


**LAND SETTLEMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION
AND TAXATION UNDER THE MAHARAJAS OF
COOCH BEHAR STATE (1773-1949)**

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THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE NORTH BENGAL UNIVERSITY, WEST BENGAL
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ARTS

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ABBREVIATION

- A.A.R.C. : Annual Administration Report of Cooch Behar State.
- C.R.R.C. : Council Record Room, Cooch Behar.
- G.G.I. : Government General of India.
- H.H. : His Highness.
- N.A.I. : National Archives of India.
- W.B.S.A. : West Bengal State Archives.
- N.B.S.L. : North Bengal State Library.
- N.E.F. : North East Frontier.
- I.A.S.B. : Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1. GENERAL OUTLINE

This work is mainly based on original records available in Cooch Behar Recrds. So far we know no one worked on the subject. This is the first of its kind. This is, therefore, an attempt for the advancement of learning in revenue administration in the regional studies, specially in a princely State like Cooch Behar.

The land revenue has been regarded as an instrument of vast social changes in the structure of rural society. It is closely connected with land tenure and the condition of agriculture. The history of land largely depends on the interaction between men and environment, and the environment is related to the topography of the land. As such, the knowledge about the topograhly always plays an important role in shaping the history of land. So it is said "the quest for said knowledge led to the introduction of land survey, which has always been related to the needs of the period"¹. The realisation prompted the State Government to introduce definite revenue policy as one of the important factors for development.

2. METHODOLOGY

We started the investigation of land revenue administration and taxation under the Maharajas of Cooch Behar from 1773 to 1949 in 1980 and collected the materials from the Council Record Room, Cooch Behar, North Bengal State Library, Cooch Behar, Palace Library, Cooch Behar (Later on the entire Library purchased by some outsiders and caused a heavy loss for future studies on Cooch Behar History). National Library, Calcutta, National Achieves, New Delhi, West Bengal State Archives, Calcutta, West Bengal Secretariate

Library, Calcutta, North Bengal University Library, North Bengal University, Cooch Behar College Library, Cooch Behar and records preserved by some individuals at different places.

3. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In Cooch Behar, where agriculture was the principal source of the people's livelihood, where feudal and semi-feudal Land relations helped to perpetuate agricultural backwardness, where landlordism arrested the economic development in the country-side, the study of the land system and allied agrarian problems acquires a special significance.

Researches into the Cooch Behar State's Land revenue administration, Land rights and problems of Land tenure throw a flood of light on the diverse aspects of the agricultural economy of this region. The way in which the lands are held to-day, that is the existing land tenure system is, historically, the result of a gradual process of evolution which was, at different stages of the history of Cooch Behar, very materially influenced by socio-political factors. Thus the history of land revenue of Cooch Behar may broadly be divided into two periods, (a) Early period prior to British connection in 1773 and (b) Period beginning with the influence of the British since 1773.

After the connection with the British, the British engaged their immediate attention to bring about reforms in Land revenue administration of Cooch Behar and tried to place it on a new position. They were unable to attain this objective for long, a fact which substantiates the complex and profound nature of the problem. They had to work almost from nothing. Information about the land revenue administration of the State was either insufficient or wrong².

The replacement of a native Landlord by a foreigner caused the first breach in the existing land relations for now the landlordship began to pass from the class of aristocracy to a class called "Moneyocracy" in the words of Marx. Previously the king or the revenue Collector was an aristocrat whose interest was not so much in money making as in social leadership and political supremacy. In contrast, the sole aim of the State after the changed situation was to collect the largest amount of money in the quickest possible time just to pay the fixed tributes to the British and for meeting their own expenditures. So automatically very little care had been taken for the improvement and development of the State and its people.

What could possibly be the British motive behind the introduction of different measures for improvement of revenue administration ?

The modern apologists of the British rule, offer the explanation that the whole settlement was an innocent mistake, made through simple ignorance of the fact that the Zamindars or Jotedars were not owners of land. This fairy tale is a plain nonsense. The authorities were fully conscious that they were creating a new class of landlords and, also of their purpose in doing it. A. T. Embree is of the opinion that Lord Cornwallis introduced the Zamindari system because of his "prejudices in favour of the land owning classes to which he himself belonged"³.

A definite motive was to stabilise the hitherto uncertain and fluctuating income. With the introduction of new measures the State was assured of a certain minimum, whatever be the conditions of Production.

The most important aim was to create a class of rich and powerful landlords who from motives of self-interest, would be deeply interested in the

continuance of the State and would support the State in every hour of trial. In fact, as the preamble to Regulation 11 of 1773 stated, a landlord who was secure "in the quite enjoyment of a profitable estate could have no motive for wishing for a change. On the contrary, if the rents of his lands were raised..... he will readily listen to any of offers which are likely to bring about a change⁴. The revenue collectors, who overnight became landlords clearly understood that if they were to exist as a class, it was their duty to strengthen the hands of the State⁵.

By interfering in the affairs of Cooch Behar State the East India Company wanted to secure the Northern Boundary which was hitherto confined to Rangpur. It may also be pointed out that the Maharajas were at this time knocking at the door of the British. The rise of the Marathas have become a great menace to the security of the Company's possession and the company was also busy to fortify their North Western frontier. At the same time the disturbance in Cooch Behar posed a great menace to the Company's possession in the North. This consideration also led Hastings to involve in the affairs of Cooch Behar⁶.

By the treaty Cooch Behar became a feudatory State and agreed to pay annually half of the revenue to the English East India Company⁷.

Six hundred and thirty five Princes rule two-fifths of India and a quarter of its population. Many are absolute monarchs linked only by treaty with the British Crown. Among these only seventy three of the Princes are entitled to salutes of more than eleven guns and to the prefix of Highness⁸.

The characters of the States are their treaties, made with the East India Company and the British Government. In the case of a hundred and

seventy five major principalities the suzerainty of the King Emperor can only be exercised through the Viceroy. With the five hundred smaller States varying degrees of control are vested in Provincial Governments.

It is, therefore, impossible to class all the States under one heading. There can be no common ground between small chieftainships covering a handful of square miles, and sovereign principalities such as Hyderabad, Gwalior, Mysore or Travancore, whose rulers are legally entitled to "unrestrained powers" of life and death over their subjects, who maintain their own armies, who makes and enforces their own laws⁹.

The Indian States were divided into three categories. First would come those which enjoy complete legislative and administrative independence within their own borders, whose laws are supreme, even to the Privy Council. In the second rank would come the principalities who, with partial executive independence, exercise their legislative powers as well as Criminal and Civil jurisdiction under British supervision. In the last category there would be the preponderating mass of small States who have no treaty rights and no legislative independence. Their positions were established by grants or (Sanads) and they should be differentiated from the other two classes of States, whose rulers are entitled to salutes varying from nine to twenty one guns.

The Cooch Behar State belongs to the second category of Princely States in India. The States of the Indian Principalities within the Empire has been more clearly defined than their position with regard to each other, for it has been laid down, by King's proclamation, that they must be consulted by the Viceroy in matters which concern their territories "jointly with British India or with the rest of the Empire".

The exclusion from the chamber of Princes in Delhi of all but twelve representatives of the States whose rulers are entitled to less than eleven gun salutes, may hasten a satisfactory demarcation. For there has been too much confusion between full-powered principalities and fiefs held under a grant from the paramount power¹⁰.

The treaty of Cooch Behar (1773) is not one of alliance, but is an admission of subjection, though the extent to which the sovereignty of that "State" may be held to have lapsed is a question not finally solved for long. The treaty with Bhutan was one of peace, whatever be the position of Bhutan, it is not that of an ordinary Indian State¹¹.

Many States of India have gone ahead and many are going for radical changes in land revenue administration, for that it is an important way for economic growth and social emancipation. It has been correctly said by R. C. Dutta that the history of the land revenue administration in India is of the deepest interest, because it is intimately connected with the material well being of an agricultural nation¹². It is with special emphasis on this that an attempt has been made in this thesis on land revenue administration in Cooch Behar during the period of Maharajas (i.e. on and from 1773 to 1949), to throw some light on the background on the present problems in the field. However, one of the main purposes of this thesis is to discuss the nature of feudalism prevailed in Cooch Behar State and the reasons for stagnation of the system in this princely state.

4. OVER VIEW OF LITERATURE

Many modern historians rightly emphasised the pressing need of the study of the princely States of India. So far a very little works have been

made by the researchers in this field. Under the patronage of the then Maharajas of Cooch Behar there were few books written and published which were partial in character and conventional in nature. For example :-

[1] "Rajopakhyan" was written in Bengali prose by Munshi Jynath Ghosh. The date of the beginning of the writing or the date of publication of this work has not been mentioned in the work. But it is considered from circumstances that composition of this work began between 1823 to 1833 and it was finished towards the end of the reign of Maharaja Shibendra Narayan (1845).

Rev. Mr. R. Robinson, formerly the Superintendent of Education, Cooch Behar State, translated "Rajopakhyana" into English. This is printed in the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta in 1874. There are 244 pages in this work.

[2] **Major Jenkins Report 1849**

Major Frances Jenkins was the Agent to the Governor General in the North Eastern Frontier Province. The report which he wrote in 1849 regarding Sikkim, Morang and Cooch Behar was printed in Calcutta in 1851 under order of the Government. The account regarding Cooch Behar begins in page 19 and ends in page 51. The account previous to Maharaja Devendranarayan was very briefly written and that following 1772 was given in detail.

[3] **Completion of Settlement Report**

Mr. W. A. O. Beckett wrote this report. Mr. Beckett came as the Assistant Commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1871. Afterwards he was placed in charge of Settlement work and wrote this report in English in 1874. This was written regarding the final settlement of Cooch Behar and in it a short history of the State has been given.

[4] "Koch Biharer Itihas" written in Bengali by Bhagavati Charan Bandopadhyaya and printed in the State Press, Cooch Behar in 1882. This work was printed for the public. In the preface to the work, the author has mentioned that perusing the work "Kochbiharer Bibaran" written by him in Bengali, the then Dewan Rai Calica Das Dutt requested him to write a systematic history of Cooch Behar and accordingly he engaged himself in this work. After few corrections a second edition consisting of 170 pages was printed in 1884.

[5] **The Cooch Behar State and its land Revenue Settlements**

This work is generally known to the public as the Cooch Behar Settlement report. It was composed in English in 1903 by Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, the then Assistant Settlement Officer and printed in the State Press, Cooch Behar. It contains 705 pages with 40 chapters in 4 parts. The Survey and Settlement portion is in para 4 and contains from 441 to 593 pages.

[6] **The Resettlement of the town of Cooch Behar**

This work gives an account of the resettlement of Cooch Behar, the Capital of the State. This is written in English by Pramathanath Chatterjee. It was printed in the State Press, Cooch Behar at the cost of the State in 1913.

[7] **Mercer and Chauvet's Report**

At the end of the 18th century there was a quarrel between Chhatra Nazir Khagendranarayan and Rajguru Sarbananda Goswami (on behalf of the minor Maharaja Harendra Narayan) of Cooch Behar. M/s. Mercer and Chauvet, Commissioners appointed by the East India Company, enquired into the matter in 1778. This work consists of 205 pages.

[8] Cooch Behar Select Records

Two volumes in English named "Cooch Behar Select Records" were printed in the State Press. Cooch Behar, the first volume in 1882 and the second volume in 1884. The authority of the Cooch Behar State brought from the Government Duftar copies of most of the letters in English or Bengali exchanged between the King, the Commissioner, the political agent and the Government from 1777 to 1864 and had these printed. The then Dewan Rai Calica Das Dutt selected the English letters and these have been printed in two volumes in the name of "Cooch Behar Select Records". In the first volume there are 359 pages and in the second 290 pages. Many historical facts in the fourth quarter of the eighteenth century and the first half of the 19th century have been collected in these letters.

[9] The Koch Kings of Kamrupa

In 1893 Mr. E. A. Gait published an article in this name in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4) and this was printed in book form in 1895 in the Shillong Secretariat Press. This work contains 35 pages. This book was compiled from works on Tantra, Purnea, local manuscripts of Vansavalis, Assam Euranjees and works of Mohomedan Historians. The whole account of his work has subsequently been included in the fourth Chapter of the History of Assam and this chapter contains 22 pages. (Published in 1906). The author while writing this portion of the History of Assam specially dependd on the manuscript of the Durrang Vansavali.

[10] A History of Cooch Behar

This is an English translation of the Bengali work "Koch Biharer Itihas" by Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, translated by Sarat Chandra

Ghoshal. This book contains 689 pages and was published from the State Press, Cooch Behar in 1942.

[11] **Princely Cooch Bhar : A Documentary Study on letters (1790-1836 A.D.)**, written jointly by Biswanath Das and Subhendu Mazumder, published from Calcutta in 1990. Besides Introductory Chapter along with a short history of Cooch Behar this work contains 40 letters (most of them are from "Cooch Behar Select Records", and contains 112 pages.

In recent times a few attempt has been made to study the regional Economic history in general and in particular the Princely States of India. We like to mention a few of them, such as, (1) Economic History of Hyderabad State (warangal suba : 1911 - 1950) by V. Ramakrishna Reddy, (2) Hyderabad in Transition under Salar Jung 1, 1853 - 1883 : An Indian State under British Influence by V. K. Bawa, (3) The History of a Himalayan Princely State by Atul Saklani, (4) Rajahs and Projas : An Indian Princely State - then and now, by Debdas Pillai, (5) British Crown and Indian States, compiled by Chamber of Princes, (6) British Policy and Administration in Bengal, by Richard Paul Croniu, (7) Revenue Administratin in Assam by D.D.Mali, (8) Aspects of Revenue Administration in Assam by Shrutidev Goswami, (9) Land problems and Land Reforms in Assam by Narendra Chandra Dutt, (10) Land Revenue Administration in Orissa :During the nineteenth century by Krishna Chandra Jana. All these studies concentrated other than the particular region we have selected for investigation. As regards the Economic History of the North Eastern Princely State - Cooch Behar is concerned there is no such work that has been made till now by any scholar.

5. CHAPTER SCHEME

In this present study we have made Chapter scheme in the following manner :-

In the first chapter, we have explained the reasons for selection of the area of investigation and a general Introduction of the problem. In the next chapter we introduce the research area with the land and its people. In this chapter we discussed in brief the long history of Cooch Behar State. In Chapter 3, we discussed agricultural economy of the State ; and in the next chapter we have discussed the Economic condition of Cooch Behar during the period of study. In the subsequent chapters 5,6, 7 and 8 we have discussed different surveys and settlements made during the period of our study. In Chapter 9, we have discussed the survey and settlement of the Town Cooch Behar which is the capital of the State. In the next chapter we examined the position of 'Krishiproja' in Cooch Behar State. Chapter 11, examines the land tenure in Cooch Behar and the position of tenants at that time. In Chapter 12, an attempt has been made to examine the sources of revenue and taxation in Cooch Behar. Chapter 13 examines the effects of different surveys and settlements made during the period of our study and lastly we tried to draw a conclusion of the entire analysis made in earlier chapters.

6. SCOPE OF THE THESIS AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In the discussion about the term of Settlements the authorities considered the various aspects from theoretical and practical stand point. It was taken from Adam Smith's argument that a period such as thirty years, so would be advantageous for agricultural improvement. That would also balance the vagaries of natural calamities and currency depreciation. The tax burden would be balanced and the impact distributed¹³.

On the beginning of this study on the Land Revenue Administration, we should naturally first know what was the nature of the contribution to the State income, known as the Land Revenue ?

It is a historical fact that from very ancient times, long before the Mughal Empire, the Kings or Rajas and other lessor chiefs were accustomed to take from the cultivators of the soil in their dominions or chiefships, a certain share of the produce of every cultivated area, unless as a special favour, that share was remitted¹⁴.

In Bengal (and the same is true of other parts when the districts came under the British rule) the land Revenue had for generations past been levied in cash payments, its assessment (often by contract for the year) was determined on no known principle¹⁵.

The first requirement of a good taxation is that the people should be accustomed to it, and that it should be collected with the minimum chance for oppression on the one hand and for evasion on the other¹⁶.

After the connection with the British, the British Administrators observed that while securing the State revenue, they must also secure private landed rights, if wealth and prosperity were ever to return to the agricultural population. Under previous system, there had been no such thing as legal security for titles to land ; specially not for interests that had been partially submerged or reduced to a secondary grade. There was nothing but the autocratic Government, whose will was law, but not very definite law and largely influenced by the great regulator of Indian affairs - CUSTOM.

The situation of the Indian States is unique in history and no known relationship provides to solve the problems they present. The analogy with a federation of independent States is not complete ; the analogy with the subject provinces of an Empire is not complete, and international law is of hardly any

assistance at all¹⁷. This is equally applicable in the case of Cooch Behar State.

Economic and fiscal relationships are partly a question of fact and partly of law. It is necessary to ascertain and record what payments are in fact made by one side to other and what are the services rendered in return, and what are the agreements or claims made by one side with or against the other¹⁸.

Recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in the study of regional history in India and several books were written on different aspects by scholars. Adequate attention has, however, not been paid to the economic history of Cooch Behar State in general and revenue administration in particular. Harendra Narayan Choudhury's remarkable work "The Cooch Behar State and its land revenue Settlement" published in the year 1903 dealt with the land revenue and other aspects of revenue administration in detail along with others. In that book there are only 7 Chapters in Part IV of the book which, though a notable work serves little purpose for a complete study of the revenue system of the princely State Cooch Behar. Most of the books written during the periods of Maharajas got support from the State and naturally they are partial in character and conventional in nature and Harendra Narayan Choudhuri is not an exception to it.

The period selected for this study is a significant one in the history of revenue administration. It begins with the connection with the British in 1773 and continues upto 1949 i.e. with the merger of Cooch Behar State with the Indian Union. We ~~hoped~~, the results and findings of this study will not only fill up the existing gap but also provide the necessary background for further investigation on the subject.

The British adopted the revenue administration of the Cooch Behar State though it was not without defects. Experience taught them not to make any sweeping change immediately. The changes introduced in the revenue administration in Cooch Behar were not sudden, but gradual and took place at different parganas.

The tradition belonging to the north Indian Kings that all lands were of the Crown, was also applicable in case of the Cooch Behar Kings¹⁹. Not only this right was acknowledged over cultivated or waste lands, but also the King exercised his possession over all woods, forests, ferries, mines etc. After the death of Dhairyendra Narayan, a question arose on the ownership of lands and its share among the King, the Nazir and Dewan of the Cooch Behar State. Khagendranarayan, the Nazir Deo submitted a representation to the minor Maharaja Harendra Narayan. The Maharani who had to manage the affairs during the minority of the Raja answered, " the Maharaja holds the Divine rights and he is the sovereign of his own country. There are no partners who share it with him, (the Maharaja)²⁰ .

It has also been suggested that "the Raja of Cooch Behar is the owner of the soil, and stands much in the same relation to the Jotedars as does a Zamindar in lower Bengal to his rayats²¹. Maharaja's ownership over land was again questioned when the Chowdhuries (collector of revenue of Boda, Patgram and Purvabhag (the possession of which was granted to Dhairyendranarayan by Sannud within Sarkar Cooch Behar) sought to become Zamindars by filing a suit before the Collector of Rangpur against the Nazir and Maharaja of Cooch Behar by setting up a claim of title in 1778. The queries of Mr. Purling on the issue revealed that the Chowdhuries and the Nazir were merely officers of the three chaklas and the real owner was the King himself²² .

Though there is scope for future studies on economic history of Cooch Behar State in different aspects, still we like to point out some limitations of such studies as we faced during our work.

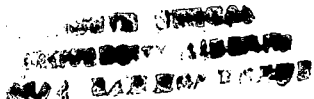
The Cooch Behar Record room was completely destroyed by fire in the year 1973 and the total collection of the palace library was purchased by some outsiders a few years back and these two events adversely affects detail studies of the past history of the State. Besides, the old records preserved in the North Bengal State Library are in a very poor condition and many of them could not even be handled at present as the conditions of those records/reports are very bad. Some individuals preserved few records, no doubt, but most of them don't want to cooperate with the researchers in this respect. This negative attitude actually limited the scope of our studies.

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CHAPTER - II

PROFILE ANALYSIS

1. INTRODUCTION

The origin of the Cooch Behar State can be traced back as early as to the sixteenth century. There is a great deal of obsecurity leading to some academic controversy about the way it was established and more so about the ancestry of its original founder. In spite of a very modest beginning as a small principality in the nearly 50 years of the sixteenth century, the Cooch Behar State is unique for its long existence and can boast of its remote antiquity, sustained continuity and survival down the centuries. It lasted for nearly four hundred and fifty years. One commentator aptly remarks,.... "excepting some of the more important states in Rajputana, there are few states in India which can boast of a more remote antiquity than that of Cooch Behar...."¹. Having sprung up in the interregnum which followed after the crushing defeat of Raja Nilambar, the ruler of Kamatapor, by the forces of Sultan Husain Shah of Gour in 1493 the Cooch Behar State had to wade through a very thorny path of history dominated successively by the Pathan, the Mughal and the British rulers of India².

During the disturbed condition of the country subsequent to the expulsion of the Muslims, the Koch chiefs were gradually becoming powerful. One of them was Hajo. He had two daughters, Hira and Jira who were married to one Hariya Mandal. Jira gave birth to two sons, Chandan and Madan. Hira gave birth to two sons, Sisu and Bisu. Accounts differ as to who became the first king of the Koch line in Cooch Behar. One account states that Chandan was proclaimed king after the defect and death of Hariya Mandal and after his death Bisu became the king under the name of Visvasinha. He was the youngest and most powerful of the brothers, having

been born in about the 21st March, 1502³. At his coronation Sisva Sinha held the royal umbrella⁴ over his head, and, assumed the title of Raikat, which, means head of the family and hereditary chief minister. He became the Kings Chief Minister and Commander of the army.

After a reign of 31 years Vishva Sinha meditated upon relinquishing the world. In the year 1554 he first repaired to his birth place on Mount Chiknay then sending away his weeping followers he retired to the mountains in his 53rd year to devote the remainder of his life to close meditation and prayer⁵.

On the retirement of Maharaja Vishva Sinha from the World, his eldest son Nir Sinha or Nara Sinha abdicated the throne in favour of his younger brother Naranarayan, it is said, in fulfillment of a promise made to the wife of the later at her marriage and Naranarayan, became king in the year 1555⁶. The Cooch Behar State reached the zenith of its Glory and power under king Naranarayan. He conquered Assam, Bhutan and the whole of North Bengal down to the Ganges at Gaur. His Kingdom was extended as far as Cachar, Sylhet and Manipur in the North East and to the coasted plains of the Bay of Bengal in the South East. S. K. Chatterjee rightly said that "he was one of the greatest king of India, a worthy contemporary of Akbar⁷. After the death of Naranarayan, the Cooch Behar State lost its pre-eminence and gradually declined under the rule of its successive kings. The State became a target of intermittent Mughal attacks during the reigns of Lakshmi Narayan, Pran Narayan, Mohindra Narayan and Rup Narayan respectively. In spite of an uncomfortable relation with the Mughals during a long period since the days of Lakshmi Narayan the state could protect its freedom and maintain sovereign status till the year 1736 when prince Din Narayan was installed in the throne by the Mughal army who had defeated and deposed Upendra Narayan, the

ruling King of the State. Upendra Narayan went underground and sought the military help of the Dev Raja of Bhutan to regain his kingdom which he succeeded in doing two years later, in 1738, with a combined force of Bhutanese and Koch arrives by defeating and forcing a retreat of Mughal establishment from the soil of Cooch Behar. This strengthened Bhutanese connection with the State. With the increasing weakness of the Cooch Behar State, Bhutanese interference in the internal matters of Cooch Behar become a permanent feature. Pensa Tuma was appointed the Bhutanese representative at the Cooch Behar Court. In 1769 Rudranarayan, the Nazir Deo, died, and his brother's son Bhabendranarayan was appointed to be Nazir Deo. All important decisions of the State had to be taken with the concurrence of the Bhutanese representative. Debendra Narayan, the minor king of Cooch Behar who succeeded his father, Upendra Narayan was assassinated in 1763. After the death of Upendra Narayan, Devendranarayan was placed in the throne and ruled only for two years. In 1765 Devendranarayan was succeeded by Dhairyendranarayan, a cousin of the deceased king. In course of time, a rift developed between the new king and his Dewan Ram Narayan. The king forced him to quit his post. As Ram Narayan was very close to the Dev Raja of Bhutan, the matter did not go unnoticed by the latter. Owing to strong pressure by the Dev Raja of Bhutan the King was compelled to reinstate the Dewan. But later on, the Dewan was brutally killed by Dhairyendra Narayan in 1769. After this incidence the King of Cooch Behar was seized under a plot, brought to Bhutan and put into the prison at Punakha. Rajendra Narayan, brother of Dharyendra Narayan, was installed in the throne by the Bhutanese in 1770. Rajendra Narayan died a premature death in 1772. Bhutanese made an attempt to put Bijendra Narayan, son of Late Dewan Ram Narayan on the throne. But due to the

resistance by the Nazir Khangendra Narayan and Sarbanand Gosain, the royal priest, this was not possible. Dharendra Narayan, a minor son of Dhairyendra Narayan was installed in the throne against the wishes of the Bhutanese representatives posted at Cooch Behar. As an immediate measure, a strong contingent of Bhutanese army invaded Cooch Behar and the battle was won by the Bhutanese. The defeated Nazir Deo escaped to Rangpur along with the infant King and many others. The Bhutanese captured the entire state and there was little chance of recapture the state by Raja of Cooch Behar. At this stage, Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan in consultation with other dignitaries of the state approached the East India Company for its help to drive out the Bhutanese force from Cooch Behar. According to Munshi Joynath Ghosh, it was promised to the Company on behalf of the minor king of Cooch Behar that a sum of rupees one lakh would be paid to it if it could succeed in freeing the state from Bhutanese control. But the offer was not acceptable to the Company which wanted a share of the annual revenue of the state as a price for its help in expelling the Bhutanese and protecting the state in future⁸. However, a treaty was signed with the East India Company in 1773⁹. The Nazir Deo concluded the treaty on behalf of the infant king, Dharendra Narayan which facilitated quick despatches of English force to Cooch Behar¹⁰.

2. COOCH BEHAR - A FEUDATORY STATE

Thus Cooch Behar became a Feudatory State by virtue of this treaty. Maharaja Dharmendra Narayan on whose behalf the treaty was concluded by the Nazir Deo was the first Ruler of the country who acknowledged his allegiance to the British Government.

He, however, did not live long and his minor son Harendra Narayan of 3 years 9 months ascended the Gadi in 1783¹¹.

During this period there were two rival groups in the state and taking advantage of the disintegration of power things were going from bad to worse. The British Government did not interfere in the internal administration and remained satisfied with the collection of revenue. In this they were interested in as much the tribute payable to Government owing to the treaty of 1773.

But sometimes after the party faction went so far as to invite the attention of the British Government and caused the Government of Lord Cornwallis in 1778 to appoint a Commission to remove the mal administration and to bring the state under the influence of the British rule for its better management in future.

The result was that a resident Commissioner was appointed at Cooch Behar for supervising the affairs of the country during the period of minority of the Maharaja Harendra Narayan and Henry Douglas was the Commissioner in 1789.

The reforms introduced by Mr. Douglas may be summarised as follows¹² :-

[1] He resumed the land possessed by the Maharani, Nazirdeo and other favourites.

[2] He abolished a portion of Mafassil Karcha (a certain kind of illegal gratification collected by State officers for themselves which might be mentioned as one fifth of the whole revenue), and made rules for the regulation of Talabana (allowance to persons), and curtailed the Maharaja's establishment.

[3] He introduced the Ijardari system for the collection of revenue in 1790. Before this the revenue appears to have been collected by Sajwals. The number of Jotedars was very large and the country was extensive. Proper control over these poor paid officers could not be kept and the consequence was oppression on the ryots. Mr. Douglas accordingly let out jotes in ijara or farm to persons in convenient lots and made them responsible for State revenue. These Ijaras were renewed annually. He did not wholly do away with khas collection.

Mr. Douglas was succeeded by Mr. Charles A. Bruce in 1791 and the later by Mr. Smith in 1795 who made over charge to Mr. Ahmuty in 1797. Mr. Ahmuty raised the term of settlement to 5 years. He made a regular register of lands of Cooch Behar¹³.

In 1801, the Maharaja Harendra Narayan came of age and the Commissioner was removed. After some changes the Government's policy towards Cooch Behar was finally fixed in 1816. It was resolved that no interference be made, except in the form of advice and representation. The post of the resident Commissioner of Cooch Behar was revised but his power was restricted to the exercise of diplomatic function only.

During the reign of Maharaja Harendra Narayan the question whether Cooch Behar should gradually pass into a Zamindari of Bengal arose more than once, and it was greatly due to the representation of Maharaja Harendra Narayan that Cooch Behar is still a Feudatory state uncontrolled in its internal administration and having constitution independent of foreign interference¹⁴

Maharaja Shivendra Narayan and Maharaja Narendra Narayan, the next two rulers of Cooch Behar passed without any important event. Maharaja Narendra Narayan died in 1863 leaving behind him minor son Nripendra Narayan who under the late dying Ruler's wishes was placed on the throne immediately on 7.8.1863, when 10 months 4 days old. Colonel Haughton was deputed to Cooch Behar as Commissioner in charge of the administration. Such a step was considered by the Government to be imperatively called for want of a genuine will of the Late Maharaja as the only means for effectively providing for the care and education of the young Maharaja, for the security of the tribute and for the defence of the Bhutan frontier for which Government was responsible.

The Commissioner was vested with full ruling powers, except in regard to certain specified points, such as the grant of land, confirmation of capital sentence etc. He was placed directly under Government and not under the control of Agent¹⁵.

In 1883 (November) Maharaja Nripendra Narayan took over charge of the state from the Government. He thought it advisable not to make any important disturbance in the administrative arrangements introduced after much consideration by the successive administrators. He did not interfere with the continuity of the departmental work, although the decision of authority and system underwent considerable change.

Maharaja Nripendra Narayan died in 1911 and his two sons Maharaja Rajrajendra Narayan and Maharaja Jitendra Narayan successively ascended the throne. Maharaja Jitendra Narayan after a rule of about 7 years died in

December 1921 in England leaving the Gadi to his minor eldest son Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan¹⁶.

The modernisation of the administration started by the British Commissioner was continued by the Maharaja and the administrative machinery of the State was created on the model of a British district. During the minority period of the king, the Dowanger queen acted as regent. Jagaddipendra Narayan was the last Maharaja of Cooch Behar. On September 12, 1949 he signed the Instrument of Accession. He transferred the State to India on August 28, 1949.

3. PHYSICAL ASPECTS

The Cooch Behar state lies between 25° 58' and 26° 33' north latitude, and between 88° 48' and 89° 55' east longitude. It contains an area, according to the Surveyor General of India, of 1,334.1 square miles, and according to the Director of Land Records and Surveys, West Bengal, of 1,332.6 square miles. Its population, which, according to its present boundaries, was 566,974 in 1901, has increased to 671,158 in 1951. There was little spectacular increase in any decade between 1872, and 1951. On the other hand, several decades in the past have registered decreases, notably the decades 1881-91, 1891-1901 and 1921-31. Even in the decade 1911-21 there was a small reduction in the population. There has been no industrial development in the State in the last one hundred years and agriculture has remained pretty much on the same level throughout. Consequently, there has not been any large increase by immigration, except by way of bands of agriculturists migrating into Cooch Behar from other parts of Bengal¹⁷.

The following statement shows the changes in the area and population in Cooch Behar between 1881 and 1951.

	1951	1941	1931	1921
Area in square miles	1,322.6	1,318	1,318	1,318
Population	6,71,158	6,40,842	5,90,886	5,92,489
	1911	1901	1891	1881
Area in square miles	1,307	1,307	1,307	1,307
Population	5,92,952	5,66,974	5,78,868	6,02,624

[Source : Census, 1951, West Bengal, District Hand Books, Cooch Behar, p. iiii]

4. CLIMATE

The climate of Cooch Behar is damp and malarious, and is to some extent enervating. The east wind which blows during the great part of the year, is full of moisture, and is injurious to health. The dry west-wind which sets in with the spring, and prevails from March to May, is the best current of air available in this state. The cool refreshing southern breeze of lower Bengal is very rare here. Roughly speaking, there are only two well-defined seasons in Cooch Behar, as in fact in all the neighbouring areas, namely winter and summer. The rains of Cooch Behar are proverbially long and persistent.

5. THE PEOPLE

Until 1949, Cooch Behar was what used to be known as a Native Princely state. The census of the State started with 1872. As a statement below will show there was a substantial increase in 1881, chiefly due to more accurate counting, but it is also certain that the State was healthy,

prosperous, and object of attraction to immigrants. But between 1881 and 1891 there were decreases in every police station except Tufanganj which continued to grow on account of immigrants¹⁸.

Table : II-1

Population of Cooch Behar State with variations from 1872 to 1951.

1 Population	2 Variation	3 Population	4 Variation	5 Population	6 Variation
1951	1941-51	1941	1931-41	1931	1921-31
6,71,158	+ 30,316	6,40,842	+ 49,956	5,90,886	-1,603
7 Population	8 Variation	9 Population	10 Variation	11 Population	12 Variation
1921	1911-21	1911	1901-11	1901	1891-01
5,92,489	- 463	5,92,952	+ 25,978	5,66,974	-11,894
13 Population	14 Variation	15 Population	16 Variation	17 Population	
1891	1881-91	1881	1872-81	1872	
5,78,868	-23,756	6,02,624	+70,059	5,32,565	

[Source : Census 1951, West Bengal, District Hand Books, Cooch Behar, P. XXXVII].

There was a severe evidence of cholera in 1891, and fever was always present. But the condition of the people in other respects was satisfactory. They got three crops a year, and if one fell short, they had the others to fall back upon. There was scarcity of crops in 1892 and 1897, but it did not amount to famine and in other years, the crops were good. The Gitaldaha - Manshahi railway line opened in 1893, followed by the Manshahi - Cooch Behar extension in 1898, and another extension from Cooch Behar to

Alipurduar in 1900. This railway which in 1913-14 became the Cooch Behar State railway and the Bengal Duars railway did much to develop the resources of the country and greatly facilitated the disposal of produce of all kinds¹⁹. If only the climate were more favourable, a rapid expansion of population might be expected but the unhealthiness of the climate more than counter-balanced the productivity of the soil. Conditions during the decade ending in 1911 were more favourable. Cultivation expanded, the cultivators benefited by the rise in the price of agricultural produce, and there was an increasing demand for labour, which was met by import of labourers from upcountry. During 1911-21 there was no event of great importance but during 1921-31 the state suffered heavily from cholera and small pox epidemics in 1928-29 which accounted for over 4,000 known deaths alone, whilst it is probable that a very great number of deaths was unreported. During 1931-41 there was no major event affecting the population and during 1941-51 the famine and epidemics of 1943-44 did not trouble the State of any degree²⁰.

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- [2] Biswanath Das & Subhendu Mazumder, Princely Cooch Behar : A Documntary Study on Letters, Calcutta, 1990, p. 1.
- [3] Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 227.
- [4] The royal cushion or throne was made out of the tail of the serpent of God Mahadeva ; the royal umbrella, out of the hood of that serpent folded in cloth, and the royal ceptre, by putting the monkey's head and bones noticed above into a silver image of

monkey, whence it came to be called Hanumandanda. The tradition is given in full in the Rajopakshyana, by Munsi Joynath Ghosh in chapters VII and VIII.

- [5] Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 229 and also see Gait, Koch Kings of Kamarupa.
- [6] Munshi Joynath Ghosh, Rajopakshyana, Part II, Chapter 1, Page 29-30. But Mr. Gait in his "Koch Kings of Kamarupa" fixes 1534 as the year of Narayanan's accession to the throne.
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- [17] A. Mitra, Census 1951, West Bengal, District Hand Books, Cooch Behar, Calcutta, 1953, p. V.
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CHAPTER - III

AGRICULTURE

1. INTRODUCTION

The theories of underdevelopment which emphasize the shortage of factors of production as the primary explanation, generally follow the traditional grouping of factors of production under four heads : Land, Labour, Capital and Organisation or "entrepreneurship". In this chapter, we are concerned only with land ; more specifically, we are concerned with agriculture.

Cooch Behar was, as it is today, a predominantly agricultural state. A vast majority of its population derived its livelihood from land. Agriculture, however, was organised by the landlords.

Agriculture then as now, was a "Gamble in rains". The failure of rains means a sure famine. Means of artificial irrigation like canals and tanks were few. The methods of cultivation were old and primitive. Implements were few, and, over wide areas, practically the only mechanical aid to cultivation was the plough. In matters connected with agriculture as in other things the people had their peculiar superstition. New modes of cultivation or the rearing of new crops were regarded with fear as being injurious¹.

2. SOIL

The soil of Cooch Behar is of alluvial formation and has a large admixture of sand. The greater portion of it is a light loam that can retain moisture and easily give it out, and does not become water-logged. When dry it does not cake up, but yields to light pressure, and easily gets dissolved. Ploughing is not thus difficult, and does not entail much labour on the cultivator or his cattle².

Five main river systems flow through Cooch Behar and the soil is a formation of the river system. Though the general character of the soil is sandy loam throughout the state but there are large variation in the content of clay and silt and these variations may be related to the river system which originally formed the land. The western part of Mekhliganj pargana to the west of the Tista may be considered to be a formation of the Karatya and the Tista and this area contains more clay than sand. The eastern portion of Mekhliganj pargana is a creation of the Tista and contains more of sand. Similar is the nature of the soil in pargana Lalbazar which was a creation of the Western Dharala river. The river Jaldhaka, the Mausai, the Mujnai and the Torsa have created pargana Mathabhanga and the western part of pargana Cooch Behar. Thus the soil of Mathabhanga has more of clay and the soil of Cooch Behar has slightly more of sand. Again the different parts of the same pargana do not often possess soil of the same quality³.

3. USE OF MANURE AND IRRIGATION

Almost every cultivator has cattle of his own and uses cowdung and litter as manure for his tobacco, sugarcane, jute, mustard-seed, wheat and barely as far as his own supply goes. Little or no manure is applied to the soil in the case of other crops. Oil-cake is also sometimes used as manure⁴.

The abundant and generally seasonable rainfall enables the cultivator to do without irrigation. The soil also retains sufficient moisture. Tobacco plants, however, need frequent watering both in the nursery and in the field. Draughts are of exceedingly rare occurrence in the State. A cheap and simple process of irrigation can, however, largely improve the condition of agriculture in this state⁵.

4. CROPS

Rice forms the staple crop and is divided into two classes, namely, bitri (early rice) and haimanti (winter rice), each of which is subdivided into a great many varieties. The winter rice is much the more important crop. The other principal crops are jute, tobacco and mustard, jute and tobacco are paying crops. Wheat, barley, pulses, maize, til, sunnhemp, Sugar-cane and the millets like Cheeria (*Panicum miliaceum*) and vegetables are grown in the state on a small scale. Bamboos grow extensively in the state. As for the rotation of crops, bitri rice and jute generally follow mustard seed, pulses, wheat, barley and tile. Haimante rice is sometimes grown after the bitri rice is harvested. Jute and tobacco are also sometimes successively grown on the same land, but as both these crops require manuring this rotation is not largely followed.

Crop statement and agricultural statement were never prepared in Cooch Behar in the course of the settlement operations nor were attempts made to collect the necessary information at the Khanapuri stage. As there were no proposal of compilation of the agricultural statistics (prepared in Bengal and Behar during the initial recess) the form of Khasra used in Cooch Behar does not even contain the necessary columns for entries regarding the crops grown on each plot of land during the periods of last settlement of Cooch Behar State in 1920-27. The necessary rules and instructions for making detailed enquiries in this respect were not issued to the Amins during Khanapuri⁶.

The crops raised by the people in Cooch Behar may be roughly divided into the following five main groups :

- I. Food grains - Paddy, Wheat, Barley, Pulses, Makai
- II. Oil-seeds - Rape and Mustard seeds,
- III. Tobacco
- IV. Manufactural crops - Jute and Sugar-cane
- V. Roots and Bulbs - Potato, Onion, Garlic, Ginger.

All of these crops are raised in every part of the State in a more or less degree. With the exception of paddy all other crops are only of a secondary nature, and the extent of their cultivation is not large. Although paddy is grown all over the state there are special tracts known for the excellence and abundance of this crop. The western portion of Mekhliganj, the northern portion of Mathabhanga, the north of Cooch Behar and almost the whole of Tufanganj are well known paddy growing areas. Twenty seven different varieties of Bitri and seventy six of Haimanti paddy are cultivated in the country.

There are two kinds of oil-seeds, - mustard and til. They are grown in every part of the state to a more or less extent.

Tobacco is one of the principal crops of the state and the most profitable of all agricultural products of the people. With the exception of the north of Cooch Behar and Tufanganj the cultivation of tobacco is extensive almost every where in the state. Lalbazar is specially famous for the excellence of its tobacco. This crop is also very largely raised in Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga and Dinhata, and forms one of the staple products of agriculture of those areas.

The traffic is large, and the people make a good deal of money by it. Tobacco is sent down in boats to the eastern districts of Bengal in large quantities.

The Burhmesse merchants annually take away thousands maunds of tobacco from Mekhliganj and Lalbazar. The value of the annual exports of this crop was about 10 lakhs of rupees in 1876. It is by no means less than double the amount in 1902.

Jute is one of the principal crops of the people of Cooch Behar. It is largely grown in every part of the state. The traffic in this article is large and has helped the springing up of Bunders all over the country. Haldibari owes its prosperity to jute traffic only.

The cultivation of sugar-cane is extensive in the south-west of Dinahata and in the south of Lalbazar. The cultivation of this crop is gradually extending to every part of the state. Besides raising the crop the people draw juice from it, and prepare molasses out of the same. Sugar-cane pays better than paddy or mustard-seed⁸.

5. PRICES OF CHIEF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

The prices of agricultural products were gradually rising from the time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, with the opening up of the country by roads and railways, and the facility thus offered to the export-trade. During the time of Narendra Narayan, food-grains was extremely cheap, probably because what was grown in the State remained in it, and few people had any occasion to buy food. In 1867 Mr. Smith, the then Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar remarked as follows⁹ :-

"Coarse cleaned rice is now selling at Rs. 2½ per maund. This kind of rice twenty five years ago is said to have been sold at two maunds for the rupee, and in one of Mr. Ahmuty's letters' I observed it is noted that rice was 3½ maunds to the rupee". During the period of minority of Maharaja Harendra Narayan, Mr. Ahmuty was Commissioner of Cooch Behar from 1797 to 1801. The price of paddy was then 4½ annas per maund in the beginning, and 8 annas per maund in the middle of the nineteenth century, and at its close it came up to Rs. 4 maund.

6. CONDITION OF THE CULTIVATING CLASSES

In the early days of Cooch Behar history, the Raja of Cooch Behar was the sole owner of the soil, and therefore, there were no cases in Cooch Behar of small proprietors, who own, occupy, or cultivate their hereditary lands, without either a superior landlord above them, or a sub-tenant or labourer of any kind under them¹⁰.

But during the process of different survey and settlements of Cooch Behar state, the land rights were extended to different under-tenants which have been discussed in different chapters of settlement in this work.

It was very seldom that a large jotedar, who holds his land direct from the State, cultivates himself all the land in his possession. Small farmers cultivate their land themselves. Big cultivators of almost every nature of tenancy have a class of farm labours under them called adhiars. They are generally very poor and occasionally possess their own plough and bullocks and a bit of rented land too. Generally the adhiars live in the farmer's premises, and employ the plough and cattle of the latter for cultivation, and is fed by his Grihi or master till the harvest time. Both these classes of adhiars are

remunerated by half the produce of the field. The quantity of seeds required and expended is often deducted from the gross produce, and the remainder is then divided into two¹¹. There were very few agricultural day-labourers in Cooch Behar. Many of the smaller cultivators, when not employed in tilling their own fields, occasionally hire themselves out as day - labourers.

7. AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENTS

The backwardness of the agriculture throughout the State is remarkable, the more so as the climate is so favourable. Not only is the variety and in some cases the quantity of the crops grown, exceedingly meagre, but the implements of agriculture are absolutely primitive and agricultural live-stock are of the poorest quality. No attempt is made to exploit the possibilities which the soil and the climate hold out but the cultivators go on doggedly growing rice, tobacco and jute, rice, tobacco and jute and again rice, tobacco and jute. It matters little that the situation of his land is much better suited for the growth of other crops, the cultivator pins his faith on rice, tobacco and jute. There are patches of sugarcane fields in Lalbazar, mustard is grown a good deal in Tufanganj and Cooch Behar, pulses in Cooch Behar and Dinhata to some extent. This with a few miscellaneous seed crops and some quantity of a poor variety of potatoes, vegetables and fruit make up the total produce. The system of agriculture which obtained in the country several generations ago, remains unaltered even at the period of last settlement of Cooch Behar State. Only at that time agriculture on scientific lines was started by Mr. Priyalal Ghosh, retired Inspector of Police of the State, in his farm at Falimari (Tufanganj) where motor-tractors and other upto date appliances were used.

There is no scientific manuring of the fields. Notwithstanding the innate richness of the soil the land has begun to lose its ancient productivity. The Law of Diminishing Returns is constantly working with any corresponding nourishment. The soil is, however, allowed rest now and then but such cases are so few and far between that they hardly compensate the loss of power due to constant working ; and gradual exhaustion of the soil has been the result¹².

SUMMARY

Cooch Behar is a predominantly agricultural state. Majority of its population derived its livelihood from land. But the methods of cultivation were old and primitive in nature. Means of artificial irrigation like canals and tanks were few. New modes of cultivation or the rearing of new crop were regarded with fear as being injurious.

The soil of Cooch Behar is of alluvial formation and has a large admixture of sand. Ploughing is not at all difficult.

Five main river systems flow through Cooch Behar and the soil is a formation of the river system. The general character of the soil is sandy loam throughout the state.

Although every cultivator has cattle of his own and uses cowdung and litter as manure for tobacco, sugarcane, jute, mustard-seed, wheat and barely as far as his own supply goes. The abundant rainfall enables the cultivators to do without irrigation.

Rice forms the staple crop and is divided into two classes, namely, bitri (early rice) and haimanti (winter rice) each of which is subdivided into a

great many varieties. The other principal crops are jute, tobacco and mustard. Jute and tobacco are paying crops. Bamboos grow extensively in the state.

Crop statement and agricultural statement were never prepared in Cooch Behar in the course of the settlement operations.

The crops raised by the cultivators in Cooch Behar may be divided into the following five main groups :-

- [1] Food-grains
- [2] Oil-seeds
- [3] Tobacco
- [4] Manufactured Crops
- [5] Roots and Bulbs.

All these crops are grown in every part of the state in a more or less degree. With the exception of paddy all other crops are only of a secondary nature, and the extent of their cultivation is not large.

The traffic in tobacco is large, and the people make a good deal of money by it. The Burhmesse merchants take away thousands of maunds of tobacco annually from Cooch Behar. The value of the exports of this crop was about Rupees ten lakhs in 1876.

The prices of agricultural products were gradually rising from the time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, with the opening up of the country by roads and railways. Mr. Smith, the then Deputy Commissioner Cooch Behar wrote in the year 1867 that coarse cleaned rice was then selling at Rs. 2½ per maund. This kind of rice twenty five years ago was said to have been

sold at two maunds for a rupee. The price of paddy was 4½ annas per maund in the beginning and 8 annas per maund in the middle of the nineteenth century and at its close it came up to Rs. 4 a maund.

In the early days in Cooch Behar State, the Raja was the sole owner of the soil and therefore, there were no cases in Cooch Behar of small proprietors of land.

It was very seldom that a large Jotédar who holds his land direct from the State, cultivates himself all the land in his possession. Small farmers cultivate their land themselves. Big cultivators of almost every nature of tenancy have a class of farm labours under them called adhiars.

In spite of favourable climate the condition of agriculture throughout the State is not in a good condition. The implements used in the agriculture are absolutely primitive and agricultural live-stock are of the poorest quality. No attempt is made to exploit the possibilities which the soil and the climate hold out but the cultivators do not agree to take any new measures in agriculture.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- [3] Durgadas Mazumdar, West Bengal District Gazetteers, Koch Bihar, Calcutta, 1977, p. 67.
- [4] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 163.

- [5] Karali Charan Ganguli, Final report on the Survey and settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State, 1913-1927, Cooch Behar, 1930, p. 8.
- [6] Ibid, p. 7.
- [7] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 167.
- [8] Ibid, p. 168.
- [9] The Annual Administration Report of Cooch Behar State for the year 1867-68, Cooch Behar, 1868, p. 21.
- [10] W. W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, London, 1877, p. 385.
- [11] H. N. Coudhuri, Op.cit.,p. 164.
- [12] Karali Charan Ganguli, Final report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State, 1913-1927, Cooch Behar, 1930, pp. 13-14.

CHAPTER - IV

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF COOCH BEHAR STATE

1. INTRODUCTION

Before the connection with the British, the economy of the Cooch Behar State was not in a good condition. Land was the most important source of national income, the vast majority of population being dependent on agriculture. In order to absorb the growing population, cultivation had been extended since the time of the first settlement either through a system of inducement such as changes in the mode of assessment or through outright state pressure. The importance of irrigation was understood as can be seen from the tanks and canals constructed by the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. Private works were, however, few and the State as yet insufficiently realised the urgency of irrigation works. Therefore, agriculture, then as now, was a "gamble in monsoons".

2. EARLY ECONOMIC CONDITION

Unlike many other Kingdom of contemporary India, the State of Cooch Behar suffers from paucity of materials in respect of the studies of its economic condition. In spite of this difficulty, outlines of economic condition and activities of the people, that we gather from those of the adjoining areas and also from a few contemporary literary evidences and travellers' accounts, enable us to place it on firm foundation.

The villages in India played a significant part in the economic life of the people of India from the early days, that is to say the people lived a rural life with agricultural as their chief occupation.

Agriculture also constituted the main occupation of the people of Cooch Behar. For the purpose of irrigation, the villages generally grew up

around the rivers' side. Agriculture was looked upon as noble profession by the people including those of the Brahmins¹.

A point to be noted here is that "manual labour was never looked upon with any odium or disgrace"². It may be mentioned that Hari Dasa (Haria) who became the "Mandal" or the kind of Ciknajhara used to plough lands and produce "Karpasa" cotton³.

In spite of the references to the affluence of Cooch Behar State, the General condition of the people of Cooch Behar does not appear to be so good in comparison with the inhabitants of neighbouring other districts. The following observation of Turner who visited the country in 1783 is worth mentioning ; "the country has a most wretched appearance, and its inhabitants are a miserable and punny race. The lower ranks without scruple dispose of their children for slaves, to any purchaser and that too for a very trifling consideration, not yet, though in a traffic so unnatural, is the agency of a Third person over employed. Nothing is more common than to see a mother dress up her child, and bring it to market, with no other hope, no other view, than to enhance the price she may procure for it. In deed the extreme poverty and wretchedness of these people will forcibly appear, when we recollect in these regions. The value of this can seldom amount to more than one penny per day, even allowing to make his meal of two pounds of boiled rice, with a due proportion of salt, oil, vegetables, fish and chilli"⁴. Walter Hamilton also refers to the custom prevalent among the lower classes to dispose of their children for slaves without scruple and he gives hint to the extreme poverty of the people in this region⁵. He further pointed out to a peculiar system prevailed upon the society from remote antiquity. The custom was that if a Ryot or peasant owed a sum of money, he had to give up his

wife as a pledge to the creditor in case he (the debtor) was unable to satisfy him in repayment. This possession of his wife was kept until the debt was discharged. If the wife of a debtor was not redeemed within one, two or three years and if during this period a family came out as a consequence of her connection with the creditor, the half of which considered to be the property of the person with whom she lived, and half that of her real husband⁶.

Something of the earlier internal conditions of Kamarupa can be learnt from the description of foreign traveller, many of whom were not likely to be attracted to a country which was not prosperous. The account attributed to Megathenes must have been written in the Capital of Magadha. According to his account the land is low and damp but the climate is delightful. Crops are regularly grown. Jack-fruit and coconuts are appreciated by the people and are produced in abundance. Water is supplied to the town from rivers and tanks.

There were other travellers also, such as, an Arabian travellers, one Suleman, another traveller named Iban Batuta who visited Kamarupa in 1346. During the reign of Maharaja Lakshminarayan, two portuguese missionaries, Stephen Cacella and John Cabral visited Kamta in the year 1926. In 1774, George Bogle, in 1776, Dr. Hamilton and in 1783 Captain Turner proceeded through Cooch Behar to Bhutan on the affairs of the East India Company, but they have left no detailed account regarding the economic conditions of the State. In 1808 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton undertook an enquiry into the ancient and contemporary state of the district of Rangpur. It was at that year he came to Kamatapura (Gosanimari) in the Cooch Behar State⁷.

During the period of Dhairjendra Narayan, all papers regarding revenue and finance were preserved⁸. These show that when Maharaja Dhairijendra Narayan died, he left a debt amounting to 50,000 French Arcot coins. Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet in their report of 1787 state that annually about 10,000 maunds of salt 2 to 3 thousand maunds of Gur (treacle) and small quantity of iron were imported into Cooch Behar. The merchants purchased in the different hats (markets) about one lakh maunds of tobacco, 10,000 maunds of mustard seed and some opium. These goods were collected at the posts of Mogalhat or Deviganj and exported by boat to Dacca or Murshidabad⁹.

The income and expenditure of Cooch Behar State for the years 1774-75 - 1776-77 were as follows :-

Table : IV-1 :

Year	Income	Expenditure
1774-75	1,98,763	1,97,831
1775-76	1,03,022	97,104
1776-77	1,62,547	1,62,231

(Source : S. C. Ghosal, A History of Cooch Behar, p. 279).

We have mentioned earlier that the condition of the people of Cooch Behar was bad compared with that of the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts. Captain Turner, an eye-witness wrote in 1783 that their few necessities of life indicated their pecuniary distress. Food was taken twice a day, rice, vegetable, fish, salt, oil and chillies, and worth a penny. As Captain Turner proceeded to Bhutan he saw that the northern part of Cooch Behar was practically uninhabited and in comparison with the southern area, there was more fallow land and jungle¹⁰.

The Officers of the British East India Company began a money lending business in Cooch Behar. In 1784 Captain Dunconson lent Rs. 14,901 to the Maharaja and was apparently dissatisfied with a return of Rs. 21,000 after one year¹¹. The Company's sepoy's also lent money to the peasants and charged a monthly interest of two to three annas in the rupee. They forcibly realised their dues. On account of these undesirable condition, many people left the country¹². To borrow money was to be ruined. Generally, the rate of interest was not less than 72 percent per annum, and in many cases interest was charged as Rs. 360 per cent per annum¹³.

Mr. Beveridge, the then Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar made the following remarks in 1865 on the affairs of the Cooch Behar.

"Before the appointment of a British Commissioner the Government of Cooch Behar was in a deplorable condition"¹⁴. The resources of the Government were not large. The only source of revenue worth mention was land, and even this was not properly taxed. Again, under a weak system of administration, and due to the want of proper arrangement for the suppression of crime and maintenance of the peace, the material prosperity of the people was at a low ebb, notwithstanding the excellent natural resources of the country. Absence of suitable means of communication kept the former and his produce confined within a small compass and the products of agriculture fetched a fabulously low price. Two maunds of paddy for a Narani rupee, or a little above ten annas in modern currency, was but the ordinary price in the middle of the present century, while in the beginning of the century even 3½ maunds could be had for the same value¹⁵.

3. ECONOMIC CONDITION AFTER 1864.

Colonel Hangton joined his duties as Commissioner in 1864 and except for an absence of a year and a half, continued in his post till 1873. The man destined to put things to right in the country was colonel Hangton. Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, paid the following tribute to the administration of Colonel Hangton after his visit to Cooch Behar in 1875 : "In the first place there seemed to be an earnest spirit pervading the administration, showing that the British officials, who have during the minority of the Raja supervised the management of the State, must have endeavoured in an anxious, almost an enthusiastic, way to promote it's welfare. All this is greatly owing to the zeal, considerateness and forethought of colonel Hangton, whose services have been cordially acknowledged by the Late Lieutenant Governor. In every direction I seemed to perceive signs of sincere efforts, not only for the prosperity of the Raja and his family, but also for the welfare of those on whom the prosperity of the Raja himself must depend, namely, the great majority of the people"¹⁶.

With the opening up of the country by roads and railways, and the facility thus afforded to the export-trade, the prices of food-grains are gradually rising. In the time of Maharaja Narendra Narayan food-stuff was extremely cheap, probably because what was grown in the country remained in it, and few people had any occasion to buy food. In 1867 Mr. Smith, Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar remarks :-

"Coarse cleaned rice is now selling at Rs. 2½ per maund. This kind of rice twenty five years ago is said to have sold at two maunds for the rupee, and in one of Mr. Ahmuty's letters, I observed it is noted, that rice

was 3½ maunds to the rupee"¹⁷. Mr. Ahmuty was Commissioner of Cooch Behar, during the minority of Maharaja Harendranarayan from 1797 to 1801. The price of paddy was thus 4½ annas per maund in the beginning, and 8 annas per maund in the middle of the nineteenth century. At its close it came up to Rs. 4 a maund. Formerly, mustard oil was very cheap. It sold at six seers a rupee in Maharaja Narendra Narayan's time. Even in the beginning of the British Administration of the State during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, a rupee could buy four seers of oil¹⁸.

There has been an increase in the price of other articles also. The table given below shows the variation of the prices of different articles during 1870 - 1900. It will be observed that every decade shows a marked increase of the price over its predecessor :-

Table : IV-2

Name of the Article	Average price per maund for the decade ending				Prices per maund in 1900 Rs. As.
	1870 Rs. As.	1880 Rs. As.	1890 Rs. As.	1900 Rs. As.	
Paddy	0-12				1-12
Common Rice	1-4	1-4	2-4	3-9	4-0
Tobacco	6-0	4-0	6-0	9-0	10-0
Jute	4-8	3-8	3-2	4-0	5-0
Mustard Seed	3-0	2-10	3-0	4-00	5-0
Mustard Oil	-	10-2	10-12	12-12	18-00

(Source : H.N. Chaudhury, the Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 191).

We have already mentioned that, when the British Government took charge of the State during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, the finances were in a deplorable condition. There was no control over the receipts and expenditure of the different departments, which made their own collections and disbursements and only remitted the surplus to what was called the Majudat. The system of framing budgets of revenue and expenditure was not in vogue, and both the receipts and payments were without proper control. The accounts were kept in a loose manner and were not properly checked. One of the first steps taken by Colonel Haughton was to make all the departments to remit their collections into the Majudat, and to submit bills for their expenditure. A regular budget system of controlling the finance was, under orders of the British Government, introduced from 1866-67.

In 1864, the total revenue of the State amounted to Rs. 7,87,967. It was gradually improved under a well-organised system of Government. In 1883-84, just after the installation of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, the receipts from all sources came up to Rs. 19,65,550 and in 1899-1900 they amounted to Rs. 22,72,608, showing a large increase of about 9½ lakhs of rupees in the course of seventeen years¹⁹.

The condition of the finance during the British Administration of the State was as follows :-

Tabl : IV-3

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Surplus or deficit (+ or -)
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1864-65	7,87,867	6,33,413	+ 1,54,451
1865-66	6,06,121	6,12,804	- 5,683
1866-67	6,17,230	5,10,613	+ 1,06,617

Table : IV-3 (Contd.)

Year	Revenue Rs.	Expenditure Rs.	Surplus or deficit (+ or -) Rs.
1867-68	7,90,833	5,82,313	+ 2,08,520
1868-69	8,14,898	6,84,671	+ 1,30,227
1869-70	9,41,423	9,37,236	+ 4,187
1870-71	9,19,735	9,19,772	- 37
1871-72	11,20,932	12,02,791	- 81,859
1872-73	10,02,132	11,45,136	- 1,43,004
1873-74	10,70,693	10,92,701	- 22,008
1874-75	14,43,452	15,33,334	- 89,882
1875-76	12,94,087	11,02,890	+ 1,91,197
1876-77	12,94,489	9,31,090	+ 3,63,399
1877-78	12,65,472	13,46,424	- 80,952
1878-79	13,54,921	11,72,212	+ 1,81,709
1879-80	14,72,007	11,15,757	+ 3,56,250
1880-81	12,95,366	11,85,525	+ 1,09,841
1881-82	13,20,395	11,63,434	+ 1,56,961
1882-83	13,31,663	12,36,380	+ 95,283
1883-84	19,65,550	23,14,759	- 3,49,209
Total :	2,27,09,266	2,14,23,255	+ 12,86,011

(Source : H.N. Choudhury, The Cooch Behar State and its land revenue settlements, p. 413).

The Revenue and expenditure during the administration of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan from 1883-84 to 1899-1900 are given below :-

Table : IV-4

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Surplus or deficit (+ or -)
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1884-85	17,45,481	23,42,453	- 5,96,972
1885-86	17,44,687	21,32,024	- 3,87,337
1886-87	17,68,574	17,98,160	- 29,586
1887-88	16,95,292	14,43,421	+ 2,51,871
1888-89	16,63,329	17,47,324	- 83,995
1889-90	18,56,262	24,90,207	- 6,33,945
1890-91	17,99,980	17,78,917	+ 21,063
1891-92	18,92,405	17,91,724	+ 1,00,681
1892-93	20,69,701	18,82,444	+ 1,87,257
1893-94	20,67,158	20,13,957	+ 53,201
1894-95	21,73,323	19,26,506	+ 2,46,817
1895-96	21,27,416	24,43,570	- 3,16,154
1896-97	21,58,266	21,34,005	+ 24,261
1897-98	22,39,668	24,12,101	- 1,72,433
1898-99	23,58,062	22,81,123	+ 76,939
1999-1900	22,72,608	23,17,463	- 44,855
Total :	3,16,32,212	3,29,35,399	- 13,03,187

(Source: H.N. Choudhury, Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, p. 414.)

Maharaja Narendra Narayan left Government in 1863 securities representing to Rs. 6,51,300 and coins of sorts in the Treasury of the estimated value of Rs. 5,57,997. There were also bonded debts and shares in a joint stock company, representing to about Rs. 60,000/-. Under the British

administration of the State during the minority of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan there was an aggregate saving of Rs. 12,86,011 from the revenue of the country. The greater portion of this was invested in Government Promissory Notes and shares and Debentures of joint stock Companies. The cash balance in 1882-84, just after the transfer of charge of the administration by Government amounted to about Rs. 2,75,000.

In the course of the sixteen years that followed, large sums were expended on the Palace, the General re-settlement of the State, improvement of Communication and construction of the railway, and other public works, in all amounting to close upon fifty lakhs of rupees. The whole of this amount could not be met from the ordinary revenue of the State, and there was a total deficit of Rs. 13,03,187, which had to be made up by disposing of the Government securities and contracting a loan of eight lakhs from the British Government. The cash balance on the 31st March, 1900, stood at about three lakhs and a half of rupees²⁰.

Prior to 1912 there was no regular banking business in Cooch Behar State. In 1912 there was the first time that a regular banking business has been started in Cooch Behar. So long the Marwari Mahajans, who have got most part of the trade in their hands, have also been the principal bankers in the State. But the interest charged by them is very high and their Mooli system of advancing money has also proved ruinaous in many instances. The people are purely agricultural and although the soil is generally rich and fertile and a good harvest is obtained with very little trouble, they themselves, are involved and remain debt to the Mahajans from year to year. There is no landed aristocracy here at Cooch Behar as was known in Bengal

and the Marawari Mahajans are gradually acquiring extensive landed property as a necessary consequence of their system of banking business.

The Cooch Behar Banking Corporation has been floated with a capital of a lakh of rupees divided into 200 shares of Rs. 50 each and most part of the capital has been subscribed by the people of the State²¹.

In conclusion we would like to state few points during the period of the last Maharaja of Cooch Behar, i.e. Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan. The Cooch Behar State Council accepted the proposals of the Revenue Officer for a special remission of land revenue both on agricultural and on-non-agricultural land to mark the auspicious occasion of Jagaddipendra Narayan's investiture with full Ruling powers. It was noted that from the beginning of the economic depression generous remissions of revenue and rent have been allowed from year to year in the State at rates ranging between 7 annas and 4 annas and decreasing as conditions became stabilised. The remission allowed in the year 1935 was at the rate of 2 annas in the rupee conditional on payment of the dues of a Kist within the date of sale advertised in the State Gazette. In the light of a further change in economic conditions, a further reduction of the rate of remission would be fully justified. For Non-agricultural holdings, which were not affected by the out-turn and market prices of crops, no remission was granted in 1935 and remissions of 4 annas and 2 annas in the rupee were granted in the years 1933 and 1934, respectively only in cases in which there was no outstanding arrears. Under ordinary circumstances no remission could be granted in respect of such holdings for the year 1936. But the Maharaja decided to grant remission for the year 1936, at a special rate more favourable than actual condition of the State²².

SUMMARY

The economic condition as well as general administration the princely State of Cooch Behar was not in a good condition before the connection with the British. Land was the most important source of revenue and most of the people were dependent on agriculture.

From the very ancient time agriculture was looked upon as a noble profession Cooch Behar by the people including those of the Brahmans. Hari Dasa (Haria) who became the "Mandal" or the kind of Ciknajhara used to plough lands and produce Karpasa cotton.

Turner in his account in 1783 observed that the general condition of the people of Cooch Behar in comparison with the inhabitant of other neighbouring areas does not appear to be so good. Owing to their poverty he observed that a mother dress up her child and bring it to market, with no other hope, no other view, than to enhance the price she may procure for it. Walter Hamilton also refers to the custom prevalent among the lower classes to dispose of their children for slaves and he gives hient to the extreme poverty of the people in this region.

Many foreign travellers visited this state and they left very short account of this region.

Records regarding revenue and finance were preserved during the period of Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan. These show that when Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan died he left a debt amounting to 50,000 French Arcot coins. Mercer and Chuvet in their report of 1787 State that annually about 10,000 maunds of salt 2 to 3 thousand maunds of treacle and small quantity of iron were imported into Cooch Behar. The merchants purchased from

different markets about one lakh maunds of tobacco, 10,000 maunds of mustard seed and some opium. These goods were exported by boat to Dacca or Murshidabad from Mogalhat or Deviganj.

Captain Turner, an Eye-Witness described in his account in the year 1783, the poor economic condition of the State.

The Officers of the British East India Company began a money lending business in Cooch Behar. The Company's sepoys were also lent money to the peasants and charged a monthly interest of two to three annas in the rupee. They forcibly realised their dues. On account of these undesirable conditions, many people left the country. Generally the rate of interest was not less than 72 per cent per annum and in many cases interest was charged as Rs. 360 per cent per annum.

The resources of the State were not large. The only source of revenue was land and even this was not properly taxed. Absence of suitable means of communication kept the farmer and his produce confined within a small compass and the products of agriculture was in a very low price. Two maunds of paddy for a little above ten annas.

Colonel Hanghton joined his duty as Commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1864 and continued in his post till 1873. He brought many charges and reforms, specially in respect of land revenue administration of Cooch Behar. In the beginning of the British Administration in the State during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, a rupee could bring four seers of Oil.

In the early days of the British administration, the condition of finance was in a deplorable condition. There was no control over the receipts and expenditure of the different departments. The system of preparing Budgets

was not in practice at that time in Cooch Behar. A regular Budget system was introduced under order of the British Government in 1866-67.

In 1864, the total revenue of the State amounting to Rs.7,87,967. It was gradually improved under a wall-organised system of Government. In 1883-84, the receipt from all sources of revenue came upto Rs. 19,65,550 and in 1899-1900 they amounted to Rs. 22,72,608, showing a large increase of about 9½ lakhs of rupees in the course of seventeen years.

Maharaja Narendra Narayan left Government in 1863, with securities representing of Rs. 6,51,300 and coins of sorts in the Treasury of the estimated value of Rs. 5,57,997. Under the British Administration of the State during the minority period of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, there was an aggregate savings of Rs. 12,86,011 from the revenue of the State.

In the course of the sixteen years that followed, large sums were expended on the Palace, the General re-settlement of the State, improvement of communication and construction the Railway and other public works, in all amounting to close upon fifty lakhs of rupees. The whole of this amount could not be met from the ordinary revenue of the State, and there was a total deficit of Rs. 13,03,187, which had to be made up by disposing of the Government securities and contracting a loan of eight lakhs from the British Government.

Prior to 1912 there was no regular banking business in the State. The Marwri Mahajans who have got most part of the trade in their hands, have also been the principal bankers in the State.

The Cooch Behar Banking Corporation was formed in 1912 with a capital of a lakh of rupees divided into 2000 shares of Rs. 50 each and most

part of the Capital has been subscribed by the people of the State.

During the period of the last Maharaja i.e. Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan few remission and concession of land revenue both on agriculture and on non-agricultural land was granted. It was noted that from the beginning of the economic depression, generous remissions of revenue and rent have been allowed from year to year in the State at rates ranging between 7 annas and 4 annas and decreasing as conditions became stabilised.

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- [11] In his letter dated the 21st August, 1788, Captain Dunconson did not admit receiving this amount.
- [13] Munshi Jagannath Ghosh, Rajopakhyan, Protyoksa Khanda, Adhyaya, 4 (in Bengali).
- [13] Letter from H. Druglus, the Commissioner to the Governor General in Council, dated the 29th May, 1790, also see Cooch Behar Select Records, Vl. I, p. 29.
- [14] Annual Administration report of the Cooch Behar State, for the year 1865-66, p. 28.
- [15] Harendra Narayan Choudhury, The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 298.
- [16] Sir Richard Temple's Minute on the Administration of the Cooch Behar dated the 6th July, 1875.
- [18] Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1866-67, p. 21.
- [18] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p.190.
- [19] Ibid, p. 411.
- [20] Ibid, p. 415.
- [21] Annual Administratin report of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1912-13, Para 67.
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CHAPTER - V

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THE COOCH BEHAR STATE : I

I. LAND SYSTEM AND LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION PRIOR TO FIRST SETTLEMENT :

No accurate information regarding the Settlement of Land Revenue of the State can be obtained for the period prior to its coming into contact with the British after the conclusion of the first Bhutan War by virtue of the Treaty of 1773. No old records or papers are now in existence. The Rajopakshyan¹ or the account of the Kings of Cooch Behar, written by Munshi Jay Nath Ghosh during the reign of Maharaja Harendranarayan, is the only recorded history of the State now available ; but this too is more a personal account of the Kings than of the administration and the people. An account of the old institutions of the country is, therefore, now in a manner impossible to obtain, and when pushed back too far, it must be based only on surmises and conjectures². A regular history of the internal and more particularly of the land Revenue administration of Cooch Behar begins with its connection with the British Government in 1773. Although the information since available are far from being full and connected, they pretty fairly disclose the state of things as they existed before the connection with the British³.

In very ancient times, revenue was realised in fraction of the crops grown. Thus a song was heard at Cooch Behar " 1½ buri of cowries is realised as the monthly revenue of one plough"⁴. Even upto the middle of the last century, cowries were current as money. There was a tradition that King Kanteswar (Nilamvara) caused an inscription to be engraved on a stone advising his successors to realise only a very few cowries as revenue for each plough. Though no inscription of Nilamvara or his predecessors has

yet been discovered⁵, it was written in the *Riaz-us-Salatin* that the rulers of Assam collected no revenue, instead, one out of every three subjects performed such work as ordered by the King and infringement of the order, was punished with death. During Hindu and Budhist supremacy, the administration was in the hands of various classes of Samanta Bhuiya or Subordinate officers. During their regime the practice had already been established in Kamarupa measuring land, locating and determining the boundaries. The area, the nature and the boundaries of lands were inscribed on old copperplate inscriptions. A General settlement of lands was directed during the reign of emperor Alauddin, Sekandar Shah the Sultan of Bengal had a settlement made and he fixed revenue accordingly. Sultan Ser Shah, his successor, also ordered a settlement of Bengal. Todarmal, the Minister of Akbar, prepared the famous settlement records known as the "Asal Jama tumar", which were compiled from the Daftar (Office) of the Pathan ruler Daud Khan⁶.

Maharaja Visvasinha (1496-1533 A.D.) created many posts for the better management of his Kingdom. He made Sisyasinha, "Raikat" (Rai Kot = Chieftain of fortress) and Commander-in-chief. Twelve capable men of his own family became "Karjies" (Officers). Barihana was appointed Minister for war and foreign affairs, Baisagu the supreme judicial authority as he was well-versed in the legal shastras, Juddhavaras a General. A Pandit with the title "Sarvabhauma", an astrologer named Srivara and a well-trained Vaidya (Physician) were also present in the royal Court. There were apparently gradations of rank among the officers of Maharaja Visvasingha. The leader of twenty men "Saikia", of a thousand "Hajarika" of above three thousand "Umra". The commanders of twelve Umras was called a "Nabab". This arrangement is anaologous to the ancient custom

(Mahabharat, Adiparva, Adhyaya II). There is some similarity between these posts and the titles of "Mansab" etc. of the Mughal Emperors⁷. Powerful men with the title of "Laskar", "Bhuiya", "Barua" etc. were located at the extreme side of his kingdom to keep peace of the border. The royal revenue consisted of a portion of the produce of the land⁸.

All the copperplate inscriptions dating from the 3th, 6th and 7th Centuries A.D. which have hitherto been discovered are records of grants of lands for Brahmins or establishment of temples. The grantors were all Kings devoted to Hindu religion.

When Mirjumla left Cooch Behar for Assam the peasants of Cooch Behar rose in revolt against Mughal revenue system introduced by Mirjumla. The reason behind the revolt was the new rules and regulations imposed by the Mughals for the collection of revenue⁹. It may also be mentioned here that the Mughal revenue administration demanded revenue in cash from the Paik allotments in lieu of the traditional military service to the State¹⁰. The demand of revenue in cash might have antagonised the peasants of Cooch Behar against the Mughal Rule. Moreover, there were prevailing some sort of slackness in the collection of revenue under the weak kings of Cooch Behar. As a result the peasants joined hands with the dethroned ruler Prannarayan and with the help of the peasants, Prannarayan was successful in recovering the throne of Cooch Behar¹¹. But in the year 1664 Prannarayan again submitted to Shaista Khan, the Mughal Subedar of Bengal and agreed to offer an indemnity of five and half lakhs of rupees. The tribute of the King Prannarayan reached the imperial Court on the 6th December, 1665. The Cooch Behar once again became a vassel state¹².

2. LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AFTER 1773

Before Maharaja Dhairyendra Narayan's return, a Hastabud of Cooch Behar had been prepared by officers of the Company in pursuance of the terms of the treaty. This Hastabud of the revenue was drawn up by Mr. Purling in 1773 and shows that, the revenue units and their revenue were thus fixed :-

Table : V-1

Name of Division	Real Revenue	Misc.Collection	Total
Under the Maharaja	Rs. A. G. K.	Rs. A. G. K.	Rs. A. G. K.
Zilla Baladanga	8,028-6-5-3	7,912-13-16-1	15,941-4-2-0
Zillah Bakalimari (Backelimarry)	4,672-11-19-0	6,828-14-8-1	11,501-10-7-1
Zilla Sitai	5,444-10-13-1	8,366-14-2-3	13,811-8-16-0
Zilla Pinjarinjhar	11,725-7-6-0	6,480-6-7-3	18,205-13-13-3
Zilla Lalbazar Jhar	8,330-10-13-2	1,562-5-5-3	9,892-15-19-1
Zilla Abuar pathar	2,437-14-2-0	1-080-5-2-2	3,518-3-4-2
Zilla Mohanpur	5,991-5-18-2	N.A.	5,991-5-18-2
Zilla Teldhar	5,596-12-0-1	192-9-0-1	5,789-5-0-2
Zilla Laksimpur	5,157-0-17-1	130-14-12-0	5,287-15-8-1
Zilla Bihar	399-5-10-3	10,424-8-7-0	10,823-13-17-3
Total :	57,784-5-6-1	43,979-0-2-2	1,00,764-0-8-3
Under the Nazir			
Dakurhat	15,910-1-17-0	5,400-11-4-0	21,310-13-1-0
Gitaldaha	24,976-14-13-1	7,508-14-10-3	32,458-13-4-0
Rampur	6,668-10-15-1	1,794-1-1-3	8,462-11-7-0
Chakla Purbabhaga	14,404-3-0-3	8,823-14-18-2	23,228-1-10-1
Rahimganj	54,451-2-0-3	11,093-5-8-3	65,544-7-9-2
Total :	1,16,411-0-7-0	34,062-15-0-3	1,51,031-15-10-3

Name of Division	Real Revenue	Misc.Collection	Total
Under the Dewan :			
Patchhara	10,831-14-12-3	2,132-13-12-1	12,964-12-10-0
Revenue of land newly cultivated in 1181.	6,917-9-14-2	N.A.	6,917-9-14-2
Grand Total :		Rs.	2,71,678-6-4-0

Minus :

Revenue of some land of Chakla boda included in the revenue of the divisions of Dakurhat and Gitaldahá.	2,865-0-0-0
Revenue from rent free lands such as <u>Jairgir</u> , <u>Brahmattar</u> and <u>Debuttar</u> .	51,878-7-18-2
Expenses for realisation in the <u>mufussil</u>	17,814-8-10-2
Total :	72,558-0-9-0

Balance Rs. 1,99,120-5-15-0

Of the aforesaid 1,99,120-5-15 Narayani coins, half, about 99,560-2-17-2 (Narayani) was to be payable to the Company, under the treaty and later this figure was fixed in perpetuity¹³. Like Chakla Boda, Chakla Purnabhadg was in Cooch Behar Zemindary but its revenue as included in the Hustabud had never been excluded from the calculation of the tribute¹⁴.

The Revenue of the personal properties of the Maharaja the Dewan, the Nazir and other members of the royal family and other rent free lands of this nature, was not included in the Hustabud. The collection of the revenue due to the company was delegated to Sajwal Mansaram, who with an officer and some soldiers to assist him, was posted in Rahimganj. When the Maharaja requested the removal of this officer, a surety was demanded for the dues of the company and Hanaram Sen stood surety on behalf of

Maharaja. The Sajwal (Tehsildar) and the soldiers of the company then left Cooch Behar, and thereafter the responsibility for the tribute was with the khasnavis Kasinath Lahiri. The Company's Sajwal had further occasion to visit Cooch Behar in 1777.

In 1777 when Mr. Purling was at Rungpur a proposal was made on behalf of the Maharaja to pay the tribute due to the Company in the current coin of the Company. Though there was a loss of Rs.7,600 in exchange, Mr. Purling submitted a report to the Revenue council recommending this proposal and after this he ordered Sajwal Krishnamohan to return from Cooch Behar.

In 1777 Khasnavis Kasinath Lahiri was removed from his post and Syamchandra Roy was appointed in his place. In that year, Sristidhar Bhaiya who had again been appointed Sajwal, came to Cooch Behar and collected revenue upto October, 1779. In 1780, another Sajwal was appointed. Though the Sajwals were under the Collector, signature of the Nayak Kazi the officer of the Nawab appeared in the orders addressed to them. In 1781 and 1782 Debi Sing controlled the collection of revenue. In 1781 Hararam Sen had again offered surety, and collected the revenue through his own officers. In 1790 Kasinath Lahiri on behalf of the Maharaja, and the Sajwal of Mr. Goodlad on behalf of the Company, collected revenue. From 1784, - the Maharaja's officer Kashinath Lahiri was the collector of revenue. The system lasted for ten years following the treaty and was obviously most unsatisfactory, the Sajwals of the company collected the half of the revenue due to them, and the Maharaja's officers again appeared to realise the other half. When the officers of the company sent money to Rungpur, the Khasnavis or some officers of similar status signed the chalan¹⁵.

At this time, there was a great dissatisfaction among the raiyats of Rungpur under the oppression of Devi Singh, who collected the revenue. Debi Singh's view was, - "It is a matter of great difficulty that in comparison with other places of Bengal there is great distress and lack of foodstuffs among the peasants living near Rangpur. No property is found in their houses except during the harvest. At other times, they subsist with extreme difficulty. As a result of famine a large number has died. One or two earthen vessels and a thatched hut from their only possession and it is a matter of doubt whether by selling up a thousand of them, Rupees ten can be realised"¹⁶.

The paper value of this report was not even-rated by the subjects of Cooch Behar who were aware of the actual methods of Devi Singh. At length, this patience ended, the subjects of Rangpur revolted against Devi Singh. In January, 1783 A.D. the rebels openly marred in the north of Rungpur and choose one Nuruddin as their Nawab and Daya Sil his Dewan. The murder of the Naib of the Zemindar of Tapa was the signal for the raiyats of parganas Kakina, Fatehpur, Karjirhat and Tapa to combine in killing Naibs and Gomostas whenever found. Whom Gourmohan Choudhuri, the Zeminder of Dimla opposed the insurgents, he also was killed. They invited the subjects of Cooch Behar and Dinajpur to array themselves under their so-called Nawab. They published an order forbidding payment of revenue, and organised "Dhing Kharcha (Subscription for revolt) to carry on their movement. Devi Singh had to seek the protection of his great friend Mr. Goodlad, the Collector who sent some soldiers to check the revolt with the result that a very large number of raiyats were wounded, killed or taken after engagements at Patgram and Moghalhat¹⁷. From the papers available

at the time Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan it was found that when Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan died he left a debt amounting to 50,000 French Arcot coins. The income and expenditure of Cooch Behar in Narayani coin for the year 1774-75 to 1776-77 were as follows :

Table : V-2

Year	Income	Expenditure
1774-75	1,98,763	1,97,831
1775-76	1,03,022	97,104
1776-77	1,62,547	1,62,231

The following sums were described as debts which was included in the income of these three years, 70,383, 39,811 and 18,556¹⁸.

This was the situation which compelled the British interfere in the matter of revenue administration of Cooch Behar State for their own interest i.e. for collection of tribute as per treaty of 1773.

3. DIFFERENT KINDS OF LAND

From very early times the land have been divided into two kinds (a) revenue paying and (b) rent free. Persons holding the first kind of land had to pay revenue to the State. The holders of rent-free land, were private individuals who obtained them for special purposes and enjoyed them free of any charge¹⁹. Lands were also granted to persons for doing personal service to the State, and these were called Jaigirs. These lands were also rent-free and were held by the grantee during the tenure of his service without paying any rent²⁰.

The revenue-paying lands were originally divided into Mal, Debottar, and Khangi. The first was available for State revenue, the second was dedicated for the maintenance of the worship of the deities ; and the third was set apart for the maintenance of the Maharaja's household. The Khangi lands were incorporated with the Mal lands in 1864. The Debottar lands were included in the State Revenue roll after money grants had been made for the performance of the religious rites and ceremonies. The persons responsible for the payment of the Land Revenue immediately to the State, or to the persons authorised to receive the same, were called Jotedars. In 1774 the revenue payable was found to consist of two parts viz. assal (Original rent) and abwab (additional cesses) which were then consolidated into one. The settlements used to be made annually without any measurement of the land. It is interesting to note that Gadadhar Sinha (1681-1696) the King of Assam brought many surveyors (Amin) from Cooch behar and Bengal to engage them in working out the actual amount of lands within the Kingdom²¹. Modanarayan (1665-1680) the King of Cooch Behar is said to have ordered for a general survey of lands occupied by his subjects in 1674²². In 1774 the assessment was made under no fixed rates although the three different rates of Rs.20 per bigha (i.e. 12 bighas and 16 kathas) for the first kind of land, Rs. 15/- for the second kind and Rs. 10 for the third kind appear to have been in existence from old time²³. A Sajwals (a class of state officers) through whom the collections were made realised from the raiyats certain extra charges which were not included in the Public accounts but formed about a fifth of the whole revenue. The revenue suffered loose owing to the mal-administration and oppressions of the State officials²⁴, and in 1790 the revenue paying estates, were formed out to outsiders called Ijaradars, at first from year to year and then for

terms of 5 years. As Profit the Ijaradars were authorised to collect from the raiyats two charges called Ijaradari and Saranjami forming together one sixth part of the Jamas, payable by the raiyats. Khash collections, however, continued in some mahals. Under the Ijaradari system, the raiyats were placed entirely at the mercy of the farmers. Owing to the rack renting and extortion by the Ijaradars some raiyats left the State. Regarding the evils of the Ijaradari systems the following may be quoted from the Administration Report of the State for 1886-87 :-

" The lands of the State are mostly let in farm, the farms being taken by the ladies of the Palace, the amla, and the friends and relatives of the amla etc. As the amlas do not settle in the Raja's territory, a great portion of the farmers, namely, those who are retired amla and amla's relatives, are absentees, and great portion of those who are residents in the country, remit their profits to their houses in British Zillas. Owing to this cause and the practice of subletting the profits of the farmers make scarcely any show and the country is devoid of any class corresponding to the Zamindars, Talukdars etc. of British District"²⁵.

The Ijaradari system also fostered extensive sub-infendation and in this connection may be quoted the following from the report submitted by the then Dewan of the State in 1872 on the subject of the land Revenue system before the British Commissioner :

" I am sorry to state that there are no old records from which the origin of Jotes and the gradual development of the present system can be traced out. I believe, however, that originally the jotedars were the cultivators of the soil and the residents of this Raj. Generally there was an

influx of the foreigners from other districts, they were more intelligent than the Cooch Beharis, and they began to usurp all the real power in the State. Under a Weak Government their attempts to enrich themselves even at the sacrifice of their principles could never prove unsuccessful, and the result was that many jotes gradually passed into their hands. The resident jotedars could not often protect themselves against the oppression of the ladies of the palace and the amlas of the State ; they, therefore, naturally went to some of these persons, gave them their jotes without taking any consideration money, and became their under-tenants (Chukanidars), so that they might rest in peace. This well known process was called Lagani. It ruined many resident jotedars"²⁶.

As the country had never been measured, the area and situation of a jote could not be known for certain, and encroachment on lands left unoccupied were very common and resulted in a considerable loss of revenue. In the office of the State there was no Register of the revenue free estates nor a complete list of the Jotedars and the revenue payable by them. A general survey and settlement of the State was decided upon in 1864 to remedy all these defects.

4. FIRST SURVEY AND SETTLEMENT OF THE STATE

Upto the time of the British Government assumed charge of the country on behalf of the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan during his minority in 1864, this had never been done. Although isolated jotes had been here and there measured in the crude native form and there had been a topographical survey of the country under Mr. Pemberton in 1858, they were of no use for the purpose of a regular settlement. Thus, when the British Government took charge of the State one of the first steps taken by the Commissioner Colonel Hanghton was to reform the abuses under the farming system ; and with this

view he proposed and carried out a survey of the State under Mr. Donnel, Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Survey, who was specially deputed by the British Government for the purpose²⁷. While reforming the Ijardari System Col. Hangton was not for doing away with it altogether. He wanted to create a middle class in the country like the Zemindars and Talukdars of Bengal "Who should", to quote his own words", form the bones and sinews of the country".

But Mr. Dalton in his report observed that "It must be borne out in mind that though fully alive to the abuses which existed under the Ijardari system colonel Hangton was not in favour of replacing it by a system of khas Tehsil. He may have thought that there were disadvantages in the khas Tehsil system, which out weighed the probable benefits, to the cultivators. He may have doubted whether it was not better to fall into the hands of one master than of many underlings. And undoubtedly any reforms in this direction must have proceeded pari passu with the reforms in the morale of the administrative staff to be effectual. Colonel Hangton was somewhat carried away by his desire to form an opulent middle class. But he overlooked the fact that the existing body of farmers were composed principally of foreigners, of amla, and often Ayes of the Rajbari. This was not the class out of which a resident middle class could be formed with advantage"²⁸.

Mr. O' Donnel's survey was concluded in 1870. It was the first survey of the State ever attempted in which a proper demarcation was made by Taluks and parganas, the latter of which divisions had not existed before. He divided the State into six main circuits and each circuit became a Pargana. These Parganas were named Mekhliganj, Mathabhanga, Lalbazar, Dinhat, Cooch Behar and Tufanganj.

At the same time a settlement was made for Pargana Rahimgunj and the settlement operation of this portion was concluded for 16 years from 1869.

It was subsequently found out that in fixing the annual revenue a deduction of 40 percent of the Jama obtained under sanctioned rates, had been made by mistake²⁹. On receiving a report on this subject the Government curtailed the term from 16 to 8 years. The amount of revenue obtained by this settlement was Rs. 26,791. But for the mistake referred to above it would have been about Rs. 44,537. The old Jama was Rs. 16,833. The increase obtained thus amounting to Rs. 9,958. This increase was not charged at once but was distributed over five years.

