the U.K.D under the leadership of Rabindranath Sarkar, the then Secretary of the U.K.D made Purna Chandra Mukhopadhyay,^{74a} the then Vice Chancellor of N.B.U and submitted a demand note mentioning the recruitment of local youths in different clerical posts of the said institution. They also alleged that the local youths were not recruited or given any kind of job opportunities since its establishment (1962). In another occasion, the activists of the Atharkhai of the U.K.D *gharoad* the Shibmandir B.D.O and submitted a memorandum with a demand note on 4th July, 1970. They demanded the preservation of grazing lands, immediately reconditioning of flood affected agricultural lands, release of the compensation of those lands acquired by military department and in that matter, the owner and *bargadars* should be compensated equally.⁷⁵

To strengthen their power the U.K.D contemplated of establishing its relation with the All India Gorkha League (AIGL), an ethnic based regional political party in the 'Darjeeling Hill' which was founded in the closing years of the colonial rule on 15th May 1943.⁷⁶ After the contact of Kalindra Nath Barman with A.I.G.L leaders in 1977, joint representations of the A.I.G.L and U.K.D under the leadership of Panchanan Mallick went to Calcutta to submit a memorandum with a charter of 34 points demands to the then Chief Minister, Government of West Bengal. It was mentioned in the addressing note that "this memorandum is being submitted by the Uttarkhanda and Gorkha League United Front" demanding all round development of North Bengal, opposing economic disparities, step motherly negligence, exploitation of the wealth of North Bengal etc. It was also mentioned that "if these demands were not redressed properly by the Government within six months, this front would start a tremendous movement in Uttarkhanda."⁷⁷ It may be noted that it was the first political alliance between the two regional and ethnic based political parties in two totally different areas of North Bengal i.e the hills and plains portion, came under one umbrella named 'United Front' in post-Independence period. In subsequent period, it was found that a political conference was organised by the U.K.D on behalf of the Uttarkhanda-Gorkha League Front at Chaterhat

under Phansidewa police station in Terai on 28th January 1978. The chief guests of that conference were from AIGL named Renulina Subba, M.L.A from Kalimpong, Deo Prasad Rai, M.L.A from Darjeeling and the then General Secretary of AIGL.⁷⁸ The U.K.D was also established a political relation with the Republican Party, was organised by the backward class communities and its main support base in West Bengal was among the schedule caste communities especially the Matuas and the Namasudras believed in the ideology of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Nevertheless, later the U.K.D, the A.I.G.L and the Republican Party united together and formed a new 'Mukti Front'. A joint public meeting of this new 'Front' was organised at Chaterhat school ground on 12th November 1979.⁷⁹

As stated earlier that though the U.K.D was formed in July 1969 but no demand for a separate state was raised by this regional political organization till 1980. The first formal decision in the form of party resolution for a separate state of Kamotapur was taken by the U.K.D in its Central Committee meeting held at Bijlimani Primary School in Darjeeling Terai on 31st May, 1980. It is very relevant to mention in this connection that one representative from the Gorkha League named Y.V. Subba from Kalimpong was in the conference as a special guest.⁸⁰ After the above mentioned formal decision for demanding a separate state, the leaders of the UKD decided to mould public opinion in favour of their demand. In this regard they circulated leaflets appealing the people of all level of North Bengal irrespective of caste, creed, religion and political affiliation to support the demand for the creation of a separate state. It is evident in the leaflet and in its memorandum submitted to the then Prime Minister of India dated 24th August 1981 for the first time a demand of a separate state consisting five district⁸¹ of North Bengal except the hill regions of Darjeeling district as said earlier. It was mentioned in this 'Memorandum' that "As a result after thirty three years of independence the indigenous population of the area irrespective of their caste, creed and religion have become hewers of wood and drawers of water of the refugees who now lording it over the original people so to speak."⁸² After this meeting the U.K.D repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction against the Calcutta centric rule, indifferent attitude towards the socio-economic development of North Bengal and many other issues like continuous illegal huge Bangladeshi infiltration in North Bengal as well as in Terai. The leaders of the U.K.D blamed the then Government of West Bengal and the Calcutta centric rulers for looking to the interest of the refugees as the sheer cost of the indigenous people. They also

expressed their fear of the gradual extinction of the socio-political and cultural domination along with severe economic position of the indigenous people of North Bengal. These new influx of the Bangladeshi illegal immigrants, most of whom were basically agriculturalist, began to settled in the country side of North Bengal⁸³ including rural areas of Siliguri and two other police station of Darjeeling Terai i.e Naxalbari, and Kharibari as already discussed in Chapter II.

These continuous flows of the infiltrators and refugees apart changed the demographic picture of the rural areas of Darjeeling Terai with the introduction of several advanced technology in agriculture became a prosperous class. Even the Namasudras among the refuges started to dominate in the 'SC' reserved government services.⁸⁴ It hampered the traditional agriculture base economic life of the Rajbanshis, major indigenous population of Darjeeling Terai, creation of the Colonial Government with the introduction of the *jotedary* system of land revenue in this region, and after the creation of new middle class considerable land passed from the Rajbanshis to non-Rajbanshis, the new moneyed class who were mostly immigrants. Actually since the early 20th century the Rajbanshi *jotedars* gradually lost their economic dominance over this region because of considerable alteration in the old landownership structure. In such a situation, when the Rajbanshis were gradually losing their economic power, they turned their attention to achieve a kind of social authority over others by means of Kshatriyaization.⁸⁵ Within a very short time these refuges or illegal immigrants became economically very rich with their hard work. Thus, in the later course of the movement, it was found that leaders of the U.K.D termed this refuges that came after 1971, the year of Bangladesh liberation, as foreigners and demanded their expulsion and allowed no citizenship and voting right. It has to be mentioned that the '*Bangal Khedao*' movement in North-East India especially in Assam by A.A.S.U by the end seventies of the 20th century influenced largely the leaders of the U.K.D. In fact, the U.K.D leaders wanted to mould public opinion in favour of its demands for separate state blaming the then West Bengal Government for sheltering the infiltrators in North Bengal region. However, such foreigner's expulsion movement was also organised by the '*Uttarbanga Taposili Jati O Adibasi Sangathan*' popularly known as U.T.J.A.S which was formed in early 1977 in the campus of the University of North Bengal by Naren Das. Though U.T.J.A.S fiercely opposed the separate state demand of the U.K.D but in some cases like illegal infiltration their demands were identical.⁸⁶

During the mid-eighties of the past century there were ideological differences among the leaders of the U.K.D. The presence of strong and nationalist parties in this region did not provide any opportunity for the U.K.D for further expanding its organization. It was found that most of the educated activist and leaders especially the youth activists of the U.K.D were gradually withdrawing their support or maintaining distance from the U.K.D. In this regard the names of Girija Shankar Roy and Rabindranath Sarkar may mention here. Therefore, the main reason behind the gradual alienation of the educated section of the Rajbanshi community from the U.K.D said by Dr. Ananda Gopal Ghosh that the new-middle class of the Rajbanshi community is more interested in getting facilities of the reservation system than any direct confrontation with the Government.⁸⁷ These resulted the birth of confrontation among the leaders of the U.K.D and finally split in 1987 in two groups under the leadership of Panchanan Mallick and Sampad Roy respectively. It is very interesting to note that both aforesaid these leaders were from *jotedary* background and themselves were *jotedars*.

Theoretically, if one can look into the whole issue of the Uttarkhand Movement it was seen that a traditional dominant community of North Bengal as well as in Terai, the Rajbanshis feel that they were dominated by the immigrants popularly known *Bhatias*⁸⁸ in every spheres of life. In this process of domination they are gradually becoming subservient to the 'alien' population. Thus the tensions and conflicts centring on the Uttarkhanda Movement are basically the result of clash of interests between the Rajbanshis and the alien population.⁸⁹ But this is not also true enough because Bimal Bhattachary, was the candidate of the UKD in Dhupguri Assembly (General) seat in West Bengal Bidhan Sabha Election held in March 1972.⁹⁰ Further the leadership of the UKD demanded the expulsion of the illegal migrants or foreigners who were came from Bangladesh, Assam and Tripura making 1971 as the base year.⁹¹ That's why the leaders of the U.K.D had instructed its members of every 'thana committee' to put pressure on the Government for setting up sufficient numbers of refuges camp so that the refuges would face no trouble. They also demanded proper rationing facilities for the refuges from the Government.⁹² This indicates that till then no anti-Namasudra feeling was germinated in the minds of the *Uttarkhandists*. Some stop- gap time after 1991 a huge number of *Bangladesi* refuges again infiltrated in West Bengal as well as in the semi-urban and rural areas of Darjeeling Terai as stated in Chapter II, resulted further conflagration with the birth of Kamatapur People's Party (K.P.P) in 1996.

6:2:3 GORKHALAND MOVEMENT AND DARJEELING TERAI

The Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) movement is a long and complicated story of the demand for and achieve a separate state for themselves by the Gorkhas of Darjeeling Hill sub-divisions in West Bengal under the leadership of G.N.L.F president Subash Ghising. The Gorkhaland Movement under his leadership started in mid 80's of the past century form a protest and spread over the entire region within a very short time still they achieve their goal as Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) in 1988. Though their movement would not effected very much in the Terai areas of Darjeeling but during the course of this G.N.L.F movement some incidence create a long term ethnic conflict over the entire region including Darjeeling Terai which could dealt in this phase. It should be mentioned in this connection that lots of researches have been done by the historian, anthropologists, economist and many other social scientist regarding the Gorkhaland agitation in the three hill sub-division of Darjeeling district but they ignored its far reaching effects in Terai.

The first recorded instance of the demand for separation of Darjeeling hill region from Bengal can be traced to the year 1907, barely forty years after the formation of Darjeeling (1867) as already stated in Chapter I. It was just two year before the Morley-Minto Reforms and it keep in mind that at the time when the idea of reforms was in air, in the wake of the great anti-partition upheaval in Bengal and the fate of Darjeeling was integrally associated with the reforms. Under these circumstances, the voice of the 'Leaders of Hill people' in the absence of any viable political or social association was registered for the first time.⁹³ Actually the Gorkhas in Darjeeling hill never thought of having special powers for themselves during the British rule, nor did they ever think of separating themselves from Bengal Presidency rather the relation of the Gorkhas with the British was very good.⁹⁴ In 1940s experienced a new turn of the events in the history of the formation of All India Gorkha League (AIGL) in Darjeeling on 15th May 1943; though it was already finalised at Siliguri in March 1943.⁹⁵ With the coming of freedom after Independence of India, the Gorkhas of Darjeeling did not want to be under the Bengal Government and wanted more powers for themselves. The white colour planters in the rich Darjeeling tea gardens were still there, predominant in influence, and the local Gorkhas did not easily accept the administrators from Calcutta. But the consequential demonstration was mild and was brought under control without much difficulty. By 1956 much had changed in the Darjeeling hills. The 'Rana Rule' in Nepal had been

overthrown by the pro-monarchical forces aided by the Government in Delhi acting in haste. Meanwhile from Limbuwan i.e the eastern province of Nepal the Gorkhas continued their mass migration into the eastern India which create an ethnic surge in Nagaland, Meghalaya and some other parts of north east India⁹⁶ in the last quarter of the 20th century. The process towards the balkanisation of India that had commenced in 1956 was not strongly opposed by J. Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, created a separatist idea amongst the Gorkhas of Darjeeling.⁹⁷ By this time the Communist Party of India (CPI) put forward the suggestion of the Gorkhas to forming a ‘Greater Gorkhasthan’ covering a large tract of the Himalayan and Sub-Himalayan zone. The memorial of the Darjeeling District Committee of the CPI submitted on 6th April 1947 to the Constituent Assembly states:

“In the opinion of the Communist Party of India, the District of Darjeeling belongs to the Gorkhas and it is their homeland. Further, it is the considered opinion of the Communist Party of India that the Gorkhas living in Darjeeling District, the adjoining state of Sikkim & the so-called independent state of Nepal.....constitute a distinct nationality.....It is the British, who have, since their conquest of India as a whole forcibly divided the Gorkhas, disrupted their growth and checked their national development in their own imperialist interests....It is the opinion of the Communist Party of India that the only way to further the national development of the Gorkha people is by granting them their right of self-determination.

The Communist Party of India, therefore, demands that after making necessary revisions of the existing boundaries, the three contiguous areas of Darjeeling District, Southern Sikkim and Nepal be formed into one single zone to be called Gorkhasthan.”⁹⁸

Actually the realization of ‘Gorkhasthan’ by the then Communist Party advocated in favour of special representation of the Gorkhas in the state legislature.⁹⁹ In early fifties of the past century there was a language movement in Darjeeling for recognition of Nepali as the official language of Darjeeling. The official response of Dr. B.C. Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal over the language movement in the West Bengal Assembly on 23.02.1961 that “The number of people speaking Nepali in the hill district, according to 1951 Census is only 19.98 percent, even if we leave out Siliguri subdivision and take Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong, it is 25.2 percent. Therefore Government felt that it would be better to wait for the 1961 Census.....and then we may be able to decide whether Nepali language should be either in a district or in a

municipality recognised as an additional language of that area.” Perhaps, Dr. B.C. Roy had some own observations regarding the figures of 1951 Census.¹⁰⁰ After some years the then Union Government signed ‘accords’ with political parties in the states under a centrifugal pull- Punjab, Mizoram and Assam and without any compelling necessity, a small area like Sikkim was given statehood- which really created an environment of the vast majority of the Nepali population for demanding a separate statehood.¹⁰¹ The attitude of the Left Front Government that has come to power in 1977 in West Bengal reflects a continuation of the Communist Party demand for regional autonomy.¹⁰² Actually, “The CPI (M) notes that the democratic awakening among the Nepali-speaking people living in the hill region of Darjeeling district and certain other adjacent areas and appreciate their urge for their regional autonomy.”¹⁰³ The Marxist thinks that the demand for regional autonomy is not same as demand for separate statehood. Statehood means separation from West Bengal and autonomy means keeping some short of link with West Bengal. On the other hand the Hill Development Council started functioning in Darjeeling in 1974 when Siddharta Sankar Roy was the Chief Minister of West Bengal.¹⁰⁴ Though the Nepali Bhasa Samiti was constituted on 31st January, 1972 but it is the Pranta Parishad that was constituted in April 1980, which popularised the theme of separate statehood outside West Bengal during the early part of the 80s in the 20th century and adopted a resolution in this manner in a convention at Sukhiapokhri on 8th August 1981 to form a separate state outside West Bengal.¹⁰⁵

So a strong under currents of the agitation of the Nepali speaking people was gradually imparting in the Darjeeling hills but could not get any avenues for violent outburst before emerging of Subash Ghising as a leader of Nepali people. The relation between the people of the hills and Terai areas of Darjeeling or better to say Nepali-Bengali relationship has always been describe by as ‘cordial’ by the then West Bengal Government. But it was not so ‘cordial’ as they are said because one refused to treat the other as equal and the other refused to accept itself as inferior. Officially there was no physical clash between the two major ethnic groups of Darjeeling¹⁰⁶ but the Gorkhaland Movement in the 80s of the past century have started a long term ethnic confrontation between the two major groups of Darjeeling i.e. the Nepalis and the Bengalis which still now is continued.

During Gorkhaland agitation there was no major incident occurred in Terai areas of Darjeeling except few scattered clash between the activists and the police personal.

But, ethnic-confrontation was started between the people of hills and plains of the district when the Government, both central and state agreed to sanction some non-Nepali majority *mouzas* under proposed (D.G.H) council and finally signed the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Accord on 23rd July 1988. The proposed D.G.H.C will cover the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and 18 *mouzas* under Siliguri sub-division namely Lohagarh T.G, Lohagarh Forest, Eangmohan, Barachenga, Panighatt, Baro Adalpur, Belgachhi, Sukna Forest, Sukhna part I, Pantapati Forest I, Mahanadi Forest, Champasari Forest and Salbari Chhat part II etc.¹⁰⁷ This decision of the Government created anxiety, fear and protest amongst the people of Terai because nobody knows the details about the areas of this *mouzas*.¹⁰⁸ For example Lohagarh T.G, about 30 kilometre from Siliguri town and just 600 feet from sea level is a sleepy, obscure and almost inaccessible hamlet of tea garden has remained peaceful during last four years of G.N.L.F agitation. But when they heard the news of this inclusion most of the villagers were afraid of the possibility of Lohagarh getting completely cut off due to the condition of the connecting road. There were no electric facilities, the nearest market and health centre is about 25 km away, in Naxalbari. So this inclusion was shocking to them and one of the inhabitants of this area Mr. Kalyan Mukherjee, the then general manager of Lohagarh T.G asked a news correspondent anxiously “I was surprised and still do not know the details. Do you know anything”. He further said “The people of the village are peace loving.....We are not here to dabble in politics.”¹⁰⁹ On the other hand this inclusion had created some hope among the villagers of Sukna, barely 10 km from Siliguri and about 35 km from Kurseong surrounded by dense forests and 533 feet above sea level comprising about 7000 people. During G.N.L.F agitation this area remained peaceful but a portion of this area belong to Kurseong sub-division, while remaining part belong to Siliguri sub-division “neither claims responsibility for doing development work here said” Mr. Paresh Giri, a retired Central Government employee.¹¹⁰ So this inclusion made them happy to join the D.G.H.C. But the most interesting thing is that the G.N.L.F had demanded only the Lohagarh *bustee*, comprising a few acres of land and with a Nepali-majority population, but Joyti Basu, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal offered G.N.L.F the entire Lohagarh *mouza*, which comprising several *bustee* most of them having major Bengali and tribal pockets with a total area of few hundred acres to immediate end of the Gorkhaland agitation. Similarly, the G.N.L.F demanded the portion of Sukna, which falls within the Kurseong sub-division, but the Chief Minister gave over the entire Sukna

Pratham Khanda which falls within the Siliguri police station. Again, the G.N.L.F has demanded only the Chengamari *bustee* which is another nearly contiguous area in Kurseong and the State Government has decided to grant the entire Bara Chengamari *mouza*. The other area which is also contiguous is Khaprail, but here the G.N.L.F's demand cannot be met as the land does not have a Nepali majority. But what must be noted that none of these pockets can be consider contiguous and the inclusion of any of these areas in the council would mean violation of the contiguity principal accepted in Delhi.¹¹¹ Moreover, within some time Subhas Ghisingh expressed his reservations over Mahanadi and Champasari forest areas and demanded more areas from Siliguri sub-division. The West Bengal Government had appreciated Mr. Ghisingh's point of view and accordingly had offered two points. The first option includes Chotochanga and Nipania villages and second mentions three villages near Pharu and Choto Adalpur. These two options are allowed in exchange for Mahanadi and Champasari forest areas of Terai.¹¹²

The '*Siliguri Nagarik Samiti*', North Bengal Students Union and I.N.C had protested against the proposed inclusion of certain areas under the jurisdiction of the D.G.H.C.¹¹³ Haren Ghosh, the President of the then '*Siliguri Nagarik Samiti*' told in a press conference that they were not satisfied with the stand taken by the Government. The Samiti vehemently opposed the inclusion of any portion of Siliguri Sub-Division in the proposed (D.G.H) council. He further said that "inclusion of plain areas of the proposed hill council on the basis of Gorkha Majority is against national unity and integrity."¹¹⁴ They also demanded a separate Siliguri district should be formed after the setting up of the proposed council and special steps should be taken immediately to prevent infiltration from Nepal to Naxalbari area.¹¹⁵ Nine '*Amra Bangali*' supporters, basically a group of Bengali people of Siliguri sub-division which was established during the time of Gorkhaland Movement to protest against separate statehood demand by the Neaplis, were arrested from the north gate of the Raj Bhavan for protest against this inclusion on 25.08.1988. The CPI (M) leaders of Siliguri have not said anything against the accord and the businessmen were happy because after a long time peace and stability have been restored. Mr. Priya Ranjan Das Munshi, the then President of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress (I) said that there was no overt objection to the accord in the town of Siliguri but the situation is different in those areas of Terai which have been included in the council.¹¹⁶ For example Panighatta, a small village north of Naxalbari police station,

on the foothills of the Himalayas close to the Nepal border. According to the official sources Panighatta is important to Subhash Ghisingh because it is an important trading centre where the hill people sold their orange and ginger to the plainsmen. One interesting thing is noticeable in this connection that when the G.N.L.F movement was at its height, the arrogant behaviour of some youths from across the border had scared the police officials. One night in February 1988, the Customs Station at the Panitanki near Nepal border was attacked with bombs. Moreover in the beginning of 80s of the past century or at the time of 1982 Bidhan Sabha election huge number of people infiltrated from Nepal and settled in Lohagarh, Nepania and other parts of Naxalbari police station and it is ironic that these areas has claimed by the G.N.L.F¹¹⁷ and also incorporated under D.G.H.C jurisdiction. These created a strong ethnic confrontation in the two districts of the northern parts of North Bengal when the demand of Gorkhaland further started under the leadership of Bimal Gurung, the President of G.J.M.M (Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha) in the beginning of 21th century.

So during the early part of the second half of the 18th century the Company established their political suzerainty in Bengal and it was at the end of the first part of the 19th century they annexed the sleepy, uninhabited hamlet of Darjeeling Terai. But till the first quarter of the 20th century or broadly speaking during the entire Colonial Rule there were no such political consciousness among the people of Terai. However, it is very interesting to note that within the four decades after Colonial Rule this sleepy hamlet turned into one of the political upsurge centre of West Bengal as well as in India.

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CHAPTER – VII

EPILOGUE

The present study entitled “Socio-Economic and Political Transition of Darjeeling Terai (1864-1994)” is practically an unexplored area to the scholars, academicians as well as political and administrative domain of West Bengal nay India. The researcher has presented an analysis of the overall transformation of a sleepy hamlet of Darjeeling district in the field of social, economic, educational and political dimension during the concerned time period. The study primarily focuses on the changes and development which were occurred in Terai during about hundred years of colonial rule and about fifty years after Indian Independence. Though, the study begins with 1864, the year of the formation of Terai sub-division but all the subjects’ deals from 1850, the year of the colonial annexation of Darjeeling Terai.

