

Chapter 2

Geo-Historical Profile of North Bengal

“North of the main branch of the Ganges, now known as Padma and west of the Brahmapurta lies the extensive region” of North Bengal “which embraces the modern Rajshahi Division and the state of Cooch Behar.”¹ The present-day taxonomic geography of North Bengal is not only a geographical expression but a historical development of a geo-historical concept which came to being (as North Bengal) in a process of transition in different forms like *Poundra* or *Poundrabardhan*, *Gouda*, *Varendra*, *Uttariya*, *Uttardesa*, *Kamtabihar*. Professor Ananda Gopal

Ghosh showed the process of terminological transition of North Bengal in his monumental work “Uttarbanga Namer Sandhane”² In the early phase of colonial rule the term ‘Northern Bengal’ was used geographically, which later on changed into ‘North Bengal’. However, during the middle phase of colonial rule it took intellectual conception. During post-colonial or post-independent phase it came to be used as a geo-cultural entity.

The territorial geography which hovered in our sight with the name of ‘North Bengal’ is the six districts of northern part of our present-day West Bengal such as Malda, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, N. Dinajpur, S. Dinajpur and Cooch Behar. But as the period of my discussion is up to 1991 and till then instead of North and South Dinajpur, West Dinajpur was there for which I shall use West Dinajpur. It may be mentioned here that ‘Darjeeling’ and ‘Jalpaiguri’ as districts were not in existence during pre-British period in Bengal, as they were created during British rule in a transitional politico-administrative process of the period. However, North Bengal has a great historical tradition. Pounrabardhan, Gouda, Gouda-Banga, Kamta-Koch state were well known in the history of Indian State. In this context the comment of an eminent historian of Bangladesh, Md. Habibur Rahaman may be quoted. He wrote that if more investigation carried on then it would become reveal that Pundra was the oldest *Janapad* ³

However, North Bengal had a great connection with ‘Pragjyotishpur’, ‘Mithila’ and Magadha. Regarding Puranic age it can be said the two states – Matsyadesha and Pragjyotishpur with their respective king Virat and king Bhagadatta took part in the war of Kurukshetra of Mahavarata. So North Bengal can claim as the heir of primitive Bengal. In this context the intellectual-research of Bangladesh, Dr. Ahmed Shariff commented that Rada-Varendra of Bengal was older than the East and South Bengal. As the Rada was backward so the history of Bengal began with the *Varendra*.⁴ And the successor of *Varendra* is the conjugal North-Bengal, i.e. the so called North Bengal within Bangladesh and India.

I

As a *Janapad* the first mention of *Varendra* is noticed in tenth century. In a southern Rock Inscription of 967 A.D. the name of a Brahman had been depicted as ‘Barendradyutikanin’ and Gouda Chudamani’. However as an age-old ‘*Janapada*’ the description has been given by Sandhyakarnandi in his Sanskrit text ‘Ramcharitam’(in the Chapter Kavi Prasasti) and in ‘Talcher Inscription’ of Gayadtungadeva. Sandhyakar Nandi regarded *Varendra* as ‘Janakavi’ of the Pala kings and placed it in between Ganga and Karatowa. An eminent scholar F.J. Manham in a Periodical of Royal Asiatic Society of 1994 demarcated the periphery of *Varendra* in this way that, “This belt of land runs east and West comprising Western Bogra, South Western Rangpur, Southern Dinajpur, and Northern Rajshahi, but on the West the belt takes a turn south ward and extends almost to the Ganges at Godagari, embracing the eastern portion of Malda and part of Western Rajshahi.”⁵ Alexander Cunningham thought *Varendra* as vast land amidst of

Ganga and Mahananda in West, Karatowa in East Padma in South and Cooch Behar and Terai region in the North. On the other hand the Muslim historians of medieval India denoted Varendra as the region Eastern part of Ganga and east of Lakshmanavati.⁶ Since the dawn of history today's so called North Bengal is greatly known in mainstream Indian history. Akshaykumar Maitreya wrote regarding North Bengal's relation with post-Buddhist periodic India in this way that North Bengal at the time became well known in all over India with the fabrication of Buddhist fame.⁷ Up to 1576 A.D. North Bengal was the centre of political life of Bengal. Prof. Blockman wrote that the kings of North Bengal were very powerful and because of this they were able to enjoy the semi independence even after the consecutive Muslim invasion. He did not provide any evidence in support of this. So it might be his assumption. But the lack of old Muslim inscriptions in Varendramandal in between Atreyi and Karatowa region corroborated this hypothesis.⁸ However, though with the conquest of Bengal by Mughal Emperor Akbar and transfer of capital from Rajmahal to Dhaka politically, the sunset of North Bengal began to some extent; it was recovered by the new sun rise of the Kamta-Koch Kingdom. In southern part of North Bengal (Malda, Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Baguda, Pabna) though it was a declining phase politically, in Northern part of North Bengal (Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Goalpara) there was a political rise of North Bengal in the form of Kamta-Koch Kingdom, which in a time transformed in an empire. In this context Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh wrote that though Poundrabardhan, Varnedra, Gouda and Kamta-Koch Kingdom have become lost past the new taxonomical expression North Bengal was the successor of those historical lands.⁹ However, the conceptual and physical development of modern North Bengal was the by-product of British colonial expansion in Bengal and North East India. Since the beginning of nineteenth century the probability of emergence of a unitary politically controlled geographical region in the north of Ganga and western plains of Brahmaputra developed with the expansion of English commercial and political domination, in different parts of North-East India. Not only in these plain regions the self-expansionist initiative of the English led to the inclusion of some parts of Sikkim and Bhutanese mountainous region with consecutive direct or indirect control of British authority. Thus, basically, during the British rule the pre-structural geographical shape of present North Bengal combining the plains and Mountainous region emerged.¹⁰ Later on the English made administrative organizations and reorganization of this geographical area in accordance with the administrative need. It resulted in exclusion of some regions from Bengal to neighbor provinces (like Bihar in West and Assam in the East). Besides, which areas did never went out of Bengal during British rule, for administrative necessity took a great turning point in 1947 with the partition of India in general and Bengal specifically and also continued in post-1947 period. From the administrative point of view it transited from Rajshahi Division to Jalpaiguri Division. This historical process of geo-political structural change of North Bengal has multi-dimensional effect on the demography of the region. So the geo-historical development of North Bengal in connection with its demographic change is the main thrust of this chapter.

Here, I should mention that I have taken the present day North Bengal consisting of districts, Maldah, West Dinajpur (after 1992 it became North and South Dinajpur), Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. In this respect I shall divide my period of discussion into two phases – colonial period (from 1871 to 1947) and post-colonial period (from 1947 to 1991) to make apparent the geo-historical transition of North-Bengal with the differences in both phases affecting the demography of this area of my study.

II

After the Grant of Dewani of Bengal in 1765 by the English East India Company from the Mughal Emperor of Delhi District administration and circuit system for collection of land revenue were introduced. According to the Circuit system in the early of nineteenth century whole of Bengal was divided in five Divisions, such as Rajshahi, Bardhaman, Presidency, Dhaka and Chhattagram. *Varendra* region was within the Rajshahi Division. It was constituted by the districts of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Maldaha, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Bagura, Pabna and the Rajshahi districts. The indigenous state of Cooch Behar east to Jalpaiguri and North to Rangpur district was neighbor to Rajshahi and was subsidiary state.¹¹ The southern-most region of Present day North Bengal is constituted by Malda district. The present headquarters of the district has originated from the factory which was built by the East India Company to carry on trade, mainly in silk and cotton textiles. The town which sprang up around the factory came to be known as Englezavad was converted to Englishbazar in course of time and being the head quarter of the district it came to be known as Malda in the beginning of the twentieth century.¹² However, the word Malda is of Arabic origin and the first mention of the name Malda is in the Ain-i-Akbari of abul Fajal. Alexander Hamilton wrote that “Malda was a large town, well inhabited and frequented by merchants of the different nations”.¹³ Renel wrote that “Malda is a pretty, new city. This as well as Cassimbazar is a place of trade.”¹⁴ The district of Malda contained within its limits the sites of Pandua and Gour, the capital cities of Bengal throughout medieval times.¹⁵ In ancient times the district was situated in the country of Pundravardhana.¹⁶ In the fifth century B.C. Panini mentioned a city named Goudapura in eastern India, and it would not be unreasonable to identify this Goudapura with the city of Malda and partly in the district of Rajshahi in East Pakistan. Sasanka, who ruled over Bengal at the same time at which Harsavardhana flourished, was known as the Lord of Gouda. During the reign of the Pala Kings the city of Gouda attained great splendor. However, the fortunes of Gouda were temporarily eclipsed after the conquest of Bengal by Muhammad Bakhtyier Khalji as he made Denkot – the modern Bangarh in the district of West Dinajpur – his headquarters. But the fortunes of Gouda were restored during the reign of Ghiyas-ud-din Iwaz Khalji who re-transferred the capital to Gouda.¹⁷ Hossain Shah ruled 27 years and completely restored the fortunes of Gouda so much so that Gouda became a synonym for Bengal and Gouriya for its inhabitants.¹⁸ The city was plundered by Sher Shah during his war with Mahmud Shah, the last independent Sultan of