After the conclusion of the settlement the tract came to be called Pargana Rahimganj. It is to be noted that the Revenue Survey of the State under Mr. O' Donnel, which finally fixed the number of the Parganas at Six, had not yet been concluded. The Settlement of Rahimganj, which, as already observed, had been concluded on wrong principles, had to be done again and a fresh completion report for this part of the country was submitted by the then Dewan in 1877³⁰.

The General rates adopted for the settlement were the following :-

Table: V-3

	Rs. As. P.
For Homestead and garden lands -	2-8-0 per bigha.
For bamboo lands -	1-2-0 per bigha.
For other cultivated lands including tharching grass lands and small <u>beels</u> of less than 2 bighas in extent.	0-8-0 per bigha.
For fallow and <u>jungle</u> lands.	0-1-0 per bigha.

A reduction of a fourth of these rates, except in the case of fallow and jungle lands, was allowed in some tracts of the country owing to their bad condition and want of clearance.

The total amount of revenue secured by the Settlement was Rs.9,38,610 giving an increase of Rs.5,75,471 as detailed below :-

Tabl : V-4

Pargana	Old Jama	First Settlement Jama	Increase
Mekhliganj	54,169	1,29,555	75,386
Mathabhanga	71,246	1,72,904	1,01,658
Lalbazar	74,476	1,34,198	59,722
Dinhata	76,451	1,74,034	97,583
Cooch Behar	71,520	2,32,040	1,60,520
Tufanganj	16,277	95,879	79,602
Total :	3,64,139	9,38,610	5,74,471

(Source : H. N. Choudhuri, The Cooch Behar State and its land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 453).

The amount of increase obtained by the State did not, however, represent the increase which devolved upon the jotedars. Under the Ijaradari system they had to pay two charges of Ijaradari and Saranjami, amounting to a sixth of the revenue, which were not charged under the Khash collection system. The actual increase, the Jotedars had now to pay was the amount of the increase shown above, minus a sixth of the former revenue which amounted to Rs. 60,690 or a net total of Rs. 5,13,781. Nor does this amount represent the net increase due to the settlement alone. As already noticed large quantities of invalid rent-free, Mokarari and Jaigir lands were resumed in the course of the settlement operations and brought under assessment khas lands newly cultivated and incorporated with, but forming no part of, the old jotes, were also assessed with the lands of the jotes.

Of the total amount of revenue secured by the first settlement Rs.7,188 was on account of Mokarari Mahals or permanently settled estates, which were not subject to future enhancements³¹.

One important feature of the operations was to record all the different grades of undertenures of which there were no less than six at the time. The holdings immediately below the jotes were called chukanis, and the successive lower grades were the Darchukanies, Dara-dar-chukanis, Tasya-Chukanis, Tali-Chukanis and Tasya tali Chukanis. But in Ijaradari system, there used to be as many as seven grades of tenants, from Jotedar to the lowest grade of tenants. The reform brought all of them to record, apportioned amounts to be paid by each of them severally and fixed once for all the rents to be realised.

The First settlement was concluded with the Jotedars for a term which varied from 8 to 13 years for different parganas and expired with 1883-84. His Highness was, however, pleased to extend it to 5 years more.

SUMMARY :

State of affairs before 1773.

No accurate information regarding the settlement of land and land Revenue of the country can be obtained prior to 1773. A regular history of the internal and more particularly of the Land Revenue Administration of Cooch Behar State begins with its connection with the British Government in 1773.

Different kinds of lands

From very early times the land appears to have been divided into two kinds :

- (a) Revenue - paying,
- (b) Rent free.

Persons holding the first kind of land had to pay revenue to the State. The holders of rent free land, on the other hand, were private individuals who obtained them for special purposes and enjoyed them free of any charge. Lands were also granted to persons for doing personal service to the State and these were called Jaigirs. These too were, strictly speaking, rent free and were held by the grantee during his tenure of his service without paying any rent.

Revenue-paying lands were classified under Mal, Debuttar and Khangi. The first was available for State Revenue, the Second was for religious purposes and the third was set apart for the maintenance of the Maharaja's household. The Khangi lands subsequently disappeared as a separate class of land in 1864 when Colonel Hangton incorporated them with Mal lands. Similarly, after money-grants had been made for the performance of the religious rites, the Debuttar lands were diverted from their original purpose as no longer necessary and were brought over to the State revenue roll.

Some important features of Land Revenue.

The persons paying the charge on the land immediately to the State, or to the persons authorised to receive the same, were called jotedars and formed the first grade in the tenancy of the country. Originally, these men were perhaps the cultivators of the soil and residents of the State, and the different grades of under tenures did not probably exist.

When Mr. Purling made the Hustabood on account of revenue in 1774 he found that the revenue payable by the rayat consisted of two parts, namely, assal or original rent, and abooab, or additional cesses, which were then consolidated into one.

There was no fixity of rental and regular pattahs were not granted to the tenants.

The settlement of land revenue was made annually, but the land was never measured and assessment was made under no fixed rates although three different rates appear to have been in existence in the country from old time.

Mode of collection.

The collection was made by the State through its own officers called Sajwals. Over and above the rent and abooab, the raiyats had to pay certain charges called maffasil khurcha, which were not included in the public account. These formed about a fifth of the whole revenue. This system of Collection were caused loss of revenue of the State.

Ijaradari system.

The number of Jotedars, stood in the way of successful khas collection of revenue under a system of Government not well organised and not properly administered. It was found more convenient to farm out the revenue paying estates to outsiders who were made responsible for the State Revenue. These and similar other reasons led to the introduction of the Ijaradari system of collection into the State by Mr. Douglas in 1790. In fact it was a necessity of the time for securing the State revenue, and khas collection requiring money and organisation and exercise of close supervision, was not possible under the loose form of Government of those days.

The settlement under this system was made with the highest bidder on approved security.

The rent of land at the time of Mr. Douglas were Rs. 20 per bish or 13 bighas of first class land, Rs. 15 per bish of secured class land and Rs.10 per bish of third class land.

The settlements were at first made annually. From Mr. Ahmuty's time they were made for 5 years.

The defects of Ijaradar system.

The annual and short term settlements with outsiders on the highest available bids, leaving the cultivators of the soil at almost absolute mercy of the farmers and that was the ruin of the peasantry, which means the entire population in Cooch Behar.

The high officials of the State used to take out the farms and could thus easily make exactions from the rayats. Even in the letting out the farms they always had an eye to thei interest and got the farms on easy terms to the detriment of the interest of the State.

The country under this system is the extensive sub-infendation which it has fostered. It is not known from what period the under-tenure, such as Chukanies, Darchukanies and so forth, have their origin. It is probable that some of them, at least the one higher in the scale existed even in the pro-ijaradari times. But it also a fact that the oppressions and undue influence exercises by the officials, farmers converted many jotedars into chukanidars with a corresponding lowering of the status of the undertenants below the jotedar.

This unsatisfactory state of things was not, however, without any excuse. Even if the farmers were inclined to be just and unexacting in their dealings with the jotedars, they often found themselves quite helpless in ascertaining what their just dues were. The country never been measured and the farms used to be given out on a very loose system, without properly defining the area which was covered by each lease.

The only effectual remedy for this crying evil was a general measurement of the whole state, together with the recording of rights and assessing the rents due by the tenants.

The First Survey and settlement of lands :

The first survey of the State was concluded in 1870 by Mr. O' Donnel and this settlement operations was concluded in 1884.

The Ijardari system of collection was abolished by Sir George Campbell from 1872, and that of khas collection introduced from 1st April, 1872.

The total amount of revenue secured by the Settlement was Rs.9,38,610 giving an increase of Rs.5,74,471. The Jotedars had now to pay this increase because they held so much land more than what was comprised within their original holdings.

Of the total amount of revenue secured by the first settlement Rs.7,188 was on account of the Mokarari or permanently settled estates, which were not subject to future enhancements.

One important features of this operations was to record all the different grades of under-tenures of which there were no less than six at the time.

The settlement was concluded with the jotedars for a term which varied from 8 to 13 years for different parganas and expired with 1883-84. His Highness was however, extended it to 5 years more.

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CHAPTER - VI

PATIT CHARCHA SETTLEMENT OF THE STATE OF COOCH BEHAR : II

1. INTRODUCTION

Patit or waste lands are those lands that do not pay any revenue, because it is still waste and unoccupied. When British rule began in Bengal, it was estimated that from one-third to one-half of the total area of the province was waste and uncultivated¹. There were also great tracts of waste lands in the district of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling².

In Cooch Behar the quantity of land lying waste and uncultivated at the time of the first Settlement was 7,16,756 bighas. Out of total 23,34,487 bighas of assessed and khas lands, 7,16,756 bighas or 30 percent were waste and uncultivated. The largest quantity of waste land, about 1,79,241 bighas are in Tufanganj Pargana and the percentage of waste land was also the largest i.e. 50% in that Pargana. The best cleared tracts of the State were Dinahata and Lalbazar, where waste lands formed only 24 per cent of the entire area³.

2. RULES REGARDING DISPOSAL OF WASTE LANDS

Various rules had from time to time been issued in different districts of British India, for the disposal of Government waste lands. In 1861, under the Viceroyalty of Lord Canning, the subject was first seriously considered. The first ideas on the subject were developed in the minute of the waste lands in 1861⁴.

The first Settlement of Cooch Behar State, concluded with the Jotedars varied from 8 to 13 years and ended in 1883-84. An extension of 5 years

on the same terms was made and from 1886-87 Re-settlement was started. In the meantime another petty settlement known as the Patit Charcha Settlement had taken place between 1884-1886. This settlement was taken in hand to assess the fallow or waste lands which had come under cultivation since the first settlement. The increase of revenue by the Patit Charcha Settlement was Rs. 68,824.

When the first settlement was ordered the intention of the British Government was that the next settlement of Cooch Behar State would be after the attainment of the maturity of Sri Nripendra Narayan, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar⁵.

3. ATTEMPTS TO MEASURE WASTE LANDS IN COOCH BEHAR

The total quantity of Patit land shown as assessed or cultivated in jotes in the first settlement papers is 5,68,721 bighas. There is no doubt that a portion of this Patit land had already been under cultivation. The rate of rent for patit land is an anna a bigha, while that for cultivated land the rate is 8 annas a bigha⁶. Subsequently in his letter No. 1590 dated 15.1.1883, the Dewan observes that out of 5,68,721 bighas of Patit lands, the quantity which has come under cultivation is not less than 1,48,000 bighas, though it may not be more.

Mr. G. J. B. T. Dalton, the then Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar in his letter No. 1560 dated, Cooch Behar, 20.1.1883, wrote to the Commissioner of Rajshayee and Cooch Behar Division and observed the following.

[a] The Dewan of Cooch Behar submitted a report on the subject. He gave figures which shows that, if assessed at the existing rates, the land

included as Patit in Jotes at 1 annas a bigha, but now under cultivation, would yield an increment to the State Revenue of over Rs. 60,000/-.

[b] The patit lands should not be assessed as the current rates that should be left unassessed until a new settlement be made some years hence, when it is at least probable that the existing rates will be raised, and when the sudden increase of rent caused both by the increased rates for all lands, and the new assessment of Patit lands, may cause to sudden revolution of the ryot's domestic economy, and find him unable to re-adjust it quickly enough to meet the suddenness of the increased demand.

[c] Apart from these arguments which are on the ryot's side of the question, there is no reason why the Maharaja's revenue should loss of Rs.60,000/- annually. Further, no measures have yet been taken to provide for the registration of transfer of tenures, and in consequence the existing settlement records are fast becoming unreliable as evidence of existing rights. The re-measurement of jotes, with a view to the assessment of Patit lands will afford admirable opportunity for the correction of these records, and will provide valuable data for the carrying out of the next settlement.

[d] While assessing the Patit lands, a reservation should be made in favour of lands brought under cultivation by settlers. There is reason to believe if any general attempt to assess these lands were now made, the settlers would abandon their jotes and look out for fresh tracts of virgin lands elsewhere, allowing the present clearing to fall out of cultivation.

[e] The Dewan recommends eight years extension of the existing rates of revenue. The Deputy Commissioner did not incline towards so long an extension. The Dewan thinks that three years will not be a sufficient time for the trade of the State to develop itself, as the extension of the railway

system will cause it to do in time, and the extension for longer period for next settlement the better data should have for fixing rates upto the limit which the people can afford to pay.

[f] Land is already more valuable in the State than it was. A network of good roads through the country and the town of Cooch Behar is about to be connected with the Government line by a branch of railway. Hence the Deputy Commissioner, Cooch Behar suggests extension of the existing rates for a period of five years only from the expiration of the present settlement.

[g] The experience of the last Settlement is that, it is not so much the increased rate that presses on the people as the effect of settlement at enhanced rates with retrospective effect. As a result they get the copy of the terij served on them and by that time there are several years' arrears of enhanced rate to be paid up.

A proclamation was issued by His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur on the 9th November, 1883 on the subject of extension of the period of the first Settlement and regarding assessment of rent of Patit lands which was brought under cultivation since the first settlement. The tenure of the 1st settlement was extended for 5 years from 1884-85, with the exception that all patit lands brought under cultivation since the 1st Settlement will be assessed at full rates.

The Patit Charcha operations were supplementary to the first settlement ; only the fallow lands included within the jotes in the course of the first Settlement and brought under cultivation latter on were assessed at the rate applicable to cultivated lands. No new rates had to be fixed for these operations.

4. QUANTITY OF WASTE LANDS

The quantity of land lying waste and uncultivated at the time of the first settlement, concerned with the portion of the State under the re-settlement, was 7,16,756 bighas, the details of which is given below :-

Table : VI-1

Name of Pargana	Total of assessed and khas lands	Quantity of waste land.			Percentage
		Recorded as khas	Incorporated with jotes.	Total	
Mekhliganj	3,14,220	11,685	82,349	94,034	30
Mathabhanga	4,03,940	13,151	94,968	1,08,119	26
Lalbazar	3,14,934	19,557	55,068	74,625	24
Dinhata	3,83,755	12,762	77,012	89,774	24
Cooch Behar	5,62,057	34,374	1,36,589	1,70,963	30
Tufanganj	3,55,578	63,544	1,15,697	1,79,241	50
Total :	23,34,487	1,55,073	5,61,683	7,16,756	30

It appeared that out of a total 23,34,487 Bighas of assessed and khas lands, 7,16,756 bighas or 30% was waste and uncultivated. The largest quantity of waste land i.e. 1,79,241 bighas were in Tufanganj and the percentage of waste area was also the largest i.e. 50% in that Pargana. The best cleared area of the State were Dinhata and Lalbazar, where waste lands formed only 24% of the total area⁷.

At the time of re-settlement of Cooch Behar State i.e. in the year 1877, the area covered by waste land was 6,44,991 bighas. The paraganawise detail information is given below :-

Table : VI-2

Name of Pargana	Total of assessed and khas lands	Quantity of Waste lands			% of waste lands on total lands
		Recorded as khas	Incorporated with jotes	Total	
Mekhliganj	3,25,851	8,580	68,638	77,218	23
Mathabhanga	4,11,498	6,626	1,00,835	1,07,461	25
Lalbazar	3,16,530	5,613	53,831	59,444	19
Dinhata	3,94,649	11,599	66,685	78,464	20
Cooch Behar	5,67,113	27,323	1,46,764	1,74,087	30
Tufanganj	3,62,726	54,801	93,516	1,48,319	40
Total :	23,78,367	1,14,542	5,30,449	6,44,991	27

There was a decrease of 71,765 bighas of waste and uncultivated area at the time of the resettlement in comparison with the first settlement. Though there has been a decrease of waste and uncultivated lands by 10% over the figures of the first settlement. There is still a large area of 6,44,991 bighas of waste land exists in the country at the time of resettlement operation. This makes up about 25% of the total area of the State, and is a little larger than the extent of pargana Cooch Behar which is the biggest of all parganas. These huge waste lands are kept by the people for the purpose of grazing their cattle. These area also supply them with fuel or firewood without any cost⁸.

There are two types of waste or uncultivated area in the State of Cooch Behar, they are

- [1] San or thatching-grass land.
- [2] Patit lands, sub-divided into -
 - [a] Laik, or fit for cultivation, and
 - [b] Garlaik, not so fit.

The following statement shows the distribution of these lands during the period of re-settlement of Cooch Behar State⁹ :-

Table : VI-3

Name of Pargana	San or thatching grass land	Patit Land			Ground Total
		Laik	Gar Laik	Total	
1. Mekhliganj	10,450	56,279	12,359	68,638	79,088
2. Mathabhanga	13,262	93,411	7,424	1,00,835	1,14,097
3. Lalbazar	8,978	50,008	3,823	53,831	62,809
4. Dinhata	14,293	60,176	6,689	66,865	81,158
5. Cooch Behar	14,360	1,37,523	9,241	1,46,764	1,61,124
6. Tufanganj	6,608	90,126	3,390	93,516	1,00,124
Total :	67,951	4,87,523	42,926	5,30,449	5,98,400
% of each kind on total lands	3.2	22.9	2.0	24.9	28.1

It will be seen from the above table that more than 28% of the re-settled area is composed of San or Thatching grass land and patit land, which are not cultivated by the farmer presently. The thatching grass and Garlaik Patit lands, or a little above 5% of the entire area, are never expected to be cultivated. These two classes of lands, therefore may be called the permanently unbroken lands within the assessed area.

Laik Patit lands, which form about 23% of the total area under re-settlement, are on the other hand temporary jungles which form a sort of reserve fund of the cultivator and which will be in time brought under cultivation. Thus, the larger is the quantity of this lands in a holding the better off is the rayat from the stand point of agricultural economy.

These lands are the source of future income or reserve fund of the cultivator. This type of area is the largest in Taufanganj and the smallest in Dinhata. This inequality of the Laik patit lands in the different Parganas shows the progress of cultivation made in the State since the first settlement. Many jotes under re-settlement were in existence at the time of the first settlement. These lands had been under cultivation for more than 20 years before the re-settlement was made. During the period of interval between 1st Settlement and re-settlement large clearance must have been made and when the lands were classified during the re-settlement, there was not probably much patit land in them. In some places, a good number of jotes became injured by the action of the rivers and other reasons and lands that had been cultivated in 1872 came to be patit in 1890, such changes in cultivation appears to have increased since 1872¹⁰.

The table given below compares the position of Patit lands existing at the time of the re-settlement with those at the time of the first settlement¹¹ :-

Table : VI-4

Name of Pargana	Quantity of Patit lands at		Variation in Bighas	Percentage of variation
	The first settlement in bighas	Re-settlement in bighas		
1. Mekhliganj	82,349	68,638	- 13,711	- 16.6
2. Mathabhanga	94,968	1,00,835	5,867	+ 6.1
3. Lalbazar	55,067	53,835	- 1,236	- 2.2
4. Dinhata	77,012	66,865	- 10,147	- 13.1
5. Cooch Behar	1,36,589	1,46,764	+ 10,175	+ 7.4
6. Tufanganj	1,15,697	93,516	- 22,181	- 19.5
Total :	5,61,683	5,30,449	- 31,234	- 5.5

From the above table it is clear that except in Parganas Mathabhanga and Cooch Behar, patit lands decreased everywhere, and that the total for the whole State shows a decrease of 31,234 bighas or 5.5% of the lands recorded at the time of 1st Settlement. This decrease is partly due to the increase of cultivation, and partly to diluvion or relinquishment of bad jotes or waste lands. Thus, while on the one hand old wastes are expected to gradually disappear to a great extent, new ones will as surely come into existence, and make up the deficiency caused by the annual clearance. In this way some expense of waste and uncleared areas will continue to cover the face of the country and can never be fully expunged.

The tribals specially Meches and Garos are very good "breakers" of jungles. The local farmers encouraged them to settle on the tract to be cleared by the advance of paddy and money. These tribal people generally live in the jungle. They took up the work of clearing the jungle on behalf of their masters and after the work they leave the place to make room for the local tenants. Sometimes these tribes take out a lease directly from the State and settle down as jotedars. But they are so shy and fond of roving that they can very seldom be counted among the permanent settlers¹².

The clearance of a jungle lands are made by burning down the grass and weeds. This is generally started in the month of March, when the leaves become dry. The ground is then tilled. In the first year of operation heavy tilling is neither necessary nor possible. The farmers make it a point to any how raise a crop on the clearance, both with the object of keeping down the jungle and of making some income on the capital outlay, and in this they are generally successful without a thorough ploughing, owing to the innate richness of the virgin soil.

5. PAL SYSTEM OF CLEARANCE OF WASTE LANDS

The Pal system is in vogue in the country. The practice of giving jungle lands to rayats for clearance free of rent for the first few years of the tenancy is called the Pal system. The term of the Pal or remission of rent, generally varies from 1 to 5 years, according to the nature of the jungle. After the expiration of that period the land is brought under assessment.

This system of granting Pal for the purpose of effecting a clearance of jungles is not always advantageous to the cultivator. The assessment of land is made according to the nature of the soil, the rate for jungle land is two annas per bigha and that for the cultivated land of the lowest class is four annas and more. When a man takes a plot of jungle land for a fixed term which is in no case less than ten years, he gets the whole at two annas a bigha, if he begins to pay from the commencement. But under the Pal system, the assessment is made after the land has been brought undercultivation, and thus full rates for cultivated lands are charged as soon as the land is taxed. This means that after the first five years the liability on account of revenue becomes at least double of what it would otherwise have been. And as a settlement concluded at this stage may often be for a long term, the rayat practically becomes a loser.

In Cooch Behar State there was no specific rule for the settlement of waste land. But in other parts of British India there were many rules from time to time for the settlement of waste lands. In Assam the first step in this direction was suggested in 1835 by Jenkins and on 6th March, 1838 First Special Grant Rules known as the lease hold grants, were issued by the Government of Bengal. These rules were applicable to the Assam Valley Districts only.

In spite of very favourable terms for the settlement of waste lands in this rule, very few persons, however, availed of them, and those who availed them, the majority failed in their speculation¹³. On 23rd October, 1854, revised rules for leasehold grants were issued.

The scheme of disposing of land in free sample originated in Lord Canning's minute of October, 1861, The Secretary of State took objection to some of the provisions and fresh set of rules was issued on 30th August, 1862. The rules issued by Lord Canning provided for the disposal of land to the applicant at fixed rates. These Rules were in force till August, 1872 when the Lt. Governor of Bengal stopped further grant pending revision of Rule¹⁴.

In February, 1874 revised fee-simple rules were issued. The changes introduced in the revised rules were intended to ensure a more accurate definition of land granted and more careful enquiry into the existing rights. The revised fee-simple rules worked well. These rules continued to be in force until April, 1876. Immediately after the publication of these rules, the province of Assam was separated from Bengal and was formed into a chief Commissionership.

In 1876, sale in fee-simple with revenue-free title was abolished and new rules for the settlement of waste land for Special cultivation were issued. Under these rules, the land was leased for 30 years at a progressive rules. These New lease Rules gave a permanent, heritable and transferable right of use and occupancy in the land leased, subject to the payment of land revenue, and local taxes and cesses. After the expiration of the 30 years period, the land was to be assessed in accordance with the law for the time being in force in the district in which the land was situated. But the rate of assessment under no circumstances was to be more than that already in

existence for the most highly assessed lands in that district cultivated with rice or other ordinary agricultural produce¹⁵.

The New lease Rules of 1876, with the modification mentioned above continued to be in force in the province of Assam. In 1886, when the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation was passed, these rules were revised and re-issued¹⁶.

Western Duars was the neighbouring British District of Cooch Behar State. In Western Duars there were several rules introducing time to time for settlement of Waste lands.

In 1875 the Scheduled Districts Act (Act. XIX of 1874) was declared to be in force in the Western Duars. In the same year another act known as waste land claims Act was also extended to this district. In 1895, the Bengal Rent Act of 1859 was extended to the Western Duars, with its amending Act of 1862. These acts remained in force until Bengal Tenancy Act was extended to the Western Duars in the year 1899. The Bengal Rent Act was extended in the Western Duars with some modifications. The Bengal Tenancy Act did not apply at all to any lands in the Duars leased under the Waste Land Rules.

The first British Settlement of the Western Duars was made by Mr. W. O. A. Beckett in 1877. The Second Settlement was made in 1880. The next Settlement was made in 1889 - 1895 by Mr. Sunder who was followed by Mr. Milligan in 1906-1916. The last Settlement before independence was made by Rai Bahadur Bejoy Behari Mukherjee in 1931-35.

The Arable waste land Rules were first issued in 1875. These were amplified and revised in 1888, 1917 and 1936¹⁷.

In Bengal, the waste lands were settled without any survey ; most of them included and were freely allowed to include as their own - as much of the waste as naturally adjoining the Estate. It was always contemplated, that, as the land Revenue was fixed in the lump for the whole estate, the extension of cultivation into the parts at present waste should be wholly for the benefit of the estate ; making the Revenue burden lighter and lighter more and more success in this direction was attained. But a time went on and as estates became better known and their limits practically fixed, attention was called (in 1819) to the fact that lands were being taken up that really did not belong to any estate. The first thought was only to make them pay the proper land revenue ; the title by mere occupation was allowed, or at least passed over in silence. But in 1828 Regulation 111 asserted the right of Government (which had always existed in theory) and then various efforts were made to separate the waste tracts and deal with them. These waste lands were henceforth taken in hand and afterwards leased to cultivators, or made into public forests¹⁸.

The Policy followed by the State for the Settlement of waste land had its effects on the economy of the State. It has been mentioned earlier that no special rules had been in operation in Cooch Behar State for the settlement of waste land.

In Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and in Assam, favourable terms offered for the settlement of Waste land encouraged the tea planters. Both the European and Indian Tea Planters took up land for the cultivation of tea. The tea industry developed. In the beginning it developed near the river routes. Later, when the area was not available remote areas were taken up for the cultivation of tea. The development of tea industries in those areas were

mainly responsible for the overall economic Growth of that area¹⁹. But in Cooch Behar this type of initiative was not taken in respect of waste land settlement.

The Policy for the settlement of Waste land, of course, encouraged speculation in land and the Government had to take measures to stop it in Assam and other parts of Bengal. Speculation in business is normal. Without speculation business activity cannot increase. The risk of business which are not insurable are minimised by speculation. But speculation in real estate cannot be regarded as helping business activity and therefore, such kind of speculation is to be discouraged and if possible, stopped altogether.

This type of problem was not in existence in Cooch Behar because waste land was not settled permanently with the landlords.

SUMMARY

Patit or waste land does not yet pay any revenue, because it is still waste and unoccupied. When British rule began in Bengal, it was estimated that from one-third to one-half of the total area of the province was waste and uncultivated.

In Cooch Behar the quantity of land lying waste at the time of first settlement was 7,16,756 bighas, out of total 23,34,487 Bighas of assessed and khas lands, 7,16,756 bighas or 30 percent was waste and uncultivated. The largest quantity of waste land are in Tufanganj Pargana i.e. 50% of the total land. The best cleared tracts of the State were Dinjata and Lalbazar, where waste land formed only 24 percent of the total land.

The first settlement of Cooch Behar State, concluded with the Jotedars varied from 8 to 13 years and ended in 1883-84. In the meantime

another petty settlement known as the Patit Charcha Settlement had taken place, between 1884-1886. This settlement was taken in hand to assess the waste land which had come under cultivation since the first settlement. The increase of revenue by the patit charcha settlement was Rs. 68,824/-. The total quantity of Patit land shown as assessed in the first Settlement was 5,68,721 bighas. There is no doubt that a portion of this Patit (waste) land had already been under cultivation. The rate of rent for Patit land is an anna a bigha, while that for cultivated lands the rate is 8 annas a bigha.

At the time of re-settlement of Cooch Behar State i.e. in the year 1877, the area covered by waste land was 6,44,991 bighas. There was a decrease of 71,765 bighas of waste land at the time of re-settlement in comparison with the first settlement. Though there has been a decrease of waste land by 10% over the figures of the first Settlement, there is still a large area of 6,44,991 bighas of waste land exists in the State at the time of re-settlement operation. These large area of waste land are kept by the people for the purpose of grazing their cattle. These area also supply them with fuel or fire wood without any cost.

The waste land which form a sort of reverse fund of the cultivation and which will be in time brought under cultivation. Thus, the larger is the quantity of this land in a holding the better off is the rayat from the stand point of agricultural economy. These lands are the source of future income or reserve fund of the cultivator.

Waste land decreased everywhere in the State, and that the total for the whole State shows a decrease of 31,234 bighas or 5.5% of the lands recorded at the time of 1st Settlement. This decrease is partly due to the increase of cultivation, and partly to deluvion or relinquishment of bad jotes

or waste lands. Thus, while on the one hand old wastes are expected to gradually disappear to a great extent, new ones will as surely come into existence, and make up the deficiency caused by the annual clearance. In this way some expanse of waste and uncultivated areas will continue to cover the face of the country and can never be fully expunged.

The Pal system is in vogue in the State. The practice of giving jungle lands to rayats for clearance free of rent for the first few years of the tenancy is called the Pal system. The term of Pal, or remission of rent, generally varies from 1 to 5 years according to the nature of the jungle. After the expiration of that period the land is brought under assessment.

In Cooch Behar State there was no specific rule for the settlement of waste land. But in other parts of British India there were many rules from time to time for the settlement of waste land. The Policy followed by the State for the Settlement of Waste land had its effects on the economy. In Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling and in Assam, favourable terms offered for the settlement of waste land encouraged the tea planters. The development of tea Industries in those areas were mainly responsible for the over-all economic development of that area. But in Cooch Behar that type of initiative was not taken in respect of waste land settlement. The Policy for the settlement of waste land in Assam, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, of course, encouraged speculation in land. But this type of problem was not faced by the rulers of the Cooch Behar State.

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CHAPTER - VII

GENERAL RESETTLEMENT OF THE STATE OF COOCH BEHAR : III

During the General Resettlement of 1886-91 (known as the Rakamcharcha, owing to the introduction of detailed classification of lands) a general survey was not considered necessary as the whole country had been measured in 1870-75. The old papers of the First Settlement and the Patit charcha settlement were taken as the basis and as such changes as had taken place since these settlements were recorded in the Chitttas (Khasras). No new maps were prepared on that occasion.

1. GENERAL FEATURES : CLASSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

The First settlement concluded during His Highness' minority i.e. in the year 1883-84 and was extended for five years at the time of the installation. The Principal reason, which induced the Government to advise His Highness to adopt the above step, was that, it was not thought expedient to raise the rates as soon as the King assumed charge of the State¹. By extending the period of settlement, the King also secured ample time and opportunity for considering on what lines the next settlement was to be concluded.

The extended period of first settlement expired in 1888-89. The increased rates were claimed from the beginning of the next year, i.e. from 1889-90. Both the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar remarked that the effect of settlement at enhanced rates with retrospective effect pressed hard on the people, and that, therefore, it would be desirable to make the new rates take effect in each pargana from the commencement of the year only in which the entire settlement of that pargana was concluded.

It was already known that in the first settlement of the State, cultivated lands were not classified. There was one rate (8 annas per bigha) for all classes of cultivated land in nearly the whole of the State. The consequence was that the best tobacco or Haimanti Dhan land and the worst class of high Bitridhan land were assessed at the same rate. Though the rate itself was low, it pressed hard in some places, while in many other places, which were thickly populated and where the soil was good, it was not found to be sufficiently high².

The reasons, for which the authorities adopted an average rate of 8 annas for cultivated lands, were that the work could thus be much simplified, that it was not considered advisable to entrust the Ameens with the power of classifying lands, and that the rate taken was considered to be so low that there was no fear of any ryots being actually pressed hard.

The examination and classification of the soil always formed an important feature of the settlement of land revenue. As each plot of land has measured, it had to be ascertained what the quality of the soil was and what crop was ordinarily grown on it. In Cooch Behar the land never appeared to have been uniformly taxed at the same rate ; but a variation had always been made in the assessment according to the nature of the soil. Before the Re-settlement or Rakamcharcha no elaborate classification was ever attempted, or could possibly be made, the principle of varying the revenue according to the productive power of the soil was never departed accepted earlier³. Before the first settlement there was a three fold schedule of rates for the different parts of the State and the second schedule was applicable to the greater part of the country. Those rates were considerably lowered at the first settlement

as, in the absence of a thorough measurement, the tenants had been holding large areas of land without fully paying for them and the application of those rates to the areas ascertained after regular survey would have resulted in an unbearable increase in revenue and rents⁴.

Before 1864, there was a seven-fold classification of the soil in the State. The entire cultivated area had not the same productive capacity, and a variation was necessary according to the richness of the soil. The classification of soil accordingly proceeded thus :-

- [1] Betelnut garden.
- [2] Homestead.
 - [a] of Jotedars,
 - [b] of under-tenants.
- [3] Garden.
- [4] Bamboo.
- [5] Cultivated land,
 - [a] Awal or first class.
 - [b] Duiam or Second Class.
 - [c] Saiam or third Class.
 - [d] Chaharam or Fourth Class.
- [6] San or thatching grass land.
- [7] Laik Patit.

This classification had an important omission, as it overlooked the Jalas⁵.

At the time of first settlement, commenced in 1864, the object of the authorities was not so much to obtain a large increase as to get an

amount of revenue assessed on measured area. The classification was accordingly made as general as possible to avoid large enhancements. The old classification was thus simplified and lands were brought under the following seven broad divisions, jalas being added as a distinct class for the first time.

- [1] Homestead.
- [2] Bamboo.
- [3] Garden.
- [4] Cultivated land.
- [5] Jala.
- [6] San or thatching grass land.
- [7] Patit land.

San or thatching grass, a kind of jungle, was more useful than any other jungle. It is an indispensable factor in the domestic economy of the people. Jungles were thus divided into san-grass land, and patit-land, that is other than san-grass land⁶. Before the beginning of the resettlement, a detailed discussion was held within the State. Some of the opinions expressed by different sections of the community was recorded in some letters of Dewan, Cooch Behar.

In letter No. 1168, dt. 30.9.1885, the Dewan stated :- "13. The subject of adopting means of increasing the revenue of the State engaged the attention of the council some time ago, and different schemes of taxation were referred to. In my opinion, the best means is to increase the land revenue. The people knew that a re-settlement is to take place from the beginning of 1226 B.S. and are quite prepared for it. The levying of taxes of different sorts is accompanied by a certain amount of oppression and it is always distasteful to the people". In another letter of the Dewan addressed to the President of the State Council, Cooch Behar, (Ref. No. 1858, dated

3.3.1886), the Dewan wrote, "After the receipt of the different replies, I saw the officers from whom these had been received, and fully discussed with them the question which had been raised. I also visited all the parganas of the State and freely talked with the people on the subject of the next settlement, many well-to-do-jotedars saw me and I tried to ascertain their views.

The people everywhere are of course unwilling to submit to increased burdens, and it cannot be expected that will express satisfaction with any proceedings adopted with the object of increasing their rents. But they will admit the wisdom of the principle of having different sorts of rates for different classes of cultivated land. They also stated that there should be different scales of rates for different classes of Talooks. The best land in one Talook might not yield as good an out-turn as second class land in another. The classification of Talooks was considered necessary for these reasons. Nearly all the officers, whom I have consulted, have substantially agreed in the views expressed above regarding classification of Talooks and lands.

In framing our rules relating to the new settlement, we shall have always to remember that this State has a powerful rival in the Bhutan Duars. The soil there is rich and rates low. As clearance are being made, people are going and settling there. I found that several of our ryots had gone from Talooks near the frontier. I have been making full enquiries connected with the subject. The men who left were mostly people much involved in debts ; whenever they were hard-pressed by their cruel Mahajans or landlords, they thought of setting in the Duars. The number is not, however, large, and the people, who have gone away, are mostly under-tenants of inferior grades. I think it necessary to mention this circumstances in the present report, because it is intimately connected with all proposals of increasing rents".

In this connection we like to append below the relevant portion of the resolution of the State Council, Cooch Behar, dated the 27th March, 1886, which will speak for itself⁷.

"3. With the object of ascertaining the views of the people on the subject of the next settlement, the Dewan has visited all the pergunahas of the State. He has also fully discussed the subject with the officers of the State. His present report embodies the views of all classes of the people of the State. His Highness in Council has read it with great interest and agrees with the Dewan in thinking that during the next settlement both the Taluks and the lands should be classified.....".

During the period of re-settlement operations the old classification of the land was revised. To begin with, the distinction made between homestead lands of jotedars and those of the under-tenants was done away with. This was only an artificial distinction, for there was no difference between these two kinds of homesteads. It was, therefore, not retained.

The most important feature of the re-settlement operation was the adoption of several sub-divisions for the cultivated lands. The productive power of the cultivated area cannot be the same every where, and a system of classification which did not recognise this fact could never pretend to be comprehensive. The division of cultivated lands according to the richness of the soil was necessary not only for the purpose of consistency, but also for affording relief to the tenant by making the rate of rent varying according to the nature of the soil.

The schedule of classification of the pre-settlement days was comprehensive, but owing to the absence of general measurement of lands it was of no practical use. In the first settlement the authorities were anxious

to ascertain the actual quantity of the lands in the possession of the jotedars, and make an easy assessment on the same, so as to obtain a moderate increase on the then existing revenue. And this was the reason why an elaborate classification was not attempted. But when with the increase of the material prosperity of the people, and rise in the prices of food grains and other agricultural products, the State claimed an increase of revenue from its tenants, it became necessary, on the other hand, to find out all fair means of increase, and, on the other, to do away with the evils of uniform assessment, by recognising the difference which existed in the fertility of the soil in different places⁸.

The following sixteen-fold classification was adopted for the re-settlement of the State :-

- [1] Betelnut land.
- [2] Bastu or homestead.
- [3] Udbastu or land adjoining to Bastu or homestead.
- [4] Garden.
- [5] Bamboo.
- [6] Tobacco first Class.
- [7] Tobacco 2nd Class.
- [8] Tobacco 3rd Class.
- [9] Awal or first class cultivated land.
- [10] Duium or 2nd Class cultivated land.
- [11] Saium or 3rd Class cultivated land.
- [12] Chaharam 4th Class cultivated land.
- [13] San or thatching grassland.
- [14] Laik Patit.
- [15] Garlaik Patit.
- [16] Jala or fishery.

This scale of classification was not applied to whole of the assessed area, but only to such estates or jotes as were open to re-settlement. There are Mokararis or permanently settled estates which had been in existence from before, and which were settled permanently at the time of first settlement. Some of the Mokararis and rent-free holdings, which were resumed in the course of the first settlement, were settled at half rates for a fixed number of years or until a future contingency, such as the death of the holder, should arise. These lands were not open to enhancement when the resettlement of the temporarily settled jotes was taken up⁹.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFICATION

The Classification of Taluks was followed by an elaborate classification of the soil into sixteen kinds. As already observed great care was taken to have the lands properly classified, so that the increase which the State demanded might not be large, and might be evenly distributed ; it was also necessary to see that the assessment did not press upon the holders of bad lands, owing to the want of proper discrimination of the quality of the soil.

The re-settlement was undertaken for the purpose of getting an increase to the State Revenue, the interest of the rayat was not lost sight of in fixing the rates. The two sides of the question were thus clearly put forward by the Dewan when the question of the increase came up for discussion : "It could not be denied that during the last 50 years the value of produce had more than doubled and the State had made very great progress in civilisation. The opening of the Northern Bengal State Railway, and the construction of roads all over the State had opened by the country a good

deal for purposes of trade, and served to increase the value of produce. The State was much better governed than before, and life and property were much more secure. Large sums were spent in educating the people, and in maintaining charitable dispensaries for their treatment. For all these different reasons the State was fully justified in claiming an increase on the occasion of the revision of the Settlement. But it would not be reasonable to determine this increase in proportion to the increase in the value of produce. Formerly, the number of middlemen was not large and the jotedars were generally the actual cultivators of the land. Old jotedars have now been mostly reduced to the position of chukanidars, or Darchukanidar and the rights they enjoyed before are now being enjoyed by foreigners. Again, with the increase in the material propriety the expenses of Cooch Behar people have very much increased. Considering both sides of the question, I was of opinion that the settlement should be concluded for 30 years, and that the rates for jotedars should be such as would give an increase of about 24 percent on the total revenue to your Highness"¹⁰.

In fixing the rates for cultivated lands the Dewan observed the following in his letter No. 1858 dated, Cooch Behar, the 3rd March, 1886. To the President of the State Council, Cooch Behar¹¹.

"16. In framing our rules relating to the new settlement we shall have always to remember that this State has a powerful rival in the Bhutan Duars. The soil there is rich and rates low. As clearances are being made, people are going and settling there. I found that several of our ryots had gone from Taluks near the frontier. I have been making full enquiries connected with the subject. The men who have left were mostly people much involved in debts ; whenever they were hard-pressed by their cruel Mahajans or Landlords, they thought of settling in the Duars. The number is not, however,

large, and the people, who have gone away, are mostly under-tenants of inferior grades. I think it necessary to mention these circumstances in the present report, because it is intimately connected with all proposals of increasing rents".

It is interesting to note some provisions of Bengal Council in this report. Act. VIII of 1879 of the Bengal Council lays down that in making settlements, the Settlement Officer is first to fix the rates, for ryots, and then to determine what the rents demandable from the under-tenants (middlemen) above the ryots are to be ; it is provided in Section 7 that the percentage of profit will not be less than 10. The Bengal Board of Revenue in Clause 21, Section V, Chapter V (Settlement) of the Board's Rules makes the following remarks in connection with the subject :-

"When the Settlement Officer has found that the tenure of an under-tenant is binding as against the Government, he will proceed to ascertain the gross rental which has been recorded as payable to him from all the ryots and subordinate under-tenants (if any) who are included in the tenure, and to determine the rent of the under-tenants so as to leave him a fair margin of profit on such gross rental. The law requires that his rent shall be fixed at an amount, which shall not be higher than the gross rental minus 10 percent, but it should be borne in mind that this is only a legal maximum. It will only be necessary to fix the under-tenant's rent so high in cases, in which a series of under-tenants with rights binding as against the Government are found existing between the Government or the Zamindar and the ryot, each of whom is entitled to his share of the profit before the rent reaches the Zamindar or the Government Treasury. Ordinarily, the Settlement Officer will determine what is a fair rent for the under-tenant to pay with

reference to the character of the tenure, the rate of profit allowed to him at previous settlements, and all other circumstances of the case. A profit of 20 or even 25 percent on the gross rental of his tenure will often be found to be no more than what the under-tenant is fairly entitled to".

3. VARIABLE RATES : NATURE AND CAUSES

In this settlement no uniform rates for ryots were fixed, all that was done was to fix the rates for Jotedars and then to provide that each middleman was to receive 25 percent as his share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from the ryots increased with the number of middlemen. In a case, in which the Jotedar himself was the ryot, he had to pay 8 annas only per bigha of cultivated land ; when the chukanidar was the ryot, his rate was 10 annas and in the case of the Dar chukanidar, the rate was 12 annas. The rates for jotedars were first fixed, because such rates had existed from before, and no attempt was made to first fix the gross rent demandable from a new cultivating ryot, and then to fix the State demand after deducting the malikanah payable to Jotedars and other middleman, as originally laid down by Government in letter No. 2849 of the 25th June, 1867, to the address of the Commissiner of the Cooch Behar Division¹².

Originally all lands were no doubt cultivated by jotedars and chukanidars. When the immigrants acquired jotes, the resident Jotedars living on the jotes were reduced to the position of chukanidars, and their under-tenants, who were chukanidars, became Darchukanidars. In some case also the chukanidars found it necessary to sublet their lands and thus darchukanies were created. It was shown in the Settlement papers that the number of under-tenants below Darchukanidars was small. A statement showing the

quantity of land actually cultivated by each class of tenants and under-tenants in the State at the time of the last settlement is given below¹³ :-

Table : VII-1

Class of tenants or under-tenants	Quantity of land cultivated by each class of tenants or under-tenant	Quantity cultivated by each class out of every 100 bighas of land in the State
Jotedar	6,12,283	27.5
Chukanidars	10,46,623	47.0
Darchukanidar	4,78,914	21.5
Dur-a-dur-chukanidar	79,109	3.5
Tosio-chukanidar	6,561	.002
Tulli Chukanidar	406	.0001.
Tulli-Tosio-Chukanidar	2.	.0000008.

(Source : Dewan's memorandum containing proposals to the fixing of rates for the new Settlement of the Cooch Behar State. Para 31).