The study begins with the geographical location and historical profile of Darjeeling Terai. Most of the scholar believes that Terai means foothills of the great Himalayan Mountain situated in Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Nepal and Assam etc region. The Terai area of Darjeeling district is little known to them. In such a situation best efforts have been made to provide an illuminating account of the transition of social, economy and politics of the Terai area of Darjeeling district. The Darjeeling district was known to the world by the name of Darjeeling, an important hill station but the significance of Terai was not known to anyone. It was in fact a place which falls on the way to Darjeeling, the Queen of Hills.

During pre-colonial period, the three powers namely Cooch Behar, Sikkim and Nepal had confronted with each other to establish a political hold in Darjeeling Terai region. Though the study has concentrated itself in the Terai region but it has also focused in its discussion the adjacent region of Nepal and northern part of Purnea because though at present they form different states or country but in the colonial and pre-colonial period they were attached to the Terai region of Darjeeling district politically, culturally and historically. Yet the above mentioned three powers namely Cooch Behar, Sikkim and Nepal were engaged in political struggle to established control over this region but due to dense forest, ferocious animals, uncomfortable weather and the fear of dacoits did not provide them to establish a firm political hold over the region. In fact the non-existence of any strong ruling dynasty or princes and also any strong

feudal lords deprived the Terai region of Darjeeling district to come into the limelight in ancient, medieval and even in early part of modern Indian history. But due to the circumstantial events the Company gradually went to adopt a policy of imperial expansion in Terai region of Darjeeling district. Presumably, a safest and shortest trade route through Sikkim to Tibet was the main reason for annexing the Darjeeling Terai by the Company. It is also true that the British wanted to cheque the growing power of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim in this region because they wanted to expand their political boundary in the Himalayan region. So in the first place it was annexed by the Company for her commercial purpose but due to the policy of expansion in latter period adopted by the British in the eastern part of India as well as in the Himalayan region was reflected in the establishment of a clear cut political boundary in the Himalayan Terai region of Darjeeling.

After the British established their political hold in this region, they adopted various policies of land settlement through acts and enactments to attract people to settle in agricultural occupation in this region. During the second half of the 19th century the British adopted a policy of green imperialism in the form of tea garden. With the growth of tea gardens there were the developments of roads and railways which improved the methods of communication in this region. As a result of which there started the process of migrations which brought the Oraons and the Mundas as tea gardens labourers and the Santals as labourers in railway constructions and agriculture. Due to the establishment of railways and tea gardens on the one hand and the influx of population the indigenous population of Terai like the Tharus, the Dhimals and the Meches were marginalised and they left their lands and forced to move towards Nepal, Jalpaiguri and Assam. But the predominant section of the population of Terai, the Rajbanshis who remained attached to the agriculture was no affected by the sudden structural change in the social and economic condition during the early part of the colonial rule in Terai. The caste Bengali Hindus had immigrated to this region prior to the colonial period. Though the establishment of colonial institutions like Government administrative offices, in the railways, jobs in the tea gardens as well as the timber business attracted more Bengalis to come and settle in this place. With the gradual growth of the urbanization the Marwaris and the Biharis started to migrate to this region, though the Biharis came into this region much earlier than the Marwaris. There were Nepalis who were attached to the tea gardens and cattle rearing. During the colonial period with its process of urbanization

and growth of economy which acted as a pull factor to transform this area into a land of settlers who were mostly migrants in this region. There were also push factors from their own home land which was responsible for the migration of the settlers in this region. Thus the migration in this region can be well termed as induced migration or invited migration during the colonial period which became a part of historical process of this region. These migrants during the colonial period gradually became a dominant section during post-colonial period in society, economy and in politics. The demographic pattern changed during the colonial period not so much effected in the life of the people of Terai but in the post-colonial period the social structure changed apart from the partition of India in 1947 the political disturbance in Nepal, Bangladesh and in Tibet also acted as factors for demographic transformation in Terai. Again Siliguri being one of the growing town of North-Eastern part of India after Independence and in any disturbances which caused in Assam, Nagaland and in Manipur there was inflow of population into this region. But the rise in population did not increase the resources of land in this region. As a result of which the social structure is greatly disturbed and it caused various ethnic problems which take the shape of political character. It is again true that the concept of indigenous population or “son’s of the soil” or *bhumiputra* is non-existence in Terai region. Some had migrated hundred years ago or some two hundred or three hundred years ago, but all are migrants. The increasing demographic structure in post-Colonial period created various ethnic problems but the seeds of the problem were sowed earlier in the continuous migration process started from the beginning of the Colonial rule in Terai. Thus the character of the ethnic problem which developed in post-Colonial period was basically a movement of the migrants against another group of migrants who were in a better social, economic and political position.

The land revenue system introduced by the British Government never took a permanent shape in the Darjeeling Terai. There were many experiments and changes which was mostly political in nature. The land system which developed in the pre-Colonial period not completely disappeared in the Colonial period. Again the systems of land revenue in the Colonial period also existed in the post-Colonial period though not in a very prominent shape. The land revenue settlement in Terai was an assimilation of a system which was introduced in the pre-Colonial period by the Rajas of Cooch Behar and also the Rajas of Sikkim and which later went under some alteration under the East India Company and after the British Government in 1858. It is also true that the whole of

Darjeeling Terai was not governed under Non Regulation Act. During the eighties of the 19th century the areas which were added from Jalpaiguri district to Darjeeling district as already stated in chapter III, settings A, and also in the post-Colonial period, during the 1950s the areas which were added from Bihar to Darjeeling district were under the Permanent Settlement. The rest of the areas of Darjeeling Terai under Colonial period were governed under the Non- Regulation Areas whose owner was “*Bharat Samrat*”.

The main feature of the land settlement in Darjeeling Terai was the *Jotedary* system. The *jotedary* system was not a Colonial development but it existed during the pre-Colonial times, though not in a very prominent form. Actually the British were not acquainted with the culture, tradition, and customs of this area, therefore they without making much changes of the pre-Colonial land system introduced the new revenue system in the colonial period which aimed primarily to collect land revenue as much as revenue possible without spending minimum expenditure in administrative set up. As stated earlier that during pre-Colonial period the entire Darjeeling Terai was densely populated and it was covered with dense jungle and ferocious wild animals. The earlier migrants during Colonial period expanded agriculture in this area by clearing the jungles and converted the huge fallow lands into a cultivable one. Since there was no proper measurement system of the land, the lands were measured on the basis of land marks and ideas like a tree, pond, temple, roads, orchards etc. Thus the lands did not have any proper demarcation. As there was less people and lands available was more, therefore there was not much botheration regarding the demarcation of land. On the other hand the three major indigenous population of northern part of the Darjeeling Terai namely the Tharus, the Dhimals and the Meches were not settled agriculturist and mainly practiced *jhum* cultivation. But the most predominant indigenous population of Darjeeling Terai who were mostly inhabited in the southern part of the river Mahananda, the Rajbanshis were settled agriculturist and many of them became prominent *jotedars*. These *jotedars* were socially and economically took a dominant character in the society and therefore the names of the *jotes* or villages or areas were named after them like Rajrajeswari *Jote* (now known as Deshbandhupara), Kaliprasanna *Jote* (now known as College Para), Gazal Singh *Jote* (now known as Hakimpara), Nipurbigar *Jote* (now known as Bidhan Market), D.N.Roy Sarkar *Jote* (now known as Mahabirsthan), Rangedas Mohan *Jote* (now known as Mahanandapara) etc. On the other hand the names of the *jote* in northern bank of the river Mahananda recorded in revenue department as Ketugabur *jote* (in

Hatighisa), Amarsing *jote* (in Hatighisa), Budhkaran *jote* (in Hatighisa), Bharatsing *jote* (in Patharghata), Huchai Mallik *jote* (in Hatighisa) etc and some of these names certainly a big proof of the Dhimal and the Meche domination over these areas.

Under the *jotedary* system, who was the actual owner of the land was a complicated question in Darjeeling Terai. In Permanent Settlement the *zamindar* was the proprietary owners of the land as has been refereed in various writings of historians and others. In Permanent Settlement the real motive of the Company was to extract large amount of land revenue rather than became the owners of the land. In this land system the revenue demanded annually was more or less permanent without not much of increased in percentage. On the other hand under the *jotedary* system the British East India Company and therefore British Government had full freedom to increase or decrease the land revenue to its will. Moreover if the *jotedars* imposed fifty percent of the revenue charged by the Company or British Government upon the sub-tenants it was not accepted by the British authority. Thus it can be well said that in this *jotedary* system which was prevailed in Darjeeling Terai the *jotedars* did not received the ownership right of the lands but to collect revenue and dominance in the area, the actual owner of the land was the “*Bharat Samrat*”. The *jotedars* also gave their right to cultivate land and collect revenue to the sub-tenants like *chukanidars*, *darchukindars* and *dara-darchukanidars* etc and others who were in the hierarchical structure in the land revenue system in Darjeeling Terai during Colonial period. During Colonial period one of the important feature in the *jotedary* system in Darjeeling Terai was the relationship between the *jotedars* and the sub-tenants i.e the haves and the have not’s was not in the character and exploited. The relationship was more or less good and healthy because both the sections belong to same community and both participated in agricultural activities.

But during the last quarter of the 19th century with the rapid expansion of the green imperialism in Darjeeling Terai the caste Hindus, the Biharis, the Marwaris and many others people with some capital migrated into this area and they purchased many *jotes* or parts of *jotes* and converted themselves into a middlemen and these new *jotedars* created a new class of tenants within their areas. As a result these new class of *jotedars* were gradually converted into a profit making landed bourgeois class who did not have any direct connection with cultivation of land. In these reasons gradually the Rajbanshis, the predominant sections of population in this region became landless and they became tenants in their own land. Moreover in the post-Independence period the Rajbanshis, the

only community who were largely effected by the Estate Land Acquisition Act in 1953 which abolished the *jotedary* system in West Bengal because they could not attached themselves to any other profession then agriculture as they were traditionally agriculturist and conservative in their outlook. After the partition of India in 1947 the then Central Government of India and as well as the West Bengal Government to rehabilitate the refuges these *khas* land acquired by the Estate Land Acquisition Act in 1953 for their resettlement. Further in 1960s under the J.L. Nehru's regime due to change of the economic policy a large part of these lands went into the hands of the *adivasis* and the tea garden labourers in Darjeeling Terai. Despite constitutional safe guards in the field of political system, they could not retain their whole upon the overall political landscape of the area. Thus the predominant sections of the population, the Rajbanshis has lost their lands as well as their social status and prestige and in course of time entered into movements like "*Bhatia Khedao*", "*Uttarkhand Movement*", "*Kamatapur Movement*" etc.

Though the tea plantation industry in Darjeeling Terai was started in the sixties of the 19th century but in the later decades of the 19th century more specifically in the early period of the 20th century a large number of the Bengali caste Hindus and Muslims had invested their capital in the tea gardens of Terai. Unlike the others parts of North Bengal there were the lawyers, muktears, timber merchants and many others had invested their money in the tea gardens but in Darjeeling Terai many *jotedars*, *sardars*, the managers of the European tea gardens also purchased the tea gardens in the later period of the Colonial rule. Thus during the Colonial period there was the growth of Bengali entrepreneurs in the tea garden industry in Darjeeling Terai which could not continued for more than three or four generations and from 1960s gradually became transfer into the hands of the non-Bengali entrepreneurs mostly belong to the Marwaris. It is interesting to note that while during last quarter of the 19th century when Bengali entrepreneurs disappeared from the Indian business scenario the rise of the Bengali entrepreneurship in the tea gardens of North Bengal as well as in Darjeeling Terai is very significant.

The educationally backward tract in Colonial period like Darjeeling Terai transformed into an educational hub of the adjoining districts of North Bengal within fifty years of the Colonial rule is very interesting and significant. Though there was a huge difference between the rural and urban sectors of education regarding the numbers

of educational institutions, even professional institutions which is mainly set up in the urban areas of Terai after Indian Independence. The people of the urban areas of Terai are the main beneficiaries of such educational transition of Terai but the rural Terai is far away from the urban Terai. The educational status in rural Terai and urban Terai is a hard proof of this observation.

The growth and expansion of Siliguri police station of Darjeeling Terai is meteorically rise from a sleepy hamlet of few settlers to a second Metropolitan City of West Bengal. Soon it began to be comparing with Calcutta and came to be known as the second capital of West Bengal. During the early part of the Colonial rule it was basically a halt station for the travellers, traders and British officials to Darjeeling and other parts of the hills and very soon due to rapid urbanization it was transformed into fourth Municipal Corporation of West Bengal. In the third quarter of the 19th century with the expansion of tea, transport and timber in Terai the urbanization began and in the early part of the 20th century it expanded trade. But in the post-partition period due to reorganization of the political boundary Siliguri was converted into a transit point for the transport and communication in North-East India as well as hill and other district of North Bengal. After the Chinese aggression of India in 1962, the then Government of India first time became aware of the strategic importance of the Darjeeling Terai. In later period with the development of education i.e. teaching and medical facilities i.e. treatment Siliguri was converted into a second important town of West Bengal after its capital, Calcutta. However, this transformation of Siliguri from a sleepy hamlet to a Municipal Corporation occupied a significant place but the strategic and geographical location of the area is more important in this development than any other factors

In 1862 the Colonial Government with the introduction of green imperialism had began the process of transformation of society, economy in Darjeeling Terai and after a century in 1962, the Chinese aggression further transformed the Terai politically.

In the conclusion it can be said that the study has concentrated on the society, economy and politics as its primary objectives. It has highlighted particularly the Colonial period, the urbanization and expansion of the British Colonial economy, society and changes in the politics. It has also given stress to the changes taking place in the post-Colonial period but except post colonial rapid urbanization in Siliguri and post-Colonial ethnic conflicts in Terai all the themes is focused mainly during the Colonial period.

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Interview with Mr Pius Prachar, Age-91 Years, Gayaganga, Darjeeling, Date:11.10.14.

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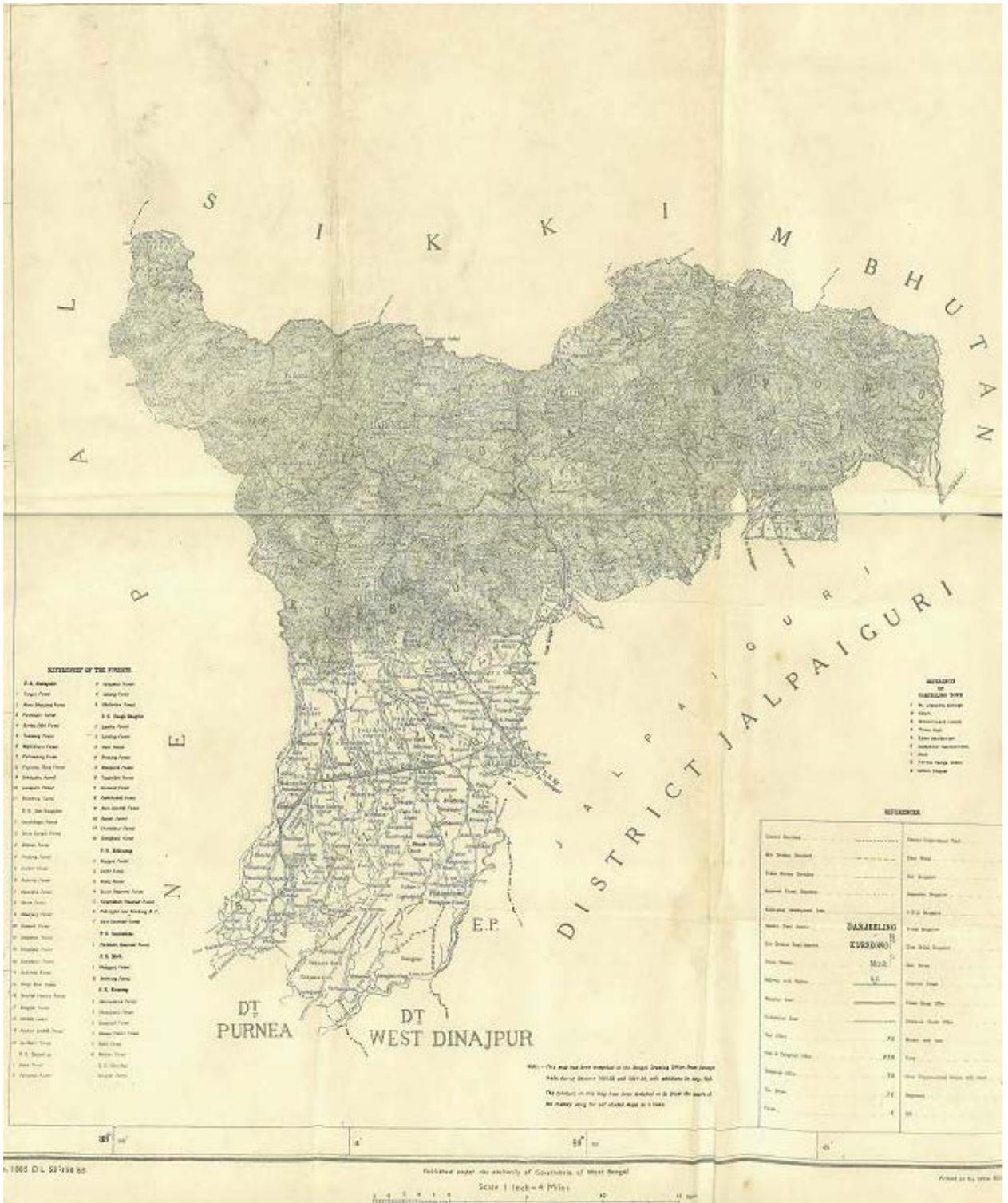
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Appendix – A



Map of Darjeeling District and Terai, 1921-24

Appendix – C

FLY LEAF.

দার্জিলিং-তরাই সেটেলমেন্ট
১৯২৪-১৯২৫

মোজা প্রশংসন— থানা নাকসামসঙ্গী—
জে, এল, নং ৭৩ পরগণা—
জোতের নাম ও নম্বর—
১৯২৪-১৯২৫

কাগজের নং	কাগজের নাম।	ফাইল ফর্দ।	মন্তব্য।
১	ফিরিস্তি	...	১
২	নকসা	...	—
৩	প্লট ইন্ডেক্স	...	৫
৪	খতিয়ান	...	২০
৫	জমাবন্দা	...	৭
৬	মিলন খসড়া	...	—
৭	কবুলিয়ত	...	—
৮	পশুর লিফট	...	—
৯	ফাইলের তালিকা	...	—
	মোট	...	৩৮

Assistant Settlement Officer-in-charge.
Darjeeling-Terai Settlement,

স্বত্ব স্বত্বের আশ্রয় নবলিখ করা।

নাম নম্বর।	স্বত্বের উত্তর নীচলিখিত নবলিখার।	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ।	বসতি।	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ পরিমাণ।		স্বত্বের মেয়াদ কর স্বত্বের হিসাব।	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ কর স্বত্বের পরিমাণ।	
				একর।	একরের পড়াংশ।		একর।	একরের পড়াংশ।
১৩	সামান্য		স্বত্বের মেয়াদ			২		০৩
৪২	সামান্য		স্বত্বের মেয়াদ			২		০৮

স্বত্বের মেয়াদ ... ৪৪

স্বত্বের মেয়াদ কর স্বত্বের পরিমাণ।	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ কর স্বত্বের পরিমাণ।	স্বত্বের মেয়াদ
১	২	০০	০০
	১৪	০০	০০
		স্বত্বের মেয়াদ কর ...	৪০
		স্বত্বের মেয়াদ ...	৪৪

Handwritten signature and notes in Bengali script.

Bengal Land Records Form No. 18 (New) 66 (Old).

[S. & S. Form No. 54.]

Final Khatian Form.

পঞ্জা দাখলানিতি থানা নারায়নগড়ী বোকা মঞ্জুর নম্বর ১৩ মেডিকেল লার্জে নম্বর

পরগণা হাতী মিসা তেজী নম্বর ১১ ষড়িয়ান নম্বর

সেত মঞ্জুর নং ১২০

উপরিস্থিত বছের		জর বছের দেয়			বছর।	ধারামুখার (খোলা)		
নম্বর (খার বাটা) নম্বর।	বিবরণ ও মতলকার (সংক্ষিপ্ত)।	পরাম্পর জংগ।	খাকানা।	সেপ।		নং	ধর	যে তারিখ খোলা হইতে অধিকতর
১	১৩-১৩৪১৩					১০৮		১৩ ২৪

যেট খাকানা ...

