

## Role of the Cooch Behar State Regency Council (1922 – 1936)

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The history of British India is mainly indicated the formation of Paramountcy in the Princely States of India. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century one of the policy of the British Government was the implementation of the indirect rule. For that purpose British Government introduced the system of Regency Council in the Princely States. Regency Council is a person or group of person selected to act as the head of the State when the ruler is minor or not present or debilitated. The period of a regent or regents is referred to as regency. Cooch Behar, the tiny Princely State in North – Eastern India is not an exception of that. The geographical location of the State interested the British Government to take some measures in this regard. However, the administration of the Princely State of Cooch Behar found a new dimension from 1863. Here it deserve to mention that after the death of Maharaja Harendra Narayan in 1839, the Colonial Government had the free run in the State. The successor, Maharaja Shivendra Narayan had a pro- British attitude. Therefore, when he ascended the throne, it helped the British Government to fulfill their designs. So, the policy of indirect rule found its strong foothold in Cooch Behar. After that the British helped the Maharaja in all avenues of administration. Regarding smooth running of the State there were broad lines of the British administration for Cooch Behar during the minority of the Maharaja and the general principles of the British Government adopted by the State, was a beneficial scheme for the smooth running of the State.<sup>1</sup>

An attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the role of the Cooch Behar State Regency Council during the period of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. The State had undergone tremendous development due to the allround developmental activities of the Council. The paper is mainly based on the Administrative Reports of Cooch Behar during the period which is the primary source for the study.

At the outset, a brief sketch of Cooch Behar State Regency Council during the minority period of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan has been narrated as a curtain raiser for the period of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan.

As regards the constitution of the Cooch Behar State Regency Council, the British laid down the following Regulations–<sup>2</sup>

1. The position hitherto occupied by British Government regarding The State was assumed by Maharaja.
2. The functions of the Commissioner were in a general way delegated to the State Council and those of the Deputy Commissioner were divided among three officers, viz. The Superintendent of the State, The Dewan, and the Civil Judge.

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As per the regulations the constitution was as follows -

Maharaja Nripendra Narayan as President, and three members, namely the Superintendent of the State, the Dewan and the manager of the Chaklajat Estate. The first meeting of the State Council was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1883.

The function of the State Council were three fold viz - a) Legislative, b) Executive and c) Judicial. On the legislative side the Council Passed laws and enactments.

On the Executive side it regulated the management of the different departments (General Department, Revenue Department and Judicial Department). In Judicial the Council was the highest court of appeal.

During the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan three category of authority were created in the State of Cooch Behar viz,- a) Maharaja (the Ruler of the State), b) The Council and c) the departmental heads. Such a category indicated the representative character of the administration.

This Council played a tremendous role from 1922 to 1936 during the minority period of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan under the guidance of Rajmata Indira Devi. It worked on the following measures on behalf the minor king of Cooch Behar.

### **Education**

During his rule important measures were taken by the Cooch Behar State Regency Council towards this end. In 1922–23 the Education Committee of Cooch Behar implemented a further impetus towards the improvement of the sub - divisional Higher English Schools and the issue was that there must be a trained B.T. teacher in each of the Higher English Schools. As a result, permission was obtained from the syndicate, Calcutta University, to send up candidates for the Matriculation Examination in Hygiene form the Dinhata Higher English School with effect from 1924 and the Tufangunj Nripendra Narayan Memorial Higher English School also received permanent recognition from the University.<sup>3</sup> A scheme for the improvement of the pay and prospect of the pundits of all the Primary and Secondary Schools in the State was submitted.

Subsequently it was sanctioned by the honourable Cooch Behar Regency Council, offering better inducement for works to the teacher and giving scope for suitable men in the department.<sup>4</sup> In this year another proposal was introduced in the undergraduate education and it was to open B.Sc. Class in the Victoria College. Since the formation of the Victoria College, the academic stream was only for arts subjects. This proposal was submitted and sanctioned by the Cooch Behar State Regency Council and side by side the recognition of the Calcutta University was applied for. In response to this application the University Inspector paid a visit to the college.<sup>5</sup>

In 1925 implementation has been made on admission and transfer rules for students in higher English Schools.<sup>6</sup> The formation of Schools for the spread of education was on going under the guidance of State Council. Thus, the number of schools were increased to 344 (Primary and Secondary School).<sup>7</sup>