Bengal. The city was occupied during the Governorship of Munim Khan (Akbar's General). But the great hurt of a severe epidemic ceased Gouda to be a capital its place being taken first by Tanda and then by Rajmahal. During the reign of Aurangzeb the district of Malda formed a part of the Jagir of Shaista Khan.¹⁹ At the end of the 17th Century Gouda had become like Pandua, a Jungle inhabited only by wild beasts, and the district an obscure portion of the Province.²⁰ Though the East India Company obtained the Diwani of the Subah Bengal, Bihar and Orrissa from emperor Shah Alam in 1765 the district of Malda came into existence under the British informally²¹ Till 1813 the district formed part of Purnea and Dinajpur districts, the Mahananda being the boundary.²² During the intervening period the district had been parceled out between the districts of Dinajpiur (old), Rajshai, Murshidabad and Purnea. The posting of a joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector in 1813 was necessitated by the heavy incidence of crimes in certain thanas of the districts of Purnea, Dinajpur and Rajshahi. (WBDG, Malda, p.3). The thanas which were then placed in charge of the Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector were Sibganj, Kaliachak, Bholahat, Gurguibah of the Purnea district, the thanas of Malda and Bamangola of the district of Dinajpur (old). In 1825 the thanas of Rahanpur and Chappai were transferred judicially from Rajshai (Order dated 25th August, 1825, Jurisdiction of Districts in Bengal, p.77). The newly formed district was included in the Bhagalpur Division. A separate Treasury was established at Malda in 1832, from which year the separate existence of the district is usually dated.²³ But in 1859 a full magistrate and collector was appointed²⁴ In 1875 the district boundaries were notified and 65 villages from Murshidabad and 237 villages from Dinajpur were transferred in the district (Notification dated 22nd February, 1879). Up to 1876 the district formed part of the Rajshahi Division of the undivided Province of Bengal. Between 1876 and 1905 the district formed part of the Bhagalpur Division, then in Bengal.

The happening of partition of Bengal had a great impact on organization and reorganization of boundaries of Malda district. In 1905 the district was transferred from the Bhagalpur division to the Rajshahi Division on the formation of the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. During the proposal of Partition of Bengal in 1905 the leaders of Bihar claimed for inclusion of the Malda district with Bihar as it was in Bhagalpur Division during 1876 to 1905. In 1911, 2nd August the British Government of India declared that as the Bengali populated areas would be included into a province, the Hindi speaking areas also would be integrated into a province. No sooner the announcement was declared Dipnarayan Singha, Schchidananda Singh and Parameshwar Lal expressed that parts of Purnea and Maldah to the east of Mahananda would go in Bengal and the rest would go to Bihar. The India Association under the leadership of Surendranath Banerjee submitted a memorandum to the British Government on 23rd January, 1912 claimed that "The portion of Purnea and Malda to the east of the river Mahananda which is the ethnic and linguistic boundary between Bengal and Bihar should go to Bengal and the Western portion of this two districts come to Bihar."²⁵ When in 1937 the proposal for reorganization of province was arisen the leaders of Bihar again claimed for inclusion of Malda in Bihar. However, in 1912

when the partition of Bengal was annulled, it was included in the Rajshahi Division till August, 1947.

Like the other regions of Bengal the history of Dinajpur region is also shrouded in dark. It is assumed that during the reign of Ashoka, the Mauryan emperor, the region was integrated with Mauryan Empire²⁶. The tradition belonging to this district which is referred to the earliest period by the Hindus is that it was under the Government of Porosurama, a very powerful monarch who lived at Mohasthanagar (Mustangar) in Rajshahi, near the frontier of this district.²⁷ The next personage of this country who is celebrated in tradition is Virat Raja, King of Matsyodes, a name which is still retained by the whole of this district, except a small portion east from the proper Katoya, for that river separated Matsyo from Kamrup, which was then governed by a prince named Bhogodatto.²⁸ F.J. Manham wrote that "This belt of land runs east and west comprising western Bogra, South western rangpur, Southern Dianjpur and Northern Rajshai, but on the west the belt takes a turn southward and extends almost to the Ganges at Godagani, embracing the eastern portion of Malda and part of Western Rajshai".²⁹ On the other hand according to Fergusson Dinajpur, Rangpur and Bogura were in ancient Pundrabardhan.³⁰ Infact in ancient times the whole of North of Bengal including Dinajpur was known as Pundravardhan Bhukti. The high land of Pundravardhana surrounded by Mahananda in the west, Koratoa in the East, Ganga in the South-West and Tista and her tributaries in the North was also known as Varendri since the reign of the Palas.³¹ During the time of the Mauryas North Bengal contained to be named as Pundra or Pundrabardhan. Numbers of inscriptions of the Gupta period have been found in Pundrabardhan. This Pundrabardhan Bhukti was consisted with some Vishayas during the Guptas. Among them Kotibarsha Vishaya was consisted of middle and Western region of Dinajpur. The eastern part of Dinajpur was known as 'Panchanagari Vishaya'. After the Guptas the region became targeted by the foreign invaders. With the decline of the Guptas the Moukhari domination was established here. Bhaskar Barman of Kamrup also keeps occupied the region for sometimes. With these foreign incursions a 'Matsyanyay' emerged in Gour as well as in Dinajpur. The condition was restored by the Palas. In the long reign of the Palas Dinajpur and many regions of Varendri were ceded away from their domination for the sometimes.³² The so called Kaivarta Revolt under the leadership of Dibbak and Bhima was held first in Dinajpur district in the Tarpandighi Copper Plate Inscription of Lakshman Sen the name Kotibarsha was replaced by Varendra. At that time Varendra with Dinajpur came under the Senas³³ With the invasion of Bakhtier Khalji Muslim rule began in Dinajpur. During the time of the Delhi Sultnate Varendri was subordinate to it sometimes and declared independent again. After the defeat of Daud Karanani to the Mughal in the battle of Rajmahal in 1576 came under Mughal domination and lost its political significance³⁴ after the death of Mughal emperor Aourangzeb Mughal influence reduced in Bengal. At that time in the periphery region some kingdoms emerged which existed independently acknowledging Mughal domination. The Zamindary administration in Dinajpur

emerged since the time of Akbar. The Mughals were very much dependent on the Zamindars for consolidation of their rule in Bengal. This tradition continued also in the British rule in India.

During Nawabi rule the parts of Sarkars Barbakabad, Ghoraghat, Jannatabad, Purnea and Tajpur constituted the Zamindary of Dinajpur. Among the thirteen Chaklas of Nawab MurshidKuli Khan Dinajpur was under Ghoraghat Chakla. In 1765 with the Grant of Diewani the Zamindary of Dinajpur came under British domination.³⁵ After the Zamindar Radhanath the Zamindary of Dinajpur came to be divided which were sold among the British servants and the administrators.³⁶ For the administrative privileges different parts of Dinajpur were transferred to Purnea, Rajshahi and Rangpur

Under the British organizations and reorganizations happened in Dinajpur. In 1798 the Karatoya river was made the eastern boundary for the adjustment of the boundary between Dinajpur and Rangpur Zillas for administrative efficiency³⁷ In 1815 the thanas Malda and Bamangola were transferred to Malda joint Magistracy which was placed under Dinajpur Judge-Magistrate for administrative efficiency (Order dated 25th April, 1815). The district was transferred from the Board of Revenue, Bengal to the Commissioner of Beneras and Bihar in 1817 (Regulation of 1816). In 1819 it was again retransferred to the Board of Revenue of Bengal (Order dated 1st January, 1819, p.68). In 1825 thanas of Chapai and Rahanpur were transferred to Malda from Rajshahi (Order dated 25th August, 1825). In 1821 Thanas Lalbazar, Khetal and Badalgachi were transferred to Bogra (Order dated 13th April, 1821). Malda and Bogra Joint Magistrates appointed independent Deputy Collectors (Order March 1832). In 1874 the district boundaries were notified (Notification dated 6th November, 1874). In 1879 Malda was transferred civilly to Rajshahi and Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri were transferred from Rangpur Judge (Notification dated, 1st February, 1879). In 1896 Thana Mahadebpur was transferred to Rajshahi (Notification dated 22nd December, 1896). Dinajpur district protested against the declaration of Partition of Bengal in 1905. Maharaja Girijanath Roy was in the fore line of the movement. Lalmohan Ghosh held an assembly here on 21st July in 1905 and called for Boycott movement. After the Annulment of Partition of Bengal in 1911 the district came in Rajshahi Division.³⁸ In the early times the territory, Cooch Behar, was known as Pragjyotisha which is mentioned in the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana and the Harivamsa. There is no mention of Kamrupa in any of these works. Kamrupa extended from Kalesvara to Svetagiri and from Tripura to Nilparbat which is the name of Kamakhya hill mentioned in the Kalikapurana. Yuan Chuang placed it to the east of Karatoya while the Yoginitantra includes in the country the Brahmaputra Valley together with Rangpur and Koch Bihar³⁹ From the Raghuvamsam of Kalidasa it appears that the western part of the original territory of Pragjyotish came to be known as Kamrupa. All the historical kings of Kamrupa finds mention for the first time in epigraphic records in the Allahabad Pillar Indscription of Samudragupta⁴⁰ who reduced the kingdom into vassalage. Puspabhadra Copper Plate of the reign of Dharmapala of

the dynasty of Brahmapala mentions Kamrupanagara as the seat of the king which may be same as Kamta or Kamtapur whose ruins lie in the district of Koch Bihar at Gossanimari. Maldah Madrasa Inscription and the Kantaduar Inscriptions⁴¹ also corroborated this view.