From the above table it is clear that the largest quantity of land is cultivated by the chukanidars ; more than 47 bighas of land out of every 100 bighas is held directly by them. The quantity cultivated by Jotedars is 27.5 and that by Darchukanidars 21.5. The land held by the remaining classes of under-tenants is much less than a twenty-fifth of the total quantity. Thus, practically, the Dur-a-Dur chukanidars, Tosio chukanidars, Tulli-Chukanidars and Tulli-toisio-chukanidars form a very insignificant portion of the ryots.

Finally the following extracts from the Dewan's Memorandum of Rates show how the rates for the cultivated lands were arrived at :-

" In fixing the rates (for other cultivated lands), it is necessary not only to consider what the prevailing rates in the State are, but also to see at

what rates rents are paid by Jotedars in the neighbouring districts in British territory. It is very well known that land can be had on very favourable terms in the Bhutan Duars and that many of the subjects of the State who held subordinate rights have found it advantageous to migrate to that part of the Jalpaiguri District. If we fix very high rates the possibility is that many more rayats will leave the State, and there will be a great decrease in our revenue. The rates which now prevail in the Duars are the following¹⁴ :-

Table : VII-2

	Per acre Rs. A. P.	Per bigha Rs. A. P.
Bastu	2-0-0	0-10-8
Rupit or land fit for Haimanti cultivation	1-8-0	0-8-0
Faringati or corres- ponding to our Saiam and Chaharam	1-2-0	0-6-0
Patit	0-3-0	0-1-0"

After considering all circumstances the Dewan proposed the following rates for cultivated land :-

Table : VII-3

	First class Taluks Rs. A. P.	Second class Taluks Rs. A. P.	Third class Taluks Rs. A. P.
Awal	1-0-0	0-14-0	0-13-0
Duiam	0-12-0	0-11-0	0-10-0
Saiam	0-9-0	0-8-0	0-7-0
Chaharam	0-7-0	0-6-0	0-5-0

(Source : The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement by H. N. Choudhury, p. 557).

In the following table the rates applied to different classes of land at the previous settlements are shown :-

Table : VII-4

Before the 1st Settlement of 1870-72			First settlement of 1870-82		Resettlement of 1889				
Classes of land	Old Nirikhnama Rates		Classes of land	Rate	Classes of land		Rate in the 1st Class Taluk	Rates in the 2nd Class Taluk.	Rate in the 3rd Class Taluk.
	Rs.As.P.	Rs.As.P.		Rs. As.			Rs. As.	Rs. As.	Rs. As.
1. Betelnut land	6-1-5	6-1-5	1. Betelnut land	2-8	1. Betelnut land		4-0	4-00	4-0
2. Jotedar's homestead	3-12-10	3-0-8	2. Homestead	2-8	2. Homestead (Bastu & Udbastu)		3-0	3-0	3-0
3. Under tenants' Homestead	3-0-8	2-4-6	3. Garden	2-8	3. Garden		3-0	3-0	3-0
4. Garden	3-12-10	3-0-8	4. Bamboo	1-2	4. Bamboo		1-2	1-2	1-2
5. Bamboo	1-8-4	1-2-3	5. Cultivated land	0-8	5. Tobacco - 1st Class		1-8	1-8	1-8
6. Awal (1st class cultivated land)	1-2-3	0-12-2	6. Thatching grass	0-8	6. Tobacco - 2nd Class		1-4	1-4	1-4
7. Doem (2nd class cultivated land)	0-14-4	0-9-1	7. Patit (fallow)	0-1	7. Tobacco - 3rd Class		1-0	1-0	1-0
8. Soem (3rd class cultivated land)	0-12-2	0-7-7			8. Awal (1st Class Ordinary cultivated land)		1-0	0-14	0-13
9. Chaharam (4th class cultivated land)	0-9-8	0-6-1			9. Doem (2nd Class Ordinary cultivated land)		0-12	0-11	0-10
10. Thatching grass	1-2-3	0-12-2			10. Soem (3rd Class Ordinary cultivated land)		0-9	0-8	0-7
11. Laik Patit (culturable fallow)	0-7-7	0-4-6			11. Chaharam (4th Class Ordinary cultivated land)		0-7	0-6	0-5
					12. Jala (Fishery)		0-8	0-8	0-8
					13. Thatching grass		0-7	0-6	0-5
					14. Laik Patit (culturable fallow)		0-2	0-2	0-2
					15. Na-Laik Patit (unculturable fallow)		0-1	0-1	0-1

Source : Final Report on the survey and settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State. 1913-1927 by K. C. Ganguli, p. 12.

Before the first settlement there was a three-fold schedule of rates for the different parts of the State and the second schedule was applicable to the greater part of the country. Those rates were considerably lowered at the first settlement as, in the absence of a thorough measurement, the tenants had been holding large areas of land without fully paying for them and the application of those rates to the areas ascertained after regular survey would have resulted in an unbearable increase in revenue and rents.

In the resettlement operation the increase of the rate for cultivated lands other than tobacco lands was exactly 25 per cent. The rate for tobacco lands was of course higher ; but the net profit of the rayats from this crop was proportionately much greater. Moreover, there were backward tracts which could not fetch an increase of full 25 percent. As for the other kinds of lands, it is observed that Rs. 4 was fixed for the betelnut lands, while the Old Nirikhnama rate was more than Rs. 6. The first settlement rate was Rs.2-8. Although there was an increase on the latter rate, it was not high, as the owners of betelnut gardens made a very good profit from the land of this kind¹⁵. The old Nirikhnama rate for Laik Patit was four annas and six pies, (Schedule II) and in the first settlement it was only one anna. Though not actually cultivated, these lands were culturable, and there was no doubt they would soon brought under cultivation. As the re-settlement was for a long term i.e. for 30 years the rate for Laik Patit land was fixed at two annas. At the first settlement, there was no separate rate for Jalas, such land used to be assessed as cultivated land, and a rate of eight annas was charged on the same. Although the demand for fish has considerably increased, no increase in the rate for Jalas was claimed by the State on the consideration that fish was already dear¹⁶.

4. REVENUE RECEIVED AND JOTEDAR'S PROFIT

The revenue just before the re-settlement amounted to Rs.9,52,642. The re-settlement Jama was Rs.12,41,060. The increase obtained by this revision of the re-settlement therefore amounted to Rs.2,88,418 or 30 per cent of the former revenue. The detail of the results of different settlements will be discussed in a separate chapter.

The holders of the temporarily settled tenures under the State are called Jotedars. The tenants directly under the proprietors of revenue-free and mokarari (permanently settled at a revenue fixed in perpetuity) estates are also designated Jotedars. As many as six grades of under-tenures (namely chukani, Darchukani, Daradarchukani, Tasya-chukani, Talichukani and Tasyatalichukani) are recognised in the State. Of these, only the first two grades, namely, Chukani and Darchukani can be created under the Tenancy Act of 1910, while those of the lower grades were in existence before 1888, the year in which for the first time legislation was introduced to restrict sub-infendation.

At the time of re-settlement or Rakamcharcha resettlement verbal settlements and settlements by unregistered documents were recognised under Section 3 of the Sub-infendation Act (Act. I of 1888) the letting of land by any one but the jotedar was prohibited. Verbal contracts of payment of rent were also prohibited in 1888. The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act. V of 1910) came into force in 1910 and Section 4 and 25 of this Act prohibit the letting of land by an under-tenant lower than a chukanidar (i.e. an under-tenant of the first grade) and a chukanidar may let land which is in his khas possession¹⁸.

At the first settlement no uniform rates for cultivating raiyats were fixed. All that was done was to fix the rates for jotedar and to provide that each class of landlord was to obtain 25% as its share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from raiyats increased with the number of middlemen. Thus where a Tasyatali chukanidar was the last under-tenant, the jotedar, the chukanidar, the darchukanidar the daradarchukanidar, the Tashya chukanidr and Tali chukanidar were allowed 25% profit each or 150% profit altogether.

During the re-settlement operation of 1889, the Jotedar's profit was raised to 35% of his revenue and the total profit of the rent collecting under-tenants was fixed at 25% whatever the number of such under-tenants might be. Thus, where the jotedar's revenue was fixed at Rs. 100/-, the rent assessed for the cultivating raiyat, i.e. the last in the scale, was Rs. 135 if he was a chukanidar, add Rs. 160 if he belonged to a lower grade. The table below shows the percentage of profits allowed to the different grades of under-tenants in the scale under different circumstances, the Jotedar getting a profit of 35% in all these cases¹⁹ :-

Table : VII-5

Last under-tenant in the scale.	Percentage of profit allowed to				
	Chuka- nidar	Darchu- kanidar	Daradar Chukani- dar	Taisya Chukani- dar	Tali Chukani- dar
Darchukanidar	25	-	-	-	-
Daradarchukanidar	15	10	-	-	-
Tasyachukanidar	10	10	5	-	-
Talichukanidar	10	5	5	5	-
Tasyatali chukanidar	5	5	5	5	5

(Source : Final Report on the survey and settlement operation in the Cooch Behar State, 1913-27, by K.C. Ganguli, p. 14).

While fixing the rent rates in re-settlement, a lot of discussion was held. Some Jotedars of different parganas of the Cooch Behar State had submitted a petition to the Dewan.

The Dewan in his letter No. 1650, dated, Cooch Behar, 3rd December, 1888, addressed to the President of the State Council, Cooch Behar submitted his valued opinion on all important points raised by the jotedars, some of his observations are given below²⁰ :-

"2. The adoption of an enlightened policy in the Government of the State, the introduction of reforms in every department, the establishment of useful institutions, and the construction of many important roads, have served to contribute to the spread of civilisation and the increase in the value of produce and they fully justify the moderate enhancement which has been claimed. Other grounds have also been fully stated. The spread of civilization is always accompanied by a change for the better in the condition of the people and also by circumstances which increase the demand for articles of produce and increase their values. I have nowhere based the claim for enhancement on any agricultural improvements introduced into the State ; such improvements do not constitute the only ground for enhancement. It is very well known that all over Bengal and Behar the system of agriculture has undergone very little change during the last 100 years and still the rents have increased a good deal.

"3. I do not think it is fair for the petitioners to state that the State has done much less for the improvement of agriculture than what has been done in the neighbouring districts. A cousin of His Highness Kumar Gojendra Narayan, Junior, was educated, at the expense of the State at the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and a Department of Agriculture was

opened a short time before the installation. Considering the smallness of the area of Cooch Behar, we spent a sufficiently large amount for the improvement of agriculture.

"5. As I stated before the claim of the State is not founded on agricultural improvements. The Superintendent of Agriculture has been making experiments and it is believed he will do all that is necessary in time. It is not certain if the soil of this state is well fitted for the growth of the different crops here referred to. The petitioners should also remember that in their country rich crops like tobacco and jute are more extensively grown than in many districts of Bengal, in many fields moreover double crops are raised. There cannot be the slightest doubt of jute and tobacco cultivation having largely increased, during the last 25 or 30 years. Cultivation of sugarcane is slowly but steadily increasing. In many parts of Bengal there are special rates for mulberry, sugarcane and cotton fields.

"6. I do not think it is necessary to prove that the opening of the North Bengal State Railway and the extension of the line of Mogulhat have given a fresh impetus to trade in the State and thus served to increase the value of produce."

Jute and mustard seed could be sent by boats only in former days to the markets in East Bengal and they were thence taken to Calcutta, the cost of carriage was thus large and the Mahajans could not afford to pay good prices here. With the opening of the Railway many new merchants have come in and the few Marwari merchants cannot now enforce their own terms.

"7. Jute is sent by rail in very large quantities. Tobacco required for the markets in East Bengal is despatched in boats ; some tobacco is also sent by rail. Mustard seed is sent both by boat and by rail. These are the chief articles of export.

"8. I am sorry that inspite of all that has been done for opening up the country by the construction of roads in this State for the last 25 years, the petitioners seem to think that the State has failed in its duty in this direction. We have 309 miles of road in the State the area of which is only 1307 square miles. I believe the State has more roads than any neighbouring districts. It is impossible to construct a road from every Talook to a navigable river and it is unreasonable to expect that every road should be made pucca. It is not correct to state that the opening of road has not raised the value of produce.

"9. Want of money for purposes of good government is a reasonable ground for taxing the people ; His Highness has no other source from which he can draw any money and if any admitted defects have to be remedied and money be wanted for fulfilling that object, he must look upon his subjects to assist him. Of course, the demand of the State must not exceed reasonable limits.

"16. The memorialists forget that independent of other reasons His Highness as proprietor, has a right to claim enhancement if it can be claimed on reasonable grounds. It was always understood that the first Settlement would be revised at the expiration of the period for which it had been concluded. In Bengal, Zamindars are not bound to show that the increase which they will obtain will be spent by them for the good of their rayats. His Highness is, however, always anxious to secure the welfare of his subjects and to spend money for their benefit. There are many things which remain to be done ; we have not yet been able to construct a Railway joining the town of Cooch Behar with the Northern Bengal State Railway.

"17. The State was fairly entitled to a share of profits derived from lands brought under cultivation. The claim for enhancement is now based on other grounds.

"20. It is well known how the affairs of the State were mismanaged in former times and how the Ruler was not allowed to enjoy even a fractional portion of the amount which could be fairly claimed by him. To give details in occupation with this point will be to write a short history of the State. A man with a Sunnad for 50 bighas of rent free land often held more than 500 bighas and a powerful man in Court sometimes held more than 1000 bighas of land though he scarcely paid the revenue due for 200. Under the circumstances it is misleading to make comparisons with old figures. It was in the course of the first settlement that the lands were measured and fairly assessed and we have claimed a 23 percent increase only since the conclusion of that settlement.

In the first settlement of the Suba of Bengal, concluded by Todarmal in 1582 the annual revenue assessed was Rs.1,06,93,152 (vide page 441, Field's Land holdings and the relation of landlord and Tenant). Though this settlement had been very carefully concluded the revenue nearly quadrupled in the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis. We all know how the rents payable by Jotedars under the Bengal Zamindars have increased since the time of the permanent settlement. Considering all circumstances there is nothing unjust in our now claiming a moderate increase.

"58-63. Betel-nut is very profitable to the ryots. Four or five nuts are sold for one piece in Hats. A very large number of Cooch Behar nuts is exported to Bhutan. Every tree yields at least an income of 4 annas in a year.

Ryots generally grow pan leaves in betelnut gardens, this fetches an additional income.

Sixteen hundred trees may grow in a bigha, but gardens with such a large number of trees are rare here. In Cooch Behar the trees are generally planted 3 to 4 cubits part. Thus no less than 400 trees grow in a bigha of land. Of course there are many young or old trees within a garden, but this does not on the whole affect the ryot's profit, for the middle sized trees produce abundance of fruits.

"86. It is a mistake to compare the position of the Jotedars in Cooch Behar with that of the Zamindar in Bengal. The old farmers of Land revenue in Bengal were raised to the rank of the present Zamindars by the permanent settlement of Lord Cornwallis, while here Sir George Campbell abolished the Ijaradari system and introduced Khash tahsil. The Jotedars thus remained what they were. Their position is also similar to that of the ryots in Government khas mahals. His Highness owns the rights both of the Government and the Zamindar in Bengal. This fact should be clearly explained to the petitioners. It was, therefore, quite correct to consider the rates at which rent is paid by the Jotedars in the neighbouring Zamindariaries.

"96. The demand for land is much larger in the State than in the portion of the Duars which adjoins it, this fact cannot be fairly denied. Under this circumstances the rates for the state should be higher than those for the Duars. We already have a different schedule of rates for many talooks situated near the frontier. It is also to be remembered that a new settlement is about to be made in the Duars and that the rates now current there are soon to be revised.

"108-109. It has never been customary for the State to pay the value of the lands taken up for public purposes when these lands are included in ordinary jotes. It is for His Highness to consider if the custom is to be changed.

6. CONSIDERATION OF THE PETITION OF THE JOTEDAR

The State Council, Cooch Behar in its meeting held on 2nd February, 1889, adopted some resolutions in respect of the re-settlement of the State. While taking decision the State Council considered following papers :-

[a] Dewan's memorandum containing proposals relating to the fixing of rates for the New Settlement of the State.

[b] Petitions submitted by the Jotedars on the subject of the proposed rates.

[c] Dewan's replies to the above petitions. Following are some important decision of the State Council :-

"2) The pleader opened by taking the preliminary objection as to the right of the Maharaja to enhance the land revenue. This point was not raised in the petitions. The fact that there would be a settlement of the whole State was proclaimed by the Council as long ago as 1886, and since then no objection on this ground was ever advanced. The pleader quoted, as in point, the Government regulations and Acts relating to enhancement cases between private parties. He did not, however, refer to the Government Settlement Acts of Khas Mehals which might have some relevance.

"3) In Cooch Behar the Jotedars are bound by the terms of their Kabulyats and it is not necessary to refer to any Laws or Regulations on this

subject. In the final paragraph of the lease, it is plainly stated that on the expiry of the term there will be a re-settlement" under such rules as may then be passed". The Maharajah showed much consideration to his people in granting an extension of the term of the Settlement for five years ; this was done on the occasion of the Installation, and it is to be regretted that the petitioners seem to have forgotten this munificent act of kindness, which may be measured by the sacrifice of a sum of about 10 lakhs of rupees, and that they now, moreover, question the justice of His Highness making any enhancement whatever. It is on the contrary unfair to question the justice of such a measure.

"7) The Dewan recommended 30 years as the term of the new Settlement, giving his reasons for a long term in paragraph 17 of his report. The Pleader prayed for a permanent settlement on the ground of the large increase being taken. A permanent settlement would be absurd in a country like Cooch Behar, which, like the Duars and Assam, is still in a very backward State. Great changes take place very rapidly, and therefore, 30 years is a very long term, and the people should be grateful to His Highness for dealing so liberally with them. The Dewan's proposal is, therefore, sanctioned.

"13) The arguments, used by the pleader, against fixing a maximum rate at which the cultivating ryots should pay their rents, have totally failed to convince His Highness in Council of the Justice and fairness of the prayer of the Jotedars. In a state where a large number of middlemen comes in between Jotedar and the actual cultivator, the interest of the cultivator will greatly suffer if no maximum rate of the rent payable by him is fixed by the State. His Highness in Council is satisfied that the proposal of fixing the maximum rate at 60 per cent, over the Jotedar's rate, made in paragraph 64 of the Memorandum, is reasonable and accords sanction to it. The Jotedars

should remember that it has been proposed to increase the percentage of their profit, the State is bound to give due protection to the cultivating ryots, and it cannot be helped if in doing so large profits are denied to all classes of middlemen.

"14. His Highness in Council is fully aware of the fact that in many cases rent is already collected from cultivating ryots at a rate higher than that now proposed by the Dewan, the effect of fixing a maximum rate for the ryot will be to decrease the Jotedar's profit in such cases, because he will not be able to increase the excessive rent already paid to him, though he will have to pay an increase to the State. This is the reason why influential Jotedars, who have been rackrenting their ryots, are complaining more than those who have confined their claims to the rules of profit laid down by the State.

"18. The Jotedars pray that the rule under which no compensation is paid for land taken up for public purposes be modified. His Highness in Council is inclined to receive this prayer favourably, and orders that such rules be framed as would enable the Jotedars to recover their fair share of compensation ; the claims of other parties will have also to be considered when the rules are framed.

The rates thus fixed were the revenue rates at which the revenue payable by the Jotedars was assessed. The several grades of undertenants were not, however, forgotten, and left to the mercy of their landlords. In the first Settlement no uniform rates for cultivating rayats were fixed ; all that was done to fix the rates for jotedars and to provide that each class of Landlords was to obtain 25 percent as its share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from the rayats increased with the number of middlemen²¹.

The rent rate of the cultivating rayat was accordingly fixed at a figure varying from 35 to 60 per cent over and above the rate payable by the Jotedar. In many cases the cultivator paid more than 160 percent of the Jotedar's revenue. These rates were made applicable to the tenancies existing at the time of the resettlement, and did not bind any lease which might be granted in future. It, however, sometimes happened that in a jote the revenue of which was enhanced the under-tenants already paid more than the rent fixed by the re-settlement.

To avoid hardship to the Jotedars in such a case it was ruled that no reductions in the Jama already paid by the Contract were to be made in cases in which no reductions, were granted by the State²².

The Jotedar who was responsible for the State revenue was allowed a profit of 35 percent, whatever the number of the undertenants was. This means that the chukanidar's rent rate was fixed at 35 percent over the revenue rate. In the majority of cases, there were several middlemen between the jotedar and the cultivating ryot. A fixed scale of profits, which varied with their number, was allowed to each of these persons.

The principles followed in fixing the rates for the re-settlement operations may be summarised as follows :-

[1] The State fixed the rates at which the revenue payable by the jotedars was assessed.

[2] It also fixed the rates at which the existing cultivators had to pay rents, the parties being left free to make their own terms in regard to future contracts.

[3] The difference between the rate for the cultivating rayat and for the jotedar was the share of the middlemen and was apportioned under fixed rules, according to the number of such men concerned.

(4) Special rule was made for the protection of the cultivating Chukanidars²³.

In order to show that the practice of fixing rates according the nature of the crops grown is a very old one, it is interesting to note few lines from the minute of Mr. John Shore, dated 18th June, 1789 ; respecting the permanent settlement of the lands in the Bengal Province.

"In every district throughout Bengal, where the licence of exaction has not superseded all rule, the rents of the land are regulated by known rates called Nirik, and in some districts each village has its own. These rates are formed with respect to the produce of the land at so much per bigha. Some soil produces two crops in a year of different species, some three. The more profitable articles, such as mulberry plant, betel leaf, tobacco, sugarcane, and others render the value of the land proportionately great.

These rates must have been fixed upon a measurement of the land, and the settlement of Todarmal may have furnished the basis of them"²⁴.

SUMMARY

In the Re-settlement operations from 1886 to 1891 commonly known as Rakamcharcha Settlement, no survey of the State was done. The old papers of the first settlement and the Patit Charcha Settlement were taken as the basis and such changes, whether in possession of or in the classification of the lands, as had taken place were recorded. The re-settlement has been concluded for 30 years ending with 1918.

The total revenue obtained by the Re-settlement was Rs.12,41,060, and increase of Rs. 2,88,418 over the first settlement and Patit Charcha settlement revenue of Rs.9,52,642.

The rates thus fixed were the revenue rates at which the jotedar was to pay the revenue to the State. In the first settlement the rate of rent to be paid by the under-tenure was not fixed. All that was done was to fix the rate of the Jotedars and to provide that each class of superior interest was to get 25 percent as profit. A fixed profit was allowed to the Jotedar to ensure security of the revenue of the State and to keep the jotes attractive, for, it was the Jotedas who had to pay the revenue under pain of sale of his jote in case of default.

Before the first settlement there was a three-fold schedule of rates for the different parts of the State and the Second Schedule was applicable to the greater part of the country. Those rates were considerably lowered at the first settlement as in the absence of a thorough measurement, the tenants had been holding large areas of land without fully paying for them and the application of those rates to the areas ascertained after regular survey would have resulted in an unbearable increase in revenue and rents.

The holders of the temporarily settle tenures under the State are called Jotedars. The tenants directly under the proprietors of revenue free and mokarari (permanently settled) estate are also designated Jotedars. As many as 6 grades of under-tenants are recognised in the State. Of those, only the first two grades, namely, Chukani and Darchukani, can be created under the existing Tenancy Act ; while those of the lower grades were in existence before 1888, the year in which for the first time legislation was introduced to restrict sub-infendation.

At the Rakamcharcha resettlement verbal settlements and settlements by unregistered documents were recognised. Under Section 3 of

the Sub-Infendation Act (Act. I of 1888) the letting of land by any one but the Jotedar was prohibited. Verbal contracts of payment of rent were also prohibited in 1888. The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act. V of 1910) came into force in 1910 and Section 4 and 25 of this Act prohibit the letting of land by an undertenant lower than a Chukanidar (i.e. an under-tenant of the first grade) and a Chukanidar may let only land which is in his khas possession.

The jotes and the different grades of chukanis are heritable and transferable.

Adhiars cultivate land on the condition that they got half the produce of the crop. They generally live upon the landlords' premises, or on lands in their khas possession, and pay no rent for the same. Sometimes they cultivate the land with the plough and cattle lent by the landlord ; but more generally they have their own implements of agriculture. Adhiars are generally regarded as Labourers. They were not considered to have any right or title but to be liable to be ejected at the will of their employer.

In letter No. 152 T, dated the 4th October, 1872, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, it was laid down that any adhiar who cultivates the same land with his own cattle for 12 consecutive years, would acquire a right of occupancy in respect of such land. This provision was embodied in Section 20 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act. V of 1910). Such occupancy right is heritable but not otherwise transferable. In the course of the settlement and re-settlement operations in this state, however, Terijes (or record of rights) were never prepared for the adhiars not were attempts made to ascertain which of them had occupancy rights. It may also be noted here that the adhiari lands often

change hands and the adhiars are generally treated as Labourers or tenants at Will.

In the first settlement of the State, cultivated lands were not classified. There was one rate (8 annas per bigha) for all classes of cultivated land. The most important features of the re-settlement operation was the adoption of several sub-divisions for the cultivated lands according to the richness of the soil. This was necessary not only for the purpose of consistency, but also for affording relief to the tenant by making the rate of rent varying according to the nature of the soil. Sixteen fold classification was adopted for the resettlement of the State.

At the first settlement no uniform rates for cultivating raiyats were fixed. All that was done was to fix the rates for Jotedars and to provide that each class of landlords was to obtain 25% as its share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from raiyats increased with the number of middlemen. During the resettlement the Jotedar's profit was raised to 35% of his revenue and the total profit of the rent collecting under-tenants was fixed at 25% whatever the number of such under tenants might be.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] Dewan's letter No. 1168 dated 30th September, 1885, to the President of the State Council, Cooch Behar, published in Correspondence relating to the resettlement of the State of Cooch Behar, printed at the State Press, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 35.
- [2] Correspondence relating to the Re-settlement of the State of Cooch Behar (1885-1898), p. 35. Cooch Behar, 1903.

- [3] Harendra Narayan Chioudhuri - The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, published from State Press, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 485.
- [4] Karali Charan Ganguli - Final report on the survey and settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State (1913-1927), printed at the Cooch Behar State Press, 1930, p. 13.
- [5] H. N. Choudhuri, - Op.cit., p. 486.
- [6] H. N. Choudhuri, - Op.cit., p.p. 486 - 487.
- [7] Resolution, the State Council, Cooch Behar, the 27th March, 1886.
- [8] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 487.
- [9] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 488.
- [10] Annual Administration Report, Cooch Behar, 1888-89, p. 57.
- [11] Correspondence relating to the Re-settlement of the State of Cooch Behar (1885-1898), p. 37-41.
- [12] Correspondence relating to the resettlement of the State of Cooch Behar (1885-1898) p. 55.
- [13] Memorandum submitted by the Dewan of Cooch Behar to the State Council on 4th September, 1888 in reference to CouncilMemo No. 9 of the 13th April, 1886.
- [14] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p.p. 557-58.
- [15] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 558.
- [16] H.N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 559.
- [17] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit.,p. 578.
- [18] K. C. Ganguli, Op.cit., p. 13.

- [19] K. C. Ganguli, Op.cit.,pp.14-15.
- [20] Dewan's letter No. 1650, dated, Cooch Behar, 3rd December, 1888 to the State Council, Cooch Behar in reply to the petition submitted by some Jotedars of different parganas of Cooch Behar State.
- [21] Annual Administration Report, Cooch Behar, 1888-89, p. 58.
- [22] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 559.
- [23] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 562.
- [24] Walter Kblly Firmingar - The fifth report on East India Company affairs (Ed.), London, 1872, p. 85.

CHAPTER - VIII

RESETTLEMENT OF THE LAND REVENUE IN COOCH BEHAR STATE : IV

1. INTRODUCTION

The Resettlement operation began in the year 1912, Mr. S.N. Sen, Bar-at-Law, Dewan of the State was in charge of the operations. No dissatisfaction was expressed with the manner in which the operations were being carried out until 1919, just before the expected close of the operations. As there were no stages corresponding to field bujharat (local explanation of entries), attestation, draft publication of the Record and hearing of objections, before the issue of Terijes and as no copies of records (Porchas) were distributed during Khanapuri, it is probable that the tenants did not understand what was going on and were, therefore, unable to express dissatisfaction before the issue of Terijes in two Parganas in 1919¹.

2. LANDLORD'S OBJECTION REGARDING RESETTLEMENT OPERATION

A petition dated 29th October, 1919² was then presented to His Highness the then Maharaja, Jitendra Narayan, Bhup Bahadur, complaining that "many grave errors and omissions had crept into the records", and requesting a full enquiry. The petition was signed by Rai Choudhury Satish Chandra Mustafi, Khan Choudhuri Amanatulla Ahmed, Thakur Krishna Mohan Sinha, Rai Choudhury Pramada Ranjan Buxi and Rai Choudhury Sures Chandra Mustafi, all prominent land holders within the State. The petitioners stated that the petition had been signed by only a few jotedars because the former were anxious not to create a wide feeling of excitement in the State.

The petitioners alleged (a) that they did not object to the increment of revenue assessed provided it was not based on a wholly wrong principle and arrived at by an unnatural classification of lands, " (b) That, as stated above

" many grave errors and omissions have crept into the various settlement records". In support of the second allegation they put forward for examination 36 sheet maps and 272 Terijes, or copies of the records of Rights³.

3. MAHARAJA'S ACTION ON THE MATTER

The petition together with the accompanying records were made over to Mr. J.A. Milligen, I.C.S., by His Highness the Maharaja Sree Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur, for report. Mr. Milligen enquired into the grievances of the Jotedars and drew up a Report dated December, 1919. The report states that the enquiry had two main objects⁴ :-

(i) to see whether the principles and procedure of the settlement gave grounds for legitimate objection, and

(ii) to see whether the errors were so numerous and of such a kind as to necessitate the adoption of some special steps for correction.

As regards the first objection of the enquiry Mr. Milligen pointed out that the avowed policy of the Settlement was to give to the tenants terijes containing full information so as to minimise the necessity for litigation. He observed that as the holder of each interest had to pay in advance not less than Rs. 2 for a copy of the map, and each of the newly created class of Krishi Projas Rs. 7 as fee for a copy of the map and stamp duty payable on the petition praying for recognition, the tenants had every right to expect an unexceptionable Terij and to be given facilities to follow every process in the preparation of the Record of Rights.

It was observed at this stage that the receipts from the above two sources came up to between Rs. 5 and Rs. 6 lacs which must be set off against a possible total expenditure on the Settlement of between Rs. 13 and Rs. 14

lacs, and that the net charge on the State's revenues has been recouped in less than 3 years, although progressive enhancement has been allowed and the full revenue will not come into force in certain backward areas until the 10th year of the settlement.

Mr. Milligan remarked that "from the Stage of Khanapuri to the moment of receiving their final Terijes the tenants have only been consulted when the settlement officers considered it necessary to do so, i.e. when a discrepancy was detected in the Settlement office". He added that there was "an astonishing absence of Rules for every stage of the operations" and summed up the whole process by the following image "the settlement machine - like the famous Chicago engine which lures in a pig at one end and throws out a piece of pork and sausages at the other exhibited for a brief space some Amins a Kanungo or two, and Assistant Settlement officers who fitted about like "Will O' the wisps", then sucked them all into its hidden mechanism and after years of silent, unseen energy it now produces a crop of Terijes".

As regards the second objection the number and kind of the errors in the Records, Mr. Milligan stated that in the terijes submitted to him he found (a) numerous corrections, erasures and cancellations, not always attested (b) remarkable variety of errors which have crept in during the various processes of copying from one set of papers to another.

Mr. Milligan summarised his conclusions and recommendations, as follows :-

"1) The principles and procedure of the Settlement, however excellent in Theory, were in practice liable to admit errors in the Records.

2) The people were given no opportunity till now when they have received their so-called "final" Terijes - of pointing out errors, raising disputes, becoming aware of their own ignorance and learning the truth about their own lands, assimilating the land laws and the orders of His Highness in Council, and of acquiring a complete understanding of their papers and the settlement Policy.

3) The Terijes do not give all the information necessary for a tenant to know all about his land. Plot numbers only are given but no details about the plots.

4) The Terijes examined by Mr. Milligan were unworthy to be called a "Final Record".

5) Assuming that the Khatians and Khasras are accurate which have in the settlement office the necessary informations for supplying the tenants with any facts that Your Highness may think fit to allow.

6) Mr. Milligan recommended that the present issue of Terijes be treated as "Draft publication" and not "final publication of the record", and that a process similar to Attestation be carried out by.

7) He recommends that the classification of his lands should be shown to each tenant on his terji.

8) He recommends that after the Terij has been corrected and attested and the results of the classification embodied in it, that the final record be printed.

9) He recommends that, to safeguard the realisation of full revenue while the completion of Terijes is pending, assessment slips showing classification of lands and the new rents payable be issued as soon as they can be prepared⁵.

Subsequently in a separate note dated 2nd March, 1920, Mr. Milligan suggested "That a complete field to field bujharat of all khatians be made ; this will eliminate nearly all the mistakes I have seen".

As a result of Mr. Milligan's Report Mr. N. N. Sen was retired from State Service. The post of Dewan of the State was then abolished.

Meanwhile, as the number of Terijes examined by Mr. Milligan was too small to venture an opinion as to the correctness or otherwise of the Settlement Records as a whole, the Government of Bengal were asked to depute a trained Settlement officer to make extensive enquiries in the fields. Babu Jaladhar Ghosh, B.A., Sub-Deputy Collector, visited certain localities and his report confirmed the unfavourable opinion expressed by Mr. Milligan as to the value of the existing record.

The Special Assistant Settlement Officer, Babu Jaladhar Ghosh, received instructions from Mr. Milligan on 25th January, 1920. He was directed to do Field Bujharat of the Khatians of as many tenancies as possible and, in testing the classification of fields, the following points were to be borne in mind :-

- (a) whether Patit lands had been classified as cultivated ;
- (b) whether arable lands had been placed in a higher class than that to which they obviously belonged.

Babu Jaladhar Ghosh worked for about two months in 34 Mouzas (Taluks). He did field bujharat in respect of 4557 plots examined 1099 Terijes and heard 1091 objections. The detailed Report prepared by Mr. Ghosh was handed over to His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar and it was missing

but in a short sketch of the situation, dated 8th March, 1920, submitted to the Settlement Officer reported as follows⁶ :-

" By my local enquiry I have found that some Saiam Patit (third class) lands, burial grounds, village paths, Patit jungles, ditches, have been wrongly recorded and classified Awal, first class lands, contrary to the fact in the field, apparently for the reason that these 3rd class and other lower classes of lands have not been separately surveyed from their contiguously situated 1st Class Awal lands, but in the case of Saiam Patit (3rd Class) lands there are isolated plots of lands admittedly 3rd class lands, which have been recorded Awal, (first class lands), wrongly contrary to the fact in the field; as such I have found by my local enquiry that there are some mistakes of classification of lands in the Settlement Record.

I have found some mistakes in Survey in some cases, lands of 2 tenancies surveyed together into one plot although they are distinguishable, Nala (water passage), burial grounds, ditches &c, not surveyed separately from the adjoining paddy fields, there are also some possession mistakes, lands of one man recorded in the name of another, tenure tree mistakes, lands wrongly recorded in another tenancy of the same man. In the Lalbazar Pergunnah I have found the terijes given to the tenants as public documents, not filled up, some headings left blank with lots of unattested corrections i.e. the corrections not signed by any officer, in some cases names and father's names wrongly recorded. There are some gap plots in the printed maps i.e. those plots do not bear any number".

The state was urgently in need of an increased revenue to meet the heavy charges under privy purse and repayment of debt and the Maharaja was entitled to an increment ; the period for which the old (or Rakam Charcha)

Settlement had been concluded having expired in 1919 and 1920. Mr. Milligan in his note dated 2nds March, 1920, had recommended that all revenue assessed already should be paid and, in any case, the matter had been determined before hand. The State was, therefore, committed to the collection of revenue on the basis of Dewan's Records. It is clear that some hardship in individual cases was inevitable since an incorrect record meant that certain landholders were assessed too heavily while others were assessed too lightly.

In a resolution of His Highness the Maharaja in Council dated 1st April, 1920 and published in the Cooch Behar Gazette of the 26th April, 1920⁷ the elimination of all red-ink⁸ entries, and that restoration of the original classification of the soil had been ordered. On the 12th May, 1920, a conference between the State Council and leading and representative jotedars was held and the points raised by the Secretary, Cooch Behar Landholder's Association, in his letter No. 3 dated 3rd May, 1920 were discussed. As a result of the Jotedar's representation a communique enunciating the Policy of the State Council was issued and published in the Cooch Behar Gazette, dated 5th July, 1920.

The explanation of this astounding irregularities lies in the initial defect in the principles adopted by the Dewan as a basis upon which to obtain an increase in the Land Revenue Demand. His idea was that the abolition of the old grading into 1st, 2nd and 3rd Class taluks and the classification of all land in the State as though situate within a 1st Class Taluk, together with the extention of cultivation and the improvement of the soil since the Rakam Charcha Settlement, would of themselves secure a satisfactory increase in the Demand without any increase in the rates charged for the 15 recognised varieties of land.

It is clear, however, that the Dewan aimed at a very considerable increase in the Demand and was, at the same time, influenced by the fact that the Jotedars were obtaining high contractual rents from tenants settled under verbal agreement in defiance of Sections 4 and 24 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act prohibiting subletting except by a Jotedar or chukanidar and requiring all contracts for subletting to be made by registered Pattah and Kabuliyat.

But as Mr. Milligan observed in his note dated 2nd March, 1920 as follows :-

"The cases of these jotedars who have flagrantly broken their implied contract with the State by rack-renting their tenants, (should) be dealt with openly and not in a furtive manner as by the so-called "rent test"⁹ followed by a change of classification made in office".

For lack of direction the "Rent test" was applied is apparent from the fact that it was used even in the case of lands comprised in Mokarari and Revenue free estates.

In the Cooch Behar Gazette, dated 31st January, 1921, Rules were published for the guidance of Assistant Settlement Officer and Kanungoes employed in the disposal of objections. At the time of the issue of the communique published in the Gazette of the 5th July, 1920, it was thought that only some 5 per cent of plots had been affected by the Rent test but the field work which followed showed that the evil was more general.

In Mr. H. G. Twynam, I.C.S.'s letter No. 565, dated 4th February, 1922 he submitted definite proposals, drawn up after consultation with Mr. F. A. Sachse, I.C.S., Director of Land Records, Bengal, recording the Resettlement of the land Revenue. That letter with its enclosures was published in a Cooch Behar Gazette Extraordinary dated 23rd February, 1922.

According to Mr. Twynam, the Settlement Officer and all the Assistant Settlement Officers agreed to the necessity of the steps he recommended (1) the complete revision of the settlement record and (2) that the rates for cultivated lands (other than tobacco lands) should be enhanced by annas four in the rupees, but that when taluks still contained lands of Quality inferior to that found in 1st Class taluks, the farmer should be restored to their privileged position.

In the letter No. 1945, dated 13th February, 1922 from the Registrar, State Council, to the Secretary, Landlords' Association it was stated that His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur in Council proposed that the term of Resettlements, except in the case of Payasti lands, should be for 15 years.

4. CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MAHARAJA WITH THE BRITISH REGARDING THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT.

On the 17th and 19th March, 1922, conferences were held at the Lansdowne Hall for the purpose of discussing the proposals contained in the letter of Mr. Twynam, No. 565 dated 4th February, 1922. It was presumed that an attempt was made to persuade His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to pass final orders on this important matter without the advice of his trained advisors¹⁰.

Strong influence was brought to bear on His Highness the Maharaja by the Land holders' Association and certain State officials to sanction a permanent settlement and even a draft notification was prepared sanctioning the settlement for a period of 999 years. At Mr. Twynam's strong persuasion, however, His Highness finally agreed to restrict the term of settlement to 99 years and the following order was signed by His Highness on the 10th April, 1922 -

" The period of the settlement about to be concluded will be for 99 years. A detailed announcement on the subject will be made after His Highness' return from England.

Sd/- J. N. B.

10.4.22"

(Note : J.N.B. means Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur the then Maharaja of Cooch Behar).

These orders were published in English and Bengali in Cooch Behar Gazette Extra-ordinary issued on Wednesday, 12th April, 1922. The same Gazette contained another Resettlement Notification dated 10th April, 1922 as follows :-

His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur in Council has been pleased to accord sanction to the following provisional revised rates of assessment per bigha :-

Table : VIII-1

Class of land	Class of Taluk					
	1st		2nd		3rd	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Awal	1-3		1-1		0-15	
Doem	0-14		0-13		0-12	
Soem	0-11		0-9		0-9	

Whenever necessary the Taluks shall be reclassified in course of the present Revisional operations, provided that no such classification shall be made without the sanction of the State Council".

Although the above rates are lower than those originally proposed by Mr. Twynama by one anna in the rupee and are not applicable to the 4th Class of land, they were not accepted by the Land holders as they hoped to escape without any enhancement of the rate applicable to Soem land. For this reason the word "Provisional" was inserted in the Notification.

Shortly after this the Maharaja left for England, and the non-cooperation movement spread with remarkable rapidity over the State where it took the form of a protest against the great increase in revenue and rent then being collected from the tenants. In this state of affairs, the Council, in order to allay the discontent regarding the high enhancement of the land revenue, ordered 10,000 copies of the Cooch Behar Gazette Extra-ordinary announcing a 99 years' settlement to be printed, distributed and broadcasted throughout the State¹¹.

His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar proceeded to England and he returned to Cooch Behar in autumn of that year (1922) but after spending some four weeks only in Cooch Behar he left again for England and most unfortunately died there in December, 1922.

From April, 1922, when the Maharaja proceeded to England upto the end of that year the question of the resettlement remained practically at a standstill owing to Maharaja's absence from the State. A few months after the demise of the Maharaja a Council of Regency was established to administer the State. Mr. Twynam vacated the appointment of Vice President of the Council in November, 1923. After taking up the appointment of Vice President of the Council of Regency Major C.T.C. Plowden, I.A., naturally required sometime to study the system of land tenure of the State and the history of present settlement calling for a decision. When he had made himself acquainted with the subject the various outstanding questions connected with

proposals for the resettlement of the land revenue of the State were drawn up. Those proposals and all the connected papers were laid before the Director of Land Records and Surveys, Bengal (Mr. A. K. Jameson, I.C.S.) in September, 1924 for criticism and for any suggestion or advice which he might think it necessary or desirable to offer the Council on the subject. After thus consulting the Director of Land Records and Surveyors, Bengal, the Regency Council finally framed their proposals for the re-settlement of the land revenue and they embodied in those proposals all the suggestions which the Director of Land Records and Survey had made in connection with their draft proposals. It may be mentioned in this connection that the Director of Land Records and Surveys, Bengal, found himself in agreement with all the main proposals of the Regency Council and suggested modifications only in regard to points of minor importance¹².

The Regency Council's proposals as finally framed were published, both in English and Bengali in the Cooch Behar Gazette (Extra-ordinary) dated the 1st November, 1924 for General information. Copies of the Notification containing the proposal were sent to the Land holders' Association, two prominent Jotedars in each of five sub-Divisions, and the leading Kokararidar and Lakherajdar of the State with the intimation that any representations in writing to the Council was to be made not later than 5th December, 1924. As representation were not received by that time, the Regency Council was prepared to receive such representations upto 31st December, 1924.

A conference was held by the Regency Council on the 23rd February, 1925 for the purpose of discussing the proposals. The Principal Mokararidar, two of the selected Jotedars, four representatives of the Land holders' Association and a Barrister-at-Law and a local pleader on behalf of the Association attended the conference, Mr. F. W. Strong, I.C.S. Commissioner of

Rajshahi Division and Political Agent for the Cooch Behar State, was also present. The Regency Council's proposals for resettlement of land revenue of the State were forwarded to the Political Agent for his concurrence on the 4th April, 1925, with a letter which reviewed at length all the questions requiring consideration. The Regency Council had proposed to offer alternative of a settlement for 99 years and of a settlement for 30 years, the former offer involving higher rates of revenue than the latter in the case of seven out of the fifteen classes of land. Their sole reason for proposing a 99 years settlement was that His Highness, the Late Maharaja Sree Jitendra Narayan had decided and publicly announced that the settlement about to be concluded would be for 99 years. After careful consideration of the proposals of the Regency Council, His Excellency the Governor of Bengal in Council was satisfied that a settlement for 99 years would not be in the interest of the Ruling Family, of the Jotedars or of the undertenants, and he was unable, therefore, to agree to it. His Excellency in Council, however, accepted the alternative proposal for a 30 years settlement and all the other proposals of the Regency Council. The orders of the Government were received at the end of June, 1925 and the Resettlement Notification dated the 11th July, 1925, containing the final orders of the Regency Council was published (both in English and Bengali), in two successive issues of Cooch Behar Gazette, dated the 13th July and 27th July, 1925 for General information¹³.

5. PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT AND RATE OF DIFFERENT CLASSES OF LAND

The final orders are reproduced below :-

"1. Period of Settlement : the period of the settlement about to be concluded shall be for 30 years. This period of 30 years shall be counted from the beginning of the Bengali year in which the rents and revenue about to be settled take effect.

(2) Rates of Revenue : (a) the provisional rates of assessment per bigha for Awal, Duem and Soem land sanctioned on the 10th April, 1922, and published in the Cooch Behar Gazette dated the 12th April, 1922 are confirmed.

(b) The old rates for all the other 12 classes of land shall remain unaltered for the whole period of the settlement.

(3) Girds Chowra, Sandara and Bilat Bisguri - In the case of these Girds :-

(a) the old rates for laik Patit and nalaik Patit land, viz. 2 annas, 1 anna per bigha, respectively shall be retained, and

(b) the rates for all the other 13 classes of land shall be 7/8th of the rates applicable to Jotes in ordinary tracts. The table below shows the rates to be applied to the 13 classes of land in these three Girds :-

Table : VIII-2

Class of land	Class of Taluk					
	First		Second		Third	
	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.
1. Betelnut Garden	3	8-0	3	8-0	3	8-0
2. Bastu and Udbastu	2	10-0	2	10-0	2	10-0
3. Garden	2	10-0	2	10-0	2	10-0
4. Bamboo	1	0-0	1	0-0	1	0-0
5. Tobacco 1st Class	1	5-0	1	5-0	1	5-0
6. Tobacco 2nd Class	1	2-0	1	2-0	1	2-0
7. Tobacco 3rd Class	0	14-0	0	14-0	0	14-0
8. Awal	1	0-0	0	15-0	0	13-0
9. Doem	0	12-0	0	11-0	0	10-0

Class of land	Class of Taluk					
	First		Second		Third	
	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.	Rs.	As. P.
10. Soem	0-10-0		0-8-0		0-7-0	
11. Chaharam	0-6-0		0-5-0		0-4-6	
12. Sankar (Thatching Grass)	0-6-0		0-5-0		0-4-6	
13. Jala	0-7-0		0-7-0		0-7-0	

(4) Payasti lands, lands in towns and Bunders and new settlement of State khas lands - Payasti lands will be subject to a 10 years settlement in accordance with past practice. The settlement of lands in towns and Bunders and new settlements of State Khas lands will be subject to such terms and conditions as may be decided upon from time to time.

(5) Mokarari and Lakheraj Estates - The rates and the period of Settlement mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs for Mal and Debuttar Mahals shall apply to the holdings in Mokarari and Lakheraj Estates.

(6) Rents : Fair and equitable rents shall be settled for all grades of under-tenants, including the Krishiprajas (illegally settled under-tenants now recognised under the Title of cultivating raiyats). On the basis of the classification of the soil and as far as possible, according to the scale of profits hitherto in force and now slightly modified in order to provide for the cases of krishiprojas.

In the cases, however, in which the rents paid are in excess of the rents payable in accordance with the sanctioned scale of profits, the procedure laid down below shall be followed :-

Where the existing contractual rent of an undertenure exceeds the rent calculated under the sanctioned scale of profits but does not exceed

double the rent, the immediately superior landlord shall be allowed either the existing profit or a profit of 50 percent in excess of that admissible under the sanctioned scale, whichever is less where, however, the contractual rent exceeds double the rent calculated under the sanctioned scale of profits, that immediately superior landlord shall be allowed double the sanctioned profit, provided that the contractual rent has been realised for more than 10 years, the burden of proving which shall be on the landlord. Failing such proof the landlord shall be allowed a profit only 50 percent in excess of that admissible under the sanctioned scale of profits.

(7) Krishiprajas (cultivating Raiyats) - In the case of Krishiprojas (cultivating Raiyats) :-

(a) the illegal tenancies discovered in the course of the present revisional operations shall be recognised and, except as regards rents payable which shall be governed by the orders now passed, shall possess the rights specified in the State Council Istaharnama dated the 2nd May, 1981, relating to illegal settlements. As already announced in paragraph 5 of the Notification dated the 8th July, 1925 published in the State Gazette (Extra-ordinary) dated the 9th July, 1925, no Krishiproja will be required to pay Rs. 5 stamp for the recognition of his rights.

(b) Where illegally settled tenancies of more than one grade exist, those of the lowest grade alone shall be recognised. If, however, the intermediate illegal tenants hold some lands in khas possession they shall be recorded as Krishiprojas under the legal tenants in respect of those areas alone and the old as well as the new rents shall be split up on the basis of the areas under different classes in khas possession of the occupants of each such holding.

(c) where an illegally settled tenant has sublet land by registered patta the tenant to whom the land is sublet shall be treated as Krishiproja provided that he holds lands in khas possession, and that each of the illegally settled tenant so subletting shall be governed by the provisions of (b) above.

(d) If in the case of a verbal tenancy under a jotedar or a chukanidar there has been an exchange of registered patta and Kabuliyat since khanapuri, such tenancy shall be treated as a legal chukani or Darchukani, respectively. The provisions will apply also to those cases only of the nature described in which there may be an exchange of registered patta and Kabuliyat within two months from the date of publication of this notification.

(e) The percentage of profit shall be the same as in the case of the legal undertenant of the corresponding grades, i.e. for this purpose a Krishiproja under a Jotedar shall be treated as a chukanidar; one under a chukanidar as a Darchukanidar, as so forth. If any Krishiproja be found under a Tasya-tali-chukanidar the percentage of profit shall be raised to 65 in the case of such a tenancy.

8. Future illegal settlements of under-tenants :

In the event of any under-tenure being created contrary to the provision of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act and of this Notification such under-tenure shall not be recognised but shall be annulled and the lease of the creator of such undertenure shall be liable to be cancelled by the Revenue Officer of the State and all the rights, title or interest of the creator of such undertenure in the lands covered by the lease shall thereupon be extinguished, or if the Revenue Officer of the State seems fit he may inflict a fine not exceeding Rs. 500/- in lieu of cancelling the lease of the creator of the undertenancy. Such fines shall be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act.¹⁴

Where the Creator of such undertenure is a co-sharer, his right, title or interest alone shall be liable to be extinguished and he alone shall be liable to the fine prescribed above.

In the event of any tenure being created by the proprietor of a revenue-free of Mokarari Estate contrary to the provisions of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act and of this Notification such tenure shall not be recognised but shall be annuled and the creator of such tenure shall be liable to a fine not exceeding Rs. 500 by the Revenue Officer of the State. Such fines shall be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act.

Failure to register patta and Kabuliyats within 12 month from the date of creation of a tenure not paying revenue to the State or an undertenure shall be treated as an illegal settlement for the purpose of this paragraph.

Naib Ahilkars and Additional Naib Ahilkar are empowered to enquire into such cases as are mentioned above-either on application or suo motu or on reference from other Courts and they shall forward the papers with a statement of the case and their recommendations to the Revenue Officer of the State for the passing of orders.

In cases in which the right, title or interest in lands are extinguished as provided for above, the lands revert to the immediately superior landlord.

(9) Registration of pattas and Kabuliyats in the case of future settlements of tenancies :

Patta and Kabuliyats shall be presented for registration within 6 months from the date of creation of a tenure not paying revenue to the State or an undertenure. Failure to comply with this order shall be punishable with a

fine not exceeding Rs. 50 for each month or part of a month commencing from the date on which the period of six months referred to above terminates. Naib Ahilkars and Additional Naib Ahilkars are empowered to deal with such cases either suo motu or on simple petition or on reference from other Courts. The proceedings shall be summary and the fines shall be recoverable under the Public Demands Recovery Act. In accordance with the orders contained in paragraph 8 no. patta or Kabuliyat shall be accepted for registration after the expiry of 12 months from the date of creation of a tenure or an undertenure".

Under paragraph 6 of the Notification dated 11th July, 1925 containing the final orders of the Regency Council regarding the resettlement of land revenue, it is clear that where the contractual rent exceeds double the rent calculated under the sanctioned scale of profits, the immediately superior landlord, shall be allowed double the sanctioned profit, provided that the contractual rent has been realised for more than 10 years, the burden of proving which shall be on the Landlord. Failing such proof, the landlord shall be allowed a profit only 50 percent, in excess of that admissible under the sanctioned scale of profits. It was difficult to say, without enquiry in the presence of the parties concerned, in which of the cases high contractual rents there was evidence of collection for more than 10 years. Such an enquiry in the case of each tenancy with a high rent would greatly retard the progress of the Settlement work and also involve unnecessary harassment of parties. Hence to save time and trouble, in the rent rolls under publication only 50 percent extra profits were calculated in such cases, and in the General notices of publication of the rent rolls issued, Taluk by Taluk, the Landlords were required to file unstamped petitions within the period of publication in the cases in which they claimed double the sanctioned profit under paragraph 6 of the Notification dated 11th July, 1925, so that the parties concerned might be summoned to convenient centres for examination of the evidence of collection by Assistant

Settlement Officers in those cases alone. This fact and also numerous changes owing to deaths, transfers, new settlements surrenders etc. since the completion of field work were responsible for the large number of objections received¹⁵.

The following rules for classification of the soil fixed at the Rakamcharcha Resettlement were accepted in this resettlement, soil classification are as follows :-

- (1) Betelnut garden,
- (2) Orchard,
- (3) Bamboo.
- (4) Homestead including Udbastu (threshing floor, Cattle shed etc.)

and the cottages of labourers.

(5) to (7) - Tobacco - This is divided into 3 classes 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The class is determined by the fertility of the soil or the condition of the standing crop.

(8) - (11) - Cultivated land - This is divided into 4 classes - 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th.

"Awal" or 1st Class - land which is called dahala (low and even land) falls under this class. It has a small proportion of sand and is fertile. The crop is not injured even if there is scanty or excessive rainfall.

"Duyem" or 2nd class land - This is even land, higher than Awal. The proportion of sand is greater and the crop producing power less than that of Awal.

"Sheyam" or 3rd Class - This is higher than Duyem land but not so even. The proportion of sand and clay is about equal. Crops do not grow well if the rainfall is insufficient.

"Chaharam" or 4th Class - This is 'danga' or high land and contains a large portion of sand. Paddy does not grow well unless there is abundant rainfall.

- (12) Thatching grass.
- (13) "Laik Patit" or culturable fallow.
- (14) "Nalaik Patit" or unculturable fallow.
- (15) "Jala" or fishery.

Under the State Council order dated the 10th April, 1922, and published in the State Gazette dated the 12th April, 1922, wherever necessary, the Taluks were to be reclassified in the course of the revisional operations, provided that no such reclassifications were made without the sanction of the State Council. The list below shows, perganna wise, the number of Taluks of which the Rakamcharcha classification was raised or lowered with the sanction of the State or the Régency Council¹⁶.

Table : VIII-3

<u>Pargana</u>	<u>Lowered</u>	<u>Raised</u>
1. Mekliganj	15	6
2. Lalbazar	2	0
3. Dinjata	2	15
4. Mathabhanga	0	1
5. Tufanganj	1	16
6. Cooch Behar	0	6
Total	20	44

The Rakamcharcha classification was restored in the case of all other Taluka comprised in these 6 parganas. For the one Taluk in pargana Tufanganj the reduction in classification was due to the fall in the value of land owing

to proximity to the reserve Forest and depredations by wild animals. The lowering of classification of the other 19 Taluks in the State was due to the deterioration of the soil by Sand deposits from rivers chiefly the Teesta. The raising of classification was due mainly to the increase in the value of the land owing to improved means of communication and fertility of soil. A few Taluks in Pargana Dinhata improved by the earthquake of 1897 which raised the level of the low lands and rendered them culturable. There has been a large increase in the cultivated area in each of those taluks as a consequence. Similarly in several taluks of Pargana Tufanganj, the cultivated area has greatly increased since the Rakamcharcha resettlement owing to gradual reclamation of waste lands. On the whole, the reclassification has been made after due consideration of the character of the soil, the facility possessed by the Taluks in matters of communication and convenience of trade and of other circumstances which go to enhance the value of land and add to the comforts of life.

It may be noted here that in letter No. 3458, dated the 23rd March, 1915 from the then Dewan Mr. P. N. Ghosh to the State Council, the Settlement Officer, and the majority of the Naib Ahilkar advocated the retention of 3 classes of Taluks and were of opinion that a wholesale revision of the existing classification of Taluks was not necessary but that revision might be effected wherever there were strong grounds for the same.

After the Rakamcharcha resettlement some Laik Patit (Culturable fallow) lands were, from time to time, settled at the rates for cultivated lands with the consent of the jotedars with whom the settlements were effected. During this General resettlements however, under Council orders, all jotes have been assessed at the sanctioned rates and on the basis of the existing classification of lands.

During the Rakamcharcha Re-settlement of 1889, increases over Rs.20 per cent on the old revenue or rents were distributed over 5 years. In the Re-settlement made by Mr. N. N. Sen, the late Dewan according to paragraph 3 of the State Council letter No. 1331 dated the 12th March, 1919, where the increase in the assessment was found to be 75 percent over the old revenue the increase was equally distributed over 5 years except in the case of Girds Sandara and Bilat Bishguri where increase over 100 per cent were distributed over 10 years. After due consideration of all circumstances the following orders were passed by the Regency Council on the 11th April, 1927.

(i) When the maximum Jama (rent or 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 at once (i.e. from the commencement of the current Bengali year 1334 B.S. in which the new settlement for a term of 30 years is to come into force).

(ii) In other cases where the maximum Jama settled now is over 75 percent of the old as well as of the existing Jamas, 75 percent higher of the last two Jamas (viz. the old and the existing Jama) subject to a minimum of 5 in any case is to take effect at once and of the reminders of the increase, one half is to take effect in the third year and the remaining half in the fifth year.

In the Notification dated the 29th June, 1920, published in the State Gazette dated the 5th July, 1920, it was stated that "the question of the advisability of instituting a complete or partial bujharat of the State" was under consideration.

For the different stages of office work, rules were framed on the lines of the up-to-date rules in force in the settlement Departments of Bengal,

Behar and Orissa. As the forms of records, land tenures, soil classification, modes of settlement of revenue and rents are quite different in Cooch Behar, such rules had to be considerably modified before they could be followed¹⁷.

From the following few figures the weight of the land revenue demand on the State may be shown :-

(1) Increase on the total demand - The Rakamcharcha Settlement increased the land revenue demand from about Rs. 9½ lakhs to about 12½ lakhs. The present resettlement increased the demand from about Rs. 12½ lakhs raising by progressive enhancement to about Rs. 18½ lakhs.

(2) Incidence of land Revenue per acre - The incidence of land revenue in the State per acre as compared with neighbouring Districts is as follows :-

Table : VIII-4

	Rangpur											
	Western Duars			Cooch Behar			Permanently settled area		Temporarily settled area			
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.			
1. On the whole	1	2	0	2	8	7	0	7	3	1	4	1
2. On the cultivated area	1	15	0	3	6	8	0	10	10	-	-	-

(* Refer to paragraph 9 of the Director of Land Records Letter No. XXV - 13-46-70 dated the 27th June, 1919, at the end of First Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Jalpaiguri district by Mr. J. N. Milligan, I.C.S. Page 287 of Agricultural Statistics of India Vol. I - 1919-20).

The incidence in Cooch Behar on the whole is exclusive of Mokarari lands. The figures for both Cooch Behar and the Western Duars on the cultivated area exclude culturable fallow, unculturable fallow, bamboo, thatching grass, homestead and Jala. Current fallow is also excluded in the

Western Duars but could not be excluded in Cooch Behar for lack of statistics. This indicates that the incidence in Cooch Behar would be even higher than given if the area of current fallow land were also excluded from the calculation.

At the 1st Settlement in Cooch Behar the incidence per area on the whole was Rs. 1-4-5. At the Rakamcharcha settlement the incidence per acre was Rs. 1-12-2.

It is clear that the incidence of land revenue was such heavier in Cooch Behar than in Jalpaiguri and was increased very considerably by the last resettlement.

(3) Population - The population of the State at different years was as follows :-

Table : VIII-5

1881	-	6,02,624	
1891	-	5,78,868	- The deceased in the years following the <u>Rakamcharcha</u> Settlement of 1889-90 is remarkable.
1901	-	5,66,973	
1911	-	5,93,052	
1921	-	5,92,472.	

There is little doubt that the poor results indicate that the inhabitants of the State are emigrating to the Western Duars and Assam where land can be obtained on more favourable terms.

(4) Rates - As there are 15 Classes of land and three classes of taluks in Cooch Behar and "advanced and backward" Parganas and several

classes of land in the Western Duars, as also three classes of Jotes in the "advanced parganas", a detailed comparison would occupy too much space.

It is sufficient to observe that ordinarily the rates in Cooch Behar are from 20% to 30% higher than the Western Duars and that the rates paid by Jotedars in Cooch Behar are only slightly lower than the rates paid by raiyats in the permanently settled portion of Jalpaiguri, the incidence per acre being Rs. 2-8-7 and Rs. 2-12-0 respectively.

The actual expenditure made in connection with the present resettlement operation of Cooch Behar state is as follows :-

Table : VIII-6

Year	Actual expenditure Rs.As.P.	
1912-13	28,343-9-1	
1913-14	66,969-0-0	
1914-15	81,805-0-0	
1915-16	1,03,794-13-8	
1916-17	1,50,738-7-10	
1917-18	1,17,537-3-10	
1918-19	1,25,649-9-1	
1919-20	1,22,606-1-3	
1920-21	1,37,703-1-2	
1921-22	1,16,558-1-1	Compiled from the Annual administration Reports of Cooch Behar from 1912-1927.
1922-23	1,14,699-2-10	
1923-24	98,899-10-1	
1924-25	84,446-0-0	
1925-26	82,192-2-6	
1926-27	1,32,296-15-8	
Total :	Rs. 15,64,238-14-1	

The budget estimate for the purpose for 1927-28 was Rs.60,755, hence the total expenditure may in round figures amount to Rs.16,25,000 of which Rs. 9,35,147 were spent in the first 9 years from 1912-13 to 1920-21 and the balance represents the cost of the operation during the subsequent 7 years.

The total receipts from this head for the year 1921-22 to 1926-27 are given below :-

Table : VIII-7

Year	Stamps			Copying fees			Forfeited deposits			Miscellaneous			Total		
	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.	Rs.	As.	P.
1921-22	1,588	12	0	296	0	0	-			58	6	0	1513	2	0
1922-23	1,462	12	0	568	14	0	-			76	6	10	2108	0	10
1923-24	1,936	8	0	1018	4	6	-			548	7	6	3503	1	0
1924-25	2,776	8	0	1338	6	0	-			144	10	9	3753	8	9
1925-26	2,849	8	0	1418	6	0	-			221	15	2	4489	15	2
1926-27	14,034	1	6	1752	11	6	10361	8	0	162	4	0	26310	9	0
Total ;	23,712	1	6	6392	7	6	10361	8	0	1212	2	3	41678	2	3

(Compiled from the Annual Administration Reports of Cooch Behar from 1921 to 1927).

The gross expenditure per square mile works out at about Rs.1,232 and the net expenditure at Rs. 621. It may be noted here that the maps and records originally prepared in 1912-1920 underwent wholesale revision in the subsequent years and the Terijes or final records for 4 parganas prepared in 1920 and the printed copies of 1447 sheets had to be rejected. There was also wholesale resettlement of revenue and rents for all grades of tenants and under-tenants in the temporarily as well as the permanently settled areas and

revenue free estates. Moreover the number of plots per square mile came upto 1745 against the standard of 1000 in Bengal. The final records here at Cooch Behar contained many more particulars than in Bengal.

These facts accounts for the large expenditure.

In the Jalpaiguri District the net cost of the last settlement worked out at Rs. 941 per square mile in the temporarily settled area (i.e. the neighbouring western Duars) against Rs. 621 in Cooch Behar. The cost rate per square mile was Rs. 1071 in the permanently settled district of Faridpur. The net expenditure per square mile worked out at Rs. 740 in the Rajshahi district and at Rs. 836 in the permanently settled area in the Jalpaiguri District.

In the last Rakamcharcha resettlement traverse and surveys were not made and fresh maps were neither prepared nor copies of maps distributed to tenants. The maps and khasras of the first settlement were made the basis of that resettlement. Moreover, the Rakamcharcha resettlement was started immediately after the conclusion of the Patit charcha resettlement and the number of holdings for which terijes were prepared at the Rakamcharcha was half of that for which Terijes are being distributed now. The present Terijes which were prepared during the last resettlement operation contain many more particulars that the Rakamcharcha Terijes and the scale of pay and prices of articles were much less when the last resettlement took place. There was then no necessity of immediate revision of the records, and the compilation of statistics and of the completion of report was not finished before 1903-1904. Still the cost of the Rakamcharcha operations for the years 1886-87 to 1898-99 came upto Rs. 4,24,716 which is equivalent to Rs. 373 per square mile¹⁸.

The area of the State according to the Revenue Survey was 8,36,467 acres or 25,30,312 bighas which is equal to 1307 square miles. In the Khasra measurement of the first settlement the area came to only 24,82,183 bighas. The diminution was due to the fact that the big rivers could not be measured and recorded in the settlement papers at the first settlement.

According to the present Survey and settlement (after adjustment of boundaries upto 1926-27) the area of the State is 25,52,299 bighas or 1318.35 Square miles. The statement below shows the pargana wise areas as ascertained at the different surveys :-

Table : VIII-8

Parganas	1st Settlement		Present Settlement	
	Bighas	Sq.Miles	Bighas	Sq.Miles
Mekliganj	3,72,243	192.27	3,88,326	200.58
Mathabhanga	4,21,650	217.79	4,43,759	229.22
Lalbazar	3,31,567	171.26	3,38,643	174.93
Dinhata	3,94,672	203.87	4,06,570	210.01
Cooch Behar	6,00,645	310.24	6,05,277	312.65
Tufanganj	3,61,406	186.68	3,69,724	190.96
Total :	24,82,183	1,282.11	25,52,299	1,319.35

(Source : Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State 1913-1927 by Karali Charan Ganguly, B.A., B.C.S. Page 51).

The number of Taluks, Chhits, interests and plots situated in each pargana are shown in the following table :-

Table : VIII-9

Pargana	No. of taluks bearing Thak numbers	No. of Chhits	No. of Interests	No. of Plots
Mekhliganj	214	84	19,693	4,29,049
Mathabhanga	185	52	29,862	3,49,071
Lalbazar	130	3	27,158	3,80,204
Dinhata	248	16	54,797	4,57,698
Cooch Behar	274	-	51,461	3,66,395
Tufanganj	114	3	21,198	3,17,359
Total :	1,165	158	2,04,169	22,99,776

(Source ibid - Page 51).

The total number of Taluks shown as 1202 in the "Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements" compiled by Babu Harendra Narayan Choudhury included the big chhita. The biggest Taluk viz. Balarampur bearing Thak No. 943, measures 35,828 bighas.

The temporarily settled areas according to the different settlement together with the number of jotes and the amounts of revenue are given below :-

Table : VIII-10

Pargana	First Settlement			Rakamcharcha Settlement			Present Settlement		
	No. of Jotes	Areas	Revenue	No. of Jotes	Area	Revenue	No. of Jotes	Area	Revenue
Mekhliganj	1788	299789	129555	2321	297265	175470	2415	305327	230689
Mathabhanga	2276	389460	172903	2529	382172	238979	3034	396075	326909
Lalbaraz	2510	293584	134198	2604	287802	181176	2943	301147	258180
Dinhata	3720	368101	174034	3980	361599	238805	4309	368049	330972
Cooch Behar	4851	524918	224455	5337	508614	282556	6473	524384	437138
Tujanganj	1219	289768	95479	2065	286244	124074	2582	309170	215096
Total :	16359	2165620	931024	18836	2123696	1241060	21756	2204102	1798984

[Source: Final Report on the Survey & Settlement Operations in the Cooch Behar State. 1913-1927 by K. C. Ganguly, Page - 52).]

The average area of jote is now about 101 bighas. It was 132 bighas at the first settlement and 119 bighas at the time of Rakamcharcha resettlement.

The number of Jotes does not represent the number of jotedars as one Jotedar may hold a large number of Jotes. In the year 1930 there are 21,756 agricultural jotes under the State of which as many as 3,349 are owned by 21 big Jotedars alone. The total area covered by these 3,349 Jotes is about 5,61,000 bighas out of the total temporarily assessed area of about 22,04,102 bighas. All the Agricultural Jotes under the State numbering 21,756 are owned by 6,300 sole jotedars and 4,464 groups of Jotedars.

Originally the Jotedars were the cultivators of the soil and residents of this State. Gradually there was an influx of the foreigners from other districts ; they were more intelligent than the Cooch Behar people, and they began to usurp all real power in the State. Similar State of affairs took place in the neighbouring Duars of the Jalpaiguri district before the last Settlement and non-resident capitalists brought up Jotes right and left, and during the settlement the authorities were forced to restrict transfers and to penalise sub-infeudation. In 1927 more than half the temporarily assessed area in the Cooch Behar State is owned by foreign Jotedars. Even during the Rakamcharcha resettlement a much larger quantity of land in the State was included in Jotes belonging to foreigners than in those held by natives. The necessity of introducing effective rent law to prevent ousting of cultivating tenants by speculators was foreseen even during the first settlement of land Revenue¹⁹.

The biggest Mokarari estate during the present resettlement belongs to Susil Kumar Chakraborty and lies in Parganas Mekhliganj, Lalbazar and

Mathabhanga. It measures 47,775 bighas, the revenue payable for which is Rs.5,149-5-1 pie. This Mokarari grant was originally made by Maharaja Harendra Narayan in 1225 B.S. to late Chandicharan Chakraborty.

The permanently settled or Mokarari Estates in Cooch Behar State with the areas and revenue recorded at different settlements are given below:-

Table : VIII-11

No.	First Settlement		No.	Present Resettlement	
	Area in bighas	Revenue Rs.		Area in bighas	Revenue Rs.
16	57,559	7,188	53	60,056	7,739

The following statement shows the areas of the revenue free estates and the numbers and areas of Jaigirs at the 1st settlement, Rakamcharcha and the present resettlement. The number of revenue free estates according to the present resettlement is also given in the following table :-

Table : VIII-12

Pargana	1st Settlement			Rakamcharcha resettlement			Present Resettlement			
	Revenue free areas bighas	No.	Jaagir Area bighas	Revenue fee area bighas	No.	Jaagir Area bighas	No.	Revenue Fee Area bighas	No.	Jaagir Area bighas
Mekliganj	15,416	50	-	5,011	-	-	16	4,966	-	-
Mathabhanga	2,609	50	2,932	7,319	50	2,932	39	4,629	7	169
Lalbazar	14,809	35	893	15,115	35	893	30	15,216	-	-
Dinhata	6,689	10	336	8,261	11	343	106	7,891	9	279
Cooch Behar	11,426	239	13,700	16,399	239	13,554	314	15,899	102	5,702
Tufanganj	2,255	32	1,010	4,847	34	1,390	34	4,727	25	1,127
Total :	53,204	366	18,871	56,952	369	19,112	539	53,328	143	7,277

The areas recorded at half rates at the different settlements are shown below :-

Table : VIII-13

Parganas	First Settlement		Rakamcharcha Settlement		Present Resettlement	
	Revenue free areas bighas	No.	Revenue fee area bighas	No.	Revenue Fee Area bighas	No.
Mekliganj	2,382	250	1,543	250	-	-
Mathabhanga	12,382	7,228	11,787	4,624	3,575	4,315
Dinhata	4,772	678	2,418	309	1,119	286
Cooch Behar	27,692	20,931	9,296	-	-	-
Tufanganj	27,692	20,931	9,296	-	-	-
Total :	27,692	20,931	9,296	9,296	9,296	9,296

The Khas areas of the State Recorded at the different settlements are given below :-

Table : VIII-14

Parganas	First Settlement			Rakamcharcha Settlement			Present Resettlement		
	Roads etc.	Sal, sisoo Forests	Jungles & other khas lands	Roads etc.	Sal, sisoo Forests	Jungles & other khas lands	Roads etc.	Sal, sisoo Forest	Jungles & other khas lands
Meliganj	2653	327	11451	3270	277	25038	1205	207	32814
Mathabhanga	1329	85	13066	1941	30	27357	1436	101	33204
Lalbazar	1795	72	19486	2484	156	26088	1516	35	18480
Dinhata	2893	129	12632	4606	218	28225	1987	12	24357
Cooch Behar	3586	359	33196	4955	9442	44104	3583	9687	36458
Tufanganj	794	1687	63329	1446	19685	55352	926	30474	21850
Total :	13050	2659	153160	18702	29803	206164	10653	40516	167143
			168869			254674			218312

The following table shows the total numbers of interests and the nijdakhal areas of the Jotedars and different grades of chukanidars for the Mal and Debuttar lands at the previous settlements and present resettlement :-

Table : VIII-15

Khas Areas of	Ist Settlement		Rakamcharcha Resettlement		Present Resettlement	
	No.	Area	No.	Area	No.	Area
Jotedars	16359	608248	18836	570100	21756	598660
Chukinadars	35206	998039	43539	931617	64721	1072115
Darchukanidars	24743	473212	32636	478608	52997	702766
Daradarchukanidars	5637	79015	11136	123605	5554	66868
Tasya chukanidars	612	6563	2098	17979	919	8522
Talichukanidars	45	406	228	1620	102	644
Tasyatalichukanidars	4	2	21	168	20	59

[Source : Compiled from different statistics from Final report on the survey and settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State, K.C.Ganguli, 1903, Cooch Behar].

As compared with the figures of the Rakamcharcha resettlement the khas area of the Jotedars has now decreased, that of the chukanidar has remained almost the same, the increase being slight, and that of the Daradar chukanidars and lower grades of under tenants has decreased, whereas there has been a large increase in the khas area of Darchukanidars and a portion of khas areas formerly held by jotedars of jotes, chukanis and Darchukanis have considerably increased. The decrease in the khas areas of the Jotedars is due to the increase of sub-infendation. The total number of Krishiprajas under different grades of tenants and under-tenants in the State in the year 1927 is 49,025.

The table below shows the proportions of lands of the different classes in every hundred bighas of the temporarily settled tract found in the Rakamcharcha resettlement and the present resettlement respectively :-

Table : VIII-16

Class of land	Rakamcharcha	Present
	resettlement B. K.	resettlement B. K.
1. Betelnut	0-7	0-9
2. Bastu and Udbastu	1-4	1-7
3. Garden	0-4	0-5
4. Bamboo	2-7	3-12
5. Total of 1,2,3,4	4-2	5-13
6. Tobacco	5-0	5-13
7. Other cultivated lands	62-9	65-19
8. Total of 6 & 7	67-9	73-7
9. San Grass	3-4	5-8
10. Patit	24-19	14-3
11. Jala	0-6	1-9
Grand Total of 5,8,9,10 & 11 :	100.00	100.00

In 1773 during the conclusion of the treaty with the British Government, Mr. Purling ascertaining the revenue of the State to be Rs.1,99,120-5-0 Narayani rupees equivalent to Rs.1,33,000/- in present currency i.e. in 1927-28. The tribute payable by the State is Rs. 67,700-15 as.

The following is a list of total revenue at different settlements :-

Table : VIII-17

1.	On the eve of the 1st settlement of 1870-72	Rs.	3,64,140
2.	First settlement of 1870-72	Rs.	9,31,024
3.	On the eve of the Rakamcharcha resettlement of 1889	Rs.	9,59,830
4.	Rakamcharcha Resettlement of 1889	Rs.	12,41,060
5.	On the eve of the present resettlement Operations of 1913	Rs.	12,62,154
6.	The Late Dewan's resettlement given effect to in 1919-20	Rs.	18,50,853
7.	Present Revisional operations given effect to in 1927.	Rs.	17,98,984

The incidence of land Revenue per bighas is 13 annas 1 pie i.e. Rs.2-7-3 per acre. It was Rs. 1-4-5 per acre at the first settlement of 1870-72 and Rs.1-12-2 at the Rakamcharcha resettlement of 1889. The incidence was about Rs. 2-8-7 according to the late Dewan's resettlement of 1919. According to the present resettlement the incidence of rent per bigha in the case of each grade of under-tenants is shown below :-

Table : VIII-18

	Rs.	As.	P.
1.	Chukanidars	1-0-7	
2.	Darchukanidars	1-5-3	
3.	Daradarchukanidars	1-6-7	
4.	Tasya chukanidars	1-8-0	
5.	Talichukanidars	1-8-9	
6.	Tasyatali chukanidars	2-2-8	
7.	Krishiprajas under Jotedars	1-2-3	
8.	Krishiprajas under different grades of chukanidars	1-7-11	

SUMMARY

The Rakamcharcha resettlement concluded for a period of 30 years expired in parganas Mekhliganj and Lalbazar in 1918-19 and in other Parganas in the following year, hence the operations in connection with the present resettlement were started in 1912-13.

The latest Revenue survey map of the State is the one of 1868-70. Since then, owing to various causes vast changes took place in the topography of the country as also in the holdings, and the old maps could no longer be relied upon. Hence, it was decided to have a traverse survey as well as a cadastral survey of the State on the lines adopted by the Government of Bengal. The survey began in 1912-13 and was completed in 1916-17, under the instructions of Major F.C. Hirst the Director of Surveys, Bengal.

Kistwar (cadastral survey) and Khanapuri (preliminary record-writing) began in 1913-14. The soil classification adopted in the Rakamcharcha settlement of 1889 was followed in this resettlement. For the illegally settled tenants, recognised as Krishiprajas only notes were made in the khasras in the course of Khanapuri and the khatians for these tenants were prepared later in office in the case of all the parganas.

The Sub in feudation Act was passed in 1888 to check the further development of Sub-infeudation in the State and to prevent the creation of new rights in place of existing ones when they lapsed or became extinct, under the existing tenancy Act, there must be exchange of registered Patta and kabuliyat at the time of creation of every new undertenancy, and jotedars and chukanidars alone can create such under-tenancies by letting out khas

lands. Large number of new tenancies have, however, been actually created in contravention of the aforesaid provisions of the law and generally at very high rents. Their number was estimated by Mr. N. N. Sen, the Dewan, at 50,000 in the whole State i.e. 1/12th of the entire population. The Dewan called them "the back bone of the country as builders of its wealth". According to his estimates, they "constitute almost 90% of the cultivating population". It was also pointed out by him that the origin of such tenancies could not be traced out and that it was extremely difficult to prove 12 years' possession even where it existed.

In the State Council letter No. 212, dated the 24th May, 1918, the title of the illegally settled cultivating rayats was recognised and the incidents of their rights were defined. These orders were communicated to the Tenants by the State Council Istaharnama dated the 2nd May, 1918.

The rules for classification of the soil fixed at the Rakamcharcha resettlement were adopted in this resettlement.

The then Dewan Mr. N. N. Sen, proposed to do away with the classification of Taluks and to treat all taluks as first class. He further proposed that new settlement based on the old rates for first class taluks might, in view of the abnormal economic conditions then prevailing, have effect for 10 years and that, on the expiration of that period, a fresh settlement might be made on the basis of the maps and records prepared during 1912 to 1919. On the 12th March, 1919. His Highness in Council accorded sanction to the Dewan's proposals but the period for which the settlement was to be in force was not definitely fixed, it merely being stated that equitable rates would be adopted on the basis of the classification made

in the current settlement when economic equilibrium and stability were found on their way to re-establishment. Thus the reduced rates for the special tracts were discontinued and all taluks were treated as first class for purpose of assessment. Mr. H. J. Twynam, I.C.S., the then Vice President, Regency Council, Cooch Behar, State in consultation with Mr. Sachse, the then Director of Land Reforms, Bengal, drew up and forwarded to His Highness the Maharaja in council on 4th February, 1922, certain proposals regarding the resettlement of land Revenue of the State. Mr. Twynam made no suggestion as to the period of settlement as he and the settlement officer were of the opinion that, in the interest of all concerned it might have been better to fix the term after revised figures of the areas under the different classes of land. The enhancement of rates proposed on 4th February, 1922 was based on the assumption that the period of settlement would at the outside not exceed 30 years as there was no suggestion that the settlement would be for an abnormally long period.

Strong influence was brought to bear on His Highness the Maharaja by the Landholders' Association and by certain State officials to sanction a permanent settlement and even a draft notification was prepared sanctioning the settlement for a period of 999 years. At Mr. Twynam's strong persuasion, however, His Highness finally agreed to restrict the term of settlement to 99 years and the order was signed by His Highness on the 10th April, 1922. Shortly after the passing of the aforesaid orders, His Highness proceeded to England. He returned to Cooch Behar in the autumn of that year (1922) but after spending some four weeks only in Cooch Behar he left again for England and most unfortunately died there in December, 1922. From April, 1922 when His Highness proceeded to England, upto the end of that year the question of the resettlement remained practically at a standstill and the announcement in

connection with a 99 years settlement which His Highness intended to make had not been made when the Maharaja died. After the death of the Maharaja a Council of Regency was established to administer the State. Major C. T. C. Plowden, I.A. was appointed as Vice-President of the Council of Regency and take up the matter of resettlement of the state. The Regency Council's proposals for resettlement of land revenue of the State were forwarded to the Political Agent for his concurrence on the 4th April, 1925. The Regency Council's sole reasons for proposing a 99 years settlement was that His Highness the Late Maharaja, had decided and publicly announced that the Settlement about to be concluded would be for 99 years. After careful consideration of the proposals of the Regency Council, His Excellency the Governor of Bengal in council was satisfied that a settlement for 99 years. After careful consideration of the proposals of the Regency Council, His Excellency the Governor of Bengal in council was satisfied that a settlement for 99 years would not be in the interests of the Ruling family of the Jotedars or of the undertenants and he was unable to agree to it. His excellency in council, however, accepted the alternative proposal for a 30 years settlement. The orders of Regency Council was published (both in English and Bengali), in two successive issues of the State Gazette, dated the 13th July and 27th July, 1925 for general information.

Originally the Jotedars were the cultivators of the soil and residents of the State. Gradually there was an influx of the foreigners from other districts. They were more intelligent than the Cooch Beharis, and they began to capture all real power in the State. Similar state of affairs took place in the neighbouring Duars of the Jalpaiguri District before the last settlement and non-resident capitalists brought up jotes right and left, and during the settlement the authorities were forced to restrict transfers and to penalise

Sub-infeudation. At the time of this resettlement more than half the temporarily assessed area in the Cooch Behar State is owned by foreign jotedars. Even during the Rakamcharcha resettlement a much larger quantity of land in the State was included in jotes belonging to foreigners than in those held by natives. The necessity of introducing effective rent law to prevent ousting of cultivating tenants by speculators was foreseen even during the first settlement of land revenue.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] Karali Charan Ganguli, Final report on the survey and settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State (1913-27), Cooch Behar State Press, 1930, p. 18.
- [2] Petition dated 29th October, 1919 by some prominent Jotedars of Cooch Behar State to the then Maharaja Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur.
- [3] H. J. Twynam, - Note on the Resettlement of Land Revenue in Cooch Behar, Cooch Behar State Press, 1923, p. 1.
- [4] H. J. Twynam; Ibid, pp 2-3 and also see K. C. Ganguli, Op. cit., p. 23 - 26.
- [5] Mr. Milligan's Report dated December, 1919.
- [6] Jaladhar Ghosh's short sketch dated 8th March, 1920, submitted to the Settlement Officer, Cooch Behar State.
- [7] Cooch Bihar Gazette of the 26th April, 1920.
- [8] Note on Red-ink entries :-

Many serious defects in the settlement operations which was started from 1912 had come to light in the year 1919. The charge

against the work of the Settlement Department had hitherto related only to errors and omissions in the Record. It appeared that not only had the work been inefficiently done but that the Dewan had allowed himself to be persuaded to sanction a wholly irregular procedure whereby the classification of lands had been revised at Head Quarters and plots of low denomination had been arbitrarily raised to a higher denomination. By this procedure the soil classification in khasras and khatians had been re-written at Head Quarters, the original entries had been cancelled and new entries in red ink superimposed. For this reason, entries in the khasra so made came to be known as "red ink" entries.

[9] The "rent-test" was a method whereby the land revenue payable by certain jotedars was arbitrarily raised not on the basis of the soil classification of their jotes but of the rents supposed to be collected by them from their under tenants. It may be doubted whether in many or most cases, the "rent-test" consisted of anything further than a red-ink entry in the khasra and khatian whereby the classification of the soil was arbitrarily raised without any reference to its actual character. This produce was finally rejected by the State Council acting under authority of His Highness Shri Jitendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur.

[10] H. J. Twynam, I.C.C. - Note on the Resettlement of Land Revenue in Cooch Behar, 1923, p. 5 (Extract of the letter of H. J. Twynam, No. 565, dt. 4th Feb. 1922 is enclosed in the appendix).

[11] H. J. Twynam, Op. Cit., p. 7.

[12] Annual Administration Report, Cooch Behar, 1924, Cooch Behar, p.47.

- [13] Ibid, 1925, p. 49.
- [14] K. C. Ganguli, Op. cit., pp. 43-45.
- [15] Annual Administration Report, Cooch Behar, 1925, p. 51.
- [16] K. C. Ganguly, Op. cit., p. 35.
- [17] Cooch Behar Gazette, published on 5th July, 1920. Notification dated the 29th June, 1920.
- [18] K. C. Ganguli, Op. cit., p. 52.
- [19] K. C. Ganguli, Op. cit., p. 53.

CHAPTER - IX

SURVEY AND SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN OF COOCH BEHAR : V.

1. FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN OF COOCH BEHAR :

The First regular settlement of the town of Cooch Behar was made in the year 1873-74. Prior to this there was no regular settlement. Shopkeepers had generally to pay revenue, but as a rule all the amlas, pleaders, and most of the other residents never paid anything. The revenue paid by the shopkeepers, was not fixed according to area or any recognised scale of rates, the amount being arbitrarily fixed from time to time. The right to collect revenue from the portion called Hat Bhawaniganj, comprising the principal streets of the town as well as the market place in which daily markets called Bazar, and bi-weekly markets called Hats, were held, was leased out to the highest bidder at auction. The lessee had the right of collecting market or Bazar dues from the Vendors who frequented the market place, as well as ground rent from the occupiers of the shops and houses included in his mehal. Only those who sold their wares in the market place paid the market dues¹. The rent payable by the Mahajans, shop keepers and others, which were very low, had not been altered since the time of Maharaja Shibendra Narayan (1839-47). The Ijaradar could not enhance rents, but he exacted for his own profit one month's extra rent called Ijaradaree. The large shop keepers and the Mahajans were, besides, too powerful to be dealt with by any private individual². The State Revenue, therefore, suffered and nothing like the amount to which the State was entitled to realised the total revenue of the town for the year 1967-68 was only Rs. 4,500/-. This unsatisfactory state of affairs attracted the notice of Mr. T. Smith, the then Deputy Commissioner, in 1968, when the ijaradaree system was abolished and the town was taken under khas management³, a committee was also appointed to fix

the boundaries of the town and the rates of rent. Several large holes in the town had in the meantime been filled up and the process of raising the several blocks so as to make them suitable for building purposes was in progress. It was at first proposed to divide the sites into suitable plots properly measured and to lease them out to the highest bidders at public auction for 10 years. But it was feared that a 10 years' lease would not be a sufficient inducement to any one to build a good house⁴.

A survey of the town of Cooch Behar was made by then Deputy Commissioner at the end of 1868, but for some reason or other ; it was not followed by a regular settlement. The first revenue survey was made in the year 1869-70, but nothing in the way of settlement. A fresh survey was made by Mr. Renuy, Deputy Collector, in the year 1872-73. The settlement Officer Mr. Beckett draw up a table of rates, which were not wholly acceptable to the Dewan, who submitted them to the Commissioner with proposals of his own for raising some rates and lowering others. Col. Haughton then passed orders to the effect that the lands in the town should be assessed at the same rate as those in the country and that the inhabitants of the town should be taxed for a variety of Municipal purposes by a Town Committee. This involved a distinct principle of taxation from that which had been adopted in making the first regular settlement of the rest of the State. Writing to Colonel Hangton's successor on the 4th April, 1873, for a reconsideration of the orders. Mr. Smith made the following remarks :-

" No detailed instructions accompanied this order, probably because colonel Hangton being on the eve of his departure had no leisure for maturing the scheme or for considering the difficulties and disadvantages which it entails and which probably might have induced him to reconsider his orders.