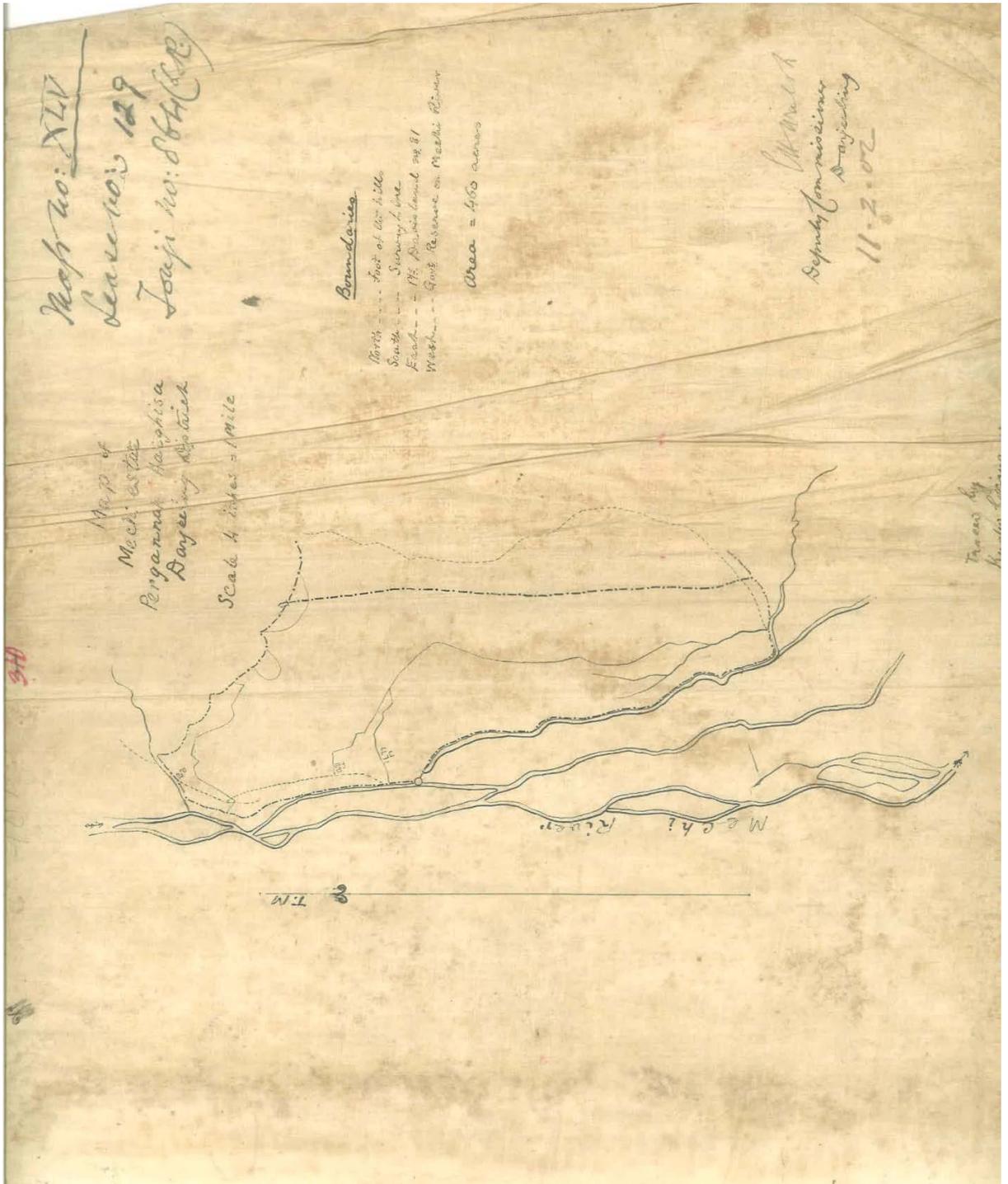
অত্র স্থত।



ধড়িয়ান (খার বাটা) নম্বর।	বছের বিবরণ ও মতলকার (বিস্তারিত)।	জংগ।	বছের খোলা ও বিবরণ।	বছের বিশেষ নিয়ম ও অধিকার।
২	১৩-১৩৪১৩-নং ১২০ মু. সার জাঁদ মোপ- সি. নারায়ন টাঙ্গ মোপ- ২৩০ মিল-	১	১৩৪১৩- ১৩৪১৩-১২০ বিস্তারিত	১৩৪১৩-১২০ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪ ১৩ ২৪

Fly Leaf of Darjeeling Terai Settlement, 1924-1925

Appendix - D



A Map of Mechi Tea Estate, Darjeeling Terai

Appendix - G

Lease No: 129
 Touzi No: 864 (L.R.) 405 309

Renewed lease of land in Carpulim granted by the Deputy Commissioner of Pagan Tea Co. Ltd.
 Darjeeling to Messrs Leslie Mackay & Co. Ltd.
of Mucki Tea Estate (Part 864)

1. The lands covered by this lease are situated within the boundaries shown by the red lines in map No. XLV, dated the 11/2/02, and attached to this lease.

The land may be described as being bounded as follows:-

- North- Foot of the Hills
- East- Mr Davis land no: 81.
- South- Survey line
- West- Govt Reserve on Mucki River

Their area is more or less 460 acres, and they are situated in the Carpulim pargana and tahsils detailed in the margin. X

2. This lease shall be for a period of 20 years. X The rights conveyed by this lease are heritable and also transferable provided (a) that the prior sanction of the Commissioner of the Division be procured to the transfer of any portion of the grant less than the whole, and (b) that the transfer is registered in the Deputy Commissioner's office. If any transfer of the rights conveyed by this lease is made otherwise than in accordance with the foregoing provisions and the rules, all rights in the lands leased shall be liable to be forfeited to Government. Any future resettlement will be at fair rates and for such term as may be fixed by Government.

3. The rent to be paid shall be as follows:-

The rent shall be paid to the Deputy Commissioner in the following instalments:- at 1/6 per acre or Rs. 172/8/- in all

On or before 20th July	(86 .. 4)	One-half
Ditto 12th January	(86 .. 4)	Ditto.

4. In the event of non-payment of any instalment of rent on the date on which it becomes due, such arrears may be recovered under any laws for the time being in force for the recovery of arrears of revenue and of other public demands.

5. The lessee shall either himself reside on or near to the lands covered by this lease, or he shall appoint a Manager or Agent, who shall reside on or near to such lands, and who shall be provided with full legal power to act on behalf of the principal in all matters arising out of or concerning the lands covered by the lease.

6. The lessee binds himself to conform to all the provisions of the rules for the grant of tea leases under which this lease is granted.

7. Any land covered by this lease which may at any time be required for a public purpose may be taken up by Government free of cost on a reduction being made in the rent payable under the lease proportionate to the area taken by Government. But the value of any improvement or property thereon shall be paid to the lessee and shall be assessed under the provisions of the law in force for the time being for the acquisition of land for public purposes.

8. All rights to minerals or quarries of all kinds are reserved to Government, together with such rights-of-way and other reasonable facilities as may be requisite for working, getting, and carrying away such minerals.

9. No right of fishery and no right to dam up or otherwise obstruct the passage of any stream is given by this lease. A public right-of-way over 20 yards on either bank of every stream, available at any time of the year for local boat traffic, is reserved.

10. Public access should be allowed at all times to any springs of water on the lands leased, whenever in the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner such access is necessary for the convenient supply of good water to persons residing in the vicinity, and the lessee is bound not to injure the springs or allow others to do so.

11. Whenever on an inspection being made the boundary lines and marks are found to be out of order, the lessee shall be bound to put them in order at his own expense, on receipt of a requisition to that effect from the

Handwritten notes:
 Tea
 T. no. 864
 A 11 129
 Period 20 yrs
 from 1.10.11
 To 9.11.11

Deputy Commissioner. Should the lessee fail to do so within 30 days from the receipt of the requisition, the Deputy Commissioner shall cause it to be done, and, if the lessee fails to pay, the Deputy Commissioner shall be entitled to recover from the lessee under the Public Demands Recovery Act all costs incurred in doing so.

12. If upon any inspection being made it shall be found that, owing to the neglect of the grantee, the boundary lines and boundary marks of his grants have either never been cleared and erected in accordance with instructions received by him, or have been allowed to fall out of repair, or become covered with jungle in such a manner that without a resurvey of the entire boundary line the exact position of such boundary marks or lines cannot be ascertained, the Deputy Commissioner may direct that such resurvey be made, and may recover from the grantee such sum not exceeding Re. 1-8 per acre of grant as may suffice to defray the cost of such resurvey. All such sums shall be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act as aforesaid.

13. The lessee shall be liable to pay^{rent} for such excess lands over and above the area shown in this lease as may be found on resurvey or otherwise to be in his possession, and the Deputy Commissioner has hereby the power to depute, at any time during the currency of the lease, any one he may think fit to enter on the lands covered by this lease for the purpose of surveying them.

14. The lessee shall be bound to furnish the Deputy Commissioner with information as to the births and deaths of residents in his tea garden and as to progress and outturn thereof in such form as may be approved by Government.

15. 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.) of 1892] being introduced by the orders of the Local Government in any tea garden, the lessee shall 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. The lessee shall also be bound to see that the said chaukidar (or chaukidars) receives his pay punctually in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

16. The rights and privileges conveyed by this lease and by any renewed lease, granted in accordance with its provisions, shall be liable to be forfeited on failure of the lessee to comply with any condition thereof.

Darjeeling
The 11th February 1902 }
RC

S. H. Walker
Deputy Commissioner.

m. s. s.
11.2.1902

Renewed Lease of a Tea Estate of Darjeeling Terai, Dated 11.02.1902

Appendix – H

Phansidewa Middle English School.

The 13th. January 1936.

Visited the Phansidewa Middle English School. This school was started in 1865 and it is one of the only 2 M.E. schools in the Terai portion of this district.

Committee.

It is under the management of a duly constituted Managing Committee with the Sub.Divisional Officer, Siliguri, as President. There are 10 members. The term of the constitution of the Managing Committee expires on the 3rd. April 1936. I am glad to note that 5 meetings were held during the last year and almost all the members regularly attended the meetings of the school.

Staff.

The staff consists of 6 teachers. The Head Master is I.A. passed. The qualifications of the teachers are quite good. In view of the school having classes from infant stage to sixth stage, I wish the committee could provide one more teacher in the staff, as the Head Master in addition to teaching has to do office work and also the supervision of the school. The 2nd teacher was found absent. I was told that he took leave and was due to join his duties before the last X'mas but he has not done so as yet. In his absence an Officiating teacher has been appointed. If the permanent incumbent is not joining his duties, the vacancy should be filled in permanently by a suitable candidate.

Pupils.

The school has a roll strength of 106. Last year on similar date the roll strength of the school was 96. Out of 106, 61 are Hindus, and the rest are Muslims. During my inspection 70 boys including one girl was present.

School Building.

The school has a good building with accommodation sufficient for the present purpose. In one class room I noticed some holes on the floor. They may be repaired easily to avoid risks to little children.

Finance.

The school gets Rs. 61/- p.m. from Govt. Grant and Rs. 50/- p.m. from District Board fund. The monthly average fee income amounts to about Rs. 64/-. The average monthly expenditure

expenditure of the school is about Rs.133/-. The rest of the expenditure is met by from public subscriptions. On examination of the public subscription list, it is seen that there is still an arrear of Rs.133-13-0, to be realized. The committee should make endeavours to realise the arrear and the monthly subscriptions regularly. On the 13th. January 1936, the Cash Book showed a balance of Rs.706-12-2, out of which Rs.706-0-2, is in the Postal Savings Bank and the balance with the Secretary and the Head Master for petty contingent expenses. I am glad to note that the financial position of the school is quite tolerable and I am sure the finance of the school will still be sound if the subscriptions are regularly raised. The salaries of the teachers have been paid in full up to December 1935.

Hostels. There are two hostels-one for Hindus having six boarders, and the other for Muslims having eight boarders.

Library. The school library has 320 books excluding Text books. During the year 1935, only 45 books were borrowed by boys. It is not very satisfying. The Head Master should encourage the students to make a liberal use of the library books.

Results of M.E.Examination.

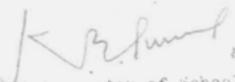
In 1935, 10 boys were sent up and only 4 passed. The Head Master explains that the Annual Examination was strictly conducted in 1935. The percentage of pass is only 40.--it is not a very satisfactory result.

General Remarks.

I went round all the classes and examined the pupils in different subjects. The results of my examination were quite satisfactory. In top two classes stress may be laid on conversation while teaching English. From enquiry I understand that only few boys after passing M.E.Examination go in for higher Education while most of the boys settle down in village to do their own village work. As I find Terai an agricultural place, I think some training in improved type of agriculture may be given to boys in this school. I would suggest the committee to start a School Farm and teach boys Agriculture in theory and practice, so that when they settle down in

in village they may be able to earn their living decently and do something to improve the agricultural works of their villages. It is not very expensive to start a School Farm when compared with other Vocational Courses, such as Carpentry, Tailoring, etc. I wish the school could also do something of Carpentry and Tailoring if the finance would permit.

These days I believe in giving some sort of practical training to boys of schools on some Vocational Lines to help the boys in settling their life in future on better conditions. I fervently hope that the Committee will receive my suggestions with enthusiasm and take steps to start a School Farm before long. I shall do my best to help the cause of the school in all possible ways


District Inspector of Schools,
Darjeeling.

School Report, Phansidewa M.E. School 1936

Appendix - I

Result Book

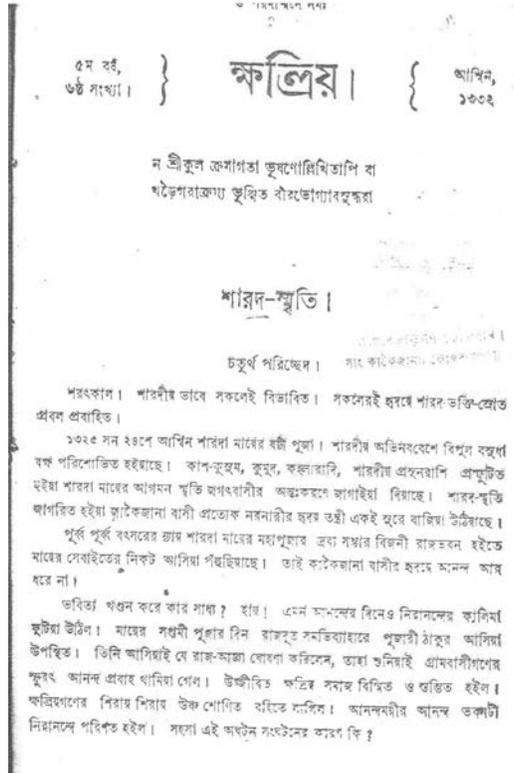
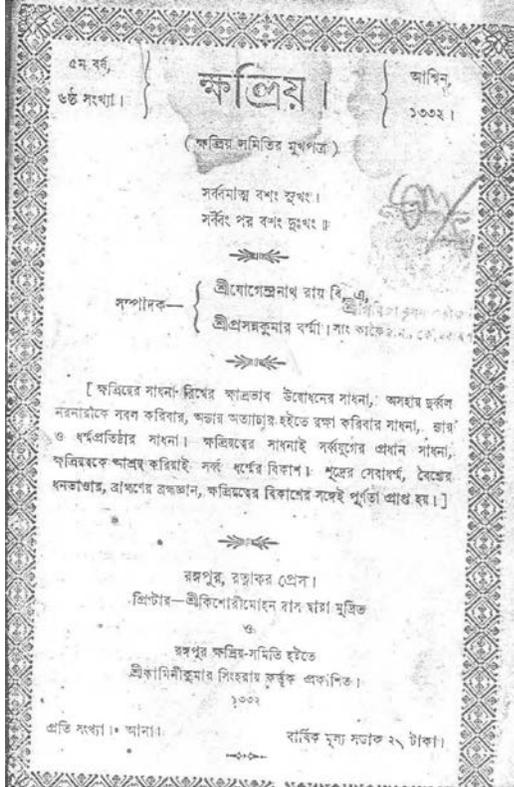
PHANSIDEWA M.E. SCHOOL FOR THE MONTH OF Dec. 1932

Class III to I.VI. - Annual Examination

Serial number	Name	ENGLISH		BENGALI MATHEMATICS				Hand work	Urdu, Persian or Arabic	TOTAL	REMARKS	
		Literature, grammar, composition and neatness. /100	Conversation, reading and dictation /50	Literature, grammar reading and dictation /50	Arithmetic. /100	Masanki /50	Geometry. /50					History. /50	Geography. /50	Science & Hygiene. /50	Drawing. /25	Drill. /25
1	Haripada Nath	53	54	31	20	14	13	16	8	8	220	P
2	Dhan Lal Saha	56	54	4	30	13	20	19	6	18	264	P
3	Paritosh Kumar Chakravarty	78	68	50	40	18	17	19	12	18	320	P - 23
4	Mr. Tamizuddeen	60	55	31	15	12	18	15	8	8	222	P
5	Mr. Paschal Hossain	60	72	75	20	12	18	18	9	10	296	P
6	Mr. Abdul Kalam	36	45	38	30	4	15	4	10	13	195	X
7	Abul Kalam Roy	6	24	25	20	3	16	6	5	18	123	X
8	Jyoti Chandra Banerjee	36	32	6	20	6	17	3	6	18	144	X
9	Varopada Nath	50	54	34	20	14	16	16	9	10	223	P
10	Mr. Sarifuddin	80	90	75	30	25	27	30	10	23	390	P - 1st
11	Mr. Mukteshwar	71	83	81	50	17	35	21	10	18	386	P - 2nd
12	Mr. Abanindranath	44	59	6	30	12	19	11	6	11	198	X

Tabulation Sheet, Phansidewa M.E. School 1932

Appendix – J



বাবু সতীশচন্দ্র সিংহ ।
ঠাকুর মানসিংহ জী ।
বাবু বৈকুণ্ঠ সিংহ ।

৩। রায় সাহেব পঞ্চানন বর্ধা ।
ঠাকুর সাপরিমহে জী ।
বাবু কামিনীকুমার বর্ধা ।
ঠাকুর ছানকীপাণ সিংহ জী ।

নিম্নলিখিত ব্যক্তিগণ কাঁচাকাঁচি সড়ার মেঘর নিয়ুক্ত হইয়াছেন—

বাবু সতীশচন্দ্র সিংহ । ঠাকুর সাধর সিংহ জী ।
রায় বাহাদুর শক্তিভোমহন সিংহ । ঠাকুর হরপ্রসাদ সিংহ জী বি, এ ।
বাবু উপেন্দ্রচন্দ্র সিংহ জী । ঠাকুর পৌরীপদ্ম সিংহ জী ।
রায় সাহেব পঞ্চানন বর্ধা । ঠাকুর মানসিংহ জী ।
বাবু বৈকুণ্ঠ সিংহ জী । ঠাকুর বিম্বর বাহাদুর সিংহ ।
বাবু গোবিন্দপ্রসাদ সিংহ জী বি, এ । ঠাকুর ললিত সিংহ জী ।

প্রান্তিক সভার কিছা মহাশয়ের কেহ হাইতে ইচ্ছা করিলে সন্মতিতে যৌক্ত নহিবেন ।
পর্যন্ত নিজে বহন করিতে হইবে ।



পাশবিক কাণ্ড—নারী-নির্যাতন ।

১। থানা থানসামার অধীন ছবুগিয়া গ্রামের খোণা নামক এক ব্যক্তির বিধবা পুত্রবধু
বয়স গুরুত্রে তেজীকে চব্বিশিয়া ও বেড়াহুটী গ্রামের কতিপয় দুর্ভৃত্ত মুসলমান লোক পূর্বেক
অপহরণ করিয়া লইয়া গিয়াছিল । খোণা আসামীগণের বিরুদ্ধে থানায় অভিযোগ করিয়াছিল ।
কিন্তু স্থানীয় পুলিশ শীঘ্র কিছুর করিতে না পারায় খোণা কতিপয় স্বর্ধপ্রাণ সাহসী ব্যক্তির
সহায়তায় পুত্রবধুকে উদ্ধার করিতে চেষ্টা করেন এবং কৃতকার্য হন । অর্ন্তের রক্ষার্থে
এইপ্রকার সাহসের কার্যে বিগণন্দন কিংকর্তব্যবিমূঢ় হইয়া বাধা প্রদানে সাহসী হন নাই ।
বধূতার উদ্ধার হইয়াছিল ।

কিন্তু বড়ই দুঃখের বিষয় মামসার দিন পুত্রবধু সহ বিনাক্ষণর আদায়ত হইতে কিরিবার
পক্ষে উক্ত দুর্ভৃত্তগণের বহুলোক একযোগে আক্রমণ করিয়া বধুটাকে পুনরায় লোক পূর্বেক
লইয়া গিয়াছে ও খোণাকে ওড়কতরুপে আহত করিয়াছে । বধুতার আর উদ্ধার হইতেছে না ।

২। থানা কাণীগঞ্জের অধীন দেওতোবা গ্রামেও পাঁচজন দুর্ভৃত্ত মুসলমান একটা
বিবাহিতা বাসিন্দাকে তারার বাবীর অল্পপস্থিতিতে সন্ধ্যার প্রাকালেই লোক পূর্বেক অহরণ

পপ-মেঘর পলাতকগণের সাহায্যের স্বরূপে সন্ধ্যার পরেই বধুতার বাবুকে উদ্ধার করিয়া লইয়া
হইতে পুলিশ পাঠানের ফলে দুই, ভোকা ও হোদা নামক তিনজন আসামী কোঁপ্রার হইয়াছে ।
ইহারা মানসে মুক্ত আছে । অপর আসামী কেঁটু এখনও পলাতক ।

৩। সপ্তাহ খানেক হইল কাউনিয়া থানার এলাকার আর একটা ঘটনা হইয়াছে ।
সফরউদিন নামে এক ব্যক্তির গ্রীকে পচা ও মনেউগা ও আর কয়েকজন পসাইয়া লইয়া
যায়, তৎপরেই সফরউদিন ও আর কয়েকটা লোক গ্রীলোকটাকে সহ পচা ও মনেউগাকে
ধরে । তৎপরে বেধা গেল গ্রীলোকটা আছে কিন্তু পচা নাই । একদিন পরেই বেধা গেল
একটা লাস তীপ্রার চরে লাগিয়া রহিয়াছে । পুলিশ লাসটা তদন্ত করেন এবং উক্ত পচার
ভরিকে আনিয়া বেধান । পচার ভগিনী এই লাসটা তারার ডাইর- লাস বনিয়া সনাক্ত
করিয়াছে । মোকদ্দমা চলিতেছে ।