In 1928 such number was increased to 350, which indicates that spread of education in Cooch Behar was phenomenal.<sup>8</sup> On 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1930 one state model school was converted into a Middle English School.<sup>9</sup> In 1931 Sunity Academy (girls' school) was recognised by the Calcutta University with permission to present candidates for the Matriculation Examination to be held on 1933.<sup>10</sup> Such implementation indicates that girls' education received a warm support in Cooch Behar. Similarly, in 1932 another issue was implemented regarding the admission of girl students in the High English Schools of the State of Cooch Behar. The Regency Council accorded provisional sanction to the admission of 5 girl students for co-education in the Mathabhanga and the Mekli-gunj High English Schools. It was directed that the Managing Committee of the Schools concerned would make suitable arrangements for retiring rooms for the girls and that the Head Masters and other teachers of the Schools would accept the responsibility involved in this new departure.<sup>11</sup> During his reign (Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan), girl students were admitted in the Victoria college to spread undergraduate education among the girls'.<sup>12</sup> In 1934 Cooch Behar State Regency Council framed new rules for the grant of free studentships in State Institutions. Here it is to be noted that these grants were open to the Cooch Behar subjects, sons and daughters of the State Servants (Cooch Behar), and other permanent residents of Cooch Behar, eighty per cent. being reserved for Cooch Behar subjects.<sup>13</sup> In this year apart from Middle English Schools, State Model Schools, Middle Vernacular Schools, Primary Schools, Upper Primary Schools, Lower Primary Schools, Night Schools, Girls' Schools; the Industrial School which was under the instruction of Cooch Behar Bayan Silpa Vidyalaya, the only technical school in Cooch Behar got financial support from the authority.<sup>14</sup> In 1937 under the revised regulations of the Calcutta University, elementary scientific knowledge has been made a compulsory subject and accordingly steps have been taken for imparting instruction in this subject. A special grant of Rs. 376 was sanctioned by the Cooch Behar State Council for the equipment of the science Room. The necessary apparatus, chemicals, charts and specimens of rocks and minerals have been purchased. Here it need to mention that a demonstration room, too, has been fitted with a sink and water connection.<sup>15</sup>

### **Medical**

The medical system of Cooch Behar was a sound one during the reign of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. In Cooch Behar the main building of the Sudder Hospital being old and very dilapidated condition, rendered it unfit for further use as a hospital. Therefore, the State Regency Council of Cooch Behar, has been graciously pleased to constructing a two storied building to be built in memory of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1923.<sup>16</sup> For maternity cases in 1923 one midwife was employed at Dinhata and another employed at Mathabhanga.<sup>17</sup> In 1924 some measures were taken by the State authority to cure people of Cholera. Temporary medical officers were appointed and a few hands from the existing permanent staff with compounders were sent to the mufussil to cope with the diseases. Two temporary dispensaries were opened in this manner, one at Kholta and other at Bhaishkhuchi. Anti - Cholera inoculation was introduced which provided successful. The police and the military forces and the sudder hospital staff were inoculated first as a preventive measures against cholera. A large number of tube - wells were sunk for the supply of good drinking water in the cholera infected places. There were altogether 1,603 cholera cases out of which

1,113 ended fatally and 490 were cured.<sup>18</sup> In 1926 reports of cholera came from all the sub – divisions of the State and the disease threatened to spread in academic form. The disease was, however, checked in all the sub – divisions except Mathabhanga where it broke out in an epidemic form. The sub – divisions was divided into five circles with a medical officer and staff for each circle, to deal with the outbreak. A large number of tube – wells were sunk in the affected areas to supply pure drinking water.<sup>19</sup> Several taluks of Cooch Behar were infected by small – pox in 1927. In order to cope with the disease, two temporary medical officers were appointed by the authority.<sup>20</sup>

To improve the treatment facilities, Cooch Behar state council permitted the civil surgeons of the sudder hospital to attend the All India Medical Conference.<sup>21</sup> The hospitals and dispensaries, sudder jail, sub – jails, police stations and out posts were regularly inspected by the Civil surgeon. Several schools were also inspected by him.<sup>22</sup> The health of the students of the Jenkins School was examined by the sanitary officer assisted by the Sanitary Inspector of the sudder circle.<sup>23</sup> Apart from that Cooch Behar state council was regularly monitored various other aspect in the sphere of medical treatment. The statement below shows the receipt under different heads of medical department for the last three years—<sup>24</sup>