With the end of Pala dynasty there was anarchy for a time during which the country was overrun by the Koch, Garo and Bhot tribes. With this Niladhvaha, a person of a humble birth, (Khenas) proclaimed himself king. During the reign of his son Chakradhvaja, his dominions included the greater part of Goalpara district, the whole of Koch Bihar and Rangpur districts and portions of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur districts with the southern frontier at Ghoraghat. However, in 1498 A.D. Kamtapur was conquered by the Muslims according to the tradition. However, with the decline of the Khenas 'Matsyanyay' emerged in this region. In this development the Koches came in power under the leadership of Biswasingha. During the reign of his son Mallanarayan or Naranarayan, he attacked the Ahom King and forced him to submission and payment of tribute. He conquered Tripura, Kachar, Dimru and other places. It is claimed that his sway extended over Chittagong to the sea.⁴² However during the time of Naranarayan this long kingdom became divided between his sons and the sons of Shukladhvaja. In North Bengal Koch Bihar (with Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar) and 'Koch-Hajo' state in Goalpara of Assam emerged.⁴³ But the conflictual relation between the two parts led to one part under temporary domination of the Mughals and the other part under the Ahoms.

During Lakshminarayan Cooch Behar became under Mughal Suzerainty. During Aurangzeb Mir Jumla, the Governor of Bengal marched upon Cooch Behar and occupied (1661) and the city's name was changed to Alamgirnagar. Again when Shaista Khan (1664) marched to Koch Behar Prannaryan offered submission. Towards the end of his reign the boundaries of the kingdom of Prannaryan extended to Tajhat and Baharband parganas in the south, Bhaskarpur near Khutaghat (in the district of Goalpara) on the east and Bhatgaon in Morang on the West.⁴⁴ With the death of Mahindranarayan ended the main-line of kings and Rupnarayan started a dynasty which descended from Mahindranaryan, the first Nazir. Rupnarayan was the last king of Koch Behar was confined practically to the present boundaries of the district. He transferred his capital from Atharokotha to Guriahati constituting more or less the present town of Koch Behar. During the time of Dhairyendra Narayan the attack of Bhutan, captivation of the king and their intervention in Koch Kingdom led to the British East India Company's intervention in the kingdom ultimately leading to these agreement signing on April 5, 1773 with young Maharaja Dharendra Naryan and the East India Company. With this British influence began in Koch Bihar.⁴⁵ The collectors of Rangpur were the political Agents for Koch Bihar. But the Commission under Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis, appointed to inquire into different disputes in the state including the kidnapping of young kind Harendra Narayan, found that the interference in the affairs of Koch Bihar by the Collector of Rangpur had not been guided by any

policy and had therefore done more than good. As a result of this recommendation Henry Douglas was appointed Commissioner for Koch Bihar. In 1800 the East India Company stopped the coining of Narayani rupee once and all. During the time Shivendranarayan a boundary dispute with Bhutan was settled by the arbitration of Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling. During the time of minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan the charge of the administration was placed in the hands of a commissioner appointed by the Governor. From this reign the administration of Koch Bihar entered the modern phase. The first Commissioner was Colonel J.C. Houghton. The Commissioner of Koch Bihar was vested by the Government with full authority of the ruler of the state. On November 4, 1864 a Deputy Commissioner, H. Beverage, was also appointed. However, the modernization of the administration began by the Commissioners was continued by the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan after his majority and assumption of power and the administrative machinery of the state was created on the model of British district. Jagadwipendra Narayan was the last Maharaja of Koch Bihar. On September 12, 1949, he signed the Instrument of Accession and he transferred the state to India on August 28, 1949.⁴⁶

There is scarce of official records about the district of Jalpaiguri as it was out of the influence of the Mughals and their successors in Bengal only being recorded with the history of Assam or *Pragjyotis*.⁴⁷ However, Buchanan Hamilton recorded information about the territory which latter on accelerated by Hunter, Glazier and Grunning. The tract formed Jalpaiguri district was known as Baikunthapur Estate or Battrishazari in the early sixteenth century.⁴⁸ H.N. Choudhury, the official historiographer of the State of Cooch Behar, expressed the view that the Raikats [the word Raikat meant rai-kat, the chief of the fort] might have acknowledged the Mughal domination in their parganas.⁴⁹ However, the influence of the Mughals in the tract might be of a mere symbolic and temporary in nature without any direct influence.

In fact, Baikunthapur in the last of quarter of the eighteenth century became independent under the Raikat rulers. After the Mughal invasion in Cooch Behar and the successive Bhutanese entrenchment in the Western Duars the Raikats of Baikunthapur became politically active. Thus Raikat Dharmadeva shifted the headquarter of the Parganas from Baikunthapur Jungle to the Jalpaiguri.⁵⁰ But during the weak successors after his death Baikunthapur was invaded by the faujdar of Rangpur in 1730s and it was declared as the Mughal Pargana with revenue to be deposited in Rangpur Collectorate.⁵¹ However, though there was effort from the Raikat to be free from the suzerainty of Murshidabad that could not become success and during the time of Vikramadeva and Darpadeva they maintained rule in Jalpaiguri acknowledging Mughal suzerainty.⁵² Shortly after the Grant of Dewanin to the British East India Company it became relation with Jalpaiguri. In 1774 the Raikat was turned into a Zamindar and payable

revenue to the Company. At the time the Bhutanese invasion in the Cooch Behar State and their usurps in Duars and passes provoked the Company's policy in the region.⁵³ During this time the Bhutanese overrunning the Bengal Duars made the Company to interfere in the matter and due to the intercession of the Regent of Tibet the peace treaty with Bhutan was signed by the Company in 1774. This was followed by sending of number of diplomatic British Missions to Bhutan without any suitable relation for the British.⁵⁴ This ultimately led to the second Anglo-Bhutanese war of 1864-65 and the Treaty of Sinchula gave the British Company possession of the Duars(1865).⁵⁵ Thus the Duars in the western part of Sankosh amalgamating with Fakiraganj, Boda, Sannyasikata or Siliguri and Patgram the modern district of Jalpaiguri was formed in 1865 which was completed after the Titaliya subdivision was incorporated with the district in 1869 and the new administrative unit of Jalpaiguri district came into being.

In post-1869 period some the administrative changes occurred in the district. Thus Titaliya was transferred civilly in 1870 to the district and Eastern Duars were transferred to Goalpara, the district of Assam in 1872. For administrative convenience a Joint Session Judge was appointed to help the Commissioner in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling in 1875. In 1879 Judicial Jurisdiction of the district was transferred to the Judge of Dinajpur. Both in 1880 and 1888 there were exchanges of land between Bhutan and the district of Jalpaiguri.⁵⁶ The Deputy Commissioner transferred the headquarters from Mainaguri to Jalpaiguri and the district was divided into Sadar subdivision withn Titaliya subdivision and part of Western Duars and the Falakata Subdivision with rest of the Buxa Subdivision the head quarter of the subdivisional officer transferred to Falakata from Buxa.⁵⁷ The following table will show the divisional administrative control over Jalpaiguri district.

Table-2.1
Jalpaiguri district under different Divisions
1869-1947

Year	Name of the Division	Sadar/Headquarter	Remark
1869	Cooch Behar	-	Since December 1868
1875	Rajshahi-Cooch Behar	Jalpaiguri	Since September 1875 there was single Commissioner for Rajshahi and Cooch Behar
1883	Rajshahi	Jalpaiguri	Since November 183 the Rajshahi-Cooch Behar Division was abolished
1947	Presidency	Calcutta	After Independence since 17 th August 1947

Source: De, Barun & et.al, West Benal District Gazetteers, Jalpaigur, p.5

Thus the divisional rule developed in the district of Jalpaiguri in which number of internal changes happened. This administrative organization and re-organization and other associative developments brought great change in the demographic profile of the district.

The creation of the district of Darjeeling is explained as the result of accidental involvement of the British Indian government in the development of the neighbouring Himalayan State.⁵⁸ The Government documentary information discloses that prior to its turning into the district dimension in 1866 it was a part of the dominions of Sikkim Putti or the Raja of Sikkim. In the triangular conflict of Nepalese overrunning Sikkim as east ward and the British East India Company's engagement in securing its Northern Indian frontier drew her in the political hobnobbing of Nepal and Sikkim. Thus in the Sikkim-Gurkha war the Company became a party in side of the Sikkim. With the help of the British the Raja of Sikkim could become restored in its territory between the Mechi and the Tista.⁵⁹ Thus by the Treaty of Titaliya in 1817 Sikkim came under the British interference in relation to the disputes with other states.