এই সকল কৃকার্য দমন করিতে হইলে পুলিশকে যেমন কার্য তৎপর হওয়া আবশ্যিক
গ্রামবাসীগণকেও উন্নয়ন বিপদের সময় প্রাণ দিয়াও বিপন্নকে সাহায্য করিতে হইবে । পরন্ত
ইহাই শ্রেষ্ঠ মানবধর্ম । এই সকল কাজে হিন্দু মুসলমান ভেদ করিলে চলিবে না, মাহুকে
মাহুদের মতই কাজ করিতে হইবে । পশুর দলে যোগ দিয়া পাশবিক কার্যে সহায়তা করিলে
সে মাহুকে মাহু বলা যায় না । যে ক্ষত্রিয়ের উপাসকগণ মহাশক্তির পূজা দিয়া কাঁচাকাঁচি
উন্নোথনের এই সুযোগ ফোণার হারাইও না । বিপদের উদ্ধারের জন্ত প্রাণ দিতে না পারিলে
সে প্রাণের কোনই মূল্য নাই তাহা স্কুর বিড়ালের প্রাণের অপেক্ষা এতটুকুও শ্রেষ্ঠ নহে ।



তরাইবাসীর সঙ্কট ।

তরাইতে একটা নতুন সড়ার পড়িয়াছে । নতুন চা বাগান হইতেছে । ইহাতে জন
সাধারণের সুবিধা হইবে, আর পরমুখাপেক্ষী হয়ে থাকিতে হইবে না । কোম্পানীয়াও উচ্চ
দরে জমি জর করিতেছেন এমন সুযোগ বৃষ্টি আর আসিবে না । অর্ন্তমোতেই হোক কিছা
দ্বায়ে পড়িয়াই হোক তরাইবাসীর গুটি এখন অর্ন্তের দিকে পড়িয়াছে । কাজেই কোম্পানীদেরও
জমির অভাব হইতেছে না । গাঁহার জলের মত অর্ন্ত চলিতেছেন । কোথাও বা ছ মাসের
মিয়ার আর কোথাও বা চার মাসের মিয়ার দ্বিবে বাঘনা চলিতেছে । কিন্তু আমি যদি ;
হে তরাইবাসী ধনী উন্নয়নোদয়গণ আপনাদের ত অর্ন্ত পিপাসা মিটল । কিন্তু এই যে ;

বিজয় প্রতিষ্ঠা ওয়ার্কস্‌।
গাইবান্ধা।

আমাদের বিজয় প্রতিষ্ঠা ওয়ার্কস্‌ নামক ছাপাখানার সর্বপ্রকার ইংরেজী ও বাংলা পুস্তক, চেক, মাথিলা, নিমন্ত্রণ পত্র, খ্রীতি উপহার পরীক্ষার প্রের প্রত্নতি বর্ধাসম্ভব মূল্যে মুদ্রা ও অল্প সময়ে ছাপাওয়া যেওয়া হয়। মনঃবলের কাজ বরের সহিত নির্দিষ্ট সময়ে মূল্যে করিয়া দেওয়া হয়। সর্বসাময়িকের সহায়ত্বিত ও পরীক্ষা প্রার্থিনী।
আমাদের ই-ডেপ্টস্‌ ইউনিয়ন নামক পুস্তকের বোকানে, মূল্যপত্রা ও অক্ষত সর্বপ্রকার পুস্তক মূল্যে বিক্রয় করা হয়।

ম্যানেজার—বিজয় প্রতিষ্ঠা ওয়ার্কস্‌,
গাইবান্ধা।

সূচী।

বিষয়	সংস্করণ	পৃষ্ঠা
১। শায়ন-স্বত্ব	শ্রীশ্যামসুন্দর বর্ষা কোলাকার	১২১—১২৪
২। উদ্বোধন	শ্রীগোবিন্দচন্দ্র রায়	১২৫
৩। সুরাঙ্গন পিঙ্গি বা অধিবর্ণ পরিগণন মাটক	শ্রীপূর্ণানন্দ রায় বিরচিত	১২৬—১২৮
৪। অক্ষয়মতি	শ্রীমদ্রতনন্দ রায়	১২৯—১৩০
৫। বুঝা হালি বীদি	শ্রীমদ্রতনন্দ রায়	১৩১—১৩২
৬। ছাত্র-পুস্ত	শ্রীমদ্রতনন্দ রায়	১৩৩—১৩৪
৭। উচ্চশিক্ষা	শ্রীমদ্রতনন্দ রায়	১৩৫—১৩৬
৮। কলিঙ্গপেশের প্রতি শক্তিরূপিনী কন্যার উক্তি	শ্রীমদ্রতনন্দ রায়	১৩৭—১৩৮
৯। বিবিধ প্রসঙ্গ	সম্পাদক	১৩৯—১৪০

বিত্তজ্ঞাপন।

সমাজের প্রত্যেক প্রাণে বাহাতে কলিত্রয় আচার ব্যবহার, নিত্যনৈমিত্তিক কার্যক্রমাদি, শাস্ত্রমত ব্রহ্মসুখলায় সম্পাদিত হয়, সে অচ্য ছাপাখরচ অপেক্ষাও কম মূল্যে নিম্নলিখিত পুস্তকগুলি কলিত্রয় সমিতিতে বিক্রয়ার্থে মূল্যে থাকে।

কলিত্রয় ব্যবস্থা	...	...	১/০
উপনয়ন ব্যবস্থা	...	...	১/০
সমাজ পদ্ধতি	...	...	০/০
কলিত্রয় সমিতির নিয়মাবলী	...	...	১/০
মণ্ডলী স্থাপনের নিয়মাবলী	...	...	৩/০
উপনয়ন গ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী	...	...	৩/০
মুক্তা বিতরণ নিয়মাবলী	...	...	৩/০
কলিত্রয় সঙ্গীত	...	...	০/০
কার্য-বিবরণী	...	...	০/০
১ম বর্ষ হইতে ১০ বর্ষ প্রতি বর্ষের একখানা	...	...	০/০
ক্রিয়া পদ্ধতি ১ম খণ্ড—পুণ্ড্রোহিত বরণ—বোড়প মাটকা পুণ্ড্রোহিত	১/০
২য় খণ্ড অধিবাসোপনয়ন বোড়প সমাধিবর্তন	১/০
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১৯২১ হইতে ১৯২২ সনের কলিত্রয় পত্রিকা বার্ষিক অধিবর্ণ উপনয়ন ছাপাখানার পক্ষাৎ কলিত্রয় সমিতির গ্রাহকগণকে নাম মাত্র মূল্যে দেওয়া হইবে প্রতি বর্ষের মূল্য ৩-০০ তাকে সাইতে কি: পি: ধরচ অন্ততঃ-১। অগ্রিম পত্র।

ম্যানেজার—
কলিত্রয় সমিতি, বঙ্গপুর।

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ইতি কথা

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বিশেষজ্ঞ শংসায়িত বাংলা বাৎসরিক জার্নাল

তৃতীয় বর্ষ, প্রথম সংখ্যা, জানুয়ারি ২০১৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

সম্পাদকমণ্ডলী

ড. সৌমিত্র শ্রীমানী (মুখ্য সম্পাদক)

প্রফেসর নির্বাণ বসু

প্রফেসর সনৎকুমার নন্দর

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প্রফেসর অমিত দে



ইতিহাস

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ইতিহাস

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যাদ্যাসাময়িক জার্নাল

তৃতীয় বর্ষ, প্রথম সংখ্যা, জানুয়ারি ২০১৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

প্রকাশক

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বারইপূর, কলকাতা ৭০০১৪৪ থেকে প্রকাশিত।

মুদ্রণ

নিখার্ক অফসেট

৪এ, পটলডাঙ্গা স্ট্রিট, কলকাতা ৭০০০০৯

গ্রন্থস্বত্ব

বঙ্গীয় ইতিহাস সমিতি কলকাতা

মূল্য ১৮০/-

সম্পাদকীয়

স্বরণগোলালেখ্য

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সুন্দরবনের জনকসতি : ইতিহাসে ও উপাখ্যানে
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দাঙ্কিনিং জেলার তরাই অঞ্চলের ইতিবৃত্ত :

প্রসঙ্গ ইতিহাসের এক উপেক্ষিত জু-খণ্ড (১৭৭৯-১৮৫০)
সুদীপ বাসনবিশ

উনিশ শতকের বাবু-সংস্কৃতি ও কবি ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র গুপ্তের কবিতায়
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৩৭৬ নক্ষত্র

বীরচর্যয় হিন্দু লেখক : উদ্যোগ পর্ব
করবী সিং

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১২

২০

৩৫

৪৬

৭০

৯৫

১১৫

১৪০

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(১৭৭৯-১৮৫০)

(প্রায় ১৭ জুলাই ২০১৪ খ্রি., ম্যানৌচিত ১৩ অক্টোবর ২০১৪ খ্রি.)

সুদীপ বাসনবিশ*

সারসংক্ষেপ

উত্তর-পশ্চিমবঙ্গের উত্তরাংশের দাজিলিং জেলার সবতল অঞ্চলকে সাধারণভাবে তরাই বলে অভিহিত করা হয়। কোচবিহার, সিকিম এবং নেপাল রাজত্বের মূলস্রোত থেকে বহুদূরে অবস্থান করা কলকাতার এই গ্রামীণ অঞ্চলটির অধিকাংশকে কেবল করে উপরোক্ত তিনটি রাজশক্তি যারংবার নিজেদের মধ্যে সংঘর্ষে জড়িয়ে পড়েছেন। যদিও ইংরেজ কোম্পানির এই অঞ্চলে আগমনের পূর্বে অঞ্চলটি ভারতের অন্যান্য অঞ্চলের থেকে প্রায় বিচ্ছিন্নই ছিল। সুসংহত রাজশক্তি বা গাঁজবংশ বা শক্তিশালী সামন্তরা এই অঞ্চলে কণ্ঠি স্থাপন করেনি বলেই অঞ্চলটি প্রাচীন, মধ্য এনেকি প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগেও অসোলোনার পাহাড়বীশে আসেনি। দাজিলিং জেলার পশ্চিম অঞ্চলের ইতিহাস নিয়ে কিছু অল্পপুথ্য রচনা দৃষ্টি করা গেলেও জেলার তরাই অঞ্চলের প্রায় ঐতিহাসিক পর্যবেক্ষণের কালক্রমিক ইতিহাস এখনও অনাগোচিত ও অসিদ্ধ। তাই তরাই বা বর্তমান দাজিলিং অঞ্চলের প্রাক-ঐতিহাসিক পর্যবেক্ষণের ইতিহাস রচনাই কর্তমান লিখকের মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

সূচকশব্দ

তরাই, নেওজ, বিক্রান্তকুমি, সিকিম, নেপাল, চৈকুংপুর, চোগিছাল, যাকত, জেওর্, লিখুয়াম, কেই নদী, ছুটন, দাজিলিং, কোম্পানি

বৃক্ষ উপাসনা ও ভারতীয় উপজাতির সমাজ :
একটি নৃতাত্ত্বিক সমীক্ষা

কুতলা মণ্ডল সেন

মজার্ন রিভিউতে ফ্যাসিবাদ

১৯২০ ও ১৯৩০-এর দশক
সৌম্য বোস

স্বাধীনতার সংকট : দেশভাগ ও উদ্বাস্ত সমস্যা

প্রসঙ্গ জলপাইগুড়ি জেলা
শ্রী সৌমেন্দ্র প্রসাদ সাহা

গ্রন্থ পর্যালোচনা

বর্তমানের চোখে 'নতুন' অতীত
সায়ন্তনী পাল

বৌদ্ধধর্ম পরিচয়
মণিকুন্তলা হালদার দে

তরাই শব্দটি ইংরেজি নয়, বাংলাও নয়; ভাষাবিজ্ঞানীদের মতে তরাই শব্দটি ফরাসি ভাষার, যার অর্থ স্যুটিয়াতে ও ভিজ়ে আবহাওয়াপূর্ণ স্থান। বিখ্যাত ভাষাবিদ হাজসন সাহেবের মতে টরাই (Tara) বা টারিয়ানী (Tariyani) কথার অর্থ হল পর্বতের পাদদেশের জলাভূমি। তার মতে তামিলের তার (Taru) এবং কণ্ঠিকের তাল (Tala) মানে হল নীচু ভূমি। তরাই অঞ্চলের প্রথম ইউরোপীয় অন্বেষণকারী ডাঃ জসেপ ডলটিন হকার পাঞ্জাবের সাতলেজ (শতক্র) থেকে আসামের ব্রহ্মকুণ্ড পর্যন্ত হিমালয়ের পাদদেশের ম্যালেরিয়া-পূর্ণ বিস্তীর্ণ অঞ্চলকে তরাই বলে অভিহিত করেছেন।^১ এই বিস্তীর্ণ ভূখণ্ডের আয়তন আটশো মাইল এবং এই বিস্তীর্ণ ভৌগোলিক ভূখণ্ড স্থানভেদে বিভিন্ন নামে অভিহিত হয়েছে। তাই তরাই অঞ্চল উত্তরপ্রদেশ^২ ও আসামে^৩ যেমন আছে, আবার তেমনভাবে বাংলা বা নেপালেও^৪ আছে। বর্তমান নিবন্ধে আমরা শুধু পশ্চিমবঙ্গের দার্জিলিং জেলার তরাই অঞ্চলের প্রাক-ঔপনিবেশিক পর্বের কালানুক্রমিক ইতিহাস নিয়ে আলোচনা করব, যা ইতিপূর্বে প্রায় অনালোচিত ও অলিখিত। ঔপনিবেশিক সরকার চা-বাগান পল্লবের কারণে এই অঞ্চলটি অধিগ্রহণের আগে (১৮৫০) ভারতবর্ষের অন্যান্য অঞ্চলের থেকে প্রায় বিচ্ছিন্ন ছিল। প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য তরাই অঞ্চলটিকে কেউ কেউ আবার মোরাঙ বা কিরাতভূমি বলেও অভিহিত করেছেন কারণ মোরাঙ সিকিম (দার্জিলিং) ও নেপাল তরাই অঞ্চলের পূর্বনাম। আলমগীরনামা ও কোচ রাজাদের বৃত্তান্তে আমরা একাধিকবার এই মোরাঙ অঞ্চলের উল্লেখ পাই। ১৭৭৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মেজর জেনারেল রেনেলের সার্ভে ম্যাপে বিহারের মুজাফফরপুর ও জলপাইগুড়ির মধ্যকার অঞ্চলকে মোরাঙ বা তরাই বলে অভিহিত করা হয়েছে।^৫ বস্তুত বর্তমান পশ্চিমবঙ্গের দার্জিলিং জেলার সমতল অঞ্চলটিকে সাধারণভাবে তরাই অঞ্চল বলে অভিহিত করা হয়। হুগোলার বিচারে এই অঞ্চলটির অবস্থান

২৬° ৩৬' ৪৮" এবং ২৬° ৪৯' ৪৫" উত্তর অক্ষাংশ এবং ৮৮° ৮' ৫১" ৮৮° ২৯' পূর্ব দ্রাঘিমাংশের মধ্যে। উত্তর-দক্ষিণে এর বিস্তৃতি আট মাইল এবং পূর্ব-পশ্চিমে এটির বিস্তৃতি দশ মাইল। আয়তনের দিক থেকে বিচার করলে জঙ্গল এলাকা বাদ দিয়ে ২২৯.২৫ বর্গ মাইল বা ১৪৭,১৭০.১৯ একরের কাছাকাছি কিছু দাঁড়ায়। অঞ্চলটি উত্তরে জেলার কিশিয়াম মহকুমা, দক্ষিণে উত্তর দিনাজপুর (যা পূর্বে পশ্চিম দিনাজপুর নামে পরিচিত ছিল ১৯৮৬ সাল পর্যন্ত) পূর্বে জলপাইগুড়ি ও পশ্চিমে স্বাধীন নেপাল রাষ্ট্র দ্বারা পরিবৃত্ত।^৬ প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য অশ্বশুক্রের পরিবেশ ও হিংস্র জীবজন্তু তরাই অঞ্চলের সঙ্গে ওতপ্রোতভাবে যুক্ত ছিল। ম্যালেরিয়া, কালাজ্বর ও তরাই ফিভারের আঁতুড়ধর ছিল এই অঞ্চলটি যা ইউরোপীয় অধিবাসীদের কাছে আতঙ্কের অন্যতম কারণ ছিল। এছাড়া অধিবাসী বৃষ্টিপাত ও বিভিন্ন বিষাক্ত সাপ ও পোকামাকড় পরিবেশকে আরো ভয়াবহ করে তুলেছিল। এখনকার বাহ্যিক বৃষ্টিপাতের পরিমাণ ছিল প্রায় ১১৬ ইঞ্চি, যা কখনো ১২০ ইঞ্চিও হত, বস্তুত বছরে প্রায় ১৫০ দিন বৃষ্টিপাত হত। এই রকম স্যাঁতসেঁতে ও ভিজ়ে আবহাওয়াপূর্ণ জায়গায় মানুষের বসতি প্রায় এক্ষণকর অসম্ভব ছিল।^৭ অন্যদিকে নেপালের হিমালয়ের পাদদেশ থেকে বাংলা, ভূটান দুরার হয়ে পূর্বদিকে আসাম পর্যন্ত বিস্তৃত অঞ্চলটি এতাই

যন জঙ্গলে পরিপূর্ণ ছিল যে এখানে হাতি, বাঘ, বাইসন, বন্যমহিষ ইত্যাদি হিংস্র জন্তু জানোয়ার তাদের নিরাপদ আশ্রয় গড়ে তুলেছিল। অঞ্চলটি অরণ্যকীর্ণ হওয়ায় শিকারীরা পক্ষে শিকার করাও দুসসাধ্য ব্যাপার ছিল।^৮

উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে এটা সহজই অনুমান করা যেতে পারে যে এই রকম একটি অশ্বশুক্রের পরিবেশ মনুষ্যজাতি প্রায় ছিল না বললেই চলে। যদিও জোড়ারারের গৃহকে কেন্দ্র করে মাঝে মাঝে বসতি লক্ষ করা যেত। এই কারণে অঞ্চলটি প্রাচীন, মধ্য এমনি কি প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগেও আলোচনার পাক্ষরীপে আসেনি। যদিও একটি সভ্যতার বিকাশ অনেকটাই নির্ভর করে পাষবর্তী সভ্যতার সঙ্গে তার যোগাযোগ বা সম্পর্কের ওপর। কিন্তু অঞ্চলটির অশ্বশুক্রের পরিবেশ ছিল তার প্রধান অন্তরায়। তাই অঞ্চলটি যখন ইতিহাসের বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে বিভিন্ন শাসকবর্গের অধীনে এল, যথা— কোচবিহার, সিকিম ও নেপাল, তখন সেখানকার শাসকবর্গ রাজস্ব আদায় ভিন্ন অঞ্চলটির উন্নতিকল্পে কোনো ব্যবস্থাই গ্রহণ করেননি। বরঞ্চ প্রত্যেকটি শাসকবর্গের প্রান্তীয় অঞ্চল হওয়ায় সর্বদাই অবহেলিত হয়েছিল। তাই ঔপনিবেশিক সরকার ১৮৫০ সালে যখন অঞ্চলটি অধিগ্রহণ করে তখন সেখানে কোনো মন্দির, মসজিদ বা বড়ো দীঘি লক্ষ করেননি। আমরা আগেই উল্লেখ করেছি যে অঞ্চলটি অশ্বশুক্রের হওয়ায় প্রায় জনমানবহীন ছিল। জনবসতি গড়ে ওঠেনি বলেই সুসংহত রাজস্ব বা রাজস্ব সংগ্রহ বা শক্তিশালী সামন্ত বা জমিদার এই অঞ্চলে বসতি স্থাপন করেননি। ফলে পুরাকীর্তির নিদর্শন স্বরূপ মন্দির, মসজিদ, দীঘি ইত্যাদি এই অঞ্চলে দেখতে পাওয়া যায় না। কারণ মঠ, মন্দির, মসজিদ, দীঘি ইত্যাদি স্থাপনের পৃষ্ঠপোষক ছিলেন রাজা বা জমিদারগণ। প্রাচীন, মধ্য এমনি কি প্রাগৈতিহাসিক যুগেও এই পৃষ্ঠপোষক বজায় ছিল। ফলে দেখা যায়, প্রতিবেশী জলপাইগুড়ি, কোচবিহার জেলার জনগোষ্ঠীর, সমাজ-সংস্কৃতির সঙ্গে দার্জিলিং-তরাই অঞ্চলের ঘনিষ্ঠ যোগাযোগ থাকলেও কোচবিহার, জলপাইগুড়ি জেলার ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে তার নামমাত্র পাই না।^৯ তাজড়া উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতের দীর্ঘ ঐতিহাসিক শ্রেণীপটের বিচারে এই অঞ্চলটি ছিল নবীনতম। ফলস্বরূপ ঐসব অঞ্চলের ইতিহাস রচনার ক্ষেত্রে আমরা মৌখিক বা লিখিত তথ্য পেয়ে থাকলেও দার্জিলিং-এর ক্ষেত্রে তা মেলে না।^{১০} পরিশেষে বলা যেতে পারে যে এই অঞ্চলে বহিরাগতদের আগমনের ধারা ছিল ধারাবাহিক এবং উল্টোদিকে কোনো গোষ্ঠীই নিজেদের আগমনের এবং বসতি স্থাপনের ইতিহাস লিপিবদ্ধ করেননি।^{১১}