Heads	1927- 28			1928 – 29			1929- 30		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
1. Prescription fees	1,307	4	0	1,377	2	0	1,418	4	0
2. Sale proceeds of Medicine	1,039	15	6	1,083	9	0	1,112	0	3
3. Ditto bottles, & c.	72	12	6	82	7	0	90	8	0
4. House rent of Rajmata cottage wards	184	0	0	202	8	0	371	8	0
5. Subscription for the aided dispensaries	1,362	0	0	1,068	0	0	972	0	0
Total	4,016	0	0	3,813	13	0	3,964	4	3

In 1928 a clinical laboratory was formed by the Medical department of Cooch Behar for diagnostic purposes in the town, because at Cooch Behar Tropical diseases practically prevailed throughout the year. Hence since the beginning of the year 1928, a regular clinical laboratory was started in a miniature scale in the sudder hospital under a specially trained sub – assistant surgeon and every effort being made to improve it gradually.<sup>25</sup>

For the people of Sitai a cottage dispensary at Sitai was opened with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1932. For the maintenance of the dispensary monthly subscriptions amounting to Rs. 30 was available from local sources. It has been accommodated for the present in a private rent – free house and the superintendent of vaccination, a sub – assistant surgeon has been placed in its charge.<sup>26</sup> Regarding vaccination, during the reign of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan serious steps were taken by the medical department. In 1933 four vaccination inspector and 25 vaccinators were engaged in vaccination work.

A subsidiary center for anti – treatment was established at the sudder hospital on the 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1933, under an officer of the state medical department, who had previously undergone a course of training at the Pasteur Institute, Kasauli. The state

council sanctioned a sum of Rs. 140 for the last months in 1936 for laying out a garden in the compound of the hospital. Under the direction of the Garden Superintendent of the state it was laid out and it had added considerably to the beauty of the hospital building and it is thought that it has not been without beneficial effect psychologically on the more sensitive patients.

#### **Public Works Department (P.W.D.)**

During the reign of Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) worked on the following schemes under the guidance of Regency Council -

##### **i) Head post – office**

A two storied pucca building for the Post Office was completed in 1924. Its main building consists of two storeys. The ground floor has a big central hall measuring 55' x 40', for the post office proper with a treasury room 12' x 10', counter &c. To the right of the central hall is a telephone exchange Room measuring 20' x 13' with a battery room 13' x 6' behind it. At the back a record room 14' x 9' has been provided. The other three sides are enclosed with 7' wide open verandahs. On the 1<sup>st</sup> floor are the quarters for the post and telegraph masters with separate entrances and staircases.<sup>27</sup>

##### **ii) Re decoration of rooms in Palace** In 1927 the following alterations have also been carried out<sup>28</sup> -

- a) Removal of Her Highness' staircase into His late Highness.
- b) Enlargement of late Maharaja Jitendra Narayan's Study room into a bigger sitting room by enclosing a portion of the next room.
- c) Removal of the northern central staircase into the passage to the west of the late father Maharaja's suite of rooms and conversion of the staircase room into a bathroom.
- d) Conversion of the library room into a sitting room, small drawing room into a bed room, gun room into a billiard room and the billiard room into a library.
- e) Providing a complete marble flooring to the new billiard room and marble flooring border to several of the rooms.
- f) Replacing the old large doors with either etched and embossed glass panels or ground glass panels with a fan light on top.