Accordingly when again the Sikkim-Nepal frontier dispute emerged two British officials Captain Lloyd and Mr. Grant were sent.⁶⁰ It was at that time that Lloyd was attracted to 'the old Goorkha Station of Darjeeling' in its suitability for sanatorium and Grant reported it to the then Governor General of Bengal Lord Bentinck. The military and strategic importance of the place was also explained. Thus in approval of the Court of the Directors, the Company persuaded the Raja of Sikkim in executing a 'Deed of Grant' in 1835 (1st February) presenting the territory of Darjeeling Hill to the Company by the 'Sikkimputtee'. [*"The Deed went on thus that "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 Rajaha, out of friendship for the said Governor General, hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is, all the lands south of the Great Rangit river, east of the Balasan, Kahail and Little Rangit rivers and West of Rungno and Mahanadi rivers"*]⁶¹ But the growing importance of the tract after that envied Sikkim and led to the happening of imprisonment of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Hooker.⁶² This provided the Company the opportunity to expand its territory to the East Nepal and withdrawing of the annual grant to the Sikkim Rajah. This again led to the skirmish between Sikkim and the company ultimately leading to the British full freedom of trade in Sikkim border. On the other in continuation of the second Anglo-Bhutanese war the Treaty of 1865 ceded Kalimpong subdivision to the British. Thus in 1866 incorporating Kalimpong with Darjeeling the new district of Darjeeling came into being.⁶³ With the formation of the district it was divided into Hill subdivision with the Headquarter at Darjeeling and Terai Subdivision with the Headquarter at Hanskhawa near Phansidewa (from 1864 to 1880) which was later on shifted to Siliguri. Gradually Kurseong Subdivision was formed in 1891, Siliguri Subdivision was constituted

in 1907 and the Kalimpong Subdivision was created in 1917. In 1875 Darjeeling was placed under the commissioner of Rajshahi Division helped by a Joint Session Judge and in 1879 the judicial powers were transferred to the Judge of Dinajpur.⁶⁴ Until the 1905 the district was under the Rajshahi division and in 1905 due to the partition of Bengal it was given under Bhagalpur Division and it reentered into Rajshahi division in 1912 and until the second partition of Bengal the boundaries of the district remained intact. Since the formation of the district it witnessed its constitutional and administrative status as Non-Regulation district to excluded and backward tract in 1919 and partially excluded in 1935 which had also effect on the post-independent periodic political-administrative development. This naturally might have impact on the demographic profile of the region.

III

Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
 Having never set eyes on this land he was called to partition
 Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
 With their different diets and incompatible gods.
 ‘Time’, they had briefed him in London , ‘is short. It’s too late
 For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
 The only solution now lies in separation.
 The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,
 That the less you are seen in his company the better,
 So we’ve arranged to provide you with other accommodation.
 We can give four judges, two Moslem and Two Hindu,
 To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you.’
 Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day
 Patrolling the gardens to keep assassins away,
 He got down to work, to the task of settling the

Fate of Millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date

And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,

But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect

Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,

And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,

But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,

A continent for better or worse divided.

The next day he sailed for England, where he quickly forgot

The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not,

Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot.⁶⁵

An Act to make provision for the setting up in India of two independent Dominions, to substitute other Provisions for certain provisions of Government of India Act, 1935, which apply outside those Dominions, and to provide for other matters consequential on or connected with the setting up of those Dominions. (**18th July, 1947**)⁶⁶ Mountbatten had decided earlier that one person should be appointed chairman jointly of the Bengal and Punjab Boundary Commissions, and that he would have a casting vote in the event of disagreement between the representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League who would advise him.⁶⁷ This made the role of the Chairman, with his casting vote, extremely critical. An earlier provision that each commission would elect its own chairman was subsequently modified to provide for the appointment of a European chairman on the ground that it would expedite the work of the commissions which were to complete their work by 15 August 1947.⁶⁸ The individual chosen to jointly chair the commissions was Sir Cyril Radcliffe, Vice-Chairman of the General Council of the English Bar, who was recommended for the job by the Secretary of State a man of 'great legal abilities, right personality and wide administrative experience'. Educated at Haileybury and Oxford, Cyril Radcliffe was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1924. During the Second World War, Radcliffe held various appointments in the Ministry of Information and became its Director-General when war ended.⁶⁹ The Bengal boundary Commission was constituted by the announcement of the Governor-General with the members Mr. Justice Bijan Kumar Mukherjee, Mr. Justice C.C. Biswas, Mr. Justice Abu Saleh Mohamed Akram, and Mr. Justice S.A. Rahman. The terms of reference of the Commission, as set out in the announcement were as follows: "the Boundary Commission is instructed to demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of

Bengal on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous areas of Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so, it will also take into account other factors.⁷⁰

In fact, Radcliffe had no connections with India or Indian politics, and had absolutely no local knowledge of the territories he was to divide. The narrow time-frame in which Radcliffe was expected to delineate the boundaries was largely imposed by the impatience of Nehru, who did not wish the transfer of power to be delayed by the work of the Boundary Commissions. Nehru wanted the Commission to finish their work as quickly as possible, and was prepared to accept a makeshift border in the belief that once the states were formed, they would mutually consider modifications and variations of their frontiers.⁷¹ The public sitting of the Commission took place at Calcutta, and extended from Wednesday, the 16th of July, 1947, to Thursday, the 24th of July, 1947, inclusive, with the exception of Sunday, the 20th of July. Arguments were presented to the Commission by numerous parties on both sides, but the main cases were presented by counsel on behalf of the Indian National Congress, the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha and the New Bengal Association on the one hand, and on behalf of the Muslim League on the other.

Two eminent issues were questioned by the Commission regarding Partition of the portion of North Bengal. One was whether was it right to assign to Eastern Bengal of the considerable block of non-Muslim majorities in the districts of Malda and Dinajpur? The second one was that which state's claim ought to prevail in respect of the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, in which the Muslim population amounted to 2.42 per cent of the whole in the case of Darjeeling, and to 23.08 per cent of the whole in the case of Jalpaiguri, but which constituted an area not in any natural sense contiguous to another non-Muslim area in Bengal. After much discussion, the representatives from both the parties could not arrive at an agreed view on any of the major issues. There had been of course considerable areas of the Province in the South-west and North-east and east, which provoked no controversy on either side. But in the absence of any reconciliation on all main questions affecting the drawing of the boundary itself, at the close of the discussion Mr. Radcliffe thought that he had no alternative but to proceed to give his own decision. Finally he acknowledged that "I have done what I can in drawing the line to eliminate any avoidable cutting of railway communications and of river systems, which are of importance to the life of the province :but it is quite impossible to draw a boundary under our terms of reference without causing some interruption of this sort, and I can only express the hope that arrangements can be made and maintained between the two States that will minimize the consequences of this interruption as far as possible."

The region North Bengal, which we have taken in our discussion, is the five districts of Northern portion of Post-partition day West Bengal. However the present day two districts of Jalpaiguri

and Darjeeling were emerged during the British rule. We have seen in the last discussion that the most of the portion of Darjeeling was the part of Sikkim state and the parts of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts were under domination of Bhutan for sometimes and sometimes under Tibet. Besides political reason, the natural factors also led to the increase and decrease of the frontier of the region. In this respect the rivers of North Bengal also played an important role.⁷² However in 1947 Indian portion of North Bengal came into being on the basis of Hindu-Muslim majority areas. According to the Census of 1941 the Muslim majority districts were Chitagang, Noakhali, Tripura of Chitagang division; Barishal, Dhaka , Faridpur, Mayensingh of Dhaka Division; Jessore , Murshidabad, Nadia of Presidency Division and Bagura, Dinajpur , Maldah, Pabna, Rajshahi and Rangpur of Rajshahi Division.⁷³ According to the conceptual division total 16 districts were included into East Pakistan. The districts of Burdwan Division and Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri of Rajshahi Division, the districts of Calcutta, 24 Parganas, Khulna of Presidency Division and Chittagang Hill region total 12 districts were included into west Bengal of India.

In general North Bengal or Rajshahi Division was Muslim majority region. If district wise census on the basis of religion was taken then it was seen that Rajshahi, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna were totally Muslim majority areas. In Malda and Dinajpur the Hindu-Muslim ration was 48:52. This was an approximate demographic picture. But the Radcliffe Boundary Commission demarcated the boundary line between India and Pakistan by police station wise religious demography. At the time Scheduled Caste Hindus were major in number than the Upper Caste Hindus. In Jalpaiguri, Dinajpur and Rangpur it was noticed. Besides the Scheduled Caste Hindus the Tribal people were also large in number in Malda, Jalpaiguri, and Darjeeling districts. In consideration of boundary of independent North Bengal these were important factors.

According to 1941 Census the Muslim and Non-Muslim population and their percentages in the districts of the North Bengal are being shown below in a Chart.

Table-2.2
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims
In North Bengal Districts (%)
1941

Area	Percentage of Muslims	Percentage of Non-Muslims
Rajshahi Dvn	63%	37%
Darjeeling	2%	98%
Jalpaiguri	23%	77%
Dinajpur	50%	50%
Malda	45%	55%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 44-45

In the following Charts the Muslim and non-Muslim population and their percentage are being shown police station wise and subdivision wise in Dinajpur according to the 1941 Census.