কোচবিহার, সিকিম এবং নেপালের রাজস্বের মূলসোত থেকে বহুদূর অবস্থান করা বন্দের এই প্রান্তীয় তরাই অঞ্চলের ইতিহাস অনেকটা এই তিন রাজস্বের একধিশ্রুতে মিনিত হওয়া, বিচ্ছিন্ন হওয়া আবার জড়িয়ে পড়ার ইতিহাস। আলোচনার কেন্দ্রবিন্দু বর্তমান দার্জিলিং জেলার শিলিগুড়ি মহকুমা হলেও বিহারের পুণিয়া জেলার উত্তরাংশের ও নেপালের দক্ষিণ ভাগের সমভূমি অঞ্চলও এই আলোচনাতে মাঝে মাঝে এসে যাবে, কারণ কালের নিয়মে রাজনৈতিকভাবে এরা একই সামাজিক, সাংস্কৃতিক ও ঐতিহাসিক পরিমণ্ডলের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল। পৌরাণিক কাহিনি অনুযায়ী এই অঞ্চলের আদি অধিবাসী

কিরাতরা নিজেদের রাজপুত্র বলে দাবি করলেও সম্ভবত তাঁরা কোচ বংশজাত ছিলেন এবং যিশুখ্রিস্টের জন্মের বহু আগে থেকেই এই অঞ্চলে রাজত্ব করতেন। মহাভারতের যুগে পাণ্ডুপুত্র ভীম বিহার ও দিনাজপুরে বেশ কিছু অঞ্চলে নিজেদের কর্তৃত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠায় সক্ষম হয়েছিলেন এবং বঙ্গ, পৌঞ্জ ও কিরাতাধিপতি বাসুদেবকে পরাস্ত করেছিলেন। অনাদিকে পাণ্ডুরদের অজ্ঞাতবাসের সময় তাঁদের আশ্রয়দাতা রাজা বিরাট মোরাঙ বা তরাই অঞ্চলের জৈনকে কন্যাকে বিবাহ করেছিলেন।^{১০}

তরাই অঞ্চলে লিখুদের বসতি স্থাপনের আগে আনুমানিক পঞ্চম শতকে এই কিরাতভূমি আটজন সামন্ততান্ত্রিক প্রধানদের দ্বারা শাসিত হয়, যথা - হভেন হাং, ইয়াক হাং, ছিসুবি হাং, লারা পাংবো হাং, শেসীবা হাং, কানগো হাং, খাদি হাং, এবং ইম হাং। এঁদের মধ্যে ইম হাং ছিলেন সবচেয়ে প্রভাবশালী সামন্ত এবং লেপচাদের প্রধান, যিনি নেপালের দেওমাই নদী থেকে পূর্বদিকে অগ্রসর হয়ে তিস্তা নদী পর্যন্ত তাঁর প্রভাবাধীন করেন এবং আরো কিছু লেপচা উত্তর দিকে অগ্রসর হয়ে দার্জিলিং ও লিকিম বসতি স্থাপন করেন। অপরপক্ষে বড়ো কিরাত অধিবাসীদের নেতা খাদি হাং নেপালের ইলাম উপত্যকা থেকে নেমে এসে নেপালের ঝাং এবং বর্তমান পশ্চিমবঙ্গের শিলিগুড়ি, ময়নাগুড়ি এবং মহাকালগুড়ি অঞ্চল নিজ প্রভাবাধীনে আনেন। অন্য দুইজন সামন্ততান্ত্রিক প্রধান পশ্চিমে দুখেশী নদীর দিকে অগ্রসর হয়ে বসতি স্থাপন করেন।^{১১} প্রায় একই সময়ে চীন থেকে আগত শাহ্ মোক্‌আন অধিবাসীরা বার্মা, আসাম হয়ে উত্তরবঙ্গে প্রবেশ করে এবং আরো উত্তর দিকে অগ্রসর হয়ে পূর্ব নেপালের কিরাত অধিবাসীদের সঙ্গে বসবাস শুরু করে।^{১২} কিন্তু অল্প কিছু সময়ের মধ্যেই আনুমানিক ষষ্ঠ শতকের প্রথমদিকে তিব্বতের কাচীন বা চিং পো অধিবাসীরা শাহ মোক্‌আনদের আক্রমণ করে। শাহ মোক্‌আনরা তীব্র প্রতিরোধ গড়ে তুললেও শেষপর্যন্ত হকায়ের যুদ্ধে পরাজিত হয়ে পূর্ণিয়ার নিকটবর্তী জালালগড় এবং তিস্তার মধ্যবর্তী অঞ্চলে বসতি স্থাপন করে। এই সময় সই য়াক লাজো হাং - কে এই অঞ্চলের চব্বিশজন রাজার মধ্যে প্রধান নির্বাচন করা হয় যিনি ফেমজং, ধারু, ধিমাং, কোচ প্রভৃতি অধিবাসীদের শাসন করতেন। এই ঘটনার পরবর্তীকালে শাহ মোক্‌আন অধিবাসীরা নিজেদের লিখু বলে পরিচয় দিতে শুরু করেন।^{১৩} অন্যদিকে সপ্তম শতকের প্রথমদিকে শাহ মোক্‌আন অধিবাসীদের অন্য একটি বিভাগ মোউরঙ-এ নেতৃত্বে চীনের দক্ষিণ ভাগ হয়ে বার্মার উত্তর দিকে প্রবেশ করে। অতঃপর তারা আরো কিছুদূর অগ্রসর হয়ে আসাম অতিক্রম করে উত্তরবঙ্গে প্রবেশ করে এবং ঘনজঙ্গল পরিষ্কার করে সেখানে পাকাপাকিভাবে বসতি স্থাপন করে। নেতৃত্বের নামানুসারে এরপর থেকে তাদের সিংহগর্ভাধীন অঞ্চল মোরাঙ^{১৪} বলে চিহ্নিত হতে শুরু করে। রাজা মোউরাঙ নেপালের পূর্ব হিমালয়ের পাদদেশের প্রায় সমস্ত কিরাতভূমি অধিগ্রহণের পর তাকে চারটি প্রদেশে ভাগ করে সেখানে সামন্ততান্ত্রিক ঝাঁটের শাসন ব্যবস্থা প্রতিষ্ঠিত করেন। এই চারটি প্রদেশ হল খয়য়ান, লিখুয়ান, লাপচান এবং মোউরাঙ। এদের মধ্যে লাপচানরা পশ্চিমে মেচী থেকে পূর্বে তিস্তা নদীর

মধ্যবর্তী অঞ্চল শাসন করতেন। রাজা মোরাঙ খাম্পাং-এর কাছে রাজত্ব-এ তার গ্রীষ্মকালীন রাজধানী এবং পূর্বে নেপালের বিজয়পুরের কাছে খামা বা শানগুড়িতে তার শীতকালীন রাজধানী স্থাপন করেন।^{১৫} রাজা মোরাঙ-এর কোনো উত্তরাধিকারী না থাকায় তিনি তাঁর অন্যতম মন্ত্রী মক্‌আন শানকে তাঁর সাম্রাজ্যের দায়িত্বভার অর্পণ করেন।^{১৬}

পাল, সেন ও গৌড়ের সুলতানদের আমলে এই তরাই অঞ্চল গৌড়ের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল।^{১৭} পাল রাজারা কিরাতদের পরাজিত করে তাদের অধিপতা শুধুমাত্র পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের মধ্যে সীমাবদ্ধ রাখতে সক্ষম হয়েছিল।^{১৮} পাল সাম্রাজ্যের পতনের পর তরাই অঞ্চল সেন সাম্রাজ্যভুক্ত হয় এবং লক্ষ্মণসেনের রাজত্বকাল পর্যন্ত এই অঞ্চলে সেনদের অধিপতা বজায় ছিল।^{১৯} প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখযোগ্য যে চিরকালই সকল দেশের প্রত্যন্ত প্রদেশ হওয়ায় এই তরাই অঞ্চল সাংস্কৃতিক দিক থেকে অবহেলিত থেকে গেছে।^{২০} অপরদিকে সারা তুর্ক-আফগান যুগে মুহম্মদ ইকতিয়ারুদ্দিন বখতিয়ার খিলজির তিব্বত অভিযানের ঋণ্য পরিকল্পনা ছাড়া উত্তরবঙ্গে সীমান্ত বিস্তারের ক্ষেত্রে কোনো সত্যিকারের প্রয়াস দেখা যায় না।^{২১} এই সময় বখতিয়ার খিলজি তরাইয়ের এক খেচ সদরকে ইসলাম ধর্মে দীক্ষিত করেছিলেন যার নাম আলী মেচ। পঞ্চদশ শতকের শেষের দশকে ১৪৯৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে গৌড়ের আফগান সুলতান আল্লাউদ্দীন হুসেন শাহ কামরূপ আক্রমণ করে তাকে নিজ সাম্রাজ্যভুক্ত করেন।^{২২} প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য এই সময় হুসেন শাহের ফৌজ গৌড়ের পূর্ব সীমায় প্রবাহিত করতোয়া নদী অতিক্রম করে প্রতিবেশী কামতাপুর রাজ্য আক্রমণ করেছিল। খেন, কোচ, মেচ, রাতা, গারো প্রভৃতি কোম সম্রাজ্যের মানুষকে নিয়ে কামতাপুর রাজ্য দক্ষিণে রংপুর থেকে উত্তরে হিমালয়ের সানুদেশ বরাবর বিস্তৃত হয়ে আসামে গিয়ে থেমেছিল। রাজধানী ছিল কোচবিহারের দিনহাটা মহকুমার গোসানীমারীতে। গৌড়ের আক্রমণে রাজধানী সর্ব্বথা হত, রাজবংশ হল যুদ্ধের বলি। কিন্তু এতদসত্ত্বেও গৌড়ের রূপাল ছিল মন্দ। কামতাপুর ধ্বংস করেও গৌড়ের সীমান্ত করতোয়ার পূর্বভাগে স্থায়ীভাবে বিস্তৃত হয়নি। অন্যদিকে খেন রাজবংশের পতন হলেও কামতাপুর রাজবংশের ঐতিহাসিক গুরুত্ব শেষ হয়ে যায়নি। ষোড়শ শতকের প্রথম ভাগে কামতাপুর রাজ্যের উত্তরসূরী হিসাবে উত্তর বাংলার মানচিত্রে কোচবিহার স্থান করে নেয়।^{২৩}

প্রথম দুই পুরুষের রাজত্বে যথাক্রমে বিশ্বসিংহ ও নরনারায়ণের সময় কোচবিহার যশের শিখরে গিয়ে পৌঁছল অর্থাৎ এককথায় এই সময়ে কোচবিহারের রাজার সমস্ত উত্তরবঙ্গে তাঁদের একচ্ছত্র অধিপতা কার্যে একত্রিত হলেন। জনৈক মুসলিম ঐতিহাসিকের বিবরণ অনুসারে ১৫৯৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মুঘল সম্রাট আকবরের রাজত্বকালে কোচবিহার রাজ লক্ষ্মীনারায়ণের রাজসীমা পূর্বে ব্রহ্মপুত্র নদী, পশ্চিমে ত্রিহত (বর্তমানে উত্তর বিহারের মুজাফফরপুর জেলা) উত্তরে তিব্বত এবং দক্ষিণে ঘোড়াহাট পর্যন্ত বিস্তৃত ছিল। আবুল ফজলের ধারণা অনুসারেও পশ্চিমে ত্রিহত থেকে আরম্ভ করে পূর্ব দিকে ব্রহ্মপুত্র উপত্যকা এবং উত্তরে হিমালয়ের পাদদেশ পর্যন্ত এই রাজ্যটির সীমানা ছিল।^{২৪} ষোড়শ শতকের অন্তিম দশকে রাজ্য বিখ্যাতভুক্ত হয়ে গেল। ব্রহ্মপুত্র উপত্যকা নিয়ে পূর্বদিকের ছোটো

তরফ পৃথক হয়ে গেল এবং অন্যদিকে রাজ্যের পশ্চিম অংশে বৈকুণ্ঠপুর পরগনার আর এক তরফ রায়কত উপাধি নিয়ে; যারা কোচবিহারের পশ্চিম সীমান্তের তরাই অঞ্চল তদারকি করতেন এবং কোচবিহার রাজ্যের অভ্যন্তরে সময় হ্রস্বধারণ করেছিল তারা আলাদা হয়ে গেল। কিন্তু মূল রাজ্যও থেকে বিচ্ছিন্ন হয়ে থাকবার দরশন বৈকুণ্ঠপুর নিঃসন্দেহে একাধী হয়ে গিয়েছিল এবং কেবল রাজ্যের বাহ্যবলে কোচবিহার রাজ্যের পশ্চিম বিভাগ রক্ষার দায়িত্ব রায়কতরা বহন করতে পারেনি। সেজন্য অবশ্যজ্ঞাবী পরিণতি হিসাবে মহানন্দা থেকে মেচী নদী পর্যন্ত বিস্তৃত প্রায় ২৭০ বর্গমাইল এলাকা, যা ভৌগোলিক সংজ্ঞায় তরাই বলে পরিচিত, বৈকুণ্ঠপুর হাতছাড়া হয়ে গেল। আর এই অঞ্চল যে শক্তির হাতে গেল উত্তর বাংলার ইতিহাসে তার উপস্থিতি ছিল অপ্রত্যাশিত। শক্তিটি সিকিম; সপ্তদশ শতাব্দীর মাঝামাঝি সময়ে সিকিম তার প্রথম চোগিয়াল ফুনসো নামগিয়ালোর নেতৃত্বে সুসংহত রাজনৈতিক জীবন গড়ে তোলে। অনুমান করা যায় যে মুঘল আক্রমণে কোচবিহার যখন ক্ষতবিক্ষত এবং রায়কতরা হতোদয় হয়ে বৈকুণ্ঠপুরের অরণ্য-আশ্রয়ে বাস করছিল, ঠিক তখনই সিকিম তার পার্বত্য অধিষ্ঠান থেকে সমতলে প্রসারিত হবার সুযোগ গ্রহণ করে মেচি ও মহানন্দার মধ্যবর্তী তরাই অঞ্চল দখল করে নেয়। সঠিক সময় আজও জানা যায়নি।^{১৯} যদিও নামগিয়াল পরিবারের দাবি যে সিকিমের তরাই অধিগ্রহণ প্রাক-ফুটসগ যুগের যখন কিন্তু উত্তরবঙ্গ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইতিহাস বিভাগের প্রাক্তন অধ্যাপক ও সিকিমের ইতিহাস-বিশেষজ্ঞ ডঃ তাপস রায়চৌধুরীর মতে এই দাবি ভিত্তিহীন। কারণ, ১৬২৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ফার্নার ক্যা বাল ও ফাদার দিয়াজ নামে জেমস্টাই মিশনারীদের যখন এই অঞ্চলের মধ্যে দিয়ে তিব্বতের শিগাতগে গিয়েছিলেন তখন তারা এই অঞ্চলে সিকিমের প্রশাসনের কোনো চিহ্ন লক্ষ করেননি। তাছাড়া ১৬৪২ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পূর্বে সিকিমের অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রশাসনের অবস্থা এতটা দুর্বল ছিল যে তার পক্ষে রাজ্যবিস্তার করা সম্ভব ছিল না। তাই অনুমেয় যে ১৬৫০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পূর্বে ফুটসগ সিকিম বহির্ভূত কোনো অঞ্চল অধিকার করার ক্ষেত্রে তৎপর হয়েছিলেন বলে মনে হয় না।^{২০} কিন্তু এতদসত্ত্বেও রায়কতরা এ ব্যাপারে কিতলিত হলেন না বা অন্তর্গত হলেন না। বরঞ্চ ত্রয়োদশ শতাব্দীর শেষে রায়কত ধর্মদেব নিশ্চিন্তমানে রাজধানী বৈকুণ্ঠপুরের অরণ্যাঞ্চল থেকে জলপাইগুড়ির খোলা জায়গায় উঠিয়ে আনলেন যার চিহ্ন আজও বর্তমান। মনে হয় অরণ্যজীবনে থেকে তিনি হাঁপিয়ে উঠেছিলেন। কিন্তু উন্মুক্ত জায়গায় রাজধানী নিয়ে আসার ফল হল বিপরীত ও সুদূরপ্রসারী।^{২১} যাইহোক সিকিম মেচী-মহানন্দার মধ্যবর্তী অঞ্চল দখল করলেও বেশিদিন নিজ নিয়ন্ত্রণে রাখতে পারেনি। নিজ রাজ্যের প্রান্তীয় অঞ্চল হওয়ায় তরাইতে সিকিমের নিয়ন্ত্রণ এতটাই দুর্বল ছিল যে মাঝে মাঝে ভূটানি সেনারা হানা দিয়ে যথেষ্ট লুটতরাজ চালাত এমনকি সুযোগ পেলে এখানকার অধিবাসীদের ধরে নিয়ে নিজ রাজ্যে দাসে পরিণত করত।^{২২} উপরোক্ত ঘটনা এই অঞ্চলে সিকিমের প্রশাসনিক নিয়ন্ত্রণের শিথিলতা প্রমাণ করে। যদিও একথা সত্য যে তৎকালীন রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতিতে সুদূর পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে অবস্থিত সিকিম রাজ্য পক্ষে সমতলের তরাই অঞ্চলের ওপর নজরদারি করা সম্ভবপর ছিল না। যথাযথ যোগাযোগ

ব্যবস্থার অভাব ছাড়াও শীতকালে বিশেষত বর্ষার সময় অবস্থা অত্যন্ত দুর্বিধ হয়ে উঠত। তাছাড়া তরাই অঞ্চল থেকে সিকিমের যে খুব একটা আর্থিক লাভ হত তাও বলা যায় না।^{২৩} তবুও সিকিম এই অঞ্চলের ওপর নিজের নিয়ন্ত্রণ বজায় রাখতে সচেষ্ট হয়েছিল কারণ চারিদিকে স্থলভূমি দ্বারা আবদ্ধ এই ক্ষুদ্র রাষ্ট্রটি তার বাণিজ্যিক সুবিধার জন্য মহানন্দা নদীর জলপথে ব্যবহার করতে চেয়েছিল। কারণ ভিক্তা নদীপথে সেই সময় বাণিজ্য করা কোনোক্রমেই সম্ভবপর ছিল না। এই রকম অবস্থায় সিকিম থেকে লেপাচা বা ভূটিয়া কর্মচারী পাঠিয়ে তরাই অঞ্চল শাসন করার পরিবর্তে স্থানীয় বড়ো জোতদার অথবা কোচবিহার সরকারের প্রাক্তন কর্মচারীদের মাধ্যমে শাসন করাই সিকিম সুবিধাজনক বলে মনে করে। চৌধুরী নামক কর্মচারীর মাধ্যমে সিকিম প্রধানত এই সময় রাজস্ব আদায় করত। শিলিগুড়ির আদৌরে ফাসিদেওয়ালে সরকারি কাৰ্যালয় স্থাপিত হয়। স্থানীয় প্রবীণ নাগরিকদের মতে, বর্তমান ফাসিদেওয়া হাটের কাছে মহানন্দা নদীর তীরে ভোজনারণ্য চা বাগানে অবস্থিত যুগ্মে সিকিমরাজ অপরাধীদের ফাসি দেওয়ার আগে স্থান করিয়ে একটি কঠাল গাছে বুলিয়ে দিতেন।^{২৪} ফুটসগ নামগিয়াল তাঁর রাজত্বকালে এই কিরাত ভূমিকে তিনটি প্রদেশে ভাগ করেন, যার একটি হল বর্তমান দার্জিলিং জেলার শিলিগুড়ি মহকুমা এবং তাদের কাছ থেকে কিছু রাজস্ব আদায়ে সক্ষম হন।^{২৫} ফুটসগ নামগিয়ালের মৃত্যুর পর তাঁর একমাত্র পুত্র তেন-সুজানাম-গিয়াল ১৬৭০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সিকিমের সিংহাসনে আরোহণ করেন। তিনি তিনজন মহিলাকে বিবাহ করেন, যাদের মধ্যে একজন ছিলেন নেপাল তরাইয়ের কিরাত প্রধান ইয়-ইয়-হাঙ-এর কন্যা খুংওয়া মুকমা।^{২৬} পরবর্তী শাসক চাগ-দর-নাম-গিয়ালের সময় ভূটান সিকিম আক্রমণ করলে (১৭০০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে) রাজা লাশাতে পলায়ন করেন। সিকিমের রাজপ্রতিনিধি ইয়ক-ফিং-অরপকে এই সময় ভূটানিরা বন্দি করে নিয়ে যায় এবং দীর্ঘ আট বছর (১৭০০-১৭০৮) সিকিম ভূটানের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন অঞ্চলে পরিণত হয়। পরবর্তীকালে চাগ-দর ফিরে এসে ভূটানের কাছ থেকে প্রায় সমস্ত অঞ্চল অধিকার করতে সক্ষম হলেও কালিস্পং এবং তার আশপাশের কিছু জায়গা তিরতরে সিকিমের হাতছাড়া হয়ে যায়। পরবর্তী শাসক চো-গিয়াল গিউব মেদের ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের অতৃপ্তি ও অসন্তোষ, শাসন ব্যবস্থার দুর্বলতা ও রাজ্যের রাজনৈতিক অনিশ্চয়তার সুযোগে ভূটানিরা মাঝে মাঝেই সিকিম হানা দিতে শুরু করে। তাছাড়া নেপাল তরাই স্থিত লিম্বু উপজাতিদেরকেও আক্রমণের সজ্জাবনা দেখা দেয়।^{২৭} ১৭৪১ খ্রিস্টাব্দ নাগাদ তারা সিকিম রাজ্যের কর্তৃত্বকে অধিকার করে নিজেদের স্বাধীন বলে ঘোষণা করে এবং রাজ্যের প্রায় রাজস্ব দেওয়া বন্ধ করে দেয়।^{২৮} অপরদিকে এই সময় মহানন্দা নদীর উত্তরভাগ থেকে নেপাল সীমান্ত পর্যন্ত অঞ্চল বিজয়পুররাজ কমদত্ত শেের (১৭৬১-১৭৬৯) অধীনে ছিল। প্রসঙ্গত উল্লেখ্য, এই শেেরের পূর্বপুরুষ ছিলেন চিতোরের চৌহান বা শিশোদিয়া বংশউদ্ভূত, যারা আনুমানিক ১৩০৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মুসলমানদের আক্রমণে বিতাড়িত হয়ে নেপালে আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করেছিলেন এবং পূর্ব ও দক্ষিণ নেপালের বিস্তীর্ণ অংশে রাজস্ব কয়েম করেছিলেন। অজিল রায়, চিতোররাজ বুদ্ধি রায়ের ছেলে ছিলেন এর পুরোধা। অজিলের পরবর্তী বংশধর তুলা