The First question that arises is on what principle are the taxes to be assessed. The Dewan has proposed to act up to the spirit of Act. III of 1864 B.C. and follow the principle of valuing houses and lands and taxing them at a fixed rate not exceeding $7\frac{1}{2}$ percent of their annual value. Such a percentage would never produce an amount equal to what the Raja is entitled to obtain and moreover as rents have not been adjusted according to an adequate scale we have no means of ascertaining the annual value of the houses and lands. I believe that the inhabitants prefer to pay adequate rents, the justice of which is obvious to everyone instead of taxes, the very name of which is everywhere unpopular. I have no doubt also that in the course of a few years, the majority of the inhabitants would have to pay both taxes and high rents ; for the fortunate persons who get lease of lands in the heart of the town at agricultural rates, would sublet and sell their holdings and high rents would be obtained though not by the Rajah.

For these and other reasons the Settlement Officer Mr. Beckett agrees with me in thinking that the interests of the Rajah would be served best by postponing for the present the scheme of Municipal taxation and by making settlement of the town rates, either the rates proposed by Mr. Beckett or those subsequently proposed by the Dewan. I would mention that I laid this question before the late officiating Commissioner at Jalpaiguri and he signified his willingness to accede to my proposal. The only difficulty which stood in the way of an immediate decision was the difference of opinion between the Settlement Officer and the Dewan as regards the proposed rates of rent. This difference can be adjusted easily if you are pleased to concede the principle of a settlement of the town at town-rates".

It was however on the basis of the survey made by Mr. R. H. Renny, Extra Assistant Commissioner, in the year 1872-73, that the first Settlement

of the town was concluded by Mr. W. O. A. Beckett for three years with effect from the beginning of 1873-74⁵.

2. RATES OF RENT AND PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT

This was a tentative measure adopted with the object of seeing how the rules introduced in the course of the Settlement affected the residents. The rates were fixed after a good deal of discussion, especially, as there was nothing in the way of past experience to serve as guide in the matter⁶. The town was, besides, in a state of transition. The rates were slightly modified at the next settlement which was made in from 1876-77 for a period of 8 years which expired in 1883-84, under orders contained in the proclamation issued at the Durbar held on the occasion of the installation of His Highness the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur in 1883, the term of the settlement of all lands other than Patit or fallow lands in the State, was extended for 5 years⁷. The Patit charcha or re-assessment of lands which had been classified as Patit or uncultivated fallow at the first settlement, having been taken up at this time, a fresh survey of the town was made along with these operations in the year 1884-85, and a fresh settlement concluded for 3 years from 1886-87 to 1888-89. The period of this settlement was made short, because the Rakamcharcha settlement (re-assessment of lands under a fresh classification) of the Pargana of Cooch Behar was to commence in 1890-91. So far, however, as the town was concerned, the term of the settlement made in 1886-87 was extended for a further period of 10 years which expired in 1900, and no fresh survey was made⁸. In view of the extension of the Railway to the town and from there to the foot of the Bhutan hills in the Alipurduar and of the consequent development of the Commercial resources of the town which was expected from the same, it was not considered expedient, to revise the rates at the time. A fresh survey was however, made in the year 1906-07 and a

resettlement concluded for 13 years with effect from 1907-08 so as to terminate with the period of the resettlement of the Cooch Behar Pargana.

The Cooch Behar town property was divided into 9 blocks as shown below :-

Block No. 1	-	Comprising	495 plots.
Block No. 2	-	Comprising	1240 plots.
Block No. 3	-	Comprising	761 plots.
Block No. 4	-	Comprising	201 plots.
Block No. 5	-	Comprising	426 plots.
Block No. 6	-	Comprising	506 plots.
Block No. 7	-	Comprising	635 plots.
Block No. 8	-	Comprising	570 plots.
Block No. 9	-	Comprising	58 plots.

The area under the survey and settlement of the Town Cooch Behar at both the first and the second settlement was the whole of the taluk of Cooch Behar as defined in the Revenue Survey papers⁹.

Mr. W.O. A. Becket at first proposed the following rates for the town :-

Rs. 50 per bigha for shop in the reserved portion and for houses of prostitutes.

Rs. 12 will be the minimum for any shop in the reserved portion and for a prostitutes house.

Rs. 16 per bigha for homesteads in reserved portion.

Rs. 32 per bigha for shops in other parts.

Rs. 5 will be the minimum for any shop in other parts.

Rs. 12 per bigha for homesteads in other parts¹⁰.

The Dewan's opinion about the rates to be introduced in the town.

The Dewan wrote as follows on the rates proposed by Mr. Beckett :

" It was probably never the wishes of the authorities to increase existing rates in the new settlement ; the rates lately sanctioned for the greater portion of the Raj are not higher than those at which settlements used before to be concluded by the Malcutchery. Under these circumstances it is not advisable to assess very heavily lands held by Grihastos or permanent residents of the town and by others from whom the Raja never collected any rent. They should be made to pay rent like others ryots, but the rates should not be so high as Rs. 12 and Rs. 16 per bigha. The rates for homesteads in the whole town should in the humble opinion of the Dewan be uniform and it should not exceed Rs. 5 a Bigha ; paddy fields adjoining a house should, moreover, be assessed at the usual rate of 8 annas. With respect to shops it will be necessary to have two rates, one for the reserved portion and the other for the other parts of the town. At present many shop keepers pay rent at the rate of 8 annas to one rupee a cubit of frontage of these shops at these rates the rent of a bigha varies from Rs.100 to Rs. 200 and some times more. Some shop keepers however, pay rents at lower rates. Considering these circumstanes the rates proposed for shops in the reserved portion is rather low ; it may be 70 rupees, (the minimum) being Rs. 12 as proposed "¹¹.

Dewan further observed "It will be rather hard if the rates for shops in the reserved portion be applied to all houses of prostitutes ; many will find it difficult to pay rent at the rate of Rs. 50 a bigha, most of these were removed a short time ago from the best part of the town to a place which was low, the circumstances too is to be allowed some weight Rs. 15 per bigha

(with Rs. 5 as the minimum) is considered to be a sufficiently high rate for them.

In connection with this subject it is to be remembered that all the residents of the town have to pay chowkidari taxes, the rate of which is gradually being increased."

In May, 1873, Mr. C.T. Metcalfe, Commissioner, Cooch Behar, sanctioned the following rates for the town of Cooch Behar :-

Boundaries of plot No. 1 - the rate was fixed 12 annas a cubit and Rs. 25 per bigha for the rest area.

Boundaries of plot No. 2 - Frontages on all four sides at the rate of 12 annas a cubit and Rs. 25 a Bigha for the remaining area.

Boundaries of plot No. 3 - the whole area at the rate of Rs. 25 per bigha.

Boundaries of plot No. 4 - West frontage at the rate of 12 annas a cubit and the remainder at the rate of Rs. 25 per bigha.

Boundaries of plot No. 5 - the rates on the South Frontage to be 12 annas a cubit and Rs. 25 a bigha for back holdings. The remainder of the plot to be at the rate of Rs. 8 a bigha.

Boundaries of plot No. 6 - the rate on the south frontage to be 12 annas a cubit and Rs. 25 per bigha for back holdings. The rest area to be at the rate of Rs. 8 a bigha¹².

The rate in the rest of the town to be Rs.8 per bigha.

Several petitions were filed by the residents of the town complaining of the proposed rates, and the matter was fully discussed at a meeting presided over by the Commissioner and attended by all the responsible officers of the State. It was argued that the proposed rates were excessive with regard to the condition and income of the State officers, Lawyers and other residents of the town, not being shop-keepers. It was finally agreed that the rate for shops should be retained at the prevailing rate of 12 annas per running cubit of frontage area and that the rates for house-lands, other than shops and frontage rates, should be at the uniform rate of Rs. 8 per bigha. The settlement was to be made as far as possible with those persons who might be in defacto possession of the land as lessees for a term of years or in cases where the lessees desires to erect pacca or permanent buildings. In cases where persons claimed a superior right and had hitherto paid rents to the state the settlement might be made with them as Jotedars. In cases where no rents had hitherto been paid by persons claiming to be jotedars, the recognition of this tenure would be dependent on the consideration of the circumstances of the case and on the payment of a premium or salamee at the rate of Rs. 10 a bigha. Persons who were willing to be a lessees for a term of few years might obtain such leases at the current rates for periods of 3, 7 and 21 years liable to revision on each revision of resettlements. This was the origin of the two classes of holdings viz. Jotes and occupancy holdings in the town of Cooch Behar. The rule continued upto 1905 and some occupancy holdings were converted into jotes at the Settlement held in the year 1905, on receipt of a nuzzar of Rs. 10 a bigha.

As it was stated earlier that the rate for shops was 12 annas per cubic, and for all other lands Rs. 8 per bigha. In the rest of Cooch Behar

town Taluk the rates prevailing at that time in different taluks of the State were adopted, as detailed below :-

<u>Table : IX-1</u>	Rs. As. P.	
For Homestead or Garden lands	2-8-0	per bigha.
For Bamboo land	1-2-0	
For cultivated land	0-8-0	
For fallow or jumble land	0-1-0	

These arrangements, however, did not meet with the approval of Mr. W. T. Herschel, Commissioner, who on the 9th September, 1874 recorded the following note on the subject :-

" I have had some complaints before me about this and have noticed some unsatisfactory results of the arrangement".

" The boundary in the first place appears drawn in too close to the Rajbari placing it at the very edge of the town, whereas there is a considerable gathering of houses to the North of it now excluded. The fact that land is Petbhata should not affect the case. Petbhata may fall into the town and yet be exempt as petbhata for life and liable after that to the fair rent due to its position. The petbhata therefore, next to the Rajbari, should be included. Conservancy and other laws will then apply equally to the inhabitants of it ; otherwise, we may have the foulest sports under the nose of the Palace. I think the boundaries might well extend further north. There are several houses that way which seem quite as properly liable to town rules as other parts far off from the Rajbari.

Again, I am not sure that the boundaries in some parts have not been a little widely drawn specially down to the south west corner. I have

only casually inspected that part but it seemed very little like town, the proximity of the new cutcheries may make a difference. Then the rates appear to me to require revision. The rates that are fair in the Centre cannot be fair at the skirts. I observed many empty spots in the reserved portion which seem to show that at present at least a lighter rate would be advisable even there. In the outskirts may be seen new huts sprung up on low marshy ground rather than on good ground in the interior. It is no object to crowd the town, but we are very long way from doing that as yet. We are spending enormous sums on filling up holes in the town and making good ground and it is intolerable to see the town growing up outside itself all the time.

The present rates from all I can see were not assessed with sufficient discrimination.

I request the Deputy Commissioner will call together a Committee consisting of himself, Mr. Beckett, the Dewan and any other he may think fit to add and revise the boundaries and rates with reference to the remarks and report result for the issue of orders in regard to the next settlement which will take effect after the end of 1882".

3. MEASURES ADOPTED FOR REVISION OF RATES OF RENT.

A Committee consisting of the members named above accordingly sat on the 11th August, 1875 with the result that the town was extended on the North and the south-west by the addition of two blocks. The rate for shops remained the same as before the old rate of 8 per bigha for house lands was maintained in fact in the block bounded on the North by Shibendra Narayan Road, on the east by the Smith Road, on the south by Sunity Road and on the West by Keshab Road. In the rest of the town proper, including the portions

newly added, the rate was reduced to Rs. 6 per bigha. In all other parts of the town taluk the rates were as follows :-

<u>Table: IX-2</u>	Rs. As. P.
For house land	3-0-0 per bigha
For bamboo	1-2-0 per bigha
For cultivated or fallow lands	0-8-0 per bigha
For fallow land in some places situated quite close to the river.	0-1-0 per bigha.

These rates were a little higher than those which prevailed in the different taluks of the State and which had been adopted in the previous settlement. But, on the other hand, in certain parts included within the boundaries of the town proper the low rates fixed for lands situated outside were adopted in consideration of the fact that they were inhabited by poor people with the commencement of the construction of the new palace, a scheme was adopted for the improvement of the surrounding lands. The palace compound was accordingly extended on the North and lands had also to be taken up in other directions for a variety of purposes. In order to provide suitable house sites for people, who had to be removed and who had hitherto enjoyed the advantages of the town, it became necessary to extend the limits of the town proper¹³.

The portion of the Cooch Behar town taluk lying outside of the area were also surveyed. Some new area viz. Kharimala Khagrabari was now included for the first time in the town of Cooch Behar. No alteration was made in the rates for shops and the area assessed at the rate of Rs. 8 per bigha also remained the same as before. The remaining portion of the town proper was assessed at Rs. 6 per bigha and the outgoing portions of the town taluk at the ordinary rates mentioned above.

With a view to provide acomodation for the people whose houses had to be removed on account of the extention of Narendra Narayan Park in 1896-97, the town proper was further extended on the east by the addition of the area of the Cooch Behar town Taluk. The new area was assessed at the rate of Rs. 6 per bigha¹⁴.

This tract together with the remaining portion of the Cooch Behar town taluk had been included within the limits of the town Municipality in 1892.

In proposing a new settlement of the town to take effect from the commencement of 1905-1906, Rai Calica Doss Dutt, Dewan of the State in his letter No. 1623 dated the 4th September, 1905 to His Highness the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur in Council, summed up the existing circumstances and remarked as follows :-

The different rates prevailing in the town at that time were as follows :-

Block 1 - The rate was Rs. 8 per bigha.

Block 2 - Rs. 6 per bigha.

In this block there are also some lands which the following rates prevail :-

<u>Table : IX-3</u>	Rs. As. P.
For homestead	3-0-0
For Bamboo	1-2-0
For cultivated land	0-8-0
For certain patches of land situated on the bank of the Torsa	0-1-0

(These are mostly agricultural)

Block 3 - The remaining portion of the town Rs. 3 per bigha.

There are some cultivated and Patit lands in this block which are settled at the rate of 8 annas and 2 annas a bigha respectively. Some lands have also been lately settled at Rs. 6 per bigha. For lands occupied by shops outside the old market place a frontage rate of 12 annas a cubit or Rs. 240 a bigha and for shops situated on the two sides of the old market place Rs.1-4 a cubit¹⁵.

It is interesting to note that irrespective of shop sites the highest rate was Rs. 8 and that the rates for agricultural lands were lower than those fixed on the occasion of the re-settlement of the State in the interior.

In his letter the then Dewan explained why it was not advisable to revise the rates of 1896. The Railway was extended to the town in 1898 and from there to the foot of the Bhutan Hills in two years. It was at one time thought that when the Torsa, the Dharla and the Teesta were bridged, European firms, as in Haldibari would be established here at Cooch Behar. But no such firms had been opened ; only M/s. Ralli Brothers took lease of a plot of land near the Railway Station but they also had not yet opened business there. Thus the anticipations as regards the development of the trade of the town owing to the opening of the Railway have not been realised. The Dewan thought that in consideration of the extensive improvements effected at a considerable expenditure in the different parts of the town, the revision of rates should no longer be deferred. The revision of rates have also become necessary owing to the fact that though a large number of roads have been opened within the last few years the drainage channels cannot be improved or other useful works undertaken for want of funds. The Dewan proposed the following rates :-

(1) A uniform rate of Rs. 8 for the portion of the town situated to the north.

(2) A uniform rate of Rs. 6 for the portion situated to the south.

(3) The remaining portion of the town, the rate be fixed according to the rules adopted on the occasion of the resettlement of the State. This area, though included in the town Taluk is an agricultural tract and will not bear a high rate¹⁶.

The above proposals of the Dewan have been sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar in Council on the 19th September, 1905.

The total area surveyed, including the town and its suburbs, was 10.17 square miles. The area of the town including Nilkuthi and the Railway Station Compound was 4878 bighas 5 cottas and 4 dhurs or 2.5 square miles. All measurements were made with Gunter's Chain and the area calculated were then reduced to standard bighas, cottahs and churs.

All previous settlements, however, the measurement itself was made in standard Bighas, cattas and dhur. At the Revenue Survey of 1869-70, the area of Cooch Behar town, Taluk was found to be 1309.86 acres, which is equivalent to 3962 bighas 6 cattas. The total area of Cooch Behar town shown in the first settlement was 3965 Bighas and 19 dhurs which was less than that shown in the settlement of 1876-77 by 12 bighas 5 cottas and 18 dhurs. Of those two settlements the town proper the merely a part of the Cooch Behar town Taluk, which only was therefore surveyed in its entirety. It was noticed that at the survey of 1884-85 a portion of Taluk - Khar mala Khagrabari, west of the Gordon Road, was added to the town taluk and the area

calculated was 4167 bighas 8 cottas and 5 dhurs. A good deal of change had taken place since that time and before the town was measured for the new settlement in 1905-06. The main course of the river Torsa began to flow past the town in 1890 and large tracts of land on the south and south-west of the town taluk were washed away. This accounts for the difference of 55 bighas and 13 dhurs between the results of the last two measurement. It has also to be borne in mind that the results of two surveys even of the same area can never be exactly the same, especially, when the area under operation is large. The percentage of difference allowed by the Board of Revenue is 10.

The unassessed area during the settlement of 1905-06 measuring 2,568 bighas 5 cottas and 14 dhurs, was distributed as follows:-

Table : IX-4

B.K.D.

1.	Lands which gradually come under settlement.	264-14-12
2.	Land which is required for Public purposes and which cannot, therefore be settled.	2077-17-6
	a] The palace and its compounds Road, <u>jhils</u> etc.	352-14-3
	b] The Narendra Narayan Park	51-14-17
	c] Public Buildings and their compounds	469-14-05
	d] Tanks, <u>Jhils</u> etc.	210-0-1
	e] Roads & drains	469-6-17
	f] Lands otherwise required for public purposes	259-12-11
	Total -	<u>2077-17-6</u>
3.	Rent free lands :-	433-7-16
	a] <u>Debuttar</u>	146-4-15
	b] <u>Brahmattar</u>	48-4-0
	c] <u>Lakheraj</u>	19-2-11
	d] <u>Petbhata</u>	219-16-10
	Total :	<u>433-7-6</u>
4.	<u>Jaigir</u> or service land	35-15-18
5.	<u>Mokarari</u> land or land permanently settled	21-4-14
	Total :	<u>2,568-5-14</u>

In recommending a revision of the settlement of the town of Cooch Behar, the Dewan remarked as follows :-

" Towards the close of 1883, Your Highness in Council constituted a Town Committee and placed Rs. 9,000 out of the collections of the town at the disposal of that body for Municipal purposes. The total land Revenue collections of the town amounted at this time to a little over Rs.9,500 with the completion of the new Palace its compound was extended to the north upto Puranabas, where Maharani Kameswari Dangar Aye Devati, the Rajmata Deo Aye Devati and other ladies of Palace used to live. We had also to take up lands in other directions for different purposes. With this object of making suitable house sites available for people who had to be moved and who had hitherto enjoyed the advantages of the town it became necessary to extend its limits to the boundary of the town taluk on the north and the south and to the Gordon Road with its extension to the Bangchatra Road on the east and also to assess them at town rates. The total land revenue collections inclusive of the tolls realised in the two daily markets now amounting to nearly Rs.17,000/- which under the subsequent orders of Your Highness is entirely made over to the town Committee'.

The increase in revenue is estimated about Rs. 3,000, which is more than 25 percent on the collection of land revenue irrespective of tolls. If it be your Highness' pleasure that the increase also should be paid to them they should arrange to pay the cost of re-settlement. If necessary the State may grant a loan and the town Committee may repay it in 3 or 4 years with the increase which is expected"¹⁷

It should be mentioned here that the present limits of the town Municipality are not conterminous with those of the Cooch Behar town, taluk, as shown in the Revenue Survey map, for which revenue collections are made

by the Bhowaniganj Tehsil Cutchery. The portion of the taluk which lies south of the Hazrapara Road and is bounded on the east by the Bangvhatra Road and on the West by the Tract leading from the site before occupied by the house of Dina Nath Chakraborty of Patakura to the Torsa lies outside the limits of the Municipality. This tract contains agricultural lands and is inhabited by Agriculturists, who enjoy very few of the advantages of the town, the latrine tax and the chaukanidari tax at high rates were not thought fit to be imposed upon them. Although the Town Committee could strictly speaking have no claim to the revenue derived from this tract, His Highness liberally gave it along with the other collections made by the Bhowaniganj Tehsil Cutchery to the Municipality. The amount of this Revenue was not much, at the close of last year it amounted to Rs. 447.

With the revision of the rates and applications of the six rupees rate to the lands lying immediately to the south of the present southern units of the Municipality, it will be time to extend the Municipal limits atleast to the tract of which the rate is now proposed to be raised to Rs. 6.

The whole of the increase obtained by the resettlement of 1905-06 of the town was ordered by His Highness to be given to the Town Committee for the maintenance and development of the town of Cooch Behar¹⁸.

SUMMARY

The first measurement of the town of which have any authentic record, was the one held in 1868. This measurement was followed by the survey of 1869-70 held under the supervision of Mr. H. J. O. Donel, Deputy Superintendent of Revenue Surveys, Govt. of India, a loan of whose services was obtained for the purpose by Colonel J. C. Hanghton, the first

Commissioner of Cooch Behar during the minority of the then Maharaja Sir Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. At this survey the town was formed into a distinct taluk, called the Cooch Behar town Taluk. The area at this time was 2 square miles.

The above two surveys had no reference to the settlement of rents, the operations connected with which were for the first time undertaken in 1872-73 and completed in the following year i.e. 1873-74. The term of Settlement was purposely fixed for a short period of 3 years as the residents besides shopkeepers and women of ill-fame, were before exempted from the payment of rents and the authorities wanted to see how the new rules withdrawing the exemption affected them.

The next Settlement was the one of 1876-77 concluded for a period of eight years to end in 1883-84 with that of the General Settlement of the State. Beyond an extension of the limits of the town and a slight modification in the rates no changes in the rules were introduced at this settlement. His Highness Maharaja Sir Nripendra Narayan assumed the charge of the State in November, 1883 and as it was then thought inexpedient to undertake a new settlement, the period of the General Settlement of the State was extended for 5 years, at the expiration of which a fresh settlement was concluded in the town for a period of ten years which expired in 1899-1900. As it was in contemplation at this time to connect the capital of the State with the Railway system of British India, and as it was expected that the railway would develop the commercial resources of the town, no revision of rates was made this settlement. The Railway was opened upto the Torsa ghat opposite the town in 1894. The line was diverted, an iron bridge was constructed over the river and the railway was extended to the town in 1898 and from there to the foot of the Bhutan Hills in two years. At one time some European

merchants showed considerable eagerness to have lands near the Cooch Behar Station for the establishment of jute firms. It was also thought lands would be wanted by other traders. Some lands were accordingly reserved but excepting M/s. Ralli Brothers and a few petty shopkeepers none came forward even though the apprehend difficulties in regard to transhipments were to a great extent removed by the bridging of the Dharla below Mogulhat and of the Teesta below Kawneah.

At the time of the Revenue survey held by Mr. O' Donel in 1869 the area of the town was about two square miles. It had considerably increased since then. With the increase in area the land revenue collections, inclusive of the collections made at the two daily hats in the town also increased from Rs.9500 in 1883, the year His Highness assumed the charge of the State to Rs. 17000 in 1905 and though the entire amount was under an order of His Highness in council, paid to the Municipal Board of the town, called the Cooch Behar town Committee, that body could not undertake several useful works, the principal of which was a scheme for the drainage of the town which had been affected by the opening of a large number of roads. For all these, funds were wanted and a revision of a rates was considered necessary. The revision was also necessary in view of the vast improvements effected in the town. The Dewan's views in this connection with this matter as contained in his letter No. 1623 dated the 4th September, 1905, is very interesting to note.

A meeting of the council held on the 19th September, 1905. His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur was pleased to sanction the proposals of the Dewan, as also the estimated cost of Rs. 8000 which was subsequently raised to Rs. 10000/-. It was decided that the cost was to be paid by the

Town Committee, to whom the increase of Rs. 3000 then expected to be obtained by the resettlement was to be paid. The settlement operations were commenced in November, 1905, and completed in February, 1908. It appears that the total increase actually obtained over the old Jama of Rs.10,729-8-6 is Rs.6,283-10-9 or nearly 59 percent. It has been distributed over 5 years from 1908, from when the new settlement has come into force. The total of assessed area dealt with in 1458 Bighas 8 kathas 16 dhurs of which 3 bighas 3 kathas 13 dhurs lying by the sides of the market place, have been assessed at Rs. 1-4 per cubit, 1106 Bighas 12 kathas 13 dhurs at Rs. 8, 227 bighas 5 kattas at Rs. 6 and 98 bighas 19 kathas 10 dhurs at the General resettlement rates. The unassessed area measured 2568 Bighas to be occupied by the palace and other public buildings, roads, tanks, jhils etc.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

- [1] Pramanath Nath Chatterjee, - The Resettlement of the town of Cooch Behar, Cooch Behar, 1913, p. 52.
- [2] The Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1882-83, Cooch Behar, 1883, p. 8.
- [3] P. N. Chatterjee, - Op.cit., p. 53.
- [4] P. N. Chatterjee, Op.cit., p. 52.
- [5] Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, The Cooch Behar State and its land revenue settlements, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 508.
- [6] P. N. Chatterjee, Op.cit., p. 54.
- [7] Proclamation issued on the 9th November, 1883.
Extract from the proclamation issued by His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur : "The existing land Revenue settlement is hereby

extended for 5 years from 1291 B.S. with the exception that all patit lands brought under cultivation since the last settlement will be assessed as full rates".

- [8] Letter of G.J.B.T.Dalton, Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar No. 1560 dated Cooch Behar, the 20th January,1883, to the Commissioner of Rajshya and Cooch Behar Division.
- [9] P. N. Chatterjee, Op.cit.,p. 56.
- [10] W.O.A. Beckett's letter No. 398 dated the 30th May,1872.
- [11] Quoted from the Book of P. N. Chatterjee, Op.cit., p. 60.
- [12] P.N. Chatterjee, Op.cit., p. 62.
- [13]] Ibid, p. 65.
- [14] The Annual Administration Report of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1896-97,Cooch Behar 1897, pp. 5,6.
- [15] A.A.R., 1905-06, p. 8.
- [16] Dewan's letter No. 1623, dated 4th September, 1905 to His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.
- [17] A.A.R. 1905-06, p. 10.
- [18] P. Chatterjee, Op.cit., p.91.

CHAPTER - X

A NOTE ON KRISHIPROJAS

:HISTORY OF KRISHIPROJAS OR CULTIVATING RAIYATS IN COOCH BEHAR :

The Krishiprojas are cultivators settled on land in defence of Section 4 and 24 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910 which prohibit (a) the subletting of land by an under-tenant lower than a Chukanidar, (b) the subletting of land unless by registered Pattah and Kabuliyat¹.

The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910 was enacted in the line of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, enforced in rest of Bengal, but was not a copy of it. On the whole, this act of 1910 was more beneficial to the cultivators than even the amended Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885².

In Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910, the term "Adhiar" was defined as a person who cultivates another's land for a share of the produce. But the term "Krishiproja" was defined as a cultivating raiyat who has been recorded in Terij as such. Further it was stated in the Act that the Krishiproja in all respects shall be deemed to be an "under-tenants"³. An Adhiar or Proja is a person who cultivates land on the condition that he gets half the produce of the crop ; he is in fact, a hired labourer, paid in kind. The Adhiars have had no rights in the soil, but Sir G. Campbell, when Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, in a letter dated 4th October, 1872, ordered that Adhiars, who cultivate with their own cattle for twelve consecutive years, should gain occupancy rights in their fields⁴. Where illegally settled tenancies of more than one grade exist, those of the lowest grade shall be recognised. However, the intermediate illegal tenants hold some lands in khas possession of the occupants of each such holdings did not recognised.

Where an illegally settled tenant has sublet land by registered patta the tenant to whom the land is sub-let shall be treated as Krishiproja provided that he holds the land in khas possession⁵.

In the course of first settlement the Adhiyars were classified under the head of under-tenants. These persons cultivate for the farmer and get half the produce at the value of their labour. They generally live upon the landlord's premises or on lands in his khas possession, and pay no rent for the same. Some times they cultivate the land with the plough and cattle lent by the Grihi (Landlord), but more generally they have their own implements of agriculture. Sometime a man possessing some land of his own, also cultivates another's land on the Adhiyari system. In that case they are called Utungkara proja, the General appellation for both these classes of cultivators being "Proja". Thus although the term "Proja" ordinarily means an under-tenant, but the Cooch Behar people will not understand by it anything more than a farm labour. These men do not keep themselves always confined to the same plot or plots of land, but move from one land to another, as they may find it profitable, or as the Giriha may direct. Thus they are more hired labourers than under-tenants and were not recorded as under-tenants during the resettlement operations⁶.

The sub-infendation Act was passed in Cooch Behar in 1888 to check the further development of sub-infendation in the State and to prevent the creation of new rights in place of existing ones when they lapsed or became extinct. By that Act, the letting by any one but the Jotedar of any land that was not let already was prohibited and a Jotedar was prohibited from letting out lands to persons other than actual cultivators. In His Highness's letter No. 711, dated the 12th November, 1889, sanction was accorded to the addition of

a penal clause to paragraph 10 of the patta viz., that all agreements by which lands are sublet must be reduced to writing and when they are not so done will not be recognised by any Court of justice or any office in the State. By Section 24 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (V of 1910), a chukanidar also was allowed to let out lands in his khas possession but the letting out of land by as under-tenant other than a chukanidar continued to be prohibited. Under Section 4 of the same Act, a tenure not paying revenue to the State or on under-tenure shall not be created except by contract entered into by means of registered patta and kabuliyat at the time of creation of every new under tenancy, and jotedars and chukanidars alone can creat such under tenancies by letting out khas lands⁷.

Large number of new tenancies have, however, been actually created in contravention of the aforesaid provisions of the law and generally at very high rents. Their number was estimated by Mr. N. N. Sen, the then Dewan of the State, at 50,000 in the whole state i.e. 1/12th of the entire population. They are the people who actually cultivate the land and it is safe to say that in many instances, their return amounts only to the barest means of subsistance. These illegally settled tenants fall under two classes viz. (i) valid but invalid because verbal, and (ii) invalid under existing law and invalid because verbal. Under class (1) fall the verbal tenants holding lands directly under Jotedars and also those who similarly acquired lands from chukanidars after the passing of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act of 1910⁸.

In this letter No. 233, dated the 22nd April, 1918, the then Dewan dwelt at length on the helpless condition of these illegally settled tenants and solicited His Highness's favour to confer on them a right and title to the land they held and to protect them from eviction. The Dewan called them " the

Back-bone of the country as builders of its wealth". According to his estimates they "constitute almost 90% of the cultivating population". It was also pointed out by him that the origin of such tenancies could not be traced out and that it was extremely difficult to prove 12 years' possession even where it existed.

It is interesting to note here the observation made by Mr. H. J. Twynam, I.C.S., Vice President, Regency Council, In-charge Settlement Department, Cooch Behar, in his note on the Resettlement of Land Revenue in Cooch Behar. "It seems doubtful whether anything much can now be done to arrest the process of Sub-infendation or to prevent these Krishiprojas, in many instances, being reduced to the lowest standard of life comparable with existence. It is, of course, not only the jotedars who take advantage of economic necessity in this way but also the other grades of lawful under-tenants, Chukanidars, Darchikanidars etc. The only remedy is for the Krishiproja who is rack rented to vacate his holding, but the standard of living is so low that it will probably always be possible to obtain men willing to work on terms which will just enable them to keep themselves, and perhaps their families, alive. In any event, the problem is one with which the Resettlement of the land revenue is not directly concerned. It is a question which should be carefully considered together with the amendment of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, a measure which is in urgent need of drastic revision"⁹.

Regarding these Krishiprojas there are a few outstanding questions which have not been settled :-

[a] Whether illegally settled tenancies discovered during the present revisional operations but subsequent to the date of the Notification granting recognition should be recognised or not.

It is difficult to see how recognition having been granted to some can be to others refused and such recognition does, at any rate, give the Krishiproja security of tenure.

[b] The status to be accorded to Krishiprojas holding land under other Krishiprojas, or under Jotedars or chukanidars where there has been a subsequent interchange of pattah and Kabuliyat. In the latter case it is proposed to bring the Krishiproja within the recognised degree of undertenants, as Jotedars and chukanidars have the right to sub-let by Pattah and Kabuliyat.

[c] The question of Krishiprojas' rents - this is a thorny subject as it is precisely by and because of these high contractual rents that the legally settled tenants and undertenants make high profits and are anxious for a long period of settlement, the profits made from the lawfully settled undertenants at each new settlement being negligible in portion to the profits made from Krishiprojas¹⁰.

The notifications dated 1918 have settled the problem as regards the illegal tenancies created prior to that date and in those cases the contractual rent has been recorded as payable. As regards the illegal tenancies created subsequent to that date it is difficult to see how recognition can be granted without recognition of the contractual rent. It is clear that in respect of these lands all the evils of competitive rents have made their appearance in the State".

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- [1] Karanali Charan Ganguly, - Final report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State. (1913-27), Cooch Behar, 1930, P. 19.

- [2] Todarmal, Land in West Bengal, Calcutta, 1990, p.89-90.
- [3] Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910, Cooch Behar, 1910, p. 12.
- [4] W. W. Hunter, Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. X, p. 389, London. 18.
- [5] Cooch Behar Gazette, Part I, 1925, p. 57, and also in Hand Book of Circular orders and notification &c. from May, 1893 to December, 1929, Vol. IV, Cooch Behar, 1930, p. 276.
- [6] H. N. Choudhuri. The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 513, and also see A. Mitra, Census 1951, West Bengal District Hand Books, Cooch Behar, Calcutta, 1953, p. X/VIII.
- [7] K. C. Ganguly, Op. Cit., p. 20.
- [8] Dewan's letter No. 233, dated the 22nd April, 1918, addressed to His Highness, p. 1.
- [9] Ibid, pp. 2-3.
- [10] K. C. Ganguly, Op. Cit., pp., 33-34.

CHAPTER - XI

LAND TENURE SYSTEMS

There were several distinct land tenures in Cooch Behar State during this period of study. All the tenures may be grouped under two heads, namely, (a) Revenue paying estates and (b) Rent free holdings¹.

The land tenures prevailing in Cooch Behar State are of less complicated character than those generally found in Bengal, and it is said that they are more favourable to all the parties engaged in the soil, as the rights of each are defined either by law or custom and easily ascertained².

1. REVENUE PAYING ESTATES

The Raja or King of Cooch Behar is the owner of the soil, and stands much in the same relation to the jotedars as does a Zamindar in lower Bengal to his rayats³.

The Revenue paying estates are called "Jotes" and the holders of these estates are called "Jotedars". The Jotedars are thus, in one sense, analogous to "Zemindars" and "Talukdars" of British India, who pay the revenue direct to Government. A jote is heritable and transferable. It is also divisible subject to the limits fixed by the laws of the State. The State has always recognised the rights of ownership, subject to the payment of revenue at the prevailing rates, although, there is no written code extant from which such right could be proved. The rent payable by Jotedars is liable to enhancement. It is liable to be summarily sold for its own arrears of revenue although the law on the subject is more lenient than Act. XI of 1859, of British India⁴.

The Jotes are of two kinds, (a) Mokarari or permanently settled, and (b) Sarasari or temporarily settled. The revenue of the former is fixed

permanently and no increase can be made by the State unless the quantity of land in possession of the holder be found to be in excess of the original grant. The revenue of the temporarily settled jotes, on the other hand, can be increased after the expiration of the term of the lease. The jote can be relinquished under the customary law of the country after payment of the full revenue for the year within a stated time. It can be resumed by the State on the violation of any terms of the lease, or for a public purpose, without paying any compensation for the land. In the case of Mokararis, however, a fair and equitable price is paid for the land. The Jotedar has thus got a little interest for Sarasari Jotes⁵.

Under the Jotes there were six grades of under-tenures in Cooch Behar. These, at least those of the higher grades, have been in existence from a very old time and mark the great development of sub-infeudation which has prevailed in the country from before the first settlement. This system received an impetus from the abuses of the Ijaradari system of collection of land revenue which was abolished in 1872. In 1888 a law was passed to put a check to the evils of sub-infeudation which prohibited subletting the chukanis and all holdings inferior to them.

2. TYPES OF UNDER-TENURES

There were six types of under-tenures existed in Cooch Behar, such as :-

1. Chukani,
2. Darchikani,
3. Dara-dar-chukani,
4. Tashya Chukani
5. Tali Chukani
6. Tashya-tali-chukani

Chukani is the General name for an under-tenure, and the prefix "Dar", "Dara-dar", etc. makes its place in the scale of Subordinate tenancy.

These tenures have occupancy rights. An under-tenant was formerly liable to ejection only on the violation of any terms of the lease. This character of these holdings have been emphasised by the sub-indentation Act of 1889. These holdings are heritable and divisible, but could not be formerly transferred by sale as of right, without the consent of the superior Landlord, except under orders of the Court. This disability has been removed by the Voluntary sale of under-tenures Act of 1892. The under-tenants can now sell their title to the holdings by a deed duly registered, and on the payment of a fee to the landlord through the Revenue authorities⁶.

Formerly, almost every class of under-tenant could sublet his lands, either verbally or by a written instrument, and thus sub-indentation was carried to an undue excess. In 1888, subletting of lands except by a jotedar, and that only in chukani right, was put down by Legislation, verbal contracts of payment of rent were also prohibited⁷.

3. DIFFERENT CLASSES OF CULTIVATORS

The different classes of cultivators found all over the State of Cooch Behar are as follows :-

1. Jotedars.
2. Chukanidars.
3. Dar-chukanidars.
4. Dur-a-dur-chukanidars.
5. Tosio Chukanidars.
6. Adhiars.

Persons holding revenue paying land immediately under the Rajah are called Jotedars or proprietors of jotes. Jotedars cannot take more than 25 percent in advance of the rates they themselves pay the State (as sanctioned by Government in letter No. 152T of the 4th October, 1872) from their under tenants called chukanidars. This was done to prevent the under-tenants from being unduly oppressed by the jotedars for it was ascertained that the Jotedars wanted to take from 60 to 100 per cent more from the Chukanidars than they paid themselves as rent.

A Chukandar is an under-tenant of a jotedar or the owner of a chukani. A chukanidar has rights of occupancy, his under-tenure is also heritable like a jote and divisible. He pays to the jotedar as rent a sum of not exceeding 25 percent over and above the rates that the jotedar pays to the State. The quantity of land held by each Chukanidar together with the maximum rent payable by him to the jotedar has been entered in the Terij and a copy of this terij has been given to each chukanidar⁸.

A Dur-chukanidar is an under-tenant of a chukanidar or the owner of a durchukani. A dur-chukani under tenure is also transferable with the consent of the chukanidar and heritable. A dur-chukanidar has also a right of occupancy in fact in Cooch Behar, the right of ejectment has never been known or recognised. A darchukanidar pays 50 percent over the jotedar's rates as rent to his chukanidars⁹. The quantity of land they held, its incidents and the maximum rent due by them to their chukanidar is also as in the case of the chukanidar shown in the Terij and an extract of this has been given to each durchukanidar.

A Dur-a-dur-chukanidar is an under-tenant of a dur-chukanidar or the owner of a dur-a-dhur-chukani and they have the same rights as a dur-chukanidar. Their rent is 75 percent over the Jotedar's rates. It is interesting

to note that while in Bengal under the rulings of the High Court only one class of holders under a Zamindar can have occupancy rights, at the same time in Cooch Behar, all classes of under tenants have their rights and moreover each man knows from the copy of the Terji in his hands the exact maximum he can be called on to pay as rent, thus preventing illegal cesses being taken from him. The under-tenant in Cooch Behar is therefore, in a much better position than men of the same class in Bengal. As a result they are a happy, contented, well-to-do class.

A tosio Chukanidar is an under tenant of a dur-a-dur chukanidar or the owner of a toso chukani. This is a very rare occurrence that a dur-a-durchukanidar have under-tenant under them. There are only a few of such type of under-tenants in Cooch Behar. They have also occupancy rights.

An Adhiars or Proja is a person who cultivates lands on the condition that he gets half the produce in kind, he is in fact a hired labours paid in kind. Till that time they have had no rights whatever in the soil. But Sir George Campbell in his letter No. 1527 dated 4th October, 1872 ordered that any adhiars who cultivate with their own cattle for 12 consecutive years would gain occupancy rights in their fields. A Proclamation to this effect has accordingly been issued. Each class of rayot cultivates generally speaking some of his land by the aid of adhiars, thus there are adhiars under Jotedars as well as under chukanidars, dur-chukanidars etc¹⁰.

4. RENT-FREE TENURES

A large quantity of land is held rent free by different persons all over the State. This rent-free lands are commonly known as Lakheraj Estates. The term "Lakhiraj" is a combination of two Arabic words "La" and "Khiraj", "La" means "free" and "Khiraj" means "Revenue". Hence "Lakhiraj"

means revenue free. These rent free lands bear five different denominations according to the purpose which they served. They are :-

1. Brahmattar - when the grants made to Brahmans.
2. Debottar - when allotted to the worship of a particular Deva or Deity.
3. Pirpal - when given to Musalmans for support of Pirs or saints.
4. Lakhiraj - for meritorious act.
5. Petbhata - for maintenance.

Brahmattar lands, given to Brahmanas for their support, such grants are hereditary and transferable. They are of personal nature, in contradiction to Debottar grants, which are made for the support of an idol. Deottar grants are lands given for the support of an idol, they cannot be sold in any way. In Cooch Behar there are two kinds of such grants :- (1) State debottars, (2) besides State Debottars there are which may be called private debottars.

Pirpal grants are lands granted to Muhammadans for the support of a Pir or Saint, just as a debottar is given to Hindus for the support of an idol.

Lakhiraj grants are not confined to any particular class, and are hereditary and transferable. All Lakhiraj grants return back to the State on failure of heirs.

Petbhata lands are rent-free holdings, generally given by a Raja for the maintenance of his relatives during their lives. A petbhata grant lapses at the death of the original grantee, and his heirs must apply to the Raja for a renewal. If no fresh grant is given, the heirs are ordinarily, but not necessarily,

allowed to hold the lands as a jote, paying rent at the prevailing rates, like any other jotedar, while the land is held as petbhata, it is not transferrable¹¹.

Another category of revenue free tenure special to Cooch Behar should be mentioned. It was known as Jaigir, very different from the tenure of the same name obtaining in British India. In almost all country the Jagirdari system has prevailed in some shape or other. In some parts of Bengal it is called Chakran-land or land given to servants, and is the exact equivalent of the English "Service-land"¹². The Cooch Behar Jaigirs were non-transferable and non-hereditary grants to slaves in lieu of payment for service to the Palace¹³.

This system has been in working in the State from a remote antiquity¹⁴. The system must have been introduced when land did not possess much value, and when the personal liberty of the subjects was not much respected. Some years ago the Jaigirdars were looked upon as slaves. They could be imprisoned or made to suffer corporal punishment of any description by their superior. Their number originally was 974 in 1789. The lands given to them were not clearly described in any book ; the consequence was that they generally held much larger quantities than they were entitled to. As improvements began to be introduced into the State, and the liberty of the subjects was more and more respected, it was found that the Jaigirdari system did not work satisfactorily. The Jaigirdars were accustomed to work in the old way ; they were lazy and irregular ; their usefulness also decreased owing to the change in the nature of the work which had to be done at the Palace. In the course of the new settlement their number has, therefore, been gradually reduced to 367 at the time of first settlement i.e. in the year 1876¹⁵.