Table-2.3
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims
Balurghat Subdivision (1941)

P.S.	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Balurghat	33,802	58,214
Kumarganj	19,152	26,881
Gangarampur	18,536	34,356
Tapan	22,864	37,511
Total(4)	94,354	1,56,962
	38%	62%
Fulbari	46,102	30,548
Porsa	45,599	25,690
Patnitala	36,568	31,918
Dharmarihat	29,241	32,442
Total(4)	1,57,510	1,20,598
	57%	43%
Total	48%	52%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 90-91

Table-2.4
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims
Dinajpur Subdivision (1941)

P.S.	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Dinajpur	51,692	50,226
Parbatipur	77,367	34,229
Nawabganj	59,442	23,100
Ghoraghat	17,724	8,953
Chibirbandar	59,442	23,100
Biral	31,642	35,970
Total(6) PS	2,95,889	1,8,124
	62%	38%
Raiganj	24,569	40,984
Hemtabad	14,318	14,429
Kaliyaganj	15,961	45,464
Itahar	33,019	40,212
Bansihari	20,335	29,687

Kusmundi	22,184	31,006
Total(6) PS	1,30,386	2,01,782
	39%	61%
Total 12 police station	4,26,275	2,01,782
	50%	48%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 88-89

Table-2.5
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims
Thakurgaon Subdivision Sadar (1941)

P.S.	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Thakurgaon	69,750	63,928
Baliyadangi	35,694	19,958
Atwari	21,941	15,277
Ranishankail	27,941	15,277
Haripur	14,183	13,625
Pirganj	37,602	37,437
Bochaganj	23,326	44,743
Birganj	23,326	44,743
Khansama	27,966	21,288
Kaharul	11,456	27,688
Total PS 10	2,89,107	2,96,121
In Total 30 PS	9,67,246	9,59,587

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 88-89

Table-2.6
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims (%)
Malda District (1941)

P.S.	Percentage of Muslims	Percentage of Non-Muslim
Shibganj	82%	17.75%
Nawabganj	81%	18.12%
Gomastapur	60%	39.38%
Bholahat	72%	27.69%
Nachal	69%	31%
Kaliachak	64%	36%
Maida	35%	65%
Englishbajar	45%	55%

Khorba	59%	41%
Ratua	57%	43%
Bamangola	42%	58%
Manikchak	33%	67%
Gajali	28%	72%
Habibpur	13%	87%
Total 15 PS	57%	43%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 94-95

Table-2.7
Distribution of Muslims and Non-Muslims
Jalpaiguri Sadar Subdivision (1941)

P.S.	Muslim	Non-Muslim
Tetulia	17,282	10,190
Panchagar	17,807	15,807
Boda	37,844	36,752
Debiganj	14,927	41,684 (73.58%)
Panchagram	20,568	31,050 (60.15%)
In 5 Police Station	1,08,428	1,35,383 (55.53%)

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 1941, Volume IV, Bengal, Tables, R.A.Dutch, Manager of publications, Delhi, Government of India Press, Simla, 1942, Provincial Table-II, pp. 90-91

The Muslim and Non-muslim population in Dinajpur was almost equal, in ratio of number respectively 50.2% and 49.8%. According to above chart 15 among 30 PS of Dinajpur were Non-Muslim majority areas. Muslim majority inhabitant Malda's total population was 1,232,618 among whom Muslim were 5, 99,945 (56%) and Non-Muslim were 5, 32,673 (43%). Among the 15 police Stations 9 were Muslim majority areas and they were adjacent to each other. Malda and Englishbazar police Stations were in middle of Non-Muslim majority areas. Other four Police stations were Non-Muslim majority areas and they were adjacent to Non-Muslim police stations of Dinajpur. Jalpaiguri district of Rajshahi Division though was nearer to Muslim majority areas of south was mainly Non-muslim regions. The total population of the district was 1089513 among whom Muslims were 251460 (23.08%). In south Jalpaiguri sadar subdivision total population was 7, 68,695 among whom Muslims were 2, 21,604 (28.82%). Among the 12 PS of Sadar Subdivison the three police stations Tetuliya (62.90% Muslim), panchagar (52.97%) and Boda (50.73% Muslim) were minimally Muslim majority areas.⁷⁴

The Boundary Commission decided to demarcate the boundary line in the following manner. A line was to be drawn as per the boundary between the thana of Phansidewa in the district of Darjeeling and the thana Tetulia in the district of Jalpaiguri from the point where that boundary

touched the Province of Bihar and then as per the boundary between the thanas of Tetulia and Rajganj; the thanas of Pachagar and Rajganj, and the thanas of Pachagar and Jalpaiguri, and was to continue along the northern corner of the thana Debiganj to the boundary of the State of Cooch Behar. The district of Darjeeling and so much of the district of Jalpaiguri lied in the north of this line was to be within West Bengal. On the other the thana of Patgram and the portion of Jalpaiguri district which lied to the east or south was to be within East Bengal. Then a line was to be drawn from the point where the boundary between the thanas of Haripur and Rajganj in the district of Dinajpur touched the border of the province of Bihar to the point where the boundary between the districts of 24-Parganas and Khulna touched the Bay of Bengal. So, much of the Province of Bengal lied to the west of it was to be within West Bengal. Subject to what has been provided in above with regard to the districts of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, the remainder of the province of Bengal should belong to East Bengal.

Thus the boundary line was to be within the boundary between the thanas of Hripur and Raiganj; Haripur and Hemtabad; Ranisankail and Hemtabad; Pirganj and Hemtabad; Pirganj and Kaliganj; Bochaganj and Kaliganj; Biral and Kaliganj; Biral and Kushmundi; Biral and Gangarampur; Dinajpur and Gangarampur; Dinajpur and Kumarganj; Chirirbandar and Kumarganj; Phulbari and kumarganj; Phulbari and Balurghat. It was to terminate at the north-south line of the Bengal-Assam Railway in the eastern corner of the railway lands belonging to that railway. Then it was to follow up to the boundary between the thanas of Balurghat and Panchbibi. From that point the line was to continue along the boundary between the thanas of Balurghat and Panchbibi; Balurhat and Joypurhat; Balurghat and Dharmairhat; Tapan and Dharmairhat; Tapan and Patuitala; Tapan and Porsha; Bamangola and Porsha; Habibpur and Porsha; Habibpur and Gomastapur; Habibpur and Bholahat; Malda and Bholaghat; English Bazar and Bholaghat; English Bazar and Shibganj; Kaliachak and Shibganj; to the point at the boundary between Malda and Murshidabad on the river Ganges. The line should then turn south-east down the river Gangas along the boundary between the districts of Malda and Murshidabad; Rajshahi and Murshidabad; Rajshahi and Nadia.

According to the Radcliffe Award six thanas under Dinajpur Sadar Subdivision (Raiganj, Hemtabad, Kaliyaganj, Itahar, Bansihari and Kusmundi) and Tapan, Gangarampur, Kumarganj and Ishwaradi, to the west of Parbatipur Railway four thanas of Balurghat were included with West Dinajpur (of India). To the east of Main Railway, portion of Balurghat, which was connected with Hill Railway Station, was included with Dinajpur (of East Pakistan). No thanas of Muslim majority like Malda, Nadia and Jessore were included with west Bengal. Non-Muslim majority inhabited Dhanerihat Police Station of Balurghat subdivision, Viral of Dinajpur Sadar and Bochaganj, Birganj and Kaharul of Thakurgaon Subdivision being situated within Muslim majority areas were included into East Pakistan⁷⁵ At the time of division of the district there was only one subdivision was here, Balurghat Subdivision. On 14th July, 1948 Raiganj

Subdivision was constituted with six police stations. On 7th May, 1948 Hilli PS was formed under Balurghat subdivision. At the time the area of newly formed West Dinajpur was 1348.8 sq miles.⁷⁶

Among the fifteen police stations of Malda nine police stations were mainly Muslim majority areas. In spite of being surrounded by Muslim areas Malda and Englishbajar, Radcliffe divided Malda between East Pakistan and West Bengal. Only Bholahat, Shibganj, Nawabganj, Gomastapur and Nachol these five conjugated Muslim majority inhabited areas were given to East Pakistan. On the other in West Bengal, with four large conjugal Muslim prominent Police Stations like Kaliachak, Khorba, Harishchandrapur, and two or three marginal non-Muslim majority Police Stations, the new Malda district was created. This kept continue the main railway connection from Calcutta to Siliguri (Through Farakka and Malda to Darjeeling)⁷⁷ The whole of the Jalpaiguri districts excluding Tetuliya, Pachagar, Boda, Debiganj and Patgram was included into West Bengal. Taking these five police stations with 55.53% Non-Muslim majority inhabitants the district was regarded as Non-Muslim region. In the District Gazetteers, Jalpaiguri it was written that “Under the Radcliffe Award the areas within the southern police station of Tetuliya, Pachagarh, Boda, Debigaj and Patgram, comprising a total area of 672 square miles went to Pakistan.⁷⁸ Regarding its impact in the same place it was said that “ A great influx of Bengali Hindu refugees from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) began which changed the demography, social, economic and physical aspects of Jalpaiguri district”⁷⁹

Regarding Darjeeling district the district Gazetteer wrote that “The partition of 1947 left this district intact and as part of West Bengal”⁸⁰ However “According to the Constitution of India the district no longer enjoys special privileges and all statutes except the Bengal Tenancy Act in certain, of its particular, apply to it”. Since then the Deputy Commissioners of Darjeeling got the designation of District Magistrate.⁸¹ Cooch Behar as an indigenous state, according to Stand Still Agreement, though initially remained outside of India Union, the last Maharaja Jagadwipendra Narayan signed the Instrument of Accession (Sept. 12, 1949) and included into Indian Union (28th August, 1949). Since then by the Cooch Behar Administration Order, 1949 Cooch Behar turned into a district of West Bengal from 1st January, 1950. Thus the post-independent new North Bengal in Indian side emerged.