সেনের সময় থেকে তাঁরা সেন নামে পরিচিত হতে শুরু করেন।^{১৩} কিন্তু ১৭৬৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে কামদণ্ড সেনের মৃত্যুর পর সম্রাট কিরাত বা মোরাদ অঞ্চলে স্বৈরতান্ত্রিক শক্তিবলি মাখাচাঁদা দিয়ে গুর্ডে গুর্ডে এবং প্রত্যেক প্রদেশে নিজেদের স্বাধীনতা দাবি করে। কামদণ্ড সেনের দুর্বলস্বাক্ষরিত আত্মীয় রঘুনাথ সেন শত চেষ্টা করেও বিজয়পুরের শাসন-স্বমত্যা ধরে রাখতে পারেননি, অতঃপর বৃথিকর্ষাই যিনি তরাই অঞ্চলে কামদণ্ড সেনের গুপ্ত হত্যার জন্য দায়ী ছিলেন তিনিই বিজয়পুরের শাসনস্বমত্যা দখল করেন।^{১৪}

নেপালে গোর্খা শক্তির প্রতিষ্ঠা আর বাংলায় ইংরেজের প্রতিষ্ঠা প্রায় সমকালীন ঘটনা। নেপালও তার প্রতিবেশী রাজ্য সিকিমের মত পর্বত উপত্যকা থেকে সমতলে নেমে আসতে উদ্যোগী হয় এবং দক্ষিণের সমতলে পৌঁছতে নেপালের খুব বেশি সময় লাগেনি।^{১৫} যাইহোক অষ্টাদশ শতকের আটের দশকে রাজা পৃথ্বীনারায়ণ শাহের নেতৃত্বে গোর্খা সৈন্যবাহিনী দুর্ধকেশী নদী অতিক্রম করে পূর্ব নেপালের কিরাত ও লিম্বুরের রাজ্যের সীমানা হিসাবে চিহ্নিত ছিল।^{১৬} অন্যদিকে এই সময় সদ্য ভূটানি আক্রমণের ফলে বিপর্যস্ত সিকিমের কাছে খবর গিয়ে পৌঁছয় যে গোর্খা সেনারা তরাইয়ের বিজয়পুর অঞ্চল সহ নেপালের লিম্বুয়ান প্রদেশ দখল করে নিয়েছে। স্বভাবতই সিকিম তার প্রত্যন্তর দেওয়ার জন্য তৈরি হয় এবং উভয়ের মধ্যে বেশ কিছু ছোটখাটো যুদ্ধ হওয়ার পর বিজয়পুরে ১৭৭৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে উভয়ের মধ্যে একটি সন্ধি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। সম্ভবত গোর্খা সেনারা তাদের দীর্ঘ যুদ্ধাভিযানের ফলে ক্রান্ত হয়ে পড়েছিলেন বলে সন্ধি স্বাক্ষরে সম্মত হন। সন্ধির শর্ত অনুযায়ী গোর্খারা নেপালের কোনকান্দী নদী পর্যন্ত তাদের রাজ্যের পূর্ব সীমানা নির্ধারিত করে এবং এও ঠিক হয় যে চুক্তিভঙ্গকারী শক্তিকে ক্ষতিপূরণ দিতে হবে। এই সময় হঠাৎ পৃথ্বীনারায়ণ শাহ মারা যান এবং তাঁর পুত্র প্রতাপ সিংহ শাহ সিংহাসনে আরোহণ করেন।^{১৭} যদিও ড্যানিয়াল রাইট, ওল্ডফিল্ড, হ্যামিলটন প্রমুখরা পৃথ্বীনারায়ণের মৃত্যু ১৭৭১ খ্রিস্টাব্দে হয় বলে চিহ্নিত করেছেন। কিন্তু ১৭৯৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দের প্রথম দিকে নেপাল অস্বক্যারী কিরপ্যাট্রিকের মতে পৃথ্বীনারায়ণের মৃত্যু সম্ভবত ১৭৭৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দের প্রথমদিকে হয়েছিল।^{১৮} যাইহোক সিংহাসনে আরোহণের বছর বা সম্ভবত তার পরের বছরের প্রথম দিকে নেপালরাজ প্রতাপ সিংহ শাহ উপরোক্ত চুক্তিপত্রটি ভঙ্গ করে ১৭৭৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সেনাপতি গঙ্গারাম থাপার সহযোগিতায় মেচী ও মহানন্দা নদীর মধ্যবর্তী বর্তমান দার্জিলিং জেলার তরাই অঞ্চল আক্রমণ করেন এবং ১৭৮০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মধ্যে সমস্ত তরাই অঞ্চলে তাঁদের নিয়ন্ত্রণ কয়েম করেন যার আরম্ভ ছিল প্রায় ২৩০ বর্গমাইল।^{১৯} তবে সিকিম যে গঙ্গারামকে বিভাগিত করার ব্যবস্থা করেছে এরকম একটি খবর গঙ্গারামের কাছে পৌঁছতেই তিনি বিভিন্নভাবে আত্মরক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করেন। সিকিমের যে এরকম কোনো পরিকল্পনা ছিল তা সিকিমের সরকারি দলিলে পাওয়া গেলেও ইংরেজদের নথিপত্রে তার কোনো উল্লেখ নেই। সিকিমের অসমর্থতাই এই স্তব্ধতার প্রধান কারণ তা বলাই বাহুল্য। যাইহোক গঙ্গারাম অনেকটা গুজবের অনুবর্তী হয়েই কিছু আঞ্চলিক ব্যক্তির সাথে যড়যন্ত্রে লিপ্ত হন যাদের মধ্যে অন্যতম ছিলেন উত্তরবঙ্গে ফকির বিদ্রোহের নেতা মজনু শাহ, যাকে সিকিম রাজা

পাঁচটি জেত দান করেছিলেন, তাকেও তিনি আরো পাঁচটি জেত দেন।^{২০}

অষ্টাদশ শতকের মধ্যভাগ থেকেই তরাই অঞ্চল সন্ন্যাসী ও ফকির সম্প্রদায়ের আশ্রয় হয়ে উঠতে শুরু করেছিল। তবে দলে দলে গিরি সম্প্রদায়ের সন্ন্যাসী ও ফকিররা এ অঞ্চলে কোথা থেকে এবং কীভাবে এলেন সে বিষয়টি এখনো গভীর অনুসন্ধানের অপেক্ষা রাখে। তবে অনুমান করা যেতে পারে যে ইংরেজদের ব্যাধ দেবার জন্য বাংলার নবাব মীরকাশিম, অযোধ্যার নবাব সূজাউদ্দৌল্লা এবং মুঘল সম্রাট শাহ আলম যে জেট বেঁধেছিলেন বঙ্গারের প্রান্তরে ১৭৬৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে তা বিকল হয়। অযোধ্যার নবাব ইংরেজদের কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ করলেও ইংরেজরা তাঁর সৈন্যবাহিনী ভেঙে দিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু এই আত্মসমর্পণ সৈনিকেরা কোথায় গেল, কোন্ অহিংস জীবিকা গ্রহণ করল? অযোধ্যা এদের কাছে নিরাপদ ছিল না, বাংলা-বিহার-উড়িষ্যাও নয়। সুতরাং এরা বেছে নিল এমন একটি স্থান যেখানে ইংরেজদের মতামতের কোনো দাম ছিল না, কর্তৃত্বও ছিল না। সবাই যে মেচী- মহানন্দার মধ্যবর্তী তরাই অঞ্চলে এল তাও নয়। বিশেষত সন্ন্যাসীরা দলে দলে চাকুরি নিল বৈকুণ্ঠপুর, কোচবিহার ও ভূটানে। অস্ত্রজীবী এই সব মানুষেরা সন্ন্যাসীর বেশ নিলেও বৈকুণ্ঠপুর, কোচবিহার ও ভূটানের হয়ে যুদ্ধ করবার দায়িত্বও নিয়োছিল। অনেকে আবার সীমানা পেরিয়ে সুবা-বাংলার ইংরেজ কর্তৃত্ববাহী অঞ্চলেও লুট-তরাজ চালাত।

^{২১} আবার অনেকে ভূটানের মধ্য দিয়ে তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক লেনদেনের সঙ্গেও যুক্ত ছিল। যাদের মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হলেন পূর্ণগিরি গোসাঁই, যিনি ইংরেজদের নথিপত্রে পূর্ণগিরি গোসাঁই নামে পরিচিত।^{২২} গুরুনাক অধ্যাপক অমালেন্দু দে তাঁর সদ্য প্রকাশিত রচনা *গিরাজের পূত্র ও বংশধরদের সন্ধান* এই ধরনের তথ্যকে সমর্থন জানিয়েছেন।^{২৩} উত্তরবঙ্গ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের হিমালয় চর্চা বিষয়ক বিভাগের প্রাক্তন অধ্যাপক বাবীন্দ্রসর মিশ্র দেখিয়েছেন যে অষ্টাদশ শতকের যাটের দশক থেকেই কোম্পানি যখন তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক যোগাযোগের জন্য তরাই-এর মধ্য দিয়ে একটি বিকল্প পথের সন্ধান খুঁজছিলেন তখন সেই উদ্দেশ্যে প্রেরিত মিঃ মার্চেন্ট নামক একজন ইংরেজ কর্মচারীকে ১৭৬৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সন্ন্যাসী-ফকিররা তরাইতে হত্যা করেন। নেপালের রাজা পৃথ্বীনারায়ণের সঙ্গে নেপাল তরাইয়ে নেওয়ার রাজ্য জয়প্রকাশ মন্ত্রের সংঘর্ষে এই সন্ন্যাসী ফকিররা জয়প্রকাশকে সাহায্য করেছিলেন।^{২৪} সুতরাং উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে একথা স্পষ্টভাবে বলা যেতে পারে যে একদিকে সিকিমের দুর্বল প্রশাসন এবং অন্যদিকে জলকাকীর্ণ, জনমানবহীন এই তরাইতে সন্ন্যাসী-ফকিররা একপ্রকার স্বাধীনতা ভোগ করতেন এবং তাঁদের আক্রমণে কোম্পানি সরকার ব্যাবস্তু হয়ে উঠেছিল। এখনও তরাইয়ে সন্ন্যাসীকাটা ও গোসাঁইর নাম দুটি তাঁদের অস্তিত্বের সাক্ষ্য বহন করে। তবে যাইহোক সিকিমের দুর্বল প্রশাসনের পক্ষে এদের কিছু বলার সাহস ছিল না। বরং নির্কঙ্কট থাকবার জন্য প্রশাসন এঁদের যথেষ্ট জয়গা-জমি দিয়ে গৃহীত রেখেছিল। পূর্ণগিরি, রংপুর ও দিনাজপুরের সীমান্তবর্তী গ্রামের মানুষেরা এঁদের সম্মত করতেন। অবস্থাপন্নরা ভয় করতেন। যদিও অভ্যন্তরীণ শান্তি ও শৃঙ্খলা রক্ষা এবং সীমান্তের নিরাপত্তার উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা কোম্পানি তখনও করে

উঠতে পারেনি। রংপুরের ফৌজদার জয়নাল আবেদিন ও রেজা খাঁ ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংসকে সম্মানী ও ফকিরদের দমন করতে তাঁদের অসহায়তার কথা জানান। হেস্টিংসের দৃঢ় পদক্ষেপে ধীরে ধীরে সম্মানী ও ফকিরের উৎপাত বন্ধ হল ঠিকই কিন্তু কৈকটপুরের পশ্চিম সীমান্তে গোখারদের মেটী আতিক্রম করে তরাই অধিগ্রহণ অপূর্ণ বন্ধন নতুন দুর্ভাবনা বহন করে আলল, যা আমরা আগেই উল্লেখ করেছি। যদিও সম্মানীদল সম্পর্কে ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংসের স্পর্শকাতরতার বিষয়টি জানতে পেরে পৃথুনীরায়ণ তরাই অঞ্চল দখল করার বাসনা হেস্টিংসকে আগেই জানিয়েছিলেন। যুক্তিও দিয়েছিলেন এই বলে যে সিকিমের তরাই অঞ্চল নেপালের শাসনে থাকলে সম্মানীরা কোম্পানির তন্ম্যাটে গিয়ে অত্যাচার করবে না। সম্মানীদের দমন করার অজুহাতে নেপালের সিকিম-তরাই অঞ্চল অধিকারের বিষয়টি যে হেস্টিংসের অপছন্দ তা তিনি পৃথুনীরায়ণকে জানিয়েও দিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু এই সময় কোম্পানি ভূটান-কোচবিহার দ্বন্দ্ব জড়িয়ে পড়ার ফলস্বরূপ ^{৫১} নেপালের গতিবিধির ওপর নজর রাখতে পারেনি যার সুযোগে নেপাল এই অঞ্চলটি দখল করে নেয়, যা আগেই উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। গোখা এবং সম্মানী ও ফকিরদের রংপুর ও দিনাজপুরের সংলগ্ন অঞ্চলে ক্রমাগত আক্রমণ এবং লুটতরাজ কোম্পানির মাথাব্যথার কারণ হয়ে দাঁড়ায়। অবশেষে ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংস ১৭৮৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ফক্স ক্রসের নেতৃত্বে নেপালে একটি সৌহার্দপূর্ণ অভিযান পাঠানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নেন। কিন্তু কয়েকমাস পরেই গভীর জেনারেল ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংস ভারত ত্যাগ করেন এবং এই অভিযান সম্পর্কে আর কিছু জানা যায় না। যদিও নেপাল সরকার ১৭৮৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ১৩ মে রংপুরের কালেক্টরেটকে চিঠি পাঠিয়ে কোম্পানির সাথে বন্ধুত্বের সম্পর্ক স্থাপনের আবেদন জানান। ^{৫২} ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংসের পর লর্ড কর্নওয়ালিস গভর্নর জেনারেল হয়ে ভারতে আসেন। ১৭৯১ খ্রিস্টাব্দের গোড়ার দিকে নেপালের দুসাহসী গোখাবাহিনী হঠাৎ করে তিব্বত আক্রমণ করে ২৭৫ মাইল নিবিদ্ধ এলাকার মধ্যে ঢুকে পড়ে। এই সময় তিব্বতে অবস্থিত চীনের রাজদূত জেনারেল হো সী প্রতিবেদী রাষ্ট্রের সাহায্যে বিরাট সেনাবাহিনী নিয়ে তিব্বতের পাশে এসে দাঁড়ান। এই অবস্থায় তিব্বত কোম্পানির কাছে নিরপেক্ষ থাকার আবেদন জানায়। অপরদিকে নেপালও ১৭৯২ খ্রিস্টাব্দের মার্চ মাসে স্বাক্ষরিত হু-নেপাল বাণিজ্যিক চুক্তির সুরদে কোম্পানির কাছে সাহায্যের প্রার্থনা করে। কিন্তু এই পরিস্থিতিতে লর্ড কর্নওয়ালিসের অনুরূপ “নিরপেক্ষ নীতি” তিব্বত বা নেপাল কাউকেই খুশি করতে পারেনি। যে তিব্বতের সাথে বাণিজ্যিক স্বার্থে কোম্পানি ওয়ারেন হেস্টিংসের সময় থেকে মফ্বর সম্পর্ক তৈরি করেছিল সেই তিব্বতের সঙ্গে তার বন্ধুত্বের মনোভাব আর রইল না এবং এর সঙ্গে মুগে গেল নেপালের মধ্য দিয়ে তিব্বতীয় হিমালয়ে ইংরেজদের ব্যবসার সম্ভাবনামূলকও। কোম্পানি বৃদ্ধিতে পারল যে ভারতে ইংরেজ-স্বার্থ রক্ষা করতে হলে উত্তরের প্রাকৃতিক সীমারেখা সম্পর্কে সুস্পষ্ট নীতি গ্রহণ করতে হবে। হিমালয়ের বাণিজ্যিক গুরুত্ব এই সময় কোম্পানির রাজনৈতিক গুরুত্বের কাছে বিধে হয়ে গেল ^{৫৩} এবং এর ফলস্বরূপই দেখা গেল যে উনিবিংশ শতকের প্রথম কুড়ি বছরের মধ্যে ইংরেজের

হিমালয় সম্পর্কিত নীতির রূপরেখা স্থির হয়ে গেছে।

পার্বত্য হিমালয়ের এই রাজনৈতিক অস্থিরতা কোম্পানির তরাই অঞ্চলের নিজের কর্তৃত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠার বাসনাকে আরো উদ্বল করে তোলে। যদিও অষ্টাদশ শতকের দ্বিতীয় ভাগ থেকেই কোম্পানি তার রাজনৈতিক, কূটনৈতিক ও অর্থনৈতিক প্রয়োজনে তরাই অঞ্চলের গুরুত্বকে উপলব্ধি করতে শুরু করেছিল, কিন্তু ততদিনে গোখারা এই অঞ্চলে তাদের নিয়ন্ত্রণ কায়েম করে ভারতের উত্তর-পূর্ব সীমান্তে নিজেদের প্রভাব বিস্তারের সচেষ্ট হয়েছিল, এমনকি মাঝে মাঝেই ১৭৬৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে মুঘল সম্রাটের কাছে থেকে প্রাপ্ত কোম্পানির রাজস্ব আদায়ের এলাকাতোও হানা দিত। মূলত এই কারণেই ১৭৯৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে লর্ড কর্নওয়ালিস নেপালের সাথে তরাই এবং পূর্ণিমার এতদিনের সীমান্ত নির্ধারণের সমস্যা মিটিয়ে ফেলতে উদ্যোগী হন। এই সময় গোখারাও কোম্পানির সাথে নতুন করে বিরোধ চাইছিলেন না। ^{৫৪} কিন্তু এতদসত্ত্বেও নেপাল তার সম্প্রসারণের মনোভাব ত্যাগ করতে পারেনি এবং তার ফলেই ইংরেজদের সঙ্গে তার সম্পর্ক ধাপে ধাপে তিক্ত হয়ে ওঠে। তিব্বতে চীনের ভয়ে নেপাল এগুতে চাইল না, তাই সে ভারতের দিকে সীমানা বিস্তারের প্রয়াসী হল। অন্যদিকে উনিবিংশ শতকের প্রথম থেকেই কোম্পানি উত্তর হিমালয়ের পাদদেশে সিকিম, নেপাল ও ভূটান সলগ্ন অঞ্চলে তার নিয়ন্ত্রণ প্রতিষ্ঠায় সচেষ্ট হয়। সর্বোপরি হিমালয় উপত্যকায় কোম্পানির তখন এমন একটি ঘাটের প্রয়োজন ছিল তার কিছুই ভূটান পূর্ণ হতে দেয় নি। অন্যদিকে লর্ড মররা পশ্চিম দিকে শতক্র এবং পূর্বদিকে সিকিমের পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে নেপালের প্রভাব বিস্তারে যথেষ্ট উদ্বিগ্ন ছিলেন। ^{৫৫} তিনটি হিমালয় রাজ্যের মধ্যে সবচেয়ে দুর্বল সিকিম। দুটি বড়ো রাজ্যের মাঝখানে তার স্থান হবার দরশ সিকিম আর দুজনকে নিজের অংশের থেকে রাজ্যভাগ দিয়ে তবে নিষ্কৃতি পেয়েছিল। সুতরাং ইংরেজরা এই দুর্বল রাজ্যটির সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক তৈরি করবে বলে মনস্থির করল। ^{৫৬} তাছাড়া সরাসরি সিকিম আক্রমণ করলে তিব্বত ও চীনের সঙ্গে প্রত্যক্ষ বিরোধ শুরু হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা ছিল। তাই কূটকৌশলে তারা সিকিমে নিজেদের প্রভাব বিস্তারের সচেষ্ট হয়। সিকিমের সাথে কূটনৈতিক সম্পর্ক গড়ে তোলার পেছনে কোম্পানির তিনটি মূল উদ্দেশ্য ছিল; এক, সিকিমের মধ্য দিয়ে তিব্বত হয়ে চীনের সাথে বাণিজ্যিক সম্পর্ক স্থাপন করা; দুই, নেপাল ও ভূটানের কোম্পানির বিরুদ্ধে শৈত চক্রান্তের মোকাবিলা করা; এবং তিন, কোম্পানির কূটনৈতিক অঞ্চলে নেপালী সৈন্যের মোকাবিলা করা। এই কারণে কোম্পানি বেঙ্গল জর্জ টাউনকে সিকিমরাজ্য চূর্ণ-ফুদ-নাম-গিয়ালের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ স্থাপনের কথা বলেন। ^{৫৭} ১৮১৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে গোখারা সিকিমের দক্ষিণ-পশ্চিম সীমানায় নাগরিজোন্ড আক্রমণ করে সিকিমের পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের দিকে অগ্রসর হয়। সিকিমের তরুণ রাজা চুগ-ফুদ এখার সরাসরি ব্রিটিশ সরকারের কাছে সাহায্যের আবেদন করেন। ব্রিটিশ সরকার এই সুযোগেই অপেক্ষায় ছিলেন। তাই অবিলম্বে নেজর চালিবর অধীনে এক সৈন্যবাহিনী গোখারের দমন করবার জন্য সিকিম পাঠানো হল। ইংরেজদের সঙ্গে লড়াই করবার ক্ষমতা গোখাদের ছিল না, সুতরাং তারা সন্ধি স্বাক্ষরে