##### **iii) Police barracks at Cooch Behar**

The work of constructing a two storied pucca building for the police barracks at Cooch Behar was in progress throughout the year 1928. Rs. 47,647 was expended during the year.<sup>29</sup>

##### **iv) Construction of a dispensary at Bamanhat**

A corrugated iron roofed building on steel trusses and 10" pucca walls consisting of 4 rooms viz. - one doctor's room 17' x 12', one operation room 12' x 8', one store room 12' x 8' and one dispensary 9' x 8' with two side verandahs. The whole work completed in 1928.<sup>30</sup>

v) **Building for Cooch Behar state press**

A pucca building 181'-5" x 35'-9" having 7' wide verandah in front and two sides was constructed in 1930 at a total cost of Rs. 39,968 with exception of steps and surface drains. The building consists of 7 rooms viz., one Bengali composing room 35' - 4" x 25', one English composing room 67'- 3½" x 25', one printing machine room 25' x 23', one clerks' room 25' x 12', one record room and other officer's room each measuring 12' x 12' - 3½".<sup>31</sup>

vi) **Construction of a Circuit House in Cooch Behar Town**

In 1930 a two – storied pucca building having in the ground floor two rooms 20'x 18' each one to be used as dining room and the other drawing room, 2 office rooms 12' x 8' each, 2 bath rooms one 13'- 3" x 8'- 6', another 8' x 8', one stair case room 10'x 20, one pantry 10' x 8', one store room 10' x 8' and two small verandahs in back 13' - 6" x 8' and 6' x 8' and a verandah 8' wide in front and the two sides. Besides the above there is a carriage porch at the front. In the first floor it has two bed rooms 20' x 18' each, 2 dressing rooms 12' x 8', 2 bath rooms 8' x 8' each and another bath room 13' - 3" x 8' and 8' wide verandahs in front and back.<sup>32</sup>

vii) **Communication**

In this avenue there were a lot of schemes implemented by the Public Works Department which were as follows –

In 1923 P.W.D. took the following works (construction of bridges and culvert) regarding communication in Cooch Behar.<sup>33</sup>

1. Four feet span pucca culvert in the 1<sup>st</sup> mile of Baneswar to Natabari road.
2. Eight feet span pucca culvert in the 6<sup>th</sup> mile of the road from Cooch Behar to Garodhat.
3. Four feet span pucca culvert in the 9<sup>th</sup> mile of the road from Cooch Behar to Garodhat.
4. Five feet span pucca culvert in the 10<sup>th</sup> mile of the road from Cooch Behar to Garodhat.
5. Six feet span pucca culvert in the 7<sup>th</sup> mile of Patlakhawa road.
6. Five feet span pucca culvert in the 5<sup>th</sup> mile of Patlakhawa road.
7. Four feet span pucca culvert in the 3<sup>rd</sup> mile of Shahebgunj - Bamanhat road.
8. Strengthening the Iron Bridge over the Girja river in the Four mile of the village path from Dewangunj to Chilahati.
9. A timber bridge in the 17<sup>th</sup> mile of the Cooch Behar – Sital kuchi road.
10. Adding a span to the wooden bridge in the 21<sup>st</sup> mile Dinhata - Mekhligunj road.
11. A 20 feet span bridge on the 7<sup>th</sup> mile of Cooch Behar – Sitalkuchi road.
12. A masonry bridge in the 45<sup>th</sup> mile of the Emigration road west of Cooch Behar.
13. One feet span masonry culvert on the Haughton street in the town of Cooch Behar.

In 1925 the following culverts and bridges were constructed by the p.w.d.<sup>34</sup>

1. One 4' span pucca culvert on the 6<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> mile of Patlakhawa road.
2. One 5' span pucca culvert on the 3<sup>rd</sup> mile of Kakina road.
3. One 4' span pucca culvert on the 20<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> mile of Kakina road.
4. One 6' span pucca culvert on the 3<sup>rd</sup> mile of Janaki-Tiwary road.
5. One 12' span timber bridge on the 6<sup>th</sup> mile of the Changrabanda - Jamaldah road.
6. One 6' span pucca culvert on the 7<sup>th</sup> mile of the Phulbari - Chilkiguri road.
7. One 3' diameter corrugated iron culvert on the 14<sup>th</sup> mile of the Cooch Behar - Sitalkuchi road.
8. One 3' diameter corrugated iron culvert on the 13<sup>th</sup> mile of the Katamari - Manabari road.
9. One 12' span iron bridge on the 7<sup>th</sup> mile of the Lowkuti road.

In 1926 a few works were constructed, which were as follows<sup>35</sup>

1. One 5' span pucca culvert in the 6<sup>th</sup> mile of Rungpur road.
2. One 6' span pucca culvert in the 6<sup>th</sup> mile of Dinhata -Baxirhat road.