Though the decision of Partition was declared prior to 15th August, 1947, uncertainty appeared taking the future of Malda. When the decision of partition of Bengal was taken, the influential persons of Hindu society made effort to include the Hindu domination areas of Eastern and Northern parts of Bengal with West Bengal. Sir Jadunath Sarkar tried to take Malda and Rajshahi within West Bengal.⁸² But as there was no apparent declaration of Radcliffe of Malda being integrated into which Union from 12th August 1947 to 15th August 1947 Malda district was under East Pakistani administration and Pakistani flag was raised there on Pakistani

Independent Day on 14th August. But on 17th August when the Commission's decision was finally declared then among the 15 thanas taking Harishchandra, Khorba, Ratua, Manikchak, Kaliyaganj, Englishbazar, Malda, Gazol, Bamangola and Habibpur the new district of Malda was formed⁸³ So the independent day of Malda is 17th August, and on the day after, on 18th August, Monday Indian flag was hoisted at the Office of Collectorate bringing down the Pakistani one in Malda district.⁸⁴

On the eve of independent in 1947, 12th August when Mount Batten got in hand the Award of the Bengal Boundary Commission he was not in favour of its publication before 16th August. So the Viceroy according to the Government decision in respect of the boundary Award publication and its implementation directed both the Government of East Pakistan and West Bengal to take the Muslim and non-Muslim majority districts on the conceptual basis. Accordingly whole of the Dinajpur district was transferred to East Pakistan (temporarily)⁸⁵ and on 14th August the flags of Pakistan were hoisted in the different police stations of Dinajpur. But on 17th August after the publication of the Award the district was transferred to India⁸⁶ Malda is declared one of the 14 constituent districts of the province of West Bengal. (Notification No.55 Ga, 17.08.1947). The boundaries of the district of Malda includes the local areas of the following 10 police stations: English Bazar, Kaliachak, Malda, Babibpr, Ratua, Manikchak, Kharba, Harischandrapur, Gajole, Baman-Gola(No.62 GA, 17.08.1947). The district was included in the Jalpaiguri-West Dinajpore Sessions Division w.e.f. 14.08.1947). The district was included in the Jalpaiguri-West Dinajpore Sessions Division in West Bengal (9487Jur.27.09.1947). However, according to the different Government Notifications the geographical territory of Indian North Bengal in 1947 may be seen in following way. Darjeeling became one of the 14 Constituent districts of the province of West Bengal (55 GA, 17.08.1947). The district was included in the newly formed Jalpaiguri-West Dinajpur Session's Division with its headquarter station at Jalpaiguri with effect from 17.08.1947 (5235 J, 26.08.1947). The district was comprised within the Presidency Division on and from 17.08.1947 (9887 Jur., 27.09.1947)

West Dinajpur district has become one of the 14 districts of the Province of West Bengal (55 GA, 17.08.1947). The district of West Dinajpur should consist of one subdivision, viz., West Dinajpur subdivision, and the local areas of the following police stations should be included within the limits of those subdivisions: Balurghat, Kumarganj, Gangarampur, Tapan, Raiganj, Hemtabad, Bangshihari, Kushumundi, Kaliaganj, and Itahar. (60 GA, 17.08.1947). Balurghat police station should include in it all such areas as was then included in the Balurghat police station in the district of Dinajpur and as was situated to the West of the railway lands belonging to the Bengal and Assam Railway (63 GA, 17.08.1947). A new district named West Dinajpur be constituted and that the limits of the said district should include the local areas of the said polices stations which were then included in that district of Dinajpur (66 GA, 17.08.1947). The district, as declared in the notification no. 60 GA., dt. 17.08.1947 was comprised within the

newly formed Jalpaiguri-West Dinajpur sessions Division w.e.f. 17.08.1947. The district was included in the Presidency Division w.e.f. from 17.08.1947 (9487 Jur.27.09.1947).

Jalpaiguri was declared one of the 14 constituent districts of the province of West Bengal (55 GA, 17.08.1947). The limits of Sadar subdivision of the district should include the local areas of the police stations of jalpaiguri, Rajganj, Maynaguri, Nagrakata, Dhupguri, Mal , Matiali (65 GA,17.08.1947). The area comprised in the following police stations hitherto forming part of the district of Jalpaiguri in the province of Bengal should be created a new *zila* to be styled the district of Jalpaiguri: Jalpaiguri, Rajganj, Maynaguri, Nagrakata, Dhupguri, Mal, Matiali, Alipurduars, Kalchini, Kumargram, Falakata, and Madarihat (9483 Jur, 27.09.1947). Jalpaiguri district is comprised in the Presidency Division w.e.f. 17.08.1947 (9487 Jur. 27.09.1947). On and from 01.01.1950, the chief Commissioner's Province of Koch Bihar constituted into a district in west Bengal and included the local areas of the police-stations of Kotwali, Dinhata, Sitai, Tufanganj, Mathabhanga, Sitalkuchi, Mekhliganj, Haldibari, (3509 GA, 01.01.1950). The district of Koch Bihar had been divided into the following subdivision: Koch Bihar (sadar), Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Tufanganj, Mekhliganj (3549 GA, 01.01.1950). The district had been included in the Presidency Division of West Bengal (3550 GA, 01.01.1950).

So post-independent Indian North Bengal, According to Radcliffe Award (17th August, 1947), become constituted with 10 police-stations from each of Dinajpur, Malda and Jalpaiguri and the whole of Darjeeling district. That is only one third portion of Rajshahi Division came under India North Bengal or West Bengal. It led to the disconnection of railway connection between North Bengal and the remaining West Bengal. Again the northern part of North Bengal became disconnected by Roadway from Malda and West Dinajpur. The Partition of India or Bengal in 1947 led to divide West Bengal in three parts south of the Ganges, Malda-Dinajpur or Gourbanga and Jalpaiguri-Darjeeling or Northern North Bengal, besides there princely state Cooch Behar. In this regard Professor A.G. Ghosh raised question that why the Radcliffe Commission created West Bengal or specially North Bengal in this way? Did the members of the commission sign the declaration without noticing this divided map of North Bengal or whether they did not understand the map of North Bengal? ⁸⁷

After the independence the districts of present day North Bengal in Indian part were declared among the 14 districts of the province of West Bengal – Maldah bt the Govt. Notification 55 GA, 18.08.1947, West Dinajpur by the Govt. Notification 55 GA, 17.08.1947, Darjeeling by the Govt. notification 55 GA, 17.08.1947, Jalpaiguri by the Govt. Notification 55 GA, 17.08.1947, and Cooch Behar by 3509 GA, 01.01.1950. On 27.09.1947 by the 9842 Jurisdiction it was decided that the area comprised in English Bazar, Kaliachak, Malda, Habibpur, Ratua, Manikchak, Kharba, Harischandrapur, Gazole, Bamangoe police stations hitherto forming part of the district of Malda in the Province of Bengal become a new district, viz. Malda, within the province of

West Bengal w.e.f. as if it had been issued on the 17.08.1947 (Chakraborty, M.,op.cit.p.337). Afterwards various changes happened in the district with administrative reorganization. Kaliachak police station was included (areas added with) the villages of Farakka P.S. of Murshidabad District bearing J.L. Nos.191-206/36, 41, 48 (10118 PL/PB/4P-9/81, 19.11.1982). Baishnabnagar police station had been formed with the villages of Kaliachak PS of the district bearing J.L. Nos. 28,35-54,58-65,175,191-206/36,41,48 (7561 PL/PB/4P-3/87, 12.08.1987). The district was included in the Jalpaiguri Division in West Bengal, in lieu of Presidency Division, w.e.f. 01.04.1992. (73-PAR (AR), 28.02.1992). It should be mentioned here that the district Malda was formed with a single subdivision.

It was declared that on and from 17th August 1947 the Dinajpur district should be deemed to have been and should be styled the West Dinajpur district and its limits should be altered so as to include the local areas of the police stations such as Balurghat, Kumarganj, Gangarampur, Tapan, Raiganj, Hemtabad, Bangshihari, Kushumundi, Kaliaganj and Itahar. (Govt. Notification 548 G.A., 23.02.1948). A new police station is formed with the villages bearing Gen. J.L. Nos. 267, 277, 278, 281-290, 293,320-59,363-89,391 from Balurghat police station. (Govt. Notification, 1150 PI, 08.05.1948). Balurghat police station had been reconstituted with villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-266, 268-276, 279, 280, 291, 292,294-319,360-362,390,392-399. (Govt. Notification 1151 PI, 08.05.1948). Raiganj subdivision had been constituted with the police stations of Raiganj, Hemtabad, Banshihari, Kushmandi, Kaliaganj and Itahar. (Govt. Notification, 2139 G.A., 14.07.1948). Raiganj had become the headquarter station of the Raiganj subdivision as declared by notification No. 2135 G.A.; dt.14.07.1948). The local areas of the police stations of Chopra, Karandighi, Islampur, and Goalpokhar, included in the district of Darjeeling from the state of Bihar in pursuance of the provisions of the Bihar and West Bengal (Transfer of Territories) Act of 1956, by notification No. 3858 G.A.; dt. 01.11.1956, is further transferred to the district of West Dinajpur from Darjeeling. (Govt. Notification 3875, 02.11.1956).

A portion of the area comprised within the Chopra police station, constituted by notification no. 3859 G.A., dt. 01.11.1956, which lies to the north of river Mahananda, was excluded from the Chopra police station on and from 21th of March, 1959, in the district of West Dinajpur and was included in the Phansidewa police station in the district of Darjeeling. Islampur, a new subdivision of the district, was formed on and from 21.03.1959, comprising the local areas of the police stations of Chopra, Karandighi, Islampur and Goalpokhar. (Govt. Notification, 1178 G.A., 20.03.1959). Chakalia police station had been formed with the villages from Goalpokhar P.S., w.e.f. 20.02.1964. (Govt. Notification 433 PI, 05.02.1964). Harirampur police station had been formed with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-76,78-116,135,136,143,144,152 of Banshihari P.S. w.e.f/ 15.04.1988. (Govt. Notification 2708-PI/PB/ 4P-2/87, 16.03.1988).