বাধ্য হয়।^{৬৯} এই ভাবে ১১১৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ডিসেম্বর মাসের ২ তারিখে কোম্পানি ও নেপালের মধ্যে একটি চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হয়, যা সোঙ্গৌরি চুক্তি নামে পরিচিত। চুক্তির তৃতীয় ধারা অনুসারে নেপাল তিস্তা ও মেচী নদীর মধ্যবর্তী সমস্ত অধিকৃত অঞ্চল ইস্ট ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানিকে সমর্পণ করে। সন্ধির ষষ্ঠ ধারা অনুসারে নেপাল ভবিষ্যতে সিকিম রাজ্যকে বিরক্ত না করার অঙ্গীকার করে এবং পরবর্তীকালে নেপাল ও সিকিমের মধ্যে যদি কোনো বিরোধ উপস্থিত হয় তবে তা বাধ্যতামূলকভাবে ব্রিটিশ সরকারের কাছে সালিশীর জন্য পাঠাতে বলে সম্মতি জানায়।^{৭০} মুক্ত-পরবর্তী রাজনৈতিক স্থিতিবস্থার পরিস্থিতিতে কোম্পানির সঙ্গে সিকিমের সম্পর্ক নিগূঢ় হয়ে ওঠে। সিকিমরাজার মনোভাব তাদের পক্ষে ইতিবাচক মনে করে এবং সিকিমের কৃষিগত করার এটি উপযুক্ত সময় বলে বিবেচনা করে ব্রিটিশ গভর্নর জেনারেল কোম্পানির সিকিমের রাজার সঙ্গে একটি মৈত্রীচুক্তি করার প্রস্তাব নিয়ে মেজর ব্যারে ল্যাটারকে সিকিমে পাঠান। প্রস্তাবের গুঢ় উদ্দেশ্য বোঝা সিকিম রাজার পক্ষে সম্ভব হয়নি। ১৮১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ১০ ফেব্রুয়ারি তাই তিতালিয়া চুক্তির মাধ্যমে কোম্পানি ও সিকিম রাজার মধ্যে বন্ধুত্বের সেতু বন্ধন হয়। সিকিম রাজার পক্ষে চুক্তি সম্পাদনে প্রতিনিধিত্ব করেন পেনা-ইয়াংসি গোস্বামীর লামা তিন-চেন-লঙ-চু, চে-ই-ডেনলিঙ্ক এবং মা-চেন-টোম্পা নামে রাজার এক বিশ্বস্ত মন্ত্রী। কোম্পানির পক্ষে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করেন মেজর ব্যারে ল্যাটার। মৈত্রীর প্রতীক উপহার হিসাবে সোঙ্গৌরি চুক্তিতে তিস্তা ও মেচী নদীর মধ্যবর্তী পার্বত্য এলাকা বা গোখারী ইস্ট ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানিকে সমর্পণ করেছিল তা কোম্পানি সিকিম রাজ্যকে হস্তান্তর করে। অন্যদিকে রাজ্যে এই মর্মে প্রতিজ্ঞাবদ্ধ হন যে তিনি নেপাল বা অন্য কোনো পার্শ্ববর্তী রাজ্য আক্রমণ করবেন না, ইউরোপ বা আমেরিকার কোনো অধিবাসীকে ইংরেজের অনুমতি ভিন্ন সিকিমে বসবাস করার অধিকার দেবেন না, কোম্পানির কাছে অপরাধী বা ডাকাত বলে পরিচিত যে ভারতীয়রা তাঁর রাজ্যে আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করেছে তাদের কোম্পানির হাতে সমর্পণ করবেন^{৭১} ইত্যাদি। ইংরেজের সহায়তায় মুক্ত হয়ে তিনি এও কথা দেন যে যদি হিমালয়ে ইংরেজের কোনো সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তবে সিকিম তাকে সর্বতোভাবে সাহায্য করবে।^{৭২} কিন্তু এই চুক্তির ফলে গোখারীদের দখল করা আংশিক অংশ সিকিম ফেরত পেয়েছিল। তাই সিকিমের রাজা তথা উচ্চপদস্থ ব্যক্তির কেউই এই চুক্তিতে সম্পূর্ণ সন্তোষ লাভ করতে পারেনি। এর পরে অবশ্য সিকিমের প্রতি অবিচারের কথা বিবেচনা করে^{৭৩} ব্যারে ল্যাটারের অনুরোধে চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের দুমাস পরে লর্ড মরার মেচী ও মহানন্দা নদীর মধ্যবর্তী তরাই অঞ্চল সিকিমকে প্রত্যর্পণ করেন।^{৭৪} তিতালিয়া চুক্তির রাজনৈতিক গুরুত্বকে অস্বীকার করা যায় না কারণ সিকিমের সঙ্গে বন্ধুত্ব স্থাপনের মাধ্যমে কোম্পানি গোখা বাহিনীর পূর্বদিকের আগ্রাসনাকে রোধ করতে পেরেছিল; সিকিম পরোক্ষভাবে কোম্পানির নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন অঞ্চলে পরিণত হয়েছিল। সর্বোপরি তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক সম্পর্ক স্থাপনের জন্য কোম্পানি প্রথমবার কোনো বন্ধু-রাজ্যের মধ্যে দিয়ে একটি সুনির্দিষ্ট পথ পেল, যা নেপাল বা ভূটানের মধ্যে দিয়ে তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্য করার চাইতে অনেক বেশি

সুবিধাজনক ছিল।^{৭৫}

ব্রিটিশ সরকারের কাছে থেকে সহায়তার আশ্বাস পেলেও রাজা চুগ-ফুদ গোখারীর স্বাক্ষরে নিশ্চিত হতে পারলেন না এবং অন্যদিকে কোম্পানির তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যের পথটিও নিশ্চিত হন না। ফলস্বরূপ ইংরেজরা হিমালয়ের পাদদেশে এমন একটি ঘাঁটির স্থাপন করতে লাগলেন যেখান থেকে খুব সহজেই তিব্বতের সঙ্গে বাণিজ্যিক যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করা যায়। ইতিমধ্যে মেচী নদীর পূর্বদিকে অবস্থিত অনটু (Onitoo) অঞ্চল নিয়ে নেপাল ও সিকিমের মধ্যে বিরোধ বাধে। ১৮১৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে স্বাক্ষরিত তিতালিয়া চুক্তির শর্তানুসারে সিকিম সরকার কোম্পানিকে মধ্যস্থতার আহ্বান জানায়।^{৭৬} ভারতের গভর্নর জেনারেল তখন লর্ড বেটিন্ড। বেস্টিক ১৮২৮ খ্রিস্টাব্দে জেনারেল লয়েড ও মালদহ জেলার বাণিজ্য প্রতিনিধি মি. গ্রান্টকে এই সমস্যাটি পর্যালোচনার জন্য সিকিমে পাঠান। জেনারেল লয়েড ও গ্রান্ট এই অঞ্চল ভ্রমণ করার সময় সিকিমের অন্তর্গত ছোট্ট একটি পাহাড়ীগ্রাম যার নাম ছিল দোজর্জ-লিং^{৭৭}-এ এসে পৌঁছান। জায়গাটির ভৌগোলিক অবস্থান ও প্রাকৃতিক সৌন্দর্য তাঁদের মুগ্ধ করে এবং জায়গাটি সম্বন্ধে তাঁরা গভর্নর জেনারেল তথা ব্রিটিশ সরকারের এই বলে দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করেন যে, গ্রামটি পাওয়া গেলে শুধুমাত্র ইস্ট ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানির কর্মচারী বা ইংরেজ অধিবাসীদের গ্রীষ্মাবাসের পক্ষেই যে উপযুক্ত হবে তা নয়, এখানে একটি সামরিক ঘাঁটি স্থাপন করলে ব্রিটিশ সরকারের পক্ষে পার্বত্য রাজ্যগুলির প্রতি নজর রাখাও সুবিধাজনক হবে। লয়েডের এই পরিকল্পনা যে ব্রিটিশ কর্তৃপক্ষের কাছে অত্যন্ত গোপনীয় ছিল সে বিষয়ে কোনো সন্দেহ নেই। লর্ড উইলিয়াম বেস্টিক এবার ডেপুটি সার্ভেয়ার জেনারেল হাবটিকে পুনরায় অনুসন্ধান করার নির্দেশ দেন এবং এবারও হাবট জানান যে গ্রামটি অক্সিহরণ কোম্পানির স্বার্থের অনুকূল হবে।^{৭৮}

১৮৩০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে বেস্টিক কোম্পানির কর্তৃপক্ষের সামনে গ্রামটির হস্তান্তরের ব্যাপারে সিকিম রাজার সঙ্গে আলোচনা করবেন বলে প্রস্তাব রাখেন। কিন্তু ঐ সময় চার্লস মেটকাফ এই বলে প্রস্তাবটি নাকচ করে দেন যে, এর ফলে সিকিম সরকারের মনে কোম্পানির অভিসন্ধির প্রতি একটি বিরূপ প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি হবে এবং উল্টোদিকে নেপালও তার সীমান্তে কোম্পানির কোনো অঞ্চল প্রদানের বিনিময়ে দোজর্জ-লিং অধিগ্রহণের জন্য সিকিম রাজার সাথে আলোচনার দাবি জানান।^{৭৯} কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি নিয়ে গভর্নর জেনারেল যথাসম্ভব ক্ষতিপূরণ দেবার বিনিময়ে গ্রামটির হস্তান্তরের ব্যাপারে সিকিম রাজ্যকে অনুরোধ জানান। কিন্তু সিকিম সরকারের পক্ষে এই অনুরোধ গ্রহণ করা সম্ভব ছিল না। তাই ব্রিটিশ সরকারের পক্ষে থেকে আবার জেনারেল লয়েডকে সিকিমে পাঠানো হয়। জেনারেল লয়েড রাজা চুগ-ফুদকে বোঝালেন যে একমাত্র স্বাস্থ্য-নিবাস তৈরি করার উদ্দেশ্যেই তাঁর সরকার এই জায়গাটির প্রতি বিশেষ আগ্রহী। অবশেষে ১৮৩৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পরলা ফেব্রুয়ারি এক দাপনত অনুসারে দোজর্জ-লিং গ্রামটি ব্রিটিশ সরকারকে রাজ্য সমর্পণ করেন। কিন্তু উভয় জাতির ভাবার সমস্যা অথবা বক্তব্যের অস্পষ্টতার জন্য এবিষয়ে কিছু ভুল বোঝাবুঝির সৃষ্টি হয়। দাপনত্রে লেখা হয় যে নিশ্চল উপহার হিসাবে জায়গাটি

ব্রিটিশ সরকারকে দেওয়া হয়েছে অথচ এর জন্য রাজা চুগ-ফুদ দুটি শর্ত আরোপ করেছিলেন বলে শোনা যায়; এক, গোষ্ঠী অধিকৃত বেরগাঁও সিকিমকে কেহও দিতে হবে এবং দুই, তরাইয়ের নেপালি প্রজা রামু প্রধানকে তার সমস্ত বাকি খাজনা মিটিয়ে দিয়ে উৎখাত করতে হবে। কিন্তু শর্ত দুটি সম্পর্কে দানপত্রে কোনোই উল্লেখ ছিল না। কোনো কোনো ঐতিহাসিকের মতে, জেনারেল লয়েড এবিধয়ে যে চাতুরী করেছিলেন রাজা চুগ-ফুদ তা ঠিক অনুধাবন করাশে পারেন নি। রাজার তুল ডাঙল যখন গভর্নর জেনারেল তাঁকে এই দানের জন্য ধন্যবাদ জানিয়ে একটি চিঠি দিলেন। সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই রাজা চুগ-ফুদ প্রতিবাদ জানিয়ে গভর্নর জেনারেলকে চিঠি দিলেন এবং দীর্ঘ বিবাদের পর ৯৯ ব্রিটিশ সরকার ১৮৪১ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সিকিম রাজাকে বাৎসরিক তিন হাজার টাকা অনুদান বা খাজনা হিসাবে দিতে স্বীকৃত হয় এবং ১৮৪৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে এই অর্থের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি করে বার্ষিক ছয় হাজার টাকা করা হয়।^{১০} এখানে একটি বিষয় উল্লেখ করা প্রয়োজন যে দানপত্রটি স্বাক্ষরের সময় কোম্পানি সিকিমরাজ চুগ-ফুদকে একটি দু'নলা বন্দুক, একটি গাদা বন্দুক, কুড়ি গজ চওড়া লাল কাপড়ের গাট এবং দু'জোড়া শাল উপহার দিয়েছিলেন।^{১১} কিন্তু অল্প কিছুকালের মধ্যেই কোম্পানি দার্জিলিং যাবার প্রতিবন্ধকতা উপলব্ধি করল, কারণ সুবা বাংলার সবচেয়ে উত্তরের রংপুর জেলা থেকে দার্জিলিং পৌঁছতে হলে সিকিমের সদিচ্ছার ওপর নির্ভর করা হতো কোম্পানির আর কোনো উপায় ছিল না। এই পরিস্থিতি কোম্পানিকে দার্জিলিং-এর যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থার উন্নতি বিধানে সেরগা দেয়। দার্জিলিং-এ পৌঁছানোর জন্য রাস্তা তৈরি ও অন্যান্য উন্নয়নমূলক কার্যক্রম সিকিমের মনে সেনেহের উদ্রেক করে এবং উল্টোদিকে তুতান এবং নেপাল তাদের সীমান্তে কোম্পানি সৈন্যের আনোদক সেনেহের চোখে দেখতে শুরু করে।^{১২} কিন্তু এই অবস্থায় নিরুপায় কোম্পানি এমন একটা পটভূমিকার অপেক্ষা করছিল যার অজুহাতে সে মৌচাঁ-মহানন্দার মধ্যবর্তী সিকিম তরাই অঞ্চলটি দখল করতে পারে যা তারা একবার নেপালের কাছ থেকে উদ্ধার করে সিকিমকে প্রত্যর্পণ করেছিল।

দার্জিলিং-এর উন্নতি সিকিমের আতঙ্কের কারণ হয়ে উঠতে লাগল। বিশেষত সিকিমের বিপুল সংখ্যক দরিদ্র অধিবাসী দার্জিলিং-এ গিয়ে ব্রিটিশ সরকারের নাগরিকত্ব গ্রহণ করতে আরম্ভ করায় সিকিমে কৃষক ও শ্রমিকের সংখ্যা কমে যেতে লাগল। যদিও সিকিম মাঝে মাঝে এই সব শ্রমিক ও কৃষকদের দার্জিলিং থেকে নিয়ে এসে নিজরাজ্যে ক্রীতদাস হিসাবে বিক্রি করে দিত। এই সময় রাজা চুগ-ফুদের মন্ত্রী পরিষদের সবচেয়ে প্রভাবশালী ব্যক্তি তো-কাঙ-দোনিয়ায়, যিনি পাগলা দেওয়ান বা দেওয়ান নামগিয়াল নামেই সমধিক পরিচিত ছিলেন, তিনি দার্জিলিং-এ ব্রিটিশ নাগরিকত্ব গ্রহণকারী সমস্ত কৃষক ও শ্রমিককে অবিলম্বে সিকিমে ফেরত পাঠানোর জন্য ব্রিটিশ সরকারের কাছে দাবি জানান।^{১৩} উল্টোদিকে সিকিমও তার রাজ্যে বসবাসকারী কোম্পানির অপরাধকারীদের হস্তান্তরে বিভিন্ন সময় বাধ্য ছিল এবং তিব্বতে ব্যবসার অধিকার নিয়ে ইংরেজ সরকার ও সিকিম রাজার মধ্যে নানা ধরনের বিবাদের সৃষ্টি হল। ব্রিটিশ সরকার দেওয়ান নামগিয়ালকে এই অপকর্মের

নায়ক বলে চিহ্নিত করে^{১৪} এবং ১৮৪৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ক্যাম্বেল রাজার এই বিমাতৃসুলভ আচরণের জন্য ভবিষ্যতে সমতলের তরাই অঞ্চল দখলের সতর্কবাণী দেন।^{১৫} এই সময় সিকিমের এক হকরকারী সিদ্ধান্ত কোম্পানিকে সুযোগ করে দিল। দার্জিলিং-এর প্রথম অধ্যক্ষ ডাঃ ক্যাম্বেল এবং জীব-বিজ্ঞানী ডাঃ হকার যথার্থ অনুমতিপ্রাপ্ত নিয়ে সিকিমে বেড়াবার সময় ১৮৪৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ডিসেম্বর মাসের ৭ তারিখে প্রেফতার হন এবং সিকিম সরকার তাদের বন্দি করে। ডাঃ ক্যাম্বেল উল্লেখ করেছেন যে তাঁর ওপর এই আশায় শারীরিক অত্যাচার করা হয় যে ভবিষ্যতে ব্রিটিশরা সিকিমের অভ্যন্তরীণ ব্যাপারে হস্তক্ষেপ করা থেকে যেন বিরত থাকে।^{১৬} তৎকালীন গভর্নর জেনারেল লর্ড ডালহৌসি সিকিম রাজাকে বন্দিদের মুক্তি দেওয়ার জন্য অনুরোধ জানান কিন্তু নামগিয়াল চুগ-ফুদ এই বলে ডালহৌসির প্রস্তাব প্রত্যাখ্যান করেন যে হকার এবং ক্যাম্বেলের কাছে যে অনুমতি পত্রটি পাওয়া গেছে তাতে গভর্নর জেনারেলের সঠিক সিদ্ধান্ত-মোহর ছিল না। এর পরেই ডালহৌসি সিকিম রাজাকে কোম্পানির শক্তির পরিচয় দেবেন বলে ঠিক করেন।^{১৭} লর্ড ডালহৌসি সি.এইচ. লুসিংটনকে দার্জিলিং-এর অন্তর্ভুক্তিকালীন অধ্যক্ষ পদে বহাল করে খুব শীঘ্র ডাঃ ক্যাম্বেল ও ডাঃ হকারকে মুক্ত করার নির্দেশ দেন। লুসিংটন বিশাল সৈন্যবাহিনী নিয়ে রংগীত নদীর তীরে উপস্থিত হন এবং বন্দিদের মুক্তির দাবি জানিয়ে সিকিমরাজাকে একটি চিঠি লেখেন। কিন্তু চিঠিটি সিকিমরাজার কাছে পৌঁছানোর আগেই ১৮৪৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দের ৯ ডিসেম্বর রাজা বন্দিদের মুক্ত করেন।^{১৮} তবে সিকিমের বিরুদ্ধে শাস্তিমূলক ব্যবস্থা হিসাবে দার্জিলিং-এর জন্য পুনর্বিবেচনা হয় হাজারটাকার বাৎসরিক অনুদান বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয় এবং ডাঃ ক্যাম্বেল-এর চেম্বার সিকিমের অন্তর্গত প্রায় ৬৪০ বর্গমাইল আয়তনের বিশাল তরাই অঞ্চল ব্রিটিশ সরকার গ্রাস করে নেয়। যার সীমানা ছিল উত্তরে রকন ও রংগীত নদী, পূর্বে তিত্তা নদী, পশ্চিমে নেপাল এবং দক্ষিণে পূর্ণিমা জেলা। ১৮৫০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে এই বিস্তৃত তরাই অঞ্চলকে দার্জিলিং জেলার সঙ্গে যুক্ত করা হয়।^{১৯} এইভাবে উল্লেখ শতাব্দীর ঠিক মধ্যভাগে সুবা বাংলার উত্তর সীমানা হিমালয়ে প্রবেশ করে। ১৮৬৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ইংরেজ সরকার কালিম্পং মহকুমার অবলুপ্তি ঘটিয়ে দার্জিলিং-এর সঙ্গে যুক্ত করে দার্জিলিং জেলাকে দুটি মহকুমায় ভাগ করেছিল। তিত্তা নদীর পূর্ব-পশ্চিমের পার্বত্য অঞ্চলের ৯৬০ বর্গমাইল এলাকা নিয়ে গঠিত দার্জিলিং সদর মহকুমা এবং সমতলের ২৭৪ বর্গমাইল এলাকা নিয়ে গঠিত দার্জিলিং সদর মহকুমা এবং সমতলের ২৭৪ বর্গমাইল এলাকা নিয়ে গঠিত তরাই মহকুমা। এই নতুন তরাই মহকুমার সদর দপ্তর স্থাপিত হয়েছিল কাঁসি দেওয়ার আদরে হাঁসখোয়ায় (১৮৬৪-১৮৮০)। ১৮৮৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দে তরাই মহকুমার সদর দপ্তর শিলিগুড়িতে স্থানান্তরিত হয়েছিল, অর্থাৎ দীর্ঘ বৃষ্টি বছর হাঁসখোয়া ছিল তরাই মহকুমার সদর দপ্তর। অতঃপর ১৯০৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে সমগ্র তরাই অঞ্চল নিয়ে শিলিগুড়ি মহকুমার সৃষ্টি করা হয়েছিল।^{২০}

উপরোক্ত আলোচনা থেকে একথা স্পষ্ট যে ১৭৭০ খ্রিস্টাব্দের আগে তরাই অঞ্চল সম্পর্কে কোম্পানির কোনো বিশেষ নীতি না থাকলেও বিভিন্ন পর্যায়ে নানা স্বার্থের