In 1927 the following work was in progress<sup>36</sup>

1. 20' span iron bridge on the 14<sup>th</sup> mile of Baneswar- Pundibari road.
2. 40' span iron bridge on the 4<sup>th</sup> mile of Latkobari Chowdhurirhat road.
3. 3' diameter corrugated iron bridge on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> mile of Mathabhanga - Moranga road.

In 1928 -29 P.W.D took the work of metalling the roads in Cooch Behar town namely Nripendra Narayan Road, Sunity Road, Kameswari Road, Smith Road.

#### Viii) Water Supply Scheme

The water supply scheme is estimated to cost of Rs. 2.5 lakhs. It was decided to spread the expenditure over two years - Rs. 1.25 lakhs being provided in 1926 - 27 and Rs. 1.25 lakhs in 1927 - 28. It was also decided that sum of Rs. 45,000 would be appropriated from the accumulated surplus of the pound fund towards the capital cost of the scheme and that a sum of Rs. 80,000 would be provided for the scheme in the budget for 1926 - 27, thus making up the total sum of Rs. 1,25,000 sanctioned for the expenditure during 1926 - 27.

The north - west portion of Narendra Narayan Park, which is in the center of the town, has been selected for the location of the water works and power house. A provision of Rs. 25,000 has been made in the Public Works Department budget, 1926 - 27 for the construction of the new power house. The whole scheme will be carried out under the supervision and direction of the chief engineer, public health department, Bengal. The proposal of the chief engineer, public health department, Bengal, in connection with rural water supply were also approved by the Cooch Behar State Regency Council and an experiment is being carried out in the shape of sinking tube wells in 25 taluks (villages) close to Cooch Behar town with a view to seeing, after the experiment has been given a proper trial, whether it will be feasible to introduce a

tube well scheme on a large scale throughout the State with a view to providing the population in the rural areas with a good water supply so far as may be possible.<sup>37</sup>

#### **ix) Re – organisation of Fire – Brigade**

As the arrangements for dealing with Fires in the town of Cooch Behar were wholly made quite for the purpose, the Regency Council sanctioned a scheme for the re-organisation of the town fire brigade submitted by the vice-president, Regency Council. The scheme is briefly as follows—<sup>38</sup>

1. The purchase of a Dennis Motor Trailer Pump (as used by The Calcutta Fire Brigade) which is connected to, and drawn by, a Motor Lorry.
2. The purchase of a one – ton Ford Lorry Chassis fitted with a body specially designed by the Chief Officer of the Calcutta Fire Brigade.
3. The construction of a garage for housing the Ford Lorry and Trailer Pump.
4. A crew of seven men drawn from the Police Force, who will be trained with the Calcutta Fire Brigade.

#### **x) Motor watering car**

To meet the difficulties experienced till now in watering the roads of the town of Cooch Behar, the purchase of a Motor Watering Car at Rs. 3,150 was sanctioned by the Cooch Behar State Regency Council in 1926.<sup>39</sup>

#### **Xi) Electric supply in the town of Cooch Behar**

In 1926 – 27 a sum of Rs. 50,000 was provided for the expanding the electric system of Cooch Behar. In addition to this a sum of Rs. 25,000 was provided in the public works department for that year for a new Power House. An additional amount of Rs. 37,000 was sanctioned for the construction of Electric godown in Cooch Behar.<sup>40</sup>

#### **Economic Measures of the Regency Council**

The economic sphere of Cooch Behar during the reign of Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan moved smoothly under the following heads.

##### **i) New Stamps in Cooch Behar**

In 1929 it was decided to introduce into the State of Cooch Behar a new type of Stamps containing the altered Coat of Arms of the State, that is, substituting the figure of tiger for that of lion. The treasury officer and the sub – divisional Naib Ahilkars were directed to destroy by burning in their presence all the old stamps that were in, and came to, their possession on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1929, on which the introduction came into force and furnish certificates stating the number and value of the stamps thus destroyed. The stamp vendors also were directed to return on the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1929 to the treasury or sub – treasuries all the old stamps in their possession and receive in exchange fresh stamps of the same value and denomination.<sup>41</sup>

##### **ii) Rent money order system**

To facilitate the payment of rent by the State Subjects (Cooch Behar) the postal authorities were moved to sanction the introduction of the Rent Money Order System in

the State of Cooch Behar. Extension of the system to this state was granted with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1935.<sup>42</sup>

**iii) Revision of rates for town and bunder lands**

On 21<sup>st</sup> March 1927 the Cooch Behar State Regency Council implemented an order regarding the revision of rates for town and bunders lands and the classification of the several bunders in Cooch Behar State were as follows—<sup>43</sup>

1. period of settlement - The period will be fixed at 10 years.