The most influential class amongst the Jaigirdars consisted of the Morangias. Their ancestors were slaves and given as presents by a Morang King to Maharaja Nara Narayan of Cooch Behar towards the end of the sixteenth Century, on the occasion of a marriage. These men settled in Kodalksheti, Bhogmara and other Taluks in pargana Mathabhanga and one member of each family served as Jaigirdar. In times the Morangias managed to acquire some influence, and committed much oppression on the people. When Government adopted steps for defining their Jaigir lands, they filed resignations giving up their posts ; these resignations were accepted and their lands were resumed and settled with them and they wereturning into peaceful rayats. The annual revenue derived from resumed Jaigir lands in Pargana Mathabhanga amounts to Rs.10999-13-2. The work before done by 156 Morgangias is managed by twelve paid Dhangur coolies. The quantity of Jaigir lands upheld in this Pargana is 2,932 bighas 10 kathas and 10 dhurs and it is held by 50 jotedars¹⁶.

The Jaigirdars as already noticed are bound to give certain defined personal service for the lands they hold.If they fail to do so,or are inefficient, or if their services are no longer required, their lands are resumed. Jaigir lands are consequently not saleable or transferable. They cannot be encumbered by the creation of tenures under them. On the death of a Jaigirdar qualified heirs ordinarily inherit, or rather, are chosen to succeed him, but the state is not bound to accept the service of the heir, and can substitute some one else.

Before the first settlement the number of Jaigirdars was very large, they were mostly useless men and the settlement was availed of to greatly reduce their number,and also to define exactly the quantity of land each Jaigirdar should hold. Some idea may be formed of the large extent of

resumption of these lands when it is remembered that a sum of Rs. 14,691 was obtained by the first settlement of the resumed Jaigirs alone of the State¹⁷.

With the growing idea of comfort and liberty of the modern age the Jaigirdari system is fast becoming antiquated and unpopular. Most of the Jaigirdars are anxious to throw their rights which the system imposes and are desirous of setting up an independent rayats whose obligation to the State mainly ceases with the payment of the land revenue. The State also does not gain by their services which are generally inferior what can be easily obtained for hire labour of much cheaper rate¹⁸.

SUMMARY

The land tenures in Cooch Behar State may be grouped under two heads (a) Revenue paying estates and (b) Rent-free estates. The revenue paying estates in the State are called "Jotes", and the holders of these estates are called "Jotedars". This is in one sense, analogous to "Zamindars" and "Talukders" of British India, who pay the revenue direct to the Government. A jote is heritable and transferable.

The Jotes are of two kinds. Mokarari or permanently settled and Sarasari or temporarily settled. The revenue of the former is fixed in perpetuity and no increase can be demanded by the State unless the quantity of land in possession of the holder be found to be in excess of the original grant.

The revenue of the temporarily settled jotes, on the other hand, can be increased after the expiration of the terms of the lease.

Under the jotes there are six grades of under-tenures. These, at least those of the higher grades, have been in existence from a very old time, and mark the great development of sub-infendation which has prevailed in the country from before the time of first settlement. This system received an impetus from the abuses of the Ijardari system of collection of land revenue which was abolished in 1872. In 1888, a law was passed to put a check to the evils of sub-infendation which prohibited subletting of chukanies and all holdings inferior to them.

The names of the under-tenants are : (1) Chukani, (2) Dur Chukani, (3) Dura-dar-chukani, (4) Tashya chukani, (5) Tali Chukani and (6) Tashyatali Chukani.

Formerly, almost every class of under tenant could sublet his lands, either verbally or by a written instrument, and thus sub-infendation was carried to an undue excess. In 1888, subletting of lands except by a Jotedar, and that only in chukani right, was put down by legislation, verbal contracts of payment of rent were also prohibited in that year.

Chukani is the General name for an under-tenure, and the prefix "Dar", "Dar-dar", etc. marks its place in the scale of subordinate tenancy. There were six different classes of cultivators found in Cooch Behar. They are : (1) Jotedars, (2) Chukanidar, (3) Dara-chukanidars, (4) Dara-dar chukanidars, and (6) Adhiars.

These tenures have occupancy rights. An under-tenant was formerly liable to ejection only on the violation of any terms of the lease. These holdings are heritable and divisible but could not be formerly transferred by sale as of right, without the consent of the superior landlord, except under orders of the Court. This disability has been removed by the Voluntary sale of lands

under-tenures Act of 1892. The under tenants can now sell their title to the holdings by a deed duly registered and on the payment of a fee to the landlords through the Revenue Authorities.

A large quantity of land is held rent free by different persons all over the State. These lands were received alike by Hindus and Mahamedans and the grants were made for both secular and religious purposes. These lands bear five different denominations according to the purpose which they serve. They are (1) Brahmattar - when the grants are made to Brahmans, (2) Debottar - when allotted to the worship of a particular Deva or Deity. (3) Pirpal when given to Musalmans for the support of Pirs or saints. (4) Lakhiraj for the meritorious act, (5) Pethbhata for maintenance.

Jaigirs or service lands, though enjoyed by the holders without rent, are quite distinct from the lands of the above descriptions. The Jaigirdars have to render personal service as a return for the occupation and enjoyment of the lands. This is a feature which is not present in any of the grants. In almost every country the Jaigirdari system has prevailed in some shape or other and is the exact equivalent of the English "Service-land".

With the growing idea of comfort and liberty of the modern age the Jagirdari system is far becoming antiquated and unpopular. Most of the Jaigirdars are anxious to throw off their rights which the system imposes and are desirous of setting up as independent rayats whose obligation to the State mainly ceases with the payment of the land revenue.

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- [3] W. A..Beckett, Completion Settlement Report of Pargannah, Mekligange, in the Cooch Behar State, Cooch Behar, 1874, p. IV.
- [4] H.N. Choudhury, Op.Cit., p. 441.
- [5] H. N. Choudhury, Op.Cit., p. 509.
- [6] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.Cit., p. 511.
- [7] The Sub-infendation Act of 1888.
- [8] Sir George Campbell's letter No. 1534 dated 12th June, 1873.
- [9] Government's letter No. 152 T dated 4th October, 1872.
- [10] W.O.A.Backett, Op.Cit., Para 60 to 62, 65 to 71.
- [11] W.H.Hunter, Op.Cit., p. 391.
- [12] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.Cit., p. 546.
- [13] Todarmal, Land in West Bengal, Calcutta, 1990, p. 84.
- [14] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.Cit., p. 546.
- [15] W.O.A.Beckett, Op.Cit., Para 9.
- [16] Report of G. Dalton, Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar to the Commissioner of the Rajshye and Cooch Behar Division vide No. 920, dated Cooch Behar, the 28th October, 1876.
- [17] H.N. Choudhury, Op.Cit., p. 547.
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CHAPTER - XII

OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE IN COOCH BEHAR

1. INTRODUCTION

In Cooch Behar the following major branches of administration were noticed under Revenue Department.

(a) Land Revenue, (b) Excise Revenue, (c) Stamp Revenue, (d) Income Tax and (e) Export Duty. We have discussed in detail the Land revenue of Cooch Behar in earlier chapters, hence in this chapter we will discuss the other sources of revenue in Cooch Behar State.

2. EXCISE REVENUE

The most important sub-heads of the Revenue was Excise. Formerly, the excise revenue used to be derived from two sources : (i) Abkari Mehals and (ii) Mushkarat Mehals. The Abkari Mehals included all rights connected with the manufacture and sale of country spirits, while the Mashkarat Mehals had reference to the sale of Opium and Ganja. These mehals used to be farmed out by the Dewān to the highest bidder. The purchaser of the Akbari Mehals enjoyed a monopoly for the whole state, and he and his sub-lessees could open shops wherever they pleased, and brew liquor of any strength they liked. It is interesting to note that the revenue derived from this auctin sale was very small ; it amounted to Rs. 86 only in 1864. In Cooch Behar State, the British Government Excise system was introduced in the year 1869. After the promulgation of Government rules in the State, a distillery was opened at Cooch Behar, in September, 1869, a second was afterwards opened at Balarampur in July 1870. The third distillery was opened at Mekhliganj in 1874. From that time Mekhliganj became the centre of an Excise division of the State, while Cooch Behar was the centre of the other¹.

The following table shows that since the institution of an Excise Department in 1869 the Excise revenue has steadily increased, although the use of drugs and spirits has received every possible discouragement at the hands of the authorities :-

Table : XII-1

Year	Revenue	Average of revenue for 5 years
1865-66	Rs. 12	Rs.
1866-67	2,337	
1867-68	5,645	
1868-69	13,721	
1869-70	15,798	7,503
1870-71	22,900	
1871-72	31,230	
1872-73	34,665	
1873-74	36,732	
1874-75	40,088	33,123
1875-76	41,114	
1876-77	45,701	
1877-78	48,819	
1878-79	52,649	
1879-80	51,751	49,807
1880-81	59,223	
1881-82	62,635	
1882-83	63,402	
1883-84	65,002	
1884-85	69,152	65,883
1885-86	64,939	

Table : XII-1(Contd.)

Year	Revenue	Average of revenue for 5 years
1886-87	Rs. 66,733	Rs.
1887-88	64,312	
1888-89	62,226	
1889-90	67,110	65,064
1890-91	75,260	
1891-92	74,384	
1892-93	72,426	
1893-94	82,358	
1894-95	82,224	77,350
1895-96	82,514	
1896-97	87,613	
1897-98	76,135	
1898-99	85,635	
1899-1900	87,117	83,802

[Source : H. N. Chaudhuri, The Cooch Behar State and its Land revenue Settlement, p. 375].

The spirit of the Excise Law of British India (Act. VII of 1878, as amended by Act. I of 1883) was followed in Cooch Behar State since 1883².

In the Cooch Behar State there were 23 Country Spirit, 80 Ganja, 50 Opium and Imported Liquor shops, or a total of 163 shops in the whole State in the year 1942. In settling the Excise and Opium shops in the State the Auction system and the Rules applicable to the Auction system as laid down in Section 111 of the Rules framed by the Board are follows³.

As regards the Country Spirit shops, the outstill system was followed in the State. Under this system the licence holder pays to the State the license fee per month for working between Sunrise and sun-set a single still only and for opening a shop of his spirit under conditions laid down in the licence⁴.

The Excise Revenue from out stills which was Rs. 67,584 in the year 1941-42 decreased to Rs. 61,310 in the year 1942-43. The Revenue from duty levied on consumption of Ganja decreased from Rs. 27,088 to Rs. 24,250 and that from duty on Opium increased from Rs. 57,785 to 60,115 in the above periods. The current demand of Excise Revenue for the year 1942-43 was Rs. 2,45,261 against Rs. 2,27,066 of the previous year showing an increase of Rs. 18,195. The collections amounted to Rs. 2,43,335. The incidence of the Excise Revenue per head was 0-6-1 (Annas Six and pie one) only in the year 1942-43 on the basis of the population of the Census of 1941⁵.

The total demand of land revenue for 1942-43 amounted to Rs. 29,58,735. The total collection was Rs. 16,28,398, leaving a balance of Rs. 13,30,337 for recovery⁶. But in the case of Excise revenue for the year 1942-43 the total demand amounted to Rs. 1,92,033 and the total collection amounted to Rs. 1,90,033, leaving a balance of Rs. 2,000 for recovery. It is clear from this that land revenue was more in comparison to Excise revenue⁷.

The poppy used to be grown and Opium manufactured in the State under the Maharaja Narendra Narayan, the cultivators had to sell the produce to the former at a price fixed by the latter. As very little supervision was exercised over the cultivators, they could retain large quantities of opium in their possession. This weak system was very favourable for the extensive use of opium. The British Government had under its consideration the question of

control of the manufacture of the drug and of poppy in the State from as far back as 1822. But owing to the limit of the cultivation and other causes nothing positive was done until 1867. Colonel Haughton prohibited the cultivation of poppy in Cooch Behar under the specified penalties, in 1867 and the British Government agreed to supply the drug to the State at cost price which was fixed at Rs. 7-4 per seer⁸. The State realised a duty at Rs.22 a seer.

In the case of Ganja the farmer formerly made his own arrangements for procuring the drug from Rangpur, the British Government realising the duty on the quantity purchased by him. On representation being made to Government that the Maharaja was entitled to levy duty on the Ganja consumed within his own territory, authority was given in the middle of 1871 to procure Ganja at cost price from Rajshahi⁹. A few inferior sort of Ganja was also often grown by the people near their own houses ; this practice was stopped long ago. The whole of the duty in the case of both opium and Ganja goes to the State as revenue, no royalty being charged by the British Government on what they sell to the State.

3. STAMP REVENUE

Before the time of Maharaja Narendra Narayan Stamp paper was not in use in the Cooch Behar Courts. Instead of Stamps there was in vogue a system of charging fees on cases instituted, under the name of "Institution fees". This used to yield between 6,000 and 7,000 Narani Rupees a year. The introduction of Stamps was a reform effected by the Maharaja Narendra Narayan who passed a Stamp Act in 1861.

The Stamp Law of 1861, was four months after its passing amended in the year 1862, and penalties for the breach of the Stamp Law were

inserted in the Code. A further amendment of the Law was made in April 1866, on the abolition of the Narani Coinage, regarding the mode of computation of the value of Stamps from Narani to British Government rupees¹⁰.

In 1891, the settlement of rent was made compulsory to be on Stamp paper within the limit of the Stamp Law¹¹.

Like every other sources of income, the history of the Stamp revenue of the State was a history of rapid progress. In 1864-65, the Stamp revenue amounted to Rs.25,965. In 1883-84 at the time of the ascendance of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan it was Rs.1,32,833 ; and it came up to Rs.1,70,730 in 1899-1900, although the amount had been exceeded in the three previous years i.e. from 1896-97 to 1898-99. The table given below shows the amount of Stamp revenue, year by year, for the two administrations, nameily, the British administration during the period of minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, and the direct administration under the Maharaja after the installation in 1883 :-

Table : XII-2

Year	Total Stamp revenue Rs.	Year	Total Stamp revenue Rs.
1864-65	25,965	1869-70	71,226
1865-66	32,717	1870-71	76,503
1866-67	53,648	1871-72	87,315
1867-68	63,339	1872-73	88,076
1868-69	69,433	1873-74	91,039

Table : XII-2 (Contd.)

Year	Total Stamp revenue Rs.	Year	Total Stamp revenue Rs.
1874-75	1,04,684	1888-89	1,45,353
1875-76	96,819	1889-90	1,38,750
1876-77	1,19,603	1890-91	1,31,469
1877-78	1,16,781	1891-92	1,46,426
1878-79	1,40,252	1892-93	1,58,819
1879-80	2,05,138	1893-94	1,53,406
1880-81	1,14,076	1894-95	1,61,442
1881-82	1,23,796	1895-96	1,60,151
1882-83	1,27,957	1896-97	1,71,131
1883-84	1,32,833	1897-98	1,75,515
1884-85	1,50,499	1898-99	1,92,686
1885-86	1,53,973	1899-1900	1,70,730
1886-87	1,49,670		
1887-88	1,43,796		

[Source : H.N.Chaudhury, The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, p.379).

4. INCOME TAX

Only in the year 1889, a proposal was moved by the Vice-President of the State Council to introduce Income Tax in Cooch Behar. He puts forward the argument that the land revenue leviable upon the agricultural classes in Cooch Behar had been raised by about 25 per cent during the period of first settlement. So he suggested the imposition of an Income Tax on the non-agricultural classes on the principles obtaining in British India. Maharaja Nripendra Narayan also considered that, under the prevailing financial pressure,

it was advisable to levy an income tax and though that the rate to be imposed might be considered on receipt of a report from the Dewan, Babu Kalica Dass Dutt, on the subject. On receipt of the Dewan's report, the matter was again discussed in the State Council. It appeared that by adopting the rates of income tax obtaining in British India, a sum of about Rs. 18,000 only would be derived. The matter was therefore kept in abeyance¹².

The Cooch Bihar Income Tax Act (Act.No. V of 1941) came into force from 1st April, 1941. The demand for the year 1942-43 was Rs. 71,533 income tax and Rs.13,492 super tax against Rs.93,268 income tax and Rs.9,419 super tax respectively of the preceding year. The fall in the demand of the year as compared with that of the preceding year is due to the reduction in the rates of income tax. This demand again, was further reduced on account of adjustment of refunds due in respect of assessments for 1941-42 completed before the notification reducing the rates of income tax was published. The net demand of income tax thus came down to Rs. 23,290. Net collections amounted to Rs.27,598 income tax and Rs.11,010 super tax. The excess over the demand of income tax was due to excess collections and advance payments made during 1942-43. The total expenditure of the income tax department in Cooch Behar for 1942-43 was Rs. 17,884 against Rs.19,611 of the preceding year. The percentage of expenditure to the total revenue was 46 per cent¹³.

5. EXPORT DUTY

The Cooch Behar Export Duty Act (Act VI of 1941) had its scope extended in February 1942 to include duty on bamboo and Simul and Bhelli. The rate of duty on tobacco was raised from 3 annas to 4 annas with effect from the 1st April 1943, in connection with the levy of new duty on bamboos and Simul and Bhelli.

The total collections during the year 1942-43 on account of duty on bamboo were Rs. 69,251 - 11 against the revised budget estimates of Rs.85,000, the collections of duty on bamboos were Rs. 1,694-15 and those of Simul and Bhelli were Rs. 965-10-9 the detail of which are given below. The fall in collection on duty on tobacco, was among other causes, due to unsettled conditions of tobacco market, due to spread of war in the east considerable restriction in the supply of wagons and strictest control over boats and commandeering of some of these which seriously interfered with river-borne traffic in tobacco.

The statement showing collections of Export Duty Sub-division wise during the year 1942-43.

Table : XII-3

Name of the sub-division	Tobacco	Bamboo	Simul & Bhelli
[a] Sadar (Cooch Behar)	8,155-5-3	23-12-0	342-2-3
[b] Tufanganj -	175-1-9	85-5-0	0-9-0
[c] Dinhata -	20,534-0-3	147-7-6	235-9-0
[d] Mathabhanga -	22,735-11-3	100-10-6	383-7-6
[e] Mekliganj -	17,651-8-6	136-12-0	3-15-0

The total expenditure during the year 1942-43 was Rs.22,503-1-1 against Rs.26,538 in the previous year, the percentage of expenditure to total income being 31 percent, against 45 per cent of the preceding year¹⁴.

There were other sources of revenue in Cooch Behar State but those departments have had most insignificant role in the revenue administration hence those were not considered in this chapter.

SUMMARY

Land revenue forms the most important item of revenue of the State exchequer. We have already discussed the land revenue of Cooch Behar in earlier chapter. In this chapter we will discuss four other major heads of revenue, such as, (1) Excise revenue, (2) Stamp revenue, (3) Income tax and (4) Export duty.

1. EXCISE REVENUE

In the very early period of British administration in Cooch Behar the Excise revenue derived from this head was very small. In 1864, the amount derived from the head was only Rs.86. The British Government Excise system was introduced in Cooch Behar in the year 1869. Distilleries were opened at Cooch Behar, Balarampur and Mekhliganj in September 1869, July 1870 and 1874 respectively. In the very first year i.e. 1865-66 the amount of excise revenue derived was only Rs. 12 and the amount collected in the next year was Rs.2,337. During the span of thirty five years the amount increased from Rs.12 to Rs.87,117.

The spirit of the Excise law of British India (Act VII of 1878 as amended by Act I of 1883) was followed in Cooch Behar State since 1883. In Cooch Behar there were 23 Country Spirit, 80 Ganja, 58 Opium and Imported liquor shops or a total of 163 shops in the whole State in 1942. As regards the Country spirit shops British Government system was followed in the State.

The excise revenue from outstills was derived Rs. 67,584 in 1941-42 decreased to Rs. 61,310 in 1942-43. The revenue from Ganja decreased from Rs. 27,088 to Rs. 24,250 and that from duty on Opium increased from

Rs. 57,785 to 60,115 in the above periods. In the case of total Excise revenue for the year 1942-43 the total demand amounted to Rs.1,92,033 and the total collection amounted to Rs. 1,90,033.

Colonel Haughton prohibited the cultivation of Poppy in Cooch Behar under specified penalties in 1867 and the British Government agreed to supply the drug to the State at cost price which was fixed at Rs.7-4 per seer. The State realised a duty of Rs. 22 a seer.

2. STAMP REVENUE

Stamp paper was not in use in Cooch Behar Court prior to 1860. The introduction of stamps was a reform effected by the Maharaja Narendra Narayan who passed a Stamp Act in 1869. The suitable amendments of the law were made in 1862 and 1866. In 1891, the settlement of rent was made compulsory to be on Stamp paper, within the limit of the Stamp Law.

Like other sources of income, the Stamp revenue of the State was also increased very steadily from the very beginning. In 1864-65, the Stamp revenue amounted to Rs. 25,965. In 1883-84 it was Rs. 1,32,833 and it came up to Rs. 1,70,730 in 1899-1900.

3. INCOME TAX

In 1899 a proposal was moved in the State Council for introduction of Income Tax in Cooch Behar State. The arguments for introduction of income tax was that the land revenue leviable upon the agricultural classes in Cooch Behar had been raised by about 25 per cent during the period of first settlement. But it appeared that by adopting the rates of income tax obtaining in British India, a sum of Rs. 18,000 only be derived. The matter was then kept in abeyance.

The Cooch Behar Income Tax Act (Act. No. V of 1941) came into force from 1st April 1941. The demand for the year 1942-43 was Rs.71,533 income tax and Rs.13,492 super tax against Rs. 93,268 income tax and Rs.9,419 super tax respectively of the preceding year. The total expenditure of the Income tax department in Cooch Behar for 1942-43 was Rs. 17,884 against Rs.19,611 of the preceding year. The percentage of expenditure to the total revenue was 46 per cent.

4. EXPORT DUTY

The Cooch Behar Export Duty Act (Act. VI of 1941) had its scope extended in 1942, to include duty on bamboos, Simul and Bhelli. The rate of duty on Tobacco was raised from 3 annas to 4 annas with effect from 1st April 1943.

The total collection during the year 1942-43 on account of duty on tobacco were Rs. 69,251-11, the collection of duty on bamboos were Rs.1,694-15 and those of Simul and Bhelli were Rs. 965-10-9. The total expenditure during the year 1942-43 was Rs. 22,503-1-1 against Rs.26,538 in the previous year, the percentage of expenditure to total income being 31 percent against 45 per cent of the preceding year.

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- [2] Ibid, p. 373.
- [3] Excise Manual, 1891, Cooch Behar, p. 47.

- [4] The Annual Report on the General Administration of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1942-43, p.24.
- [5] Ibid, p.26.
- [6] Ibid, p. 13
- [7] Ibid, p. 27.
- [8] Resolution of the Government of Bengal, dated the 17th November, 1866, and also see the Annual Administration Report of Cooch Behar State for the year 1865-66, Para 1.
- [9] The Annual Administration Report of Cooch Behar State for the year 1874-75, Excise Department, Para 4.
- [10] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 377.
- [11] The Annual Administration Report of Cooch Behar State for the year 1890-91, Para - 14.
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- [13] The Annual Report on the General Administration of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1942-43, p. 30.
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CHAPTER - XIII

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT SETTLEMENTS AND TAXATION

1. INTRODUCTION

The economic condition of Cooch Behar just on the eve of the British connection with the State could be described as miserable. The misrule of the Maharajas had little to encourage for economic development and the State was in the sad economic condition. Land, which was the most important source of income and livelihood, had been visibly neglected during the early period of British connection with Cooch Behar. Large tracts of cultivable land either had been deserted or kept under insufficient cultivation. Most of the people did not have the confidence nor the zeal to produce; for there was no certainty as to who would reap the benefits. The revenue collectors of the Maharaja, created an atmosphere of fear and suspense-which was inimical for any economic growth and ambition.

The connection with the British was a change for the landed classes and the agricultural community in Cooch Behar. The British were primarily a commercial group and their main interest was to expand their commercial interests. It was obvious that their industrial and commercial projects were directly linked with their agricultural and land revenue policies, and they had realised that unless the agricultural policy was adjusted, their commercial programme was not to be successful. With this in view, in general, the British wanted to make the land a medium of winding the loyalty and support of the people. With this aim the British nourished in this land revenue policy in Cooch Behar but about the success of the motive there are different views¹.

2. RESULTS OF DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT

In 1773, Mr. Purling, Collector of Rangpur prepared, under orders of the Governor General of India, a Hastabud or account of Public revenue of

the State, by which the land revenue was ascertained to be 1,99,120-5-0-15. Narani rupees equivalent to Rs. 1,33,000. Thereafter under the supervision of the British the resources of the State were gradually increased and after a century or so on i.e. on the eve of the first settlement, the land revenue amounted to Rs.3,64,138-13-8. The amount of revenue obtained by the first settlement was Rs. 9,38,610-9-10. The increase obtained was thus Rs. 5,74,471-12-2 or about 156 percent of the previous amount. The increase was not wholly due to the new settlement but due to a large portion of it was attributable to the assessment of fallow land brought under cultivation by the Jotedars and the resumption and settlement in jote right of invalid rent-free and Mokarari holdings, as well as of service-lands. Mr. Bekett observed in his report for Pargana Mekhliganj, that prior to the first settlement, many persons held large quantities of land without paying the full revenue under the old rates ; it often happened that men who apparently paid revenue for only 50 Bighas held 3 or 4 times that quantity. No regular measurements had ever been made ; consequently the tax system that prevailed enabled the people to defraud the State of its proper dues. The first settlement has brought the real state of affairs to light, and the revenue has increased almost entirely on this ground, although the rates are actually less than the old prevailing rates of the State².

The increase in revenue, which was no doubt due to the first settlement, did not, however, represent the amount which the Jotedars had actually to pay over and above their previous liability on account of revenue. Prior to 1872 they had to pay to the Ijardars two cesses called Ijardari and Saranjami amounting to a sixth of their jama. This had of course to be paid in addition to the fixed revenue. Practically, therefore, the amount of revenue payable by the Jotedars, was the jama of the Jote increased by a sixth of the

same on account of cesses. After the first Settlement the revenue was realised by the State Officers and the Jotedars had to pay nothing by way of Ijardari and Saranjami. To arrive at the increase which actually developed upon the jotedars it is, therefore, necessary to deduct a sixth of the old jama from the increase brought in by this settlement. The balance would represent what they had to pay in excess of their previous liability. At this rate the percentage of the increase would be smaller as is shown below :-

Table : XIII-1

Name of Pargana	Old jama	Increase obtained by deducting a sixth of the old jama from the increase due to the new settlement			Percentage
		Increase due to the settlement	A sixth of the old jama	Net increase	
Mekhliganj	54,768	67,023	9,128	57,895	90
Mathabhanga	70,647	75,621	11,775	63,846	77
Lalbazar	74,476	49,519	12,412	37,107	40
Dinhata	76,451	73,519	12,741	60,778	69
Cooch Behar	71,520	1,16,104	11,920	1,04,184	124
Tufanganj	16,276	4,211	2,713	1,498	8
Total :	3,64,138	3,85,997	60,689	3,25,308	76

Thus, after the deduction of a sixth of the old jama from the increase, a sum of Rs. 3,25,308 is found to be the net enhancement which the Jotedars had to pay on account of the first settlement. This formed 76 per cent of the old jama³.

The gross increase of revenue obtained by the assessment of Patit (waste lands) in the course of the patit charcha operations was about

Rs. 71,000. On the other hand some reductions of jama had to be granted for diluvion which has taken place since 1872 and the extent of which was ascertained during those operations. After allowing these deductions, the balance which represented the net Patit Charcha increase amounted to about Rs. 60,000. This together with the revenue fixed by the first settlement would give a total of Rs.9,52,642 which would have been the amount of land revenue on the eve of the re-settlement i.e. in the year 1887. The re-settlement jama was Rs. 12,41,060. The increase obtained by the re-settlement operation therefore amounted to Rs. 2,88,418 or 30 per cent of the former revenue.

The re-settlement has been concluded for 30 years during which period the State will not claim any enhancement. The records of the past show that the State has done a good deal for the improvement of its people in many ways. It has established a large number of schools in the interior and a first grade College (Victoria College) at the capital of the State. There are charitable dispensaries and hospitals in every part of the State. The value of produce has largely increased everywhere. The whole country has been opened up by roads and railways. For all these benefits obtained the people do not pay any tax. Taking all these facts into consideration it must be conceded that the increase is by no means inordinately high⁴. For the jotedars who cultivate their own lands there is a very large margin of profit from the produce of the soil. The jotedars who have on the other hand, leased out their lands to undertenants are also better off after the re-settlement than they were before. Under the new rules they obtain from the undertenants 35 per cent of the revenue fixed for them, when they could get only 25 per cent

under the old system. Thus although they have to pay an increase on their previous revenue they have come to share an increased profit also.

In the re-settlement, the Chukanidar has to pay 35 per cent over the jotedar's jama, against 25 per cent of the previous rate. For the cultivating Chukanidar this is by no means hard, their being a good margin for his profit from the produce of his fields. Moreover, in many cases the old jama paid by him is higher than the re-settlement jama and he has been put on special difficulty by the new rules.

But for those that have leased out the land, the terms are less easy, they have a profit varying from 25 to 5 per cent, accordingly as there are one or more grades of undertenants below them. The terms have been intentionally made difficult with a view of discouraging sub-indeudation, which has, as already noticed, been carried to a rather undue excess⁵.

The temporary settled areas according to the different settlements together with area and amount of revenue are given below⁶ :-

Table : XIII-2

Pargana	First settlement		Rakamcharcha settlement		Last re-settlement 1927	
	Area & Bighas	Revenue Rs.	Area Bighas	Revenue Rs.	Area Bighas	Revenue Rs.
Mekhliganj	2,99,789	- 1,29,555	2,97,265	- 1,75,470	3,05,327	- 2,30,689
Mathabhanga	3,89,460	- 1,72,903	3,82,171	- 2,38,979	3,96,073	- 3,26,909
Lalbazar	2,93,584	- 1,34,198	2,87,802	- 1,81,176	3,01,147	- 2,58,180
Dinhata	3,68,101	- 1,74,034	3,61,599	- 2,38,805	3,68,049	- 3,30,972
Cooch Behar	5,24,918	- 2,24,455	5,08,614	- 2,82,556	5,24,384	- 4,37,138
Tufanganj	2,89,768	- 95,476	2,86,244	- 1,24,074	3,09,170	- 2,15,096
Total :	21,65,620	- 9,31,024	21,23,696	- 12,41,060	22,04,102	- 17,98,984

In 1773 during the conclusion of the treaty with the British Government, Mr. Purling ascertained the revenue of the State to be Rs.1,99,120-5-0 Narayani rupees or equivalent to Rs.1,33,000 in modern currency. The tribute payable by the State is Rs.67,700-15 as.

The following is a list of the total revenue at different settlements are given below :-

Table : XII-3

[1] On the eve of the first settlement of 1870-72	Rs.	3,64,140
[2] First settlement of 1870-72	Rs.	9,31,024
[3] On the eve of Rakamcharcha resettlement of 1889	Rs.	9,59,830
[4] Rakamcharcha resettlement of 1889	Rs.	12,41,060
[5] On the eve of the last resettlement operation	Rs.	12,62,154
[6] Resettlement given effect to in 1919-20	Rs.	18,50,853
[7] Last revisional operations given effect to in 1927	Rs.	17,98,984

The incidence of land revenue per area was Rs. 1-4-5 at first settlement of 1870-72 and Rs. 1-12-2 at the resettlement of 1889. The incidence was about Rs. 2-8-7 according to the resettlement of 1920. The incidence of land revenue per bigha was 13 annas 1 pie i.e. Rs. 2-7-3 per acre at the last revisional operations in 1927. According to the last resttlement the incidence of rent per bigha in the case of each grade of undertenants is shown below⁷ :-

Table : XIII-4

	Rs.	A.	P.
Chukanidars	1	0	7
Darchukanidars	1	5	3
Daradar Chukanidars	1	6	7
Tshya Chukanidars	1	8	0

Table : XIII-4 (Contd.)

	Rs.	A.	P.
Tali Chukanidars	1	8	9
Tasyatali Chukanidars	2	2	8
Krishiproja under Jotedars	1	2	3
Krishiproja under different grades of Chukanidars	1	7	11

From the time of first settlement and after the abolition of Ijardari system of collection, both the demand and the collection of land revenue show a steadiness, which is as much attributable to the better system of collections as to that of the assesment. The following table clearly shows the position of demand and collection of revenue from 1864-65 to 1883-84 i.e. the year of installation of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur :-

Table : XIII-5

Year	Demand			Collection Rs.
	Current Rs.	Arrear Rs.	Total Rs.	
1864-65	3,32,407	1,73,849	5,06,256	3,24,889
1865-66	3,16,955	1,62,506	4,79,461	3,05,102
1866-67	2,56,941	1,74,356	4,31,297	2,77,956
1867-68	3,92,675	1,49,795	5,42,470	3,68,620
1868-69	3,61,288	1,81,777	5,43,065	3,57,549
1869-70	3,95,656	3,31,943	7,27,599	3,57,659
1870-71	4,16,730	2,16,752	6,33,482	4,06,398
1871-72	4,14,035	1,94,915	6,08,950	4,31,222
1872-73	4,35,370	1,68,459	6,03,824	4,48,293
1873-74	4,84,206	1,79,856	6,64,062	4,82,317
1874-75	5,67,508	2,33,268	8,00,776	6,28,125

Table : XIII-5 (Contd.)

Year	Demand			Collection Rs.
	Current Rs.	Arrear Rs.	Total Rs.	
1875-76	8,28,228	4,41,076	12,69,304	7,81,684
1876-77	9,16,188	5,03,129	14,19,317	9,74,809
1877-78	9,63,301	4,23,897	13,93,198	9,10,622
1878-79	9,83,818	4,52,748	14,36,566	9,36,397
1879-80	9,83,392	4,66,054	14,49,446	10,42,758
1880-81	9,78,511	3,99,166	13,27,677	9,44,361
1881-82	9,71,139	3,57,705	13,28,844	9,64,861
1882-83	9,67,582	3,25,764	12,93,346	9,43,699
1883-84	9,63,630	2,99,775	12,63,405	9,58,779

The statement given above very clearly testifies to the precarious nature of the revenue and its collection up to the year 1870-71, till which time the Ijardari system had prevailed. From the year following (1871-72) both the demand and the collection show a steadiness. The first settlement fixed jamas for twelve years, a sufficiently long period, and placed the rights of the tenants on a safe footing. With the introduction of the Khash Tehsil system, the oppressive methods of realisation of revenue adopted by the farmers naturally disappeared, and the Jotedars, though under the necessity of paying an enhancement of revenue, enjoyed perfect immunity from the collection charges and other nameless cesses which the Ijardars exacted from them⁹. Mr. G. Dalton the then Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar observed that "one great advantage of the Khash Tehsil system, is the closer relationship in which it brings the Jotedar with the officers of the State, their revenue being paid directly into the Sub-Divisional State Treasury Chest, and

not as formerly collected at their doors by the farmer's Gomastas. It is even yet no uncommon thing to meet a Cooch Behari of 40 years old, who has never been outside of his own taluk except to the neighbouring Thana, more or less upon compulsion. Litigation may be said to do more in this way than even the Khas Tehsil, but the fact of being entitled to pay his revenue direct lends a dignity to the jotedar, in his own opinion, which he did not before possess. It is remarkable that if you ask a Chukanidar or any other sub-tenant what he is, he will answer "a rayot" ; but a Jotedar will generally say "I am a Jotedar". Sometimes a Chukanidar will call himself a Jotedar, probably because his father or grand-father could boast of a position from which he has fallen¹⁰.

It is true that from the year 1879-80 the current demand of land revenue began to fall out, but that was after the maximum of the settlement increase had been reached, and owing to the necessity of granting reductions of jama an account of diluvion and resumption of land for roads, and also for the relinquishment of bad jotes. In a country like Cooch Behar, decrease of revenue for these causes is inevitable and must always take place unless there is large annual settlements of new lands to make up the loss¹¹.

The holders of the temporarily-settled tenures under the State are called Jotedars. The tenants directly under the proprietors of revenue-free and mokarari estates are also designated Jotedars. As many as 6 grades of under-tenures are recognised in the State. Of these, only the first two grades, namely, Chukani and Darchukani, can be created under the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910, while those of the lower grades were in existence before 1888, the year in which for the first time legislation was introduced to

restrict sub-infeudation. The Jotes and the different grades of Chukanis are heritable and transferable¹².

Adhiars cultivate land on the condition that they get half the produce of the crop. They generally live upon the landlord's premises, or on lands in their khas possession and pay no rent for the same. Sometimes they cultivate the land with the plough and cattle lent by the landlord ; but more generally they have their own implements of agriculture. Adhiars are generally regarded as labourers. They were not considered to have any right or title but to be liable to be ejected at the will of their employer¹³.

The Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, in his letter stated that any adhiar who cultivates the same land with his own cattle for 12 consecutive years, would acquire a right of occupancy in respect of such land¹⁴. The provision was embodied in Section 29 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act¹⁵. Such occupancy right is heritable but not otherwise transferable. In the course of the first settlement and Re-settlement operations in Cooch Behar, however, Terijes or record-of-rights were never prepared for the adhiars nor were attempts made to ascertain which of them had occupancy rights. It may also be noted here that the adhiari lands often change hands and the adhiars are generally treated as labourers or tenants at will.

At the first settlement no uniform rates for cultivating raiyats were fixed. All that was done was to fix the rates for Jotedars and to provide that each class of landlords was to obtain 25% as its share of profit. The result was that the rent demandable from raiyats increased with the number of middlemen. Thus where a Tasyatali Chukanidar was the last undertenant,

the Jotedar, the Chukanidar, the Darchukanidar, the Daradar Chukanidar, the Tasyachukanidar and the Talichukanidar were allowed 25% profit each or 150% profit altogether.

During the re-settlement of 1889, the Jotedar's profit was raised to 35% of his revenue and the total profit of the rent-collecting under-tenants was fixed at 25% whatever the number of such under-tenants might be. Thus, where the Jotedar's revenue was fixed at Rs. 100, the rent assessed for the cultivating raiyat i.e., the last in the scale, was Rs. 135 if he was a Chukanidar, and Rs. 160 if he belonged to a lower grade¹⁶.

Under Section 28 of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act only the Jotedar and the cultivating under-tenant are benefited by the lapse of an undertenure under Section 25 of the Act though the rents of several under-tenants may have to be revised on account of such a lapse. Practically, however, the cultivating undertenants very seldom derive the benefit owing to their ignorance and helplessness. Notwithstanding the provision regarding proclamation in Section 40(f) of the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, the Jotedars can get information in but a small percentage of cesses. Generally, the immediately superior landlord of the lapsed undertenancy appropriates the extra profit. The provisions regarding lapse were meant for diminishing the number of intermediate under-tenancies and also for discouraging sub-infeudation. In view of the creation of the innumerable illegal tenancies by verbal contract and their recognition at successive settlements of Cooch Behar State, it must be said that the provisions in the existing Tenancy Act, though good in theory, have failed to produce the desired effect. The propriety of the retention of the sections relating to lapse may, therefore, have to be considered during the next amendment of the Tenancy Act.

In all previous settlements including resettlement of 1919-20 rent were settled for all the legal undertenants of the 6 grades in Jotes had directly under the State as well as for all tenants and undertenants in revenue-free and Mokarari estates. According to the recognised principle in the State, the tenures and under-tenures comprised in the revenue-free and Mokarari estates are assessed under the rule applicable to other tenures and undertenures, and copies of the final record-of-rights are distributed among the tenants and under-tenants. Thus the resettlement of land revenue is accompanied by settlement of fair and equitable rents for all tenants in the revenue-free and Mokarari estates and for all grades of undertenants in the State.

The tenants in Cooch Behar have to pay no cesses corresponding to the Road and public works cesses of Bengal. Under the Cooch Behar Cess Act (Act. V of 1893) where the revenue payable by a Mokararidar or the Gross rental payable to a Lakherajdar exceeds Rs. 40, he has to pay communication improvement Cess at a rate not exceeding $\frac{1}{2}$ anna in the rupee. Thus at the time of last re-settlement in 1927, only the proprietors of revenue-free and Mokarari Mahals have to pay this Cess into the communication improvement fund¹⁷. In the Resettlement Resolution dated the 1st April, 1920, the then Maharaja in Council was pleased to order that with a view to raise money for expenditure on public works, roads and other means of communication within the State, the Judicial Members of the Council in consultation with the Vice-President, should draft an Act, on the lines of the Bengal Act IX of 1880 (Cess Act), whereby the imposition of Public Works or Road Cess, calculated on the known profits of tenures, should be legalised¹⁸. But no such Act has, however, been passed in Cooch Behar.

One important matter, which deserves more than a passing notice, is the prevalence of sub-feudation in the State. In 1875, Sir Richard Temple, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, noticed during his visit to Cooch Behar, the very large extent to which sub-infeudation existed here. There were already six grades of under-tenures and there was no limit to the future subletting of land ; and that system pressed hard on the actual cultivator and interfered with the prosperity of the country. In 1888 His Highness in Council passed an Act. entitled to Sub-infeudation Act. The object of the Act was not only to discourage the further subletting of land, but also to materially decrease the number of existing middlemen in course of time, and thus to improve the position of the Jotedars, who was responsible to the State for the timely payment of revenue, and of the ryot, who actually cultivate the land.

Land revenue forms the most important item of revenue of the State exchequer. It may be interesting to note that till 1940 there was no Income Tax in Cooch Behar. The Cooch Behar Income Tax Act (Act. No. V of 1941) came into force in Cooch Behar from 1st April, 1941. The following table shows the incidence of taxation of income tax in the State¹⁹.

Table : XIII-6

Total population	No. of assesseees found liable to tax	Net Revenue	Proportion of persons assessed to population	Incidence of revenue to population
<u>1941-42</u>				
6,39,898	721	Rs. 38,608	.11 per cent or 1 in 887	Rs. 6/- per 100 persons
<u>1942-43</u>				
6,39,898	980	Rs. 1,09,339	.15 per cent or 1 in 653	Rs.17/- per 100 persons

Owing to the sympathetic administration of the Cooch Behar Income Tax Act, there was no grievance of the public against the imposition of the tax and the relation between the assesses and the assessing staff has gradually become cordial. Besides, an Excess Profits Tax Act on the lines of the Indian Excess Profits Tax Act, which has been passed by the Cooch Behar Legislative Council in March 1941, will also add much to the revenue from taxes on income²⁰.

The last settlement operations (1912-27) were commenced in 1912-13. Owing to various causes extensive changes had taken place in the topography of the State. In respect of the holdings also the maps prepared in 1868-70 in connection with the Revenue Survey of the State had become out of date and could no longer be relied upon. It was therefore decided to have a Traverse Survey as well as Cadastral Survey of the State on the line adopted by the Government of Bengal. The classification of land made during the last Rakamcharcha settlement was followed and the lands were divided into 15 classes each bearing a separate rate and the Taluks were also divided into three classes, each with a separate set of rates.

Rights of Krishiprojas (cultivating ryots) were recognised in this settlement, the rights being heritable and transferable and the rents payable have been recorded in the terijes. It was laid down that future illegal settlements would not be recognised by the State and that settlements creating under-tenures must be made by registered Patta and Kabuliyats.

The enhancement of revenue and rent was made progressive in cases where the new Jama exceeded 75 per cent of the old Jama. High contractual rents were disallowed, and only double the sanctioned profit was allowed in

cases where the rent had been realised from 10 years, the burden of proving which would be on the landlord. Failing such proof the landlord would be allowed 50 per cent only in excess of the sanctioned profit.

The outstanding feature of the last settlement is that while the enhancement of revenue has been substantial yet it has not pressed heavily upon any class of tenants or under-tenants. The assessment has been based on sound principles and enhancements were made in the case of those lands only which are capable of bearing a higher rate of revenue. On the other hand assessments have been lowered in respect of lands on which formerly the burden fell too heavily. The last settlement has aimed at distributing the burden of taxation on all classes of ryots on an equitable basis so that no hardship may be felt in any individual case or set of cases. Following the principle adopted at the Rakamcharcha Settlement a proper share of the profits has been secured to the superior landlords and at the same time rack-renting has been prevented by disallowing high contractual rents, so long realised from under-tenants, and no room has been left for any future rack-renting by contract. The Krishiprojas who had no right to the land they cultivated and improved and were mere tenants at will of their superior landlords, have been given a right to their lands and fair and equitable rents have been fixed for them so that their position has been greatly improved and secured.

The intention of the British administrators in Cooch Behar during the period of minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan was to create a strong middle class who will protect the interest of the State at the time of necessity. But their motive was not fulfilled as because that class became a landed aristocrate. In Cooch Behar, in true sense there was no market for any

capitalist development, because the root of Feudalism has its long root in social, cultural and economic life of Cooch Behar.