ষাৎ-প্রতিভাতের মাধ্যমে ইংরেজদের নীতি একটি নির্দিষ্ট রূপ পায়। ১৮৩৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ইংরেজদের দার্জিলিং অধিগ্রহণের পূর্ব সময়ে তরাইতে ইংরেজদের স্বার্থ শোচনীয় দুটি ক্ষেত্রে সীমিত ছিল বলে অনুমেয়; এক, সিকিমের অভ্যন্তর দিয়ে তিব্বত যাবার জন্য একটি পথের সন্ধান। যদিও কাঠের আকর্ষণ থাকলেও তা ইংরেজদের সর্বিশেষ প্রলুব্ধ করেনি এবং দুই, তুতান ও নেপালের সন্ধ্যা একমাত্র যোগাযোগের সূত্ররূপে তরাই অঞ্চলের ব্যবহার বন্ধ করা। ১৮৩৫ খ্রিস্টাব্দে দার্জিলিং অধিগ্রহণের পর কলকাতা থেকে দার্জিলিং যাবার জন্য কোম্পানির একটি সুগম পথের শুধু প্রয়োজনই ছিল না, তা আতাবশ্যক হয়ে ওঠে কারণ নদীপথেও শেষে দুর্গম বনাঞ্চল ও পাহাড়ী পথ বেয়ে সেই সময় কলকাতা থেকে দার্জিলিং যেতে প্রায় একমাস সময় লাগত। যেহেতু এই পথের একটি অংশ সিকিম অধিকৃত তরাই অঞ্চলের মধ্য দিয়ে যেতে হত তাই কায়েল তার প্রতিবেদনে বারংবার এই অঞ্চলটির ওপর ইংরেজ কর্তৃত্ব প্রতিষ্ঠার ওপর জোর দিয়েছিলেন। তাই গভীরভাবে অনুসন্ধান করলে দেখা যাবে যে ১৮৪৯ খ্রিস্টাব্দে কায়েল ও হকারকে বন্দি করার অজুহাতে কোম্পানির সিকিম-তরাই অঞ্চল অধিকার মুখ্য নয়, ছিল একটি উপলক্ষ মাত্র। প্রধান লক্ষ্য ছিল তরাই ও কাশ্মিরে অঞ্চল অধিকারের মাধ্যমে দার্জিলিং যাবার পথের সমস্যার সমাধান করা। অনেকে প্রশ্ন তোলেন যে, দার্জিলিং ও তরাই নেপালের অন্তর্ভুক্ত ছিল এবং ঘটনার ঘোঁসে তা ভারতের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়েছিল। কিন্তু উপরের বিশদ আলোচনা থেকে একথা পরিষ্কার যে দার্জিলিং ও তরাই আদৌ নেপাল রাজ্যভুক্ত ছিল না। অভিযানের সূত্রে নেপাল এইসব অঞ্চলে হস্ত সস্ত্রসারণ করে, যদিও নেপালের কোনো অধিগ্রহণই স্থায়ী হয়নি। সবটাই তাৎক্ষণিক এবং ইংরেজের সামরিক প্রতিক্রিয়াতে নেপাল যুদ্ধপূর্ব অবস্থায় ফিরে যেতে বাধ্য হয়েছিল। ১৮১৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দের পরে ভারত ও নেপালের মধ্যে বিভিন্ন চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হলেও দার্জিলিং ও তরাইয়ের সীমান্ত ব্যাপারে নেপাল কখনই কোনো প্রশ্ন উত্থাপন করেনি। যদিও উত্থাপন করে কোনো লাভও ছিল না। কেননা এ ব্যাপারে ব্রিটিশ মনোভাব অনমনীয় একথা যেমন সত্য, এই সব অঞ্চলের প্রতি নেপালের যে কোনো অধিকার নেই তাও তেমনি সত্য। অপরদিকে প্রায় দেড় শতক ধরে তরাই সিকিমের অধিকারে থাকলেও সে অধিকার যে সুস্পষ্ট ও নিরবচ্ছিন্ন ছিল না সে প্রশ্ন ইতিমধ্যেই দেওয়া হয়েছে। মুঘল শাসনে হিমালয়ের প্রাকৃতিক সীমানা আয়ত্ত করবার আশ্রয় এবং প্রচেষ্টার যে অভাব দেখা গিয়েছিল, কোম্পানির আমলে যার ফলে ১৮৫০ খ্রিস্টাব্দে ইংরেজ তরাই অঞ্চল দখলের মাধ্যমে ঐ ইঙ্গিত লক্ষ্যে পৌঁছতে সমর্থ হয়। সম্ভবত ইস্ট ইন্ডিয়া কোম্পানি ভারতে তার সাম্রাজ্য বিস্তারের সন্তানবানকে মাথায় রেখে উত্তরে হিমালয়কে তার নির্ভরযোগ্য প্রাকৃতিক সীমারেখা হিসাবে বেছে নিয়েছিল।

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- ৩। উত্তর প্রদেশের তরাই অঞ্চলের ভৌগোলিক অবস্থান ২৮°৫০'৩০" ও ২৯°২২'৩০" উত্তর অক্ষাংশ এবং ৭৮°৩৮' ও ৭৯°৪৬' পূর্ব দ্রাঘিমাংশের কুমায়ূন ডিভিশন নামে পরিচিত। অঞ্চলটি উত্তরে কুমায়ূন জেলা, পূর্বে নেপাল, অঞ্চল দ্বারা পরিবৃত্ত। অঞ্চলটির প্রধানশহর কাশীপুর হলেও গ্রীষ্মকালীন প্রশাসনিক কার্যালয় ছিল নৈনিতাল।
- ৪। গার্বো পাহাড় ও উত্তর কাছাড়ের পার্শ্ববর্তী অঞ্চল যা কাছারী দুয়ার নামে পরিচিত তাইকেই সাধারণভাবে আসাম তরাই বলা হয়।
- ৫। দোজ্রে কথার অর্থ বন্ধ এবং লিং কথার মানে হল পাহাড়, সেই অর্থে দোজ্রে-লিং এর মানে দাঁড়ায় বন্ধের দেশ।
- ৬। নেপাল রাষ্ট্রের ৭৫টি জেলার মধ্যে দক্ষিণ নেপালের ২০টি জেলাকে নেপাল তরাই বলা হয়। যথা : কাঞ্চনপুর, কাইলালী, রায়দিয়া, বাঞ্চে, দাং, কপিলাবন্দু, রূপদিহি, নাওয়ালপারসী, চিতওয়ান, পারসা, বাড়া, রুতাহাট, সাবলাহী, মাহেশী, ধানুয়া, সিবাহা, সাপতী, সুনশারী, মোরাং ও ঝাপা অঞ্চল।
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The Transformation of the Demographic Structure of the Tribal Population in the Terai Region of Darjeeling District (1850-1947)

Sudip Khasnobish

The plain of Darjeeling District is popularly known as the Darjeeling Terai, extending from the foot of the mountainous tract of the northern border of the Purnea District. It lies between 26°36'48" and 26°49'45" north latitude and between 88°8'51" and 88°29' east longitude. It forms a trapezoid with a length from north to south of 8 miles and breadth east to west of 10 miles, covering a total area of 229.95 square miles or 147,170.19 acres, excluding forest lands. It is bounded on the north by hill portion of the district, South of Purnea District, east by Jalpaiguri district, and west by the independent state of Nepal.¹ The article leads particularly with three police stations of modern Siliguri sub-division namely Siliguri, Phansidewa and Khoribari. Though it was the administrative set-up during the colonial rule, but after independence, the number of police stations had increased to six. The three new police stations are Naxalbari, Matigara and Bagodgra. In my article I have mentioned it as 'Darjeeling Terai' because Terai is used both in Uttar Pradesh and Nepal region. One of the eminent naturalist J.D. Hooker had pointed out that the region from the Sutlej of Punjab to Brahmaputra valley of Assam has been identified as Terai region.² On the other hand, the Nepal Terai consisting of sixteen districts namely Jhapa, Morang, Elam etc, which is better known as South Nepal.³

This paper proposes to study the major tribal (Dhimal, Mech, Oraon, Munda, Santal) demographic structure and its transformations from 1850-1947 in the Darjeeling terains. This is the first analytical attempt from historical point of view, though few works have been done in sociology and social anthropology.

The historians and the anthropologists are not successful to identify the original inhabitants of this region. This failure is mainly due to the influx of the migrant population and its assimilation which makes it difficult to trace the original race of this region. Secondly, none of the migrant population have left any sources of its migration and settlement.⁴ The chronological history of the Terai region is in un-written form. The dearth of the sources could be the prime reason for the unavailability of the history of this region. During the Pala-Senas rule the Terai region was a part of the empire of the Sultans of Gour. This was located in the border areas of the empire of Gour. This can be corroborated with the fact that archeological evidences in the form of two black stone sculpture have been excavated from Ghoshpukur area near Bagdogra thana. Both of this stone images were styled in Eastern School of Sculpture of the Palas rule. Further, the names of the places like Bhimghat, Bhimbhar etc can be connected with the Bhim, the leader of the famous Kaibarta Rebellion during the rule of the Palas. But after the rule of the Palas the history of the terrain took a turn and flowed in two different directions.⁵ Broadly speaking the history of present Siliguri can be studied in two different angle. The present Siliguri (Siliguri Town area) as known to

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India. Prior to the colonial period the regions of North Bengal covered with dense forests and it was an area of Kala-Azur, Malaria and furious animals. But from the various sources it can be traced that there was the practice of agriculture and inhabitation of people in this region. The report of 1839 states of the inhabitation of few mech population in the Darjeeling Terai when the British received Darjeeling in 1835 as a gift from the Sikkim Raja.⁷ According to L.S.O Malley, there is, however, one race which inhabits this sticky region are the aboriginal Meches.⁸ It is very difficult to state the actual number of people residing in the Terai region of Darjeeling in the pre-colonial period. But we come to know from L.S.O Malley that in 1850 when the British occupied this region the total number of population was approximately 5000.⁹ According to the first census of 1872 the total number of population in 274 sq. mile of the Terai was 47,985 and the total number of villages was 19 in this region. Each Sq. mile had 41 houses and number of population was 175. According to this census though the Rajbansis were the majority of the population but the number of Mech and Dhimal were 893 and 873 respectively.¹⁰ According to W.W. Hunter this place was chiefly inhabited by the Meches and Dhimals, the two tribes who are said not to suffer from the unhealthy nature and climate.¹¹ Among the other races the Oraons formed 1648, who were migrated from the Chotanagpur region to the tea gardens areas as labourer.¹²

During the early half of 19th century the settlement of people was very less because of the heavy rainfall and severe cold in this region. But during the last decade of the 2nd half of the 19th century there were areas of few settlements mainly due to three reasons. They were in the first place, the colonial Government started the system of the distribution of land through various acts and legislatures.¹³ For this reason L.S.O Malley said in his Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling, that this phenomenal growth of the population since 1872 due to two main causes, the development of the tea industry and the influx of settlers to exploit the waste lands of the district.¹⁴ Secondly, the population grew due to the establishment of plantation industries. Though the first experimental tea gardens were established in 1860, but it was in the year of 1862 commercial tea garden named Newchampta at Khaprail was established by an Englishman James White. During the next three decades the number of tea gardens had increased abruptly. The most important factor which contributed for the growth of population was the employment of Santals, Oraon, Munda from Chotanagpur, Santal Pargana as labourers in tea gardens.¹⁵ Thirdly, with the growth of the tea gardens the colonial Government paid attention to the development of the roads and communication because the transportation system from the tea gardens to the port was very poor. Therefore, they paid their attention for the improvement of not only the roads but also the railways, so that the tea leaves could reach the port for trade without any difficulties. Though the development of railways in Siliguri had started much earlier than any other regions in Northern part of Bengal. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the tea gardens were established within the period of 1890 (except which were established by the Indian tea planters).¹⁶ This is because of the development of modern Siliguri and the entire Terai region owes to the growth of railways.

The labourers in the tea gardens of Terai were basically the migrant from Madhya Pradesh, Chotanagpur, Santal Pargana etc areas. The most interesting fact is that the British did not use the local population and the probable reasons behind this was as follows.

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us is situated in the southern-bank of the Mahananda river. The history of this area between the Mahananda and Karotoya are still in dark. It is known from the local folklore or local historical tale that the Western border of the Kamrupa kingdom was extended upto river Korotoya. Before the advent of the Muslims the Situation remained the same. But during the period of Pathan Shah in Bengal, this area (between Mahananda and Karotoya river) went under the Muslim rule. After the death of Hussain Shah, the Koch King Bishu Singha and Shisu Singha taking advantage of the internal problems between successors of Hussain Shah, had occupied the area of the Western banks of Korotoya upto southern-bank of the Mahananda river. In and around 1540 A.D, the area in the Eastern part of Tista river and the area between Tista-Korotoya came to be known as Baikunthapur. The capital of Baikunthapur was Silliguri or Sillikiguri. On the other hand the Northern bank of the river Mahananda was invaded and annexed by different times. After the establishment of the Gurkha rule in Nepal, the Gurkha invaders had come to Nepal-Mahananda region to the Baikunthapur regularly. The East India Company had sent Gen. Duneum to solve the problems. As a result of 1814-16 Anglo-Nepal war the treaty of Sagauli was signed between the East India Company and Nepal. According to the provisions of the treaty Nepal had to give up the claims over the Mechi-Mahananda area. By the treaty of Titalia the East India Company gave the Sikkim Kingdom to the area of Mechi-Mahananda. In 1835 the British Government had received Darjeeling as a gift from the king of Sikkim. To access Darjeeling it was necessary to cross the Sikkim kingdom. The British had decided not to cross the kingdom of Sikkim while going to Darjeeling and therefore, they occupied 640 sq. miles of area (including forest area) of Terai in 1850. Baikunthapur was already under the British Government and by this way, the banks of the river Mahananda, both Northern and Southern came under the British rule. But the administrative Structure were different from each other; the Southern bank was under the Zamindars of Balkunthapur and Northern part was under Purnia district of Bhagalpur Sub-division. But apprehending the dissatisfaction expressed by the locals, the area was joined with Darjeeling district. The administration of the area of hills and Terai region was placed under a Superintendent. But in 1864-65 due to the Anglo-Bhutanese wars the administration of Darjeeling hills and Terai was restructured. After Kalimpong had been brought under British administration the District was divided into two Sub-division with an area of 960 sq. miles including all the hills on both sides of the river Tista and Terai Sub-division with an area of 274 sq. miles which included the whole of the area at the foot of the hills. The head quarters of the Terai Sub-division were established at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa (1864-1880). On the other hand, in 1869 with the establishment of the Jalpaiguri district the Titalia Sub-division was joined with Jalpaiguri. As a result Silliguri or Sannyasikata was joined with Jalpaiguri. In December, 1881 Silliguri was joined with Darjeeling from Jalpaiguri. The Terai administrative Sub-divisional office was transferred from Hanskhawa of Phansidewa to Silliguri. Thus in this way, the Northern and Southern banks of the Mahananda river were joined and gave birth to the present days modern Silliguri or Terai Mahakuma before Independence.⁶

The Geographical and religious structure of the Terai region with its multi-racial and multi-lingual character remains us of the Indian diversity in races, culture and languages. This feature has, therefore, provoked many of the scholars to refer North Bengal as little

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Firstly, the local population like Mech, Dhimal, Rajbanshis were very few in numbers and therefore, they could not be recruited as labourers in the tea gardens. Secondly, the local population who have been uprooted from their lands for the establishment of tea gardens were not interested as labourers. Further, the local population was attracted towards the natural vegetation and took agriculture as their livelihood than working as labourers. Thirdly, the earning from agriculture was much higher than as tea labourers. Fourthly, the colonial government kept in mind that the labour of the local population could not be exploited as the slaves. There could have been fear of a local revolt.¹⁷

It was primarily due to the establishment of the tea gardens there was a rapid increase in the population of the area. The eminent writers like L.S.S.O' Malley, A.J. Dash, J. H. Gurning, Barun De and others have explained the changes of the demographic patterns in the context of the growth and development of the tea gardens. This can be studied from the following tables as given below:-

Table - 1
Tea Industry's Impact On Population Growth of Darjeeling District : 1861-1941

Year	Number Tea Estate	Total area in Hect. under tea	Total No. of all kinds of tea workers	Total of working force	Percentage
1861	22	1317	2534	-	-
1871	56	-	8000	94714 (1872)	8.45
1881	155	11,489	-	1,55,179	-
1891	177	18,462	-	1,55,207	-
1901	170	20,948	40,451	1,55,235	26.06
1911	156	20,853	39,561	1,51,604	26.09
1921	168	23,897	48,710	1,74,167	2.97
1931	169	24,777	63,665	1,29,070	43.33
1941	136	25,585	69,699	1,33,306	52.28

Source : West Bengal District Gazettiers Darjeeling, Barun De and others (ed), Superintendent of printing, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1980, page : 100

Therefore, the population of the Terai region centered round the economic development of the tea gardens. It is mentioned in the Centenary volume of Jalpaiguri district that with the establishment of the tea gardens the tribals from the places like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Madras, Santal Pargana, Nepal etc had migrated into this region. Now, the question arises that how did the large number of people migrated from the other region into this area because there were no proper land transport as well as no water transport. Railway lines were established much later. Most of the tea garden labourers had come into this region by crossing the distant road on foot, which was not only painful but also impossible. There are no written documents on this historical event and therefore we can not provide the exact fact that had occurred.¹⁸

Table - 2
Major Tribal Population of Darjeeling Terai (1881-1931)

Census Year	Total population of Darjeeling terai	Mech	Dhimal	Oraon	Munda	Santal
1881	63,241 Persons	-	632	-	-	-
1891	72,997 Persons	267	631	5323	1283	999
1901	70,466 Persons	343	607	8042	3984	1859
1911	72,246 Persons	201	749	7543	2437	2246
1921	75,787 Persons	-	-	10,952	5322	3607
1931	80,258 Persons	379	375	12,412	5062	4299

Sources : Census 1951, West Bengal District Hand books : Darjeeling, A. Mitra, West Bengal Government press, Alipore, Kolkata, 1954, p : XXX I XXXV, Census 1951, West Bengal, The Tribes and castes of West Bengal, A. Mitra, West Bengal Government press, Alipore, Kolkata, 1953, p. 113-118, Bengal District Gazettiers : Darjeeling, A. J. Dash, Government press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p. 66-71.

The geographical importance of Siliguri was felt by the British from the early half the 20th century. In 1907 the Sub-division head-quarter was established in Siliguri. The people from different parts of the Sub-continent had centered around Siliguri particularly due to tea, tourism, timber and transport. The attraction of the business prospect removed the fear of Malaria from the hearts of business loving people. Besides tea and timber companies like, Mark Mayer, Landen Cleark, Railey Brothers etc. related with jute business were established in this region. In this way the northern bank of the river Mahamanda developed due to the growth of tea industry and the Southern bank developed due to the expansion of commerce. There were also an increase of population in both the sides due to the above mentioned reason. According to the census of 1941, the total number of population of Darjeeling Terai was 90,014. Among this population a large part of it consisted of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes. Out of this total population the number of Meches were 272, Oraon 12,433, Munda 4993 and Santal 4045. The majority portion of above mentioned population dwelled in the plains of Darjeeling District or Terai region. It must be referred in this connection that total population of Siliguri town in the same year was 10504, out of which the total number of Schedule Caste and schedule tribe population was 839 (excluding Nepali tribes). Out of this 839, the distribution of the tribal population were Santal (14), Munda (05) and Oraon (02) in Siliguri town area. Nepali speaking tribal population consisted 306 souls, out of them Manger (05), Newar (39), Tamang (34), Gurung (49) Sunawar (54) were prominent.¹⁹ It is to be noted that the number of Rajbanshis in 1941 as recorded in the census has decreased by 9000 in total from 1931. A. J. Dash describe it as, faulty declaration of census slips. Probably, for this reason the Dhimals were not traceable in the 1941 census.²⁰ Thus it can be mentioned if the Dhimals were recorded in the 1941 census, probably in the post independent period they could have been recorded as Schedule Tribe in the census. This is very significant and historically unfortunate, as for the negligence of the census enumerators the primitive community of Darjeeling Terai region had been deprived of the facilities provided by the

both the State and Central Government of India. According to the census of 1951 the total number of population of Terai region were 1,16,476. Out of above mentioned population the Schedule Caste population consisted 24,418 (M-13,712 and F-10,706) and Schedule Tribe population consisted 25,613 (M-13,514 and F-12,099). Among these tribal population the number of Meches were 224, Oraon 17,217, Munda 5752 and Santal 3481. It is to be noted that at the same time the total number of population in Siliguri urban area were 32480, out of this the tribals were consisted 233 (Oraon 108, Munda 63 and Santal 55).²¹

During 1870's the Deputy commissioner of Darjeeling has mentioned in his Report regarding the Mech population that they are disappearing almost dying out faster than any race of which he had known or read. The reason is, no doubt, that distinctive cultivation is by Jhum, which is barred by Government forest conservancy and the spread of settled plough cultivation from South.²² Another reason is that in order to facilitate tea gardens, a large tract mainly inhabited by the Meches were declared as 'waste land' and was converted into tea gardens. The Meches were migratory and used to practice shifting cultivation in the Terai area. But with the growth of the tea gardens, they were displaced as they had not been conferred the proprietary right. They migrated to the East and mainly to Assam. However, the British tried to settle them in some pockets.²³ This theory is also supported by eminent scholar Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal when he was moving in the Terai area.²⁴

On the other hand unlike the other settlers of Bengal the tribes of this area like the Dhimal and the Mech depended upon shifting cultivation (Jhum) rather than systematic agricultural system. Therefore, when the forest conservancy act was passed in the year 1865, these aboriginal tribal community were largely affected. The Dhimals now started to survive upon hunting and food gathering and mostly on fishing in the rivers of Terai. Gradually they migrated to the Terai of Nepal. Therefore, when the structural change of Terains took place from inhospitable, no mans land and Malaria belt to T (Tea), T (trade), and T (Transport) and prospect for the job-seeking migratory tribals like Oraons, Munda and Santals but the silent cries of Dhimals and Mech could also be heard because of there displacement. In fact they became migrants from their own lands particularly during the colonial period. To conclude, it would be better to mention that it was a historical fiasco or irony on the part of Cleo, the god of history, that the migrants became the major inhabitants of this area while the original tribes were displaced from their own lands.

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