2. classification - Cooch Behar town should be treated separately from the other towns and bunders. For bunders lands in the town of Cooch Behar there will be only two rates , viz.-

Class I - For the entire frontage Rs. 1 – 4 (Rupee one and annas four only) per cubit or Rs. 400 per bigha. Back holding Rs. 10 (Rupees ten only) per bigha. The existing rates are Rs. 400 (Rupees four hundred only) a bigha for the frontage and Rs. 8 (eight only) a bigha for the back holding. All lands comprised in the block of which boundaries are given below come under Class I:-

Two hundred forty – five feet west of centre of Dalton Street and 107 feet Nripendra Narayan Road.

One hundred and seventy seven feet east of centre of Smith Road and 107 feet north of Nripendra Narayan Road. Junction of Sunity Road with kuchcha road east of Smith Road .Junction of Sunity Road with kuchcha road west of Dalton street. Class II - For the actual frontage occupied by the shop As. 12 (annas twelve only) per cubit (20 cubits deep) or Rs. 240 (Rupees two hundred and forty only) per bigha and Rs. 8 (Rupees eight only) a bigha for the back holding as at present. All lands not included in the Class I block come under this class.

It is to be understood that houses other than shops in the block comprising the lands in “Class I” will bear a ground rate of Rs.10 (Rupees ten only) a bigha and in “Class II” Rs. 8 (Rupees eight only) a bigha.

3. For the towns and bunders in the State of Cooch Behar, there will be three rates only viz. –

Class I. – Rs. 100 (Rupees one hundred only) a bigha for the entire frontage, occupied or unoccupied, and Rs. 5 (Rupees five only) a bigha for the back portion of the holding.

Class II. – Rs. 80 (Rupees eighty only) a bigha for the actual frontage occupied by the shop and Rs. 4 (Rupees four only) a bigha for rest of the holding.

Class III. – Rs. 4 (Rupees four only) a bigha for the whole area (bunders), occupied or unoccupied.

For houses other than shops in all the three classes, there will be an uniform rate of Rs. 4 (Rupees four only) a bigha For the whole area, occupied or unoccupied.

The following is a list of the Mofussil towns and bunders Classified according to the rates given below –

**Class I**

Dinhata, Mathabhanga, Haldibari

**Class II**

Dinhata sub-division

Chaudhurihat, Gossanimari, Mekhligunj, Bhetaguri, Sitai, Bamanhat, Bakshirhat,  
Sahebgunj, Gitaldaha.

Mathabhanga sub-division

Siberhat, Nishigunjhat, Ghoksadanga, Sitalkhuchihat.

Mekhligunj sub-division

Mekhligunj, Dewangunj, Jamaldaha, Ranirhat, Changrabandha.

Cooch Behar sudder sub-division

Baneswar, Dawanhat, Pundibari.

Tufangunj sub-division

Bakshirhat, Balarampurhat, Ranirhat (Tufangunj town), Bhaiskhuchi, Bara Mahadeva  
Bunder, Krishnapur, Ghoramara, Natabari.

**iv) Progressive enhancement of revenue and rent**

On 11<sup>th</sup> April 1927 the Cooch Behar State Council made the following orders regarding the enhancement of revenue and rent in Cooch Behar—<sup>44</sup>

1. When the maximum jama (rent of revenue) settled now does not exceed Rs. 5 or the increase does not exceed 75 per cent of the old as well as the existing jamas, the increase is to take effect once, in which the new settlement for a term of 30 years is to come into force.
2. In other case the maximum jama settled now is over 75 percent of the old as well as existing jamas, 75 percent of the higher of the last two jamas (viz. the old and the existing jamas) subject to a minimum of Rs. 5 in any case is to take effect at once and of the remainder of the increase, one half is to take effect in the third year and the remaining half in the fifth year.
3. The jama of no under – tenure will be made progressive unless gradual enhancement is allowed in the case of the jote (or tenure) comprising the under – tenure.
4. As regards the under – tenures of different grades, no under – tenant's jama will be made progressive unless the enhancement of the jama of his immediately superior landlord is made gradual.
5. In the case of progressive enhancement the amount annually payable during the first four years will be separately shown in the terajis (final record of right).