In the meantime for administrative privileges and for the demand of the development the district of West Dinajpur was divided into two districts Uttar Dinajpur and Dakshin Dinajpur w.e.f the 1th day of April, 1992, the headquarters of Uttar Dinajpur being at Raiganj And Dakshin Dinajpur (Govt. Notification 177-L.rR./6M-7/92, 28.02.1992). The limits of the district of Uttar Dinajpur included at Balurghat. (the local areas comprised in the subdivisions and police stations comprised in each such subdivision as follows: Raiganj Sadar Subdivision- Raiganj, Ithar, Hemtabad and Kaliaganj and Islampur Subdivision- Islampur , Chopra, Goalpukhar, Chakulia, and Karandighi. (Govt. Notification 177-L.rR./6M-78/92, 28.02.1992). On the other the limits of the newly created district of Daksin Dinajpur included the local area comprised in the subdivision and the police stations comprised in the subdivision as follows: Balurghat Subdivision- Balurghat Subdivision-Balurghat, Hili, Kumarganj, Tapan, Gangarampur, Bansihari, Harirampur and Kushmandi. (Govt. Notification 177-L.rR./6M-7/92, 28.02.1992). However, the district of Dakshin Dinajpur was divided into two subdivisions namely, Balurghat (Sadar) and Gangarampur w.e.f 01.04.1997. Balurghat subdivision included the jurisdiction of the police stations Balurghat, Hili, Kumarganj and Tapan and Gangarampur subdivision with headquarters at Buniadpur included the jurisdiction of the police stations of Gangarampur, Bansihari, Harirampur and kushmandi declared from time to time by notifications. (Govt. Notification 475-PAR (AR), 18.12.1996).

In pre-independence period Darjeeling was comprised with Sadar Subdivision including police stations of Darjeeling, Pulbazar Rangli-Rangliot, Sukhiapokri, Jore Bungalow (Govt. Notification 660 Jur., 14.01.1939); Kalimpong Subdivision including local areas of police stations Kalimpong and Gorubathan (Govt. Notification 661 Jur., 14.01.1939) and Kurseong Subdivision including the local areas of the police stations Kurseong and Mirik (Govt. Notification 663 Jur., 14.01.1939). After independence the West Bengal Disturbed Areas act, 1947 (W.B. Act V of 1947) was applied to the district of Darjeeling w.e.f. 01.01.1948 (Govt. Notification 980 P, 19.02.1948). Chopra police station was formed with the entire local areas of the police stations of Thakurganj and Chopra in the Kishenganj Subdivision of the Purnea district of Bihar and included in the district of Darjeeling in West Bengal w.e.f from 01.11.1956. (Govt. Notification, 3859 G.A., 01.11.1956). Islampur police station in the Kishenganj subdivision of the Purnea district in the state of Bihar had been included, with its entire local areas, in the Darjeeling district in west Bengal and became a police-station in the district under the same name with effect from 01.11.1956. (Govt. Notification 3860 G.A., 01.11.1956). In the same way Goalpokhar police station was included in Darjeeling from the Kishenganj subdivision of the Purnea district of the state of Bihar and Karandighi police station was included in Darjeeling from the Katihar subdivision of the Purnea district of the state Bihar. (Govt. Notification 3861 G.a. and 3862 G.A. respectively, on 01.11.1956).

The limits of the siliguri subdivision of the District of Darjeeling included the local areas of the police stations Siliguri, Phansidewa, Khoribari, Chopra, Karandighi Islampur, Goalpokhar as may be constituted from time to time w.e.f. 01.11.1956. (Govt. Notification 3863 G.A., 01.11.1956). But by the Govt. Notification 3875 G.A. the police stations of Chopra, karandighi, islampur and Goalpokhar were excluded from the Darjeeling District and Included in the existing West Dinajpur district of the state of West Bengal and the limits of the siliguri subdivision included the local areas of the police stations Siliguri, Phansidewa Khoribari w.e.f. 02.11.1956. Again the portion of the area comprised within the Chopra police station on and from the 21.03.1959 was exclude from the district of west Dinajpur and included in the district of Darjeeling (Govt. Notification 1176 G.A., 20.03.1959). The area of Khoribari police station included the villages with J.L. Nos. 1-54, 86-96, 98-108 of the same police station and Riverside area, west J.L. No.2, P.S. Khoribari, upto indo-Nepal boundary w.e.f. 11.02.1960. The area of Siliguri police station included the villages bearing Gen. J.L. No. 1-16,19-63,73-79,93-115 of the same P.S., w.e.f. 11.02.1960. (Govt. Notifications 414 PI and 414 PI respectively, 03.02.1960). Naxalbari police station was formed including villages bearing J.L. No. 55-58, 97 of Khoribari P.S. and bearing J.L. Nos.17, 18, 64-72,80-92,116-166 of Siliguri subdivision included the local areas of the police stations of Siliguri, Khoribari, Phansidewa, Naxalbari w.e.f. 11.02.1960. (Govt. Notification 459 G.A., 08.02.1960).

The Mauzas Mangpu Cinchona Plantation (J.L. 48 of Kurseong P.S.) which was included in the J.L. 26 of Rangliot P.S. being unsuitable for the purpose of Survey & records had been divided into the 9 units and further included in Kurseong police station and the villages renamed as Mangpu. (Govt. Notification 1176 G.A. 20.03.1959). Matigara Investigation Centre had become a new police station as Matigara w.e.f. 07.04.1986 including the villages. (Govt. Notification 1376-PL/RR/4P-6/81, 18.02.1986). A new police station Jaldhaka had been formed w.e.f. 15.09.1989 with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-10, 34-38 from Gorubathan P.S. (Govt. Notification 6905-PL/PB/4P-6/87, 05.08.1986). The district had been comprised within the Jalpaiguri Division w.e.f. 01.04.1992. (Govt. Notification 73-PAR (AR), 28.02.1992).

After Independence number of changes in the territorial geography of the district of Jalpaiguri happened. The Chhits bearing Nos. 39, 40, 43, 61-72, 74, 81 of Haldibari police station in Cooch Behar district were transferred to and included in the Jalpaiguri police station of the district. (Govt. Notification 2477 PL./PU-4/52, 27.06.1952). The Chhits bearing Nos. 152, 152 of Mekliganj police station of Cooch Behar district were transferred to and included in Maynaguri police station of the district. The Chhits bearing Nos.82-111 of Mathabhanga police station of Cooch Behar district were transferred and included in Dhupguri police station of the district. And the Chhits bearing Nos. 138, 139 of Tufanganj police station of Cooch Behar district are transferred and included in Alipur Duar police station of the district. (Govt. Notification 2115 PI./PU-2/53, 20.05.1955). The villages Lataguri, Jhar Matiali , Uttar Matiali, Chak Maulani,

Adabari, Dakshin Chak Maulani, Dakshin Matiali of Matiali police station of the district were transferred to and included in Mal police station of the Jalpaiguri district . (Govt. Notification 3014 PI/PAR-19/57, 10.07.1958). A fragment of Gen. J.L. No. 58 of Maynaguri police station of the district was excluded from the district and transferred to and included in Mekhiganj police station of Cooch Behar district.(Govt. Notification 765 PI, 01.03.1960).

A fragment of Gen. J.L. No. 174 of Alipur Duar police station of the district was excluded from the district P.S. was and transferred to and included in Tufanganj police station in Cooch Behar district. (Govt. Notification 766 PI, 01.03.1960). The district was comprised in the Jalpaiguri Division on 04.03.1963. Birpara police station was formed with villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-7,10-11,33,41-51 from Madarihat P.S. and Madarihat P.S. was reconstituted with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 9, 12-32, 34-40 of the same P.S. (Govt. Notification 162 PL/P4P-15/16.01.1967). Banarhat police station was formed with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 131-138, 140-145, 147-153, 155-161, 163, 164, 165, 181-187, 238 of Dhupguri P.S. and 92, 94-106 of Nagrakata P.S. (Govt. Notification 5706 PL, 07.08.1974). Bhaktinagar Police station was formed with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-6, 16-19, 22, 25 of Raiganj p.s. (Govt. Notification 1739 PL/PB/23/84, 25.02.1986). Jaygaon Police Station was formed with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-6/16-29 from Kalchini and Jaygaon P.S. (Govt. Notification 5871-PI/Pb/4P-39/86, 11.07.1989). The district was again comprised in the Jalpaiguri Division w.e.f. 01.04.1992. (73-Par (Ar), 28.02.1992).