**v) Relief of Jotedars and Tenants**

In 1932 the Cooch Behar State Regency Council issued an order in favour of jotedars and tenants, which were as follows—<sup>45</sup>

1. For every jote for which the whole of the arrears and current demand has been satisfied within the current revenue year 1932, the jotedars will be entitled to a remission of one – third of the revenue demand on that jote due for 1933.
2. For every jote for which the whole of the arrears and current demand up to including the kartick (name of Bengali month) kist (installment) of the current year has been satisfied, the jotedars will be entitled to a remission of one – fourth of the revenue demand on that jote for 1932.
3. Similar concessions shall be shown to all the tenants and under Tenants by jotedars and other superior land – lords (whether Jotedars and superior land – lords have themselves received the above concessions or not) in all cases where tenants and under -tenants have paid to their respective land – lords all kists due up to the end of 1932.

#### **vi) Land Revenue Policy**

To mitigate the hardships to the subjects of the State of Cooch Behar attributable to the prevailing economic depression, remission of revenue were granted to the jotedars and similar concessions were extended to all classes of under tenants. Extensions of time for payment of kists (indebt) were also granted. Of Jotes in respect of which default had been made for many kists, a small number were made khas (vested land) and brought under the Khas Mehal Department. The result of the policy followed has been on the whole satisfactory in as much as it gave relief to the jotedars to some extent while the revenue collections of the state showed a marked improvement.<sup>46</sup>

Thus the economic sphere of Cooch Behar moved into a advanced and technical way under the super -vision of the royal authority.

Apart from the above mentioned measures the State Council also took active steps in Some other schemes, which can be categories as -

#### **1. Maharaj Jitendra Narayan Prajabatsal Chikitsalaya**

In 1923 the former sunder hospital was redecorated with various equipments and facilities. Among the whole scheme Rs. 20,000 was granted by the Maharani Sahiba (mother of Jagaddipendra Narayan), Rs. 12,000 have been deposited with the Imperial Bank of India. Rs. 12,384 was expended during the year for the purchase of some materials. The new hospital building's name was given in memory of Maharaj Jitendra Narayan. Thus the hospital building known as Maharaj Jitendra Narayan Prajabatsal Chikisalaya (M.J.N. Hospital).<sup>47</sup>

#### **2. Transfer of management of Sunity Academy**

With a view to improving the condition of the academy for the education of girls (1925), in which Maharaja takes a great interest the management of the institution, which was an aided one was transferred to the Education Department of the State of Cooch Behar.<sup>48</sup> It was decide that the existing Committee of Management should continue to function and assist in giving effect to the decisions of the council on the various questions involved, and that the standard of the Academy should, for the present, be so raised that it might teach up to the 4<sup>th</sup> Class of a High English School. A sum of Rs. 10,000 was allotted for providing additional accommodation for the academy of

which Rs. 5,000 was provided by the Cooch Behar State authority and the balance was met from the funds of the Academy. A Ford Motor bus was also provided for bringing some of the girls to the Academy and taking them back to their homes.<sup>49</sup>

### **3. Narendra Narayan Park**

An important order issued by the Concil on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1926 regarding the modernisation of Narendra Narayan Park. The important clauses of the ordinance were as follows—<sup>50</sup>

1. To carriage motor car, motor cycle, bicycle or tricycle shall be driven or ridden in the Park at a speed exceeding 5 miles per hour. They are permitted to be used in the metalled roads only inside the Park.
2. No person shall ride on horse – back in the Park.
3. No person shall bring a dog into the Park.
4. The following acts are strictly prohibited –

The plucking, gathering or digging up of anything growing in the Park, the felling of trees the breaking of benches or plants, the cutting of names or marks on trees or on the branches, the disfiguring of furniture, the removing or disfiguring of labels or marks attached to trees or plants, pie – nicking, shooting bird – nesting, the grazing of horses or cattle and fishing, or polluting the water of the tanks. No bathing is allowed in the tanks after 2 p.m.

5. The playing of football, cricket, hokey, tennis or other out door games in the park is also prohibited.
6. No person shall commit any nuisance in the Park ground or molest or annoy any person or person – resorting to it.
7. Any person convicted of a breach of any of the above rules shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 20.

### **4. Public Health Department**

For the purpose of better combating epidemic diseases – more specially cholera, small – pox, kala – azar and malaria, the Regency Council accorded sanction to the formation of Public Health Department for the State consisting of one sanitary officer (assistant surgeon), three sanitary officers (sub-assistant surgeon), twenty-five vaccinators, three medicine carriers and three sweepers with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1927.<sup>51</sup>

The total cost of the scheme was Rs. 15,800 a year including traveling allowance, disinfectants and medicines, contingencies and house allowance. The sanitary officer has been given one sanitary inspector in reserve whom he can send out in case of emergencies to any particular place. For the purpose of proper administration of the department, the Cooch Behar State has been divided into two divisions: I Sudder Cooch Behar, Dinhata, Tufangunj; II Mathabhanga, and Mekhligunj.<sup>52</sup> To each of the two divisions – one sanitary inspector has been posted. Owing to the formation of this department; the existing provisions amounting to Rs. 4971 under ‘vaccination’ and ‘sanitation’ in the Medical budget are no longer required. Deducting this amount from

Rs. 15,800 which is the total cost of the scheme, the extra cost per annum for the department was Rs. 10,829 or Rs. 11,000 approximately.<sup>53</sup>

### **5. Cooch Behar Subject**

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1932, the Cooch Behar State Regency Council implemented an important issue on the identity of natives. The State Council successfully abolished the so called “Native of the State” and “Domiciled Native of the State” terms and adopted one classification namely, “Cooch Behar Subject” was adopted and such privileges as had before been accorded to “Native” and “Domiciled Natives” were accorded to “Cooch Behar Subject”.<sup>54</sup> A Cooch Behar Subject has been defined as one—<sup>55</sup>

1. Who owes allegiance to His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, his heirs, successors, and assigns and renounces all claims to the status of British Indian Subject or the status of subject of any Indian State.
2. Whose great – grand – father, grand – father and father have continuously resided in the Cooch Behar State.
3. Who has no home or permanent abode without the limits of the Cooch Behar State.

### **6. Agricultural Officer**

To assist the Revenue Department with expert advice regarding adoption of improved methods in Agricultural Operations and to do propaganda work amongst cultivators, an Agricultural Officer in the Department of Agriculture, Bengal, was appointed on Rs. 100 per month for a period of one year from the 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1933.<sup>56</sup>

In conclusion it can be note that during the period from 1922–1936 the Cooch Behar State Regency Council did a tremendous work on behalf of the minor Maharaja of Jagaddipendra Narayan. More importantly the Council followed the administrative cum social measures for the people of Cooch Behar and set an example of well formed management system in the princely state of Cooch Behar.

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'Illustration:- (a) where the old Jama (deposit) was Rs. 100, the existing Jama is Rs. 85 and the Jama now settled is Rs. 200, the Jama payable in the first year of Re-settlement about to be concluded will be concluded will be Rs. 175 (i.e., Rs. 100 plus Rs. 75), the same amount in the second year, Rs. 187 – 8 in the third and forth years and Rs. 200 in the fifth year.

b) Where the old Jama was Rs. 1 – 8. The existing Jama is Rs. 2 and the Jama settled, was Rs. 6. according to the principle of illustration (a), Rs. 2 plus Rs. 1 – 8 ( i.e., 75 per cent of Rs. 2) or Rs. 3 – 8 would be payable annually in the first and second years, Rs. 4 – 12 ( i.e., Rs. 3 – 8 plus Rs. 1 – 4) in the third and forth years and Rs. 6 in the fifth year but as the amount payable on this principle in the first year is less than Rs. 5, the latter amount (Rs. 5) should be paid in the first and second years, Rs. 5 in the third and forth years and Rs. 6 in the fifth year'.

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