Number of changes happened after merger of the state of Cooch Behar with the state of west Bengal. Sitalkuchi police station was formed with 145 villages and 27 Chhits bearing J.L. Nos. 135-37, 412-28, 433-476, 491-96. (Govt. Notificaton 9 PI, 01.01.1950). Mekliganj police station was formed with 145 villages and 24 chhits bearing J.L. Nos.25, 40-42, 56-58, 63-63A, 66, 67, 70-72, 75-81, 88, 91-210, 120A, 152A, 539, and Chhit Nos. 4-16, 16A, 17, 17A, 18-27, 134. (10 PI, 01.01.1950). Haldibari police station was comprised with the villages bearing J.L. Nos. 1-24, 26-39, 43-55, 59-62, 64,65,68,69,73,74,82,86; Chiits bearing nos. 1-3, 28-31,32-81 and Thaks bearing nos. 84,85,87-90. (Govt. Notification 11 PI, 01.01.1950). Besides Kotwali police station was formed and declared that the Dinhata police Station, Sitai police station , Tufanganj police station, Mathabhanga police station would include the villages, chits as specified in the schedule. Portions of the areas included in the Mekliganj, Mathabhanga and tufanganj police stations of the district were transferred to the police station of Mainaguri, Dhupguri and Alipurduar of the district of Jalpaiguri. (Govt. Notification 2115 PI/PI J-2/53, 20.05.1955). Purbachiklaguri Chhit, a fragment og Gen. J.L. No. 174 and as well as C.S. plot nos. 134 to 1350 of 1932-34 survey, should be included in the Tufanganj police station in the district . Being excluded from the Alipurduar police station in the district of Jalpaiguri. (Govt. Notification 766 PI, 01.03.1960). Ghoskadanga was formed with the villages bearing J.L. nos. 1-7,9-20, 60-74,

123, 124, 126-156, 159-161, 181 of Mathabhanga P.S. and this police station was included in the Mathabhanga subdivision. (Govt. Notification 3339-PI/PB/4P-1/87, 28.04.1987).

Thus in post-independent period North Bengal developed with organization an reorganization of its geo-administrative periphery. However, in this process of transition different reactions were revealed through different claims and counter-claims. Moreover, number of problems emerged resulted by administrative reorganizations. For example during the states' reorganization conflict arose taking the issue if integration of Maldah between the states of Bihar and West Bengal. It has been mentioned that Malda was under the Bhagalpur Division from 1876 to 1905. On this basis Bihar raised demand over Malda. But the problem became complicated taking the question of inclusion of Kishanganj subdivision of Purnea district of the state of Bihar in the state of West Bengal. The Government of West Bengal claimed in the Memorandum to the States' Reorganization Commission that "The areas proposed for inclusion in West Bengal have always formed parts of Bengal geographically and historically; and their affinities to Bengal on linguistic, cultural and ethnic considerations have always been pronounced."⁸⁸ But in the report of the commission regarding the inclusion of Kishanganj either in the state of Bihar or in the state of West Bengal on the basis it was argued that "The affinities between Kishanganjia or sripuria spoken into the extreme east of Purnea district, on the one hand and Bengali on the other, seem to be close"⁸⁹ it was again reported that "But the dialect is written in the Kaithi script, which is allied to Hindi, and as one proceeds east-wards its affinities with Maithilis and Hindi become more marked."⁹⁰ So naturally the claim on the basis of language was not implemented here. Finally a small part of the Kishanganj Subdivision Chopra, Karandihgi, Goalpokhar and Islampur were included into the State of West Bengal.

However, the commission, during its recommendation of inclusion of region of Bihar with the state of West Bengal, kept in mind that the eastern part of Kishanganj Subdivision was mainly Muslim inhabited area and they were afraid of being disturbed of their linguistic and cultural right.⁹¹ it may be mentioned here that as soon as the Commission in Purnea it faced a mass discontent against the transfer of the part of Bihar. Despite it also seemed to the Commission that there may a problem of habitation for the coming of the dislocated people from East Pakistan. So the Commission opined to the Government of west Bengal for special status of urdu language and announcement of no rehabilitation of the dislocated people in that region.⁹² In spite of this various problems arose in respect of land reforms, language and administration. The state Government of Bihar, according to the 'Bihar Waste Land Reclamation Act, Section-4', rescuing some waste land provided to the tribal and under developed people to cultivate for nine years in 1951. After nine years were over the Government of Bihar registered those land for those tribal and backward people. But the tribal and backward people of Islampur, being in the Transferred Area, were deprived from that right.⁹³ Moreover, for the inflow of the refugees from East Pakistan and later on the infiltration of the people from Bangladesh led to the

demographic change of the region leading to the marginalization of the local people here. It naturally led to the political alienation of the people later on.⁹⁴

There was demand and counter-demand in the context of inclusion of Goalpara between West Bengal and Assam. Claim for the inclusion of Goalpara with the state of West Bengal was raised only on the basis of language and culture to the states' Reorganization Commission. The Kshatriya Samiti of Siliguri also submitted memorandum to the Commission in this respect. But it seemed not to be acceptable to the Commission. Because according to them Goalpara did not show Bengali spoken majority area in the 1951 Census. Though the statistics of the Census, 1951 was challenged and the Muslims of the region were claimed as Bengali spoken people. So there was great difference between the statistics of the Census of 1931 and the Census of 1951. But the commission reported that, "But we find it difficult to admit on that ground alone any claim by West Bengal to Goalpara or any part of it."⁹⁵ So the Commission recommended that "The district has now been part of Assam for such a long time that there is no justification for disturbing the position." Prof. Ananda Gopal Ghosh, criticizing the recommendation, remarked very significantly that "if Goalpara had reunited with West Bengal, the Rajbanshis would become the half of the population of North Bengal despite the influx of the refugees from the East Pakistan"⁹⁶. However, it should be mentioned here that a claim for Separate state of Rajasthan was raised taking the Siliguri Subdivision of the district of Darjeeling, the districts of Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur in whole, North-Western part of Rangpur, Purnea district of the state of Bihar and Goalpara district of Assam.⁹⁷

In post-independent Indian North Bengal an important post-partition problem is the Enclave problem or the problem of Chhitmahal. Because of the Radcliffe's Partition of India some plots of lands remain in East Pakistan and later on in Bangladesh surrounded by the Bangladeshi territory and in same way parts of land of East Pakistan or later on Bangladesh in India as Bangladeshi Chhits. Several of problems of these Chhits have been described by Sri Debabrata Chaki in his Bengali writing "Bratyajaner Brittantya".⁹⁸ There are many complaints of the people of these Chhitmahals of their sufferings as well as problem arose in the context of administrative transformation leading to the emergence of the movement. In this context Berubari problem of Jalpaiguri district should be mentioned. According to the Nehru-Noon Pact, 1958 when a plan was taken to transfer the Chhitmahal of Cooch Behar district of India (now southern part of southern Berubari of Jalpaiguri District of India) from India to Pakistan a mass movement emerged in Berubari region against the transfer. Finally in 1974 according to the Indira-Mujib Pact 2.64sq. miles of Union No.12 of southern half of South Berubari remained in India and in exchange Dahagram and Angarpota Chhitmahal remained in Bangladesh. In spite of this the Chhitmahal Problem in Berubari till twentieth century had not become to an end. Besides Bangladeshi Chhitmahal in India territory and India Chhitmahal in Bangladeshi territory, Chhits even in the Chhits created various administrative complexions. Surprisingly this problem

emerged only in respect of the state of West Bengal in Indo-Bangladesh border, only in North Bengal in respect of the State of West Bengal and basically in Cooch Behar-Jalpaiguri border areas in respect of North Bengal.

The changing demography in size and nature the geo-administrative evolution of North Bengal went on also after 1991 the period of my study. But the process began within the period of my study in some cases. Raiganj Subdivision being situated in the middle of the West Dinajpur district for the privilege of the people of Raiganj and Islampur subdivisions who were the majority portion of the people a movement began for the transfer of District Headquarter in Raiganj. Nishith Kundu supported this just demand and after discussion with the Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy number of times he procured the promise of founding of the district headquarters in Raiganj. The government decision was also accepted in this respect. Dr. Roy announced in a mass convention in Islampur that according to the Government decision the district headquarter would be transferred soon in Raiganj. As a result Government Building began to be created at Karnojora for the district headquarter. But the people of Balurghat protested against the transfer of district headquarter from Balurghat to Raiganj. So the Govt. decision could not be implemented. After a long time the left front Government divided the district of West Dinajpur into North Dinajpur and South Dinajpur districts. The district headquarter of North Dinajpur was established in Karnajora of Raiganj and that of South Dinajpur remained in Balurghat of South Dinajpur.⁹⁹

The movement for being a district by the Alipurduar subdivision was going on for a longtime. The Alipurduar Jela Nirman Deviin Mancha (AJNDM) took the leading role in the movement. The local M.L.A. Sri Nirmal Das took a significant role in it. The AJNDM give memorandum to The Administrative Reforms Committee so that the issue of formation of Alipurduar district on the basis of large size of Alipur Duar and the distance of the district headquarter of Jalpaiguri.¹⁰⁰ Since the British colonial rule the process of administrative separation began in India. In this process before 1860 and during the period between 1870 and 1874 Darjeeling was a 'Non-Regulated Area'. In 1874 it came to be known as Scheduled District and gradually became known as 'Backward Tract' and 'Partially Excluded Area'. In the decade of 1980s the 'Gorkha National Liberation Front started a movement for separated Gorkhland state which reached at its extreme stage during 1986-88. This resulted into the formation of Darjeeling Gorkha Autonomous Hill Council in 1988. But this could not suppress the discontent and the movement took new shape under the leadership of the Gorkha Territorial Administration (August, 2012).

So, present day North Bengal developed in a long historical transition. Its geographical peripheral evolution transited differently in different times. The geographical location of the region made it a migrant prone zone. So since the ancient period people from different parts of India began to immigrate here. Again the region being an important political centre up to the

late medieval period it also attracted the people of different parts of India. The British colonization of North Bengal led to the new politico-economic development of the region. It again greatly included different category of people from different parts of India to immigrate here leading to the great change in the demography of the region. The post-independent period saw new flow of immigration into the region known as refugee migration which later on turned into infiltration. All these led to great changes in demography of North Bengal carrying various economic-cultural-political problems in the region which I shall discuss in the following Chapters.

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