The internal and external forces and class contradiction which truly acts to destroy feudalism and give birth to a Capitalism were virtually absent in this State. So there had been no capitalist form of development in Cooch Behar. However, these points have been discussed in detail in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

On the eve of the British connection with the Cooch Behar State in 1773, the economic condition of the State was sad. The connection with the British was a change for the landed classes and the agricultural community in Cooch Behar. The British wanted to make the land a medium of winning of loyalty and support of the people.

Land Revenue forms the most important item of revenue of the State exchequer. Regular Survey and Settlement have been made at intervals since 1870. The last resettlement of the State was concluded in 1927 and was based on traverse and Cadastral survey conducted under the supervision of the Director of Survey, Bengal. Copies of the record-of-rights and copies of the Cadastral maps were supplied to all tenants and under-tenants. The record-of-rights has an evidential value under the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910.

In 1774 the revenue payable was found to consist of two parts, viz., assal (original rent) and abwab (additional cesses) which were then consolidated into one. The settlements used to be made annually without any measurement of the land. The Sajwals (a class of State officers) through

whom the collections were made realised from the raiyats certain extra charges which were not included in the public accounts but formed about a fifth of the whole revenue. The revenue suffered much due to the mal-administration and oppressions of the State officials, and in 1790 the revenue paying lands were framed out to outsiders called Ijaradars, at first from year to year and then for terms of 5 years, under the Ijaradari system, the raiyats were placed entirely at the mercy of the farmers. Owing to the rack-renting and extortion by the Ijaradars many raiyats left the State. The Ijaradari system also fostered extensive sub-infeudation. The Ijaradari system was done away with in 1872 and Khas collection was introduced from the month of April, 1872.

In 1870-75 there was a General survey of the State in connection with the First Revenue Settlement (better known as the Khasra Settlement). On the eve of the first settlement, the land revenue amounted to Rs.3,64,138-13-8. The amount of revenue obtained by the First settlement was Rs.9,38,610-9-10. The increase obtained was thus Rs.5,74,471-12-2 or about 156% of the previous amount.

In the course of the Patit Charcha operations of 1884-86 only the patit or fallow lands included within the jotes during the First Settlement and brought under cultivation since then, were measured and assessed at the rate applicable to cultivated lands. The gross increase of revenue obtained by the assessment of Patit lands in the course of the Patit Charcha operations was about Rs. 71,000/-. On the eve of the re-settlement i.e. in the year 1887 the total land revenue was fixed at Rs.9,52,642. The re-settlement of 1886-91, known as the Rakamcharcha owing to the introduction of detailed classification

of lands, the total land revenue was fixed at Rs.12,41,060. The increase obtained by the re-settlement operation therefore amounted to Rs.2,88,418 or 30 per cent of the former revenue. The resettlement has been concluded for 30 years. The total revenue obtained on the eve of last re-settlement operation of the State was Rs.12,62,154 and after that settlement operation the land revenue obtained in the year 1927 was Rs.17,98,984.

The incidence of land revenue per acre was Rs.1-4-5 at the first resettlement of 1870-72 and Rs. 1-12-2 at the re-settlement of 1889. The incidence of land revenue per acre was Rs. 2-7-3 at the last revisional operations in 1927.

The holders of the temporary settled tenures under the State are called Jotedars. As many as 6 grades of under-tenures are recognised in the State. Of those, only the first two grades, namely, Chukani and Darchukani, can be created under the Cooch Behar Tenancy Act, 1910. The Jotes and the different grades of Chukanis are heritable and transferable.

Adhiars cultivate land on the condition that they get half the produce of the crop. Adhiars are generally regarded as labourers. They were not considered to have any right or title but to be liable to be ejected at the will of their employer. In 1872 an order was passed that any adhiar who cultivates the same land with his own cattle for 12 consecutive years, would acquire a right of occupancy in respect of such land. Such occupancy right is heritable but not otherwise transferable.

At the first resettlement no uniform rates for cultivating raiyats were fixed. All that was done was to fix the rates for Jotedars and to provide that each class of landlords was to obtain 25% as its share of profit. During

the resettlement of 1889, the Jotedar's profit was raised to 35% of his revenue and the total profit of the rent collecting under-tenants was fixed at 25% whatever the number of such under-tenants might be.

There was no Income Tax at Cooch Behar prior to 1940. The Cooch Behar Income Tax Act came into force in the State from 1st April 1941. Income Tax have been collected in Cooch Behar for first two years of the introduction of the Act amounted to Rs. 38,608 from 721 persons and Rs.1,09,339 from 980 persons found liable to tax, respectively.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- [2] W.O.A. Deckett, Completion Settlement report of Pergunnah Mekligunge in the Cooch Behar State, Para 74, October 7,1874.
- [3] Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, Cooch Behar, 1903, p. 577.
- [4] Ibid, p. 580.
- [5] Ibid, p. 581.
- [6] Karali Charan Ganguli, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement operations in the Cooch Behar State (1913-1927), Cooch Behar, 1930, Para 103.
- [7] Ibid, para 119, 120.
- [8] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., pp. 360-361.
- [9] Ibid, p. 362.

- [10] Mr. G. Dalton, Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar's letter No. 919, dated Cooch Behar the 28th October, 1876 to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar and Rajshya Division.
- [11] H. N. Choudhuri, Op.cit., p. 363.
- [12] Karali Charan Ganguli, Op.cit., p. 14, Para 36.
- [13] Ibid, p. 14.
- [14] Letter No. 152 T, dated the 4th October, 1872, from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar.
- [15] The Cooch Behar Tenancy Act (Act. V of 1910), Section 29.
- [16] K. C. Ganguli, Op.cit., Para 38.
- [17] Ibid, p. 45.
- [18] Cooch Behar Gazette dated the 26th April, 1920.
- [19] The Annual Report on the General Administration of the Cooch Behar State for the year 1942-43, p. 30.
- [20] Ibid, p. 31.

CHAPTER - XIV

CONCLUSION

(Feudalism to Capitalism)

The motive behind the reforms introduced by Houghton, in the revenue system was not only to ensure and increase the land revenue collection but also he desired to form an rich "middle class". His intention can be substantiated from the reports in which he refers : "here there are none of that middle class who should form the bone and sinews of the country. It appears to me that every effort should be made to improve this state of things, and to produce a class having an interest the country"¹.

Under the order of the Bengal Government the Ijaradari system was abolished in 1872².

The first settlement of the state brought changes in the structure of the rural society in Cooch Behar. In the first place it checked the absentee Jotedar, secondly, village Jotedars became the proprietors of lands, thirdly, the system of under tenures had been acknowledged and right of these intermediaries (chukanidars and etc.) was recognised by the state³. These changes in the intermediaries may be considered the most significant development in the rural agricultural society in Cooch Behar.

The Krishiprojas who formed a large number of cultivators got the favour of the State authority. Special steps were taken to protect their rights over the lands they possessed and pattas were issued against their names in the successive settlements⁴. To improve the condition of the adhiars and to safeguard their rights over the land, significant steps had been taken in the first settlement. Accordingly it was ordered that any adhiar who cultivates the same lands with his own cattle for consecutive twelve years would acquire a right of occupancy in respect of such land⁵.

In 1910 this occupancy right was made heritable but not otherwise transferable⁶. During the period from the first settlement to the end of the last settlement, the land revenue system of Cooch Behar was changed considerably in different settlements by adopting modern methods and knowledge. The revenue was fixed on the basis of regular settlement and were periodically revised in different operations in which the Bengal provisional rules followed⁷.

Cooch Behar, the princely state, dominated by the British administration had experienced the legacy of the imperial prototype of administration. The effort made by the imperial rulers to bring about the fruits of development, the imperialist power had an active hand to draw maximum resources of the state and in order to fulfil their mission, the imperialist power wanted to introduce certain steps for development. Thus, at the very outset, it is to be kept into the consideration that the British Government had their own way of development while administering the entire India as well as the princely states. In their effort to make their objectives implemented, the British Government through the help of the loyal kings of the princely states wanted to change the age old social, political and economic institutions by bringing about change in all the spheres of life such as economic, socio-cultural and political life.

In fact the paramount power used to uphold the interest of the royal family and maintained regular connection with the states under their domination. But, the people, for whom the development was designed, had been simply neglected. The concept of popular participation, and development from below and changes for the lower stage of the society were negated. The British type of administration under centralized control had been followed by the princely states of India as well as in Cooch Behar.

As a paramount power the British developed and fostered a feudal path of development⁸, and this is also applicable to Cooch Behar. In its progress, feudal economy does have both spontaneous and controlled factors. A feudal economy as was prevalent in the princely states of India exercised the fullest control over the factors of production which in other way should have helped the growth of capitalist economy in the states. The fact that the kings of Cooch Behar through ages had their fullest control over the management and administration of the State also corroborates this argument. The feudal economy has got its in-built weakness which may be verified through the "spontaneous forces" of the economy upon which the power holders do not have control and command. In fact, "spontaneous forces" of the feudal way of development endangers the weak rulers. It invites resentments and lessens the popular allegiance to the king. Though the Cooch Behar state did not face such type of resentments from below, a few popular sentiments sometimes cropped up here and there as an attempt to establish the social rights of the native people.

II

In this dissertation we have attempted to study the land revenue system of Cooch Behar and the nature of "feudalism" introduced by the Britishers. One of the reasons for the study of feudalism in India as Irfan Habib argues eloquently⁹ - "we are interested in feudalism (as in western Europe) chiefly for elucidating the consequences of its breakdown which opened the way to the genesis and development of capitalism. For such purpose its "laws of Motion" are most important for us. " These laws of motion, he argues, are likely to be different in superstructural features of medieval Europe. He rightly concludes.... "in that case to tar all such societies with the same brush will give no illumination because we cannot

read into them tendencies that we have established for an essentially different social order".

Capitalism, in Marxist terms, is not possible until the shape of society and economy is largely determined by the exploitation by owners of Capital of a class of propertyless wage workers. The problem of the Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism is concerned predominantly with this issue ; but not exclusively, because the problem of the formation of Capital is also involved, not to mention the social and political process by which capitalists replace feudal aristocracies as the ruling class.

During the period of our study there were no significant class of propertyless wage workers in Cooch Behar, and no mark of class contradiction in the trust sense.

In Cooch Behar there is hardly any change of the society. Feudalism has not given rise to capitalism. Rather the society, inspite of so many changes have remained pre-industrial and pre-capitalist. Therefore, the theory which gives emphasis that feudalism gives rise to capitalism has not yet proved to be true or the society of Cooch Behar witnesses "perpetual transitional" phase. The spontaneous factor of the capitalist way of development did not superside the stagnant factors of the economy of Cooch Behar. This is because capitalism or path of capitalist development hardly reaches the feudal society of Cooch Behar. After the influence of the British in Cooch Behar certain land-laws were changed, a middle class based on landed aristocracy emerged but these were insufficient to bring about either industrialisation of capitalism in the sense we understand in the western

economy or even in the eastern part. Capitalism always remained dormant never proceeded further and perhaps it was what Rajani Kothari¹⁰ termed as the "Indian path of development" -- a mixture between feudalism and petty commercial enterprises.

After all what is feudalism ? What type of feudalism prevailed in Cooch Behar ? Why capitalism did not emerge ? These are the questions which require some discussions. Should capitalism necessarily come out of the womb of feudalism ?¹¹

Sweezy wrote : "We usually think of a transition from one social system to another as a process in which the two systems directly confront each other and fight for supremacy. Such a process of course, does not exclude the possibility of transitional forms : but these transitional forms are thought of as mixtures of elements from the two systems which are vying for mastery. It is obvious, for example, that the transition from capitalism to socialism is proceeding along some such lines as there : and this fact no doubt makes it all the easier for us to assume that earlier transition must have been similar... so far as the transition from feudalism to capitalism is concerned, there is a serious error....".

Now the problem is can we define properly feudalism as developed in Cooch Behar ? In fact the concept of feudalism " is elastic and there are various interpretations¹². Marc Bloch, way back in 1940, lamented the loose uses to which the term feudalism was put by many in these words : "Charged with more or less vague associations the word with certain writers seems to suggest no more than the brutal exercise of authority"¹³. According to one social scientist..... it is tempting to agree that feudalism "is a term with

little analytical value, one that merely spreads confusion and prevents clear thought on the question at issue -- a mask used to cover ignorance and intellectual uncertainty"¹⁴. According to another "disagreement might be reduced if words like feudalism now less a term of convenience than a cover of ignorance, were expunged from the historical vocabulary"¹⁵. Already in 1974 Elizabeth Brown argued forcefully for the abandonment lock, stock and barrel of the very concept of feudalism. Perlin¹⁶ decries authors mixing up two distinct concepts of feudalism the first one involving "a comparison implicit or explicit with classical feudalism, as it is seen to have occurred in medieval Europe most notably in England" and a second - very general one -- with universal applicability. Many authors while writing about feudalism did not go beyond the western hemisphere. At present, however, a large body of Marxists, led by Soviet historians and counting among them a majority of these belonging to third World countries, go so far as to extend the scope of the so-called "feudal mode of production" to histories of all countries. This general definition being all too simple, there is a near unanimity among those who accept it. In the words of the Soviet Scholar Sedov¹⁷ it goes as follows : "given that cultivators work on their own land with the aid of their own implements and they alienate their surplus labour in the interest of a third person or third persons and they are therefore subject to feudal exploitation". This is very similar to the one used by Dobb ...¹⁸ "an obligation laid on the producer by force and independently of his own volition to fulfil certain economic demands of an overlord, whether these demands take the form of services to be performed or of dues to be paid in kind"...As a matter of fact, even dues in kind is too specific on Dobb, who, as is well known equates feudalism to serfdom, by which he means nothing more than labour subject to coercion of any kind.

This all too wide open definition has a large body of adherents among Marxists for its being the officially accepted one by the communist parties of the world ever since 1931, though these are variations in the phrasing used by different individual authors. For instance, Hitton talked in terms of "tenants paying rent to (or doing labour service for) a monopolistic land owner class" and Hitton goes as follows : "The essence of the feudal mode of production in the Marxist sense is the exploitative relationship between landowners and subordinated peasants, in which surplus beyond subsistence of the latter, whether in direct labour or in rent in kind or in money, is transferred under coercive sanction of the former"¹⁹.

Those who work with this definition exclude from it slavery as it occurred in European antiquity. There is of course no logical justification for this exclusion, for the slave is also just as coerced labourer subjected to surplus extraction by juridico-political means. This anomaly has been removed by Samir Amin²⁰ who has advanced the concept of "Tributary mode of production" which covers all pre-capitalist surplus extraction mechanism, whether through revenue taken by the state or rent by the landlord or slave production appropriated by the slave-owner, a definition that has found acceptance among some scholars e.g. Eric Wolf²¹ Sweezy also welcomes this concept, but while doing so he refers to it, as a "family of modes". Samir Amin however, used the singular term "tributary mode".

The impressive consensus about the serfdom definition of feudalism, however, disappears as soon as scholars sit down to write the actual history of any feudalism or any aspect of it, for then they find it necessary to take account of various other concrete features - political, cultural, ideological,

institutional aspects - be it in western Europe, other parts of Asia or even in the small principality of Cooch Behar. The actual society in study may modify some of the generalisations of the feudal mode of production. Even there is no agreement about the additional features that are essential for study of Western European feudalism. Gorreau,²² in a recent book presents an excellent summary, mainly French account of the perspective of different historians. Likewise, ward²³ in a recent article has done a good job of distinguishing between as many as ten foci in the scholarly understanding of feudalism. Thus, Focus I emphasises "ties of dependence" between man and man or vassalage. Focus II is on the institution of "fief" defined as land held in conditional rather than absolute tenure, that is, upon condition of provision of service - Ganshoff is cited as a principal proponent of the view. Focus III takes as the defining characteristic of feudalism - "the union of benefice and vassalage". Focus IV makes "specialisation of military services" as the touch stone of feudalism, authors cited being cronne and stephenson. Focus V is on the tendencies of "pacellisation" and so on.

But even this definition is not altogether comprehensive for leaving out certain aspects which were stressed by sweezy. Sweezy has been subjected to merciless and unremitting criticism for three decades by self-appointed protectors of the purity of Marxism for allegedly departing²⁴ from the orthodox concept of Marxism. Sweezy, wants to show that feudalism and capitalism may coexist in a given society and very often feudalism may fail to give rise to capitalism. But it is ironical, for the words he used for highlighting certain features of the feudal society, borrowed from Dobb. Thus (1) "a low level of technique" (2) "production for the immediate need of the household or village. Community and not for a wide market" (3) demense

farming" (4) "political decentralisation", (5) "conditional holding of land by lords on some kind of service - tenure", (6) "possession by a lord of judicial on quasi-judicial functions in relation to the dependent population" - these are not sweezy's own words but are taken from Dobb's "studies"²⁵.

However, it should be stressed as done by Perry Anderson, that "no structural analysis of feudalism considered simply as an "economic system". Likewise Brenner writes that it is indeed central to my view point that fusion (to put it imprecisely) between "economic" and "the political" was a distinguishing and constructive feature of the feudal class structure and system of production. In fact both Brenner²⁷ and Anderson tell us that the narrow definition of feudalism is very often irrelevant. The narrow definition insists that capitalism is bound to come from the womb of feudalism.

The orthodox line may best be summarised by Maurice Dobb's writings. "To the extent that the petty producers were successful in securing partial emancipation from feudal exploitation -- perhaps at first merely an alleviation of it (e.g. a transition from labour rent to money rent) they were able to retain some elements of the surplus product for themselves. This provided both the means and the motive for improving cultivation and extending it to new lands, which incidentally served to sharpen antagonism against feudal restrictions still further. It also laid the basis for some accumulation of capital within the petty mode of production itself and hence for the start of a process of class differentiation within the petty mode of production itself and hence for the start of a process of class differentiation within that economy of small producers -- the familiar process, seen at various dates and in widely scattered parts of the world toward the formation on the one hand of an upper layer of relatively well to do improving farmers

(the Kulaks of the Russian tradition) and on the other hand of a depressed layer of impoverished peasants. This social polarisation in the village (and similarly in the urban handicrafts) prepared the way for production by wage labour and hence for bourgeois relations of production".

This is at best a sketch and entirely speculative more vague than the "rise of money economy" or widening of the market. As a formula it is incomplete. It does not say how feudalism will transform itself into capitalism.

Dobb does not sketch nor Hitton nor Brenner later on tell, how the upper layer of peasantry or the agrarian conflict will lead to capitalism. The industrial entrepreneurs, the merchants, the bankers, the manufacturers who played such an important role in the industrial revolution and simply left without mention in the narration. If indeed all these "sprouted out of agrarian roots" as Dobb would suggest, the work of showing the connection between branches and leaves of the three of capitalism with those roots remain yet to be started.

The fact remains that in Cooch Behar feudalism as introduced by the British did not give rise to industrialisation or capitalism. The feudalism of Cooch Behar remained virtually static with a few cosmetic changes in the successive periods. There was no major industries and more so there was no steady movement for change.

Perhaps Sweezy's²⁸ interpretation may give us some sort of theoretical reasons for understanding this phenomenon in this part of India - namely Cooch Behar.

Sweezy shows that the transition from feudalism to capitalism need not always be automatic. This transition is possible if potential internal

contradictions lead to strife and civil revolution. If internal contradictions are not sufficient to bring the change the external factors may lead to change. One of the most important factors that sweezy categorises as external factor is the pace of urbanisation. If neither internal factors nor external factors are strong enough the feudal system will continue albeit in a stagnant way. Perhaps sweezy's model of the transition economy may give us some ideas about the apparent stagnation of Cooch Behar and its truncated development. Capitalism never came out of the womb of feudal pattern of society in Cooch Behar.

Some extracts are given from sweezy's writings written in the context of feudalism of some other countries. (1) "We must not conclude, however, that such a system (feudalism) is necessarily stable or static. One element of instability is the competition among the lords for land and vassals which together foundation of power and pretige. This competition is the analogue of competition for profits under capittlism, but its effects are quite different. It generates a more or less continuous state of warfare, but the resultant insecurity of life and possession far from revolutionising methods of production as capitalist competition does merely accentuates the mutual dependence of lord and vassel and thus reinforces the basic structure of feudal relations. Feudal warfare upsets, improverishes and exhausts society but it has no tendency to transform it. A second element of instability is to be found in the growth of population. The structure of manner is such as to set limits to the numbers of producers it can employ and the numbers of consumers it can support, while the inherent conservatism of the system inhibits overall expansion. This does not mean, of course, that no growth is possible only that it tends to lag behind population increase. Younger sons of

serfs are pushed out of the regular framework of feudal society and go to make up the kind of vagrant population -- living on alms or brigandage and supplying the raw material for mercenary armies -- which was so characteristic of the middle ages. Such a surplus population however, while contributing to instability and insecurity, exercises no creative or revolutionary influence on feudal society" (Sweezy) Sweezy tries to elaborate the "change-resisting" character of feudalism and shows that how it can perpetuate without major changes in the fundamentals.

(2) What are the causes of decline of feudalism Sweezy continues .. "Dobb believes that they can be found inside the feudal economy itself. He exceeds that the evidence is neither plentiful nor conclusive but he feels that such evidence as we possess strongly indicates that it is the inefficiency of Feudalism as a system of production, coupled with the growing needs of the ruling class for revenue, that was primarily responsible for its decline, since the need for additional revenue promoted an increase in the pressure on the produces to a point where this pressure became literally unendurable. The consequence of this growing pressure was that in the end it led to an exhaustion or actual disappearance, of the labour by which the system was nourished. In other words, according to Dobb's theory, the essential cause of the breakdown of feudalism was over-exploitation of the labour force, serfs deserted the lords' estates en masse and those who remained were too few and too overworked to enable the system to maintain itself on the old basis... (Sweezy) but sweezy thinks that this theory is not fact of history. Sweezy writes, "The serfs could not simply desert the manors no matter how exacting their masters might become, unless they had somewhere to go. It is true... that feudal society tends to generate a surplus of vagrant population, but this

vagrant population, constituting the days of society, is made up of those for whom there is no room on the manors and it is hardly realistic to suppose that any considerable number of serfs would deliberately abandon their holdings to descend to the bottom of the social ladder" (Sweezy). "The feudal system contains no internal prime mover and when it undergoes genuine development -- as distinct from mere oscillations and crisis which do not affect its basic structure - the driving force is to be sought outside the system (I suspect that this applies pretty generally to feudal system.....") (Sweezy).

(3) "The whole problem, however, takes on an entirely new aspect to which Dobb pays surprisingly little attention -- when we recall the flight of the serfs took place simultaneously with the growth of town ... There is no doubt that the rapidly developing towns -- offering as they did, liberty, employment and improved social status -- acted as a powerful magnet to the oppressed rural population ... Dobb's theory of internal causation of the breakdown of feudalism could still be rescued if it could be shown that the rise of the towns was a process internal to the feudal system. But as I read Dobb, he would not maintain this. He takes an eclectic position of the question that their origin of the medieval towns but recognises that their growth was generally in proportion to their importance as trading centres. Since trade can in no sense be regarded as a form of feudal economy, it follows that Dobb would hardly argue that the rise of urban's life was a consequence of internal feudal causes.

To sum up this critique of Dobb's theory of the decline of feudalism : having neglected to analyse the laws and tendencies of western European feudalism, he mistakes for imminent trends certain historical developments

which in fact can only be explained as arising from causes external to the system".

"It seems to me that Dobb has not succeeded in shaking that part of the commonly accepted theory which holds that the root cause of the decline of feudalism was the growth of trade. But he has shown that the impact of trade on the feudal system is more complicated than has actually been thought : the idea that trade equals money economy and money economy is a natural dissolvent of feudal relations is much too simple" "It should be noted that the problem of the growth of trade in the middle ages is in principle separate from the problem of the decline of feudalism. Granted the fact that trade increased, whatever that reason may have been feudalism was bound to be influenced in certain ways But clearly one does not have to accept Pirenne's theory in order to agree that the growth of trade was the decisive factor about the decline of western European feudalism".

"Dobb cites Marx's chapter on 'Merchant capital' (111 Ch. 20) in support of the view that industrial capital develops in two main ways. The following is the key passage from Dobb : "According to the first -- the really revolutionary way - a section of the producers themselves accumulated capital and took to trade and in course of time began to organise production on a capitalist basis free from handicraft restrictions of the guilds. According to the second, a section of the existing merchant class began to take possession directly of production, thereby serving historically as a mode of transition but becoming eventually an obstacle to a real capitalist mode of production and declining with the development of the latter'. Dobb puts much stress on the first of methods .. He writes while the growing interest shown by sections of

merchant capital in controlling production - in developing what may be termed a deliberately contrived system of exploitation through trade - prepared the way for this final income (i.e. the subjection of production to genuine capitalist control) and may in a few cases have reached it and final stage generally seems as marx pointed out, to have been associated with the rise from the ranks of the producers themselves of a capitalist element, half manufacturing, half merchant, which began to subordinate and to organise those very ranks from which it had so recently risen"... and later, after a lengthy analysis of the failure of capitalist production despite early and promising beginnings, to develop in certain areas... Dobb says "when seen in the light of a comparative study of capitalist development Marx's contention that at this stage the rise of a class of industrial capitalist from the ranks of the producers themselves is a condition of any revolutionary transformation of production begins to acquire a central importance". It is noteworthy, however, that Dobb admits that 'details of this process are far from clear and there is little evidence that bears directly upon it'. In fact so little evidence, even of an indirect character, seems to be available that one reviewer felt constrained to remark that it would have been desirable to find more evidence, for the view, derived from Marx, that the really revolutionary transformation of production and the breaking of the control of merchant capital over production, was accomplished by men coming from the ranks of merchant craftsman.....".

III

The above controversy shows that orthodox Marxists believe that internal factors and contradictions must give rise to capitalism. But Sweezy differs from this doctrinaire orthodox conservative, and mechanical interpretation and emphasises that feudalism may have no sufficient internal mechanism to change.

After all 'class contradictions' and social polarisation may lead to upheaval. But was this present in Cooch Behar ? Was social polarisation a "fact" of Cooch Behar ?

Most probably the social polarisation, of the scale sufficient to create antagonism was never present in Cooch Behar. This is because the land was mostly held by a particular "ethnic group" - namely the Rajbansis and Koch. The Rajbansis and Koch had distinct Mongoloid features as opposed to Bengalees or other Indians. The Rajbansis who held most of the land in a hierarchical structure were related with each other by blood and ethnic relationship. For example, it is the practice of Rajbansi landlords to employ able-bodied young men for cultivation of land and enter into marriage relationship with their daughters. The landless young agricultural labourers were always treated as part of the family or part of the extended family. The concept of "We" and "they" had not developed in this type of economy. Feudalism is an extended family system in the context of Cooch Behar. Social polarisation could have occurred if the kitchen is different or labourers are hired or fired. This relationship is nearly absent in Cooch Behar. The jotedars, adhiars and landless peasants were very often related by family and blood relationship. The joint family system prevalent in India may not create a type of antagonism which we think is likely to create a "revolutionary" phase. Except a few sporadic cases no violent struggle between "Serfs" and "landlords" were found anywhere in Cooch Behar.

Economic and institutional changes, it was argued, created conditions favourable to the emergence of other "dominant" groups in the peasant society of Cooch Behar. But it is difficult even to suggest that this "dominant" group was at all "revolutionary". The critics of the system had

usually concentrated on "rural money lenders" - a new middle class and denounced the money lenders as the base of the peasant society. Two major shifts in the critique in this regard are notable. Peasant indebtedness to money lenders is not any longer believed to have been a distinctly British Indian phenomenon. The existence of large scale credit transactions in pre-colonial times has been firmly established. It is not assumed either that a distinct group of professional moneylenders alone provided the credit. A common assumption now is the complexity of the social composition of rural creditors and the diversity of their economic roles in the present society like Cooch Behar. A powerful group of rural creditors it is now held, was part of the peasant society itself. The old image of wily money lenders as aliens and disrupting the peasant society from without has been largely abandoned. A major modification of the orthodox critique is the notion of the rise of a rich peasantry. But the rise of rich peasantry steadily eroded the role and omnipotence of old landlords or zamindars or jotedars. In other words, the two-way simplified version of class war between landlords and serfs is no longer tenable. In between the zamindar or landlord there are innumerable layers of middle, not so middle, small, and very small ownerships. These different layers take away some of the edges of the intensity of class struggle.

Secondly, the money lenders are in no way shackled by the landlords²⁹. The landlords and money lenders were related with each other in same sort of symbiotic relationship. This relationship is of mutual advantage in the absence of banking and other financial institutions in the rural areas. Therefore, the "dominant middle class" of the rural areas was part of the peasant society and one cannot conceive any radical role for this type of middle class. Further in Cooch Behar many of the money-lenders were "outsiders" and "small" in numbers. The "smallness" of numbers put money lenders at a

disadvantage, particularly when they had to deal with the village community as a whole in that sense in Cooch Behar there was a "communal control" limiting money lenders powers. When it came to the question of settlement of disputes over interest charges and related issues, they were at a greater disadvantage. A formal legal machinery did not exist. Even if it existed it was rudimentary and time consuming at best. It was therefore, left to village panchayats (i.e. village councils) to arbitrate. The village headman and leading peasants settled the disputes. What happened if the frustration of money lenders over the decisions led them to reduce leading to a point where it hurt the local economy as also collection of revenue ? Was the Cooch Behar state still hesitant to take sides ? We donot really know. On the other hand, Panchayat (i.e. Village Council) decisions could not do much forward reducing peasants dependence on money lenders. What happened if peasants deeply resented the continuing domination of money lenders despite their usual services ? Did it lead to any overt conflict ? We have to give a very curious answer. We have to admit that as a result of this domination most of the "surplus product of peasants" became the property of the moneylenders even before the crop was harvested. Yet despite all this to portray the relationship between money lenders and the peasants as a relationship of tension and strife would be untrue to the social temper of Cooch Behar.

The economic organisation of a village in Cooch Behar, characterised by a combination of self-sufficient peasant economy and rural industry did not necessarily ensure "economic progress and growth" in the Marxist sense of the term. The village community of Cooch Behar was able to maintain "a sort of standard of living". As a result "most members of the village community were gainfully employed and were not usually compelled to seek employment

elsewhere, except during periods of severe natural calamities or famines. These circumstances mainly accounted for the negligible size of the group without any gainful employment in the agricultural sector of the economy, some sort of communal control over the existing stock of land and the presence of plentiful land in Cooch Behar. Under the circumstances and the changed revenue system any member of the village community could easily become a self possessing or self working peasant. Peasants, under different amended laws could 'freely' move to waste lands, forest lands, reclaim a portion and earn a living since the capital necessary to procure other means of production could not have been large in the art of primitive production system as prevailed in Cooch Behar. Land in many cases continued to be used as a source of peasant subsistence and not as a source of profit. Profit might have motivated resourceful few but large majority survived at a subsistence level and maintained some sort of living standard.

In this context a large number of Indian nationalist authors have talked about the existence of landless proletariat. The existence of landless proletariat was linked with the caste based social organisation of the pre-British Indian village. It was an extremely inequitarian society, the so called "village solidarity", "communal solidarity" it is argued is a myth. The village in India is only an architectural and demographic entity.... It is caste which is sociologically real³⁰. The lower castes did not have any sense of loyalty to the village. They were clients of powerful patrons. Obligations of clientship forced them to act in ways which are misrepresented as arising out of village solidarity. Dharma Kumar³¹ made the first systematic statement of the argument relating the origins of agricultural labour in pre-British days to the institution of caste. Demand for labour arose since caste have prevented

Brahmin (upper caste) land owners from touching the plough. Owners of large holdings, mainly Brahmin or upper caste could not also do without hired labour since their families could not provide all the necessary labour. The supply of labour became possible because of caste ban on ownership of land. Dharma Kumar estimates that at about the beginning of British rule about 15 percent of the total population of Madras presidency (in South India) were agricultural labourers. Saradmoni³² has a novel argument to propound in regard to the pulayas (lower castes) of Kerala. The pulayas once owner cultivators, gradually sank into the status of attached labourers largely because of the successive waves of Brahmin intrusions into their villages as colonisers. The process presumably involved use of force. Caste sanctions only formalised their dispossession. Caste rules were primarily designed to prevent any substantial improvement in the material conditions of the Pulayas and thus to keep them tied to their position as serfs. Ironically enough, it was caste system again that tended to split the pulaya community into rival groups. Rigid caste rules, made by the Pulayas themselves, separated one sub-caste from another sub-caste of the Pulayas. The Brahmin (upper caste) hegemony could thus consolidate itself. Kessinger's study³³ of a Punjab village does not say much about the origins of agricultural labour, but shows how caste system helped the dominant land owning family effectively control the low caste Kamina and thus reinforced the latter's dependence on the landed families (the Sahotas). In the context of Sikh administration of rural tracts, the dominant caste's hegemony of village politics and disputes was a virtual monopoly. Any non-sahota group intending to settle in the village must accept the political and rural power of the Sahotas. Things were far worse for agricultural labourer's of inferior castes. "The chamar's time was at the disposal of the sahates" Agricultural wages were regulated by custom and enforced by the Sahotes,

through their ability to use sanctions ranging from physical violence to an arbitrary change of wages.

In the context of Cooch Behar or in the area which is (nearly) north eastern part of India, the domination of Brahmins, as prevailed elsewhere in south, is not that important. The Koch Kings belonged to a very low caste of hindu society. The Koch distributed their land to their relatives settled them in cultivation. The settlers were again non-Brahmins -- by and large. Any exception proves the rule. The Koch society was not as differentiated as it was found in the other societies of India. The heterogeneity of the rural population was much less. Among the Koch or Rajbansis there was no such taboo as to use the plough. The Koch or Rajbansi landlords settled their own ethnic groups in cultivation and very often the relationship between landlord and the peasant is a relationship based on family ties. The Brahmins were insignificant proportion in the rural areas. The Brahmins were hardly land-owners. The upper castes mainly entered into service sectors. So the vast rural sector in Cooch Behar was not that caste based. Further, landless labourers were virtually non-existent in the censuses before 1951. The phenomenon of landless labourer is of recent origin in Cooch Behar and the caste system or hierarchy has nothing to do in this regard. The society of Cooch Behar was to some extent homogenous - at least from the view point of India's caste-class system.

How did the British-sponsored land management system in Cooch Behar affect the agricultural labour ? It was pointed out that agricultural labour in the sense we understand hardly ever existed in Cooch Behar. The excess population was more or less accomodated in the vast waste land under Patit charcha. It is difficult to say that British policies had ever produced

landless proletariat in Cooch Behar. Even if, for the sake of argument, the number of agricultural labourers had increased at all, the reason was rapid population growth, so much that there was not enough land to go round. A certain number of cultivators had inevitably slipped into landlessness - though their numbers may not have been adequately reflected in the census reports there was nothing that Britishruler or the Koch king could do about it. We have cited evidences to show in this dissertation that the nature of land-management or transfer of peasant holdings, was not of the kind to create a sizable group of landless peasants. The dominant pattern in Cooch Behar was owner cultivator and this group of small peasants were not really 'have nots' in the orthodox sense of the term. The small peasants in Cooch Behar were not alienated from the land. The peasants were deeply committed to their small holdings. These small holdings were the pre-dominant 'mode of production'.

The nature of land-relation, as pointed out, was hardly caste-based agrestic serfdom. Even if there was anything bonded the conditions after successive land revenue management were such as to widen the market. The 'so called' attached workers in Cooch Behar could, as pointed out, break away from the master's domination and could themselves become small farmers. The small unlike many parts of India cultivated their own land. There was no taboo and the family labourers could be employed. It is in this context, so called alienation never really existed in the state of Cooch Behar - at least for a very long period.

If it is considered by the orthodox writers that the British solidified the caste structure and therefore sharpened the class struggle, then it is entirely irrelevant in case of Cooch Behar. Expansion of monetary sector,

gradual truncation of the barter sector, railways, commercialisation of agriculture created a condition which is far from solidification of the caste-class structure. The breakdown of the barter system and commercialisation of agriculture created new opportunities, new jobs new avenues of migration, social inter-course and spread of education. Hence, it is difficult to suggest that the existence of caste structure is the potential for class conflict in the rural areas.

The 'internal factors' were really not sufficient to give rise to new social order in Cooch Behar. The social order that existed was more or less continuation of the same system with periodic marginal changes. The factors outside the system, namely urbanisation or growth of cities, as suggested by Sweezy was not sufficiently strong enough to give birth to a new kind of economy. This is because of slow growth of urbanisation in Cooch Behar. During the whole period Cooch Behar's urban growth was less than the average of West Bengal and even in current period about 10% of total population of the district live in the urban areas, whereas for the state of West Bengal nearly 30% of people live in the urban areas.

While almost every fourth person is a town dweller in the state of West Bengal, in the district of Cooch Behar only seven in any group of one hundred people live in town. The district has a total number of six towns. Each of the five sub-divisional headquarters is a town, though some of them are big village called town almost by courtesy. Some of the towns of this district even do not satisfy the basic qualifying tests laid down in the census for defining an urban area, except of course, of their being administered by the town committee..... Cooch Behar municipal town only had a population of a little more than 10,000 in 1901, others had a population of a little above

one thousand only ...(census report, 1961, West Bengal, District census Hand Book Cooch Behar, p. 60).

It appears that urbanisation which should have acted as a catalyst for change in the agrarian society like Cooch Behar, as pointed out by Sweezy, ("external factors" as opposed to "internal factors" of Dobb) did not exist. Hence, there was a tendency for the society to remain stagnant. Again who were these urban people in Cooch Behar ? Did they come about as "displacement from the village" as Engels thought of the process of urbanisation or were they "producers becoming merchants or capitalists" as Marx wrote his idea of urbanisation in Das Capital Vol. III p. 393 ? The urban population in Cooch Behar was neither. It composed of a 'babu', 'Bhadralok' or 'Gentlemen' class who were averse to physical labour and kept themselves separate and distinct from the toiling masses as part of the prevailing 'babu' culture in India at that time. This 'babu gentlemen' requires a further explanation. This babu middle class is the product of British rule in India at that time.

The growth of 'urban society' in Cooch Behar is related in the final analysis to the growth of urban centres to cater the needs of British and Koch Raj administrative purpose. Centering round these 'administrative outposts' all kinds of commercial activities grew up. For administrative purpose the urban centres were connected to metropolitan capital and centres like Calcutta. Trade, commerce, administrative ramifications including establishment of law courts, judiciary, schools, colleges etc. led together an expanded employment base offering job opportunities to people. In consequence, attracted by the new openings, functional and occupational groups poured into urban centres of Cooch Behar from different parts of Bengal. First of all,

subordinate administrative posts were created which were open at that time to the Indians. Next came the clerical grades. These too were filled up by the Indians. The judicial system opened up considerable employment opportunities for the Indians. Still, however, there was a limit to the position available where all the aspirants could be absorbed. The spill-over took to legal profession. The British legal system provided opportunities for flourishing practices. Around these administrative and judicial establishments were secondary organisations like local self-government. Then came trade commerce and transport. In the indigenous system of trade and commerce there was very little scope for employment. If there was any scope at all, it would remain open to the member of the family engaged in trading - the business organisation being either partnership or proprietary. Commercial activity of the urban centres was mainly of two types (a) articles exported from the district and (b) articles imported from outside.

Both these formed a part of network of commercial activity spread across the whole country. Local trade was limited to the local demand, which in turn depended on the standard of living, the level of income and economic activity. In the outlying areas of Cooch Behar the rural economy was based on subsistence, whatever money circulation was there in the rural sector, it was too low to generate effective demand for increasing trade turn-over. The expansion of local trade and business, therefore, depended largely on the presence in the rural sector of a large number of wage earners or salaried people who exchanged the money for everything they required. In the early period of Cooch Behar, such groups were not in general so large in number, so as to generate demand to create opportunities on a big scale. Local trade surplus would remain small so long as the volume of local trade transactions

itself was small. Perhaps, this is one of the reasons of slow growth of urbanisation in Cooch Behar.

The judicial and administrative positions required formal English education. As the system of English education did not develop much in Cooch Behar, a large number of people migrated to the urban centres of Cooch Behar. This is one of the reasons for the migration of upper caste hindus population from their native districts of south or East Bengal. The census Report of 1901 wrote about the migration of East Bengal upper caste hindus ... its babus are found earning their living throughout Bengal and Assam and further a field. Many of the best clerks in the government offices came from Dacca District. Such examples are common. In case of commercial activities link with the metropolitan trading centre like Calcutta was necessary. At the same time, because of the absence of modern banking institution of finance these activities an indigenous credit system was necessary. Therefore, the new opportunities in employment and commercial activities were restricted in only those who had the qualifications and means.

The administrative and judicial set up created new employment, opening up opportunities for hindu upper caste having formal English education. In a colonial set-up these were the most coveted position. As formal education was necessary in these appointments, the upper caste hindus because of their socio-economic privileges and conditions evinced the greatest desire to obtain English education. These people migrated to the urban centres for service and profession. Their eagerness for higher formal education was motivated largely by the desire for self advancement in service and professions. Head work divorced from and adverse to manual industry was the characteristic of those who took formal education.

This was the reason why the great majority of Bengalee upper caste hindus were found in every nook and corner of the urban settlemnts of Cooch Behar. The Bengalee educated upper class hindus manned the clerical services in administration, courts, schools and other establishments. In the contemporary society they were known as 'Babus', 'Bhadraloks' or 'Gentlemen'. The 'Babus' were mainly 'white collar' employees and shunned all kinds of manual jobs. In fact these 'Babus' were the 'Elites' of the society.

This pattern of 'urbanisation' in a feudal society is different from what orthodox Marxists thought would happen. On Sweezy's hypothesis, the feudal ruling class constantly increasing demand for money in this crisis of feudalism arose from the ever greater luxury of the feudal mobility a conception similar to that presented in the first chapter on the HOF of Sombart's Luxus Und Kapitalismus. The excessive exploitation of the peasants by their lords, to which Dobb would ascribe the source of collapse of feudalism, was really in sweezy's view an effect of the lords need for cast with the resultant flight of peasants there came the establishment of cities, which produced the money economy. The external force which brought about the collapse of feudalism was 'trade' which cannot be regarded as a form of feudal economy. But the cities were not formed in the way sweezy desired in Cooch Behar.

Further, sweezy's insight that those who carried out the bourgeois revolution, who were the real vehicles of the industrial capital (capitalist production) of that time, were to be found in the rising small and middle bourgeoisie of the cities and towns and that the centre of attention must be

focussed on the contradiction between them and merchant and user capitalists (Haute bourgeoisie). It is surprising that Marxists in discussing the 'capitalist spirit' overlooks the remarkable insight of Weber (Max Weber- Die Protestantische Ethik und der Geist der Kapitalismus (1904-1905). Weber pointed out that capitalism came from the Womb of feudalism because of capitalist spirit.

The 'capitalist spirit' which appeared in the form of puritanism was the way of life, the form of consciousness best suited to the class of yeomen and small and middle industrialists of that time and is not to be found in the mentality of hunger for money 'or greed for grain' common to all Marxist writers.

The Marxist writers overlooked this 'capitalist spirit' of Weber in their paradigm. Neither capitalist spirit nor 'animal spirit' of Keynes nor Schumpeterian 'entrepreneur' had any role to play in the theoretical structure of feudalism as developed by Dobb, Sweezy-Takahasi. It was assumed that capitalism will come out of feudalism because of internal contradictions and/or external pushes and pulls. But the logical process was very inadequately sketched.

Since the theory of feudalism was doctrinaire and rigid the Marxist writers failed to give adequate emphasis on technological progress, innovation or even education. The current emphasis on education as a factor in economic growth was overlooked in the Marxian structure. How does the rate of economic return on education as an investment compare with the rate of return on physical capital? How is the volume of educational expenditures correlated with a country's economic growth? What part of a country's economic growth can reasonably be attributed to its educational effort? These

are highly relevant issues to understand the stagnation of Cooch Behar but it was never raised by the writers who believed in the automatic transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Besides education, rapid technological change also characteristically requires some business leaders who will introduce the new technology or as they are commonly called entrepreneurs. To put it in technical terms it is important to recognise that there is need not only for invention but also for innovation or actually getting the new methods adopted in practical effective ways. Richard Ackwright, one of the great cotton lords of late eighteenth century England, but he did introduce these devices commercially, employed them on a large scale made a fortune for himself and was one of the key figures of the English industrial revolution. It is needless to add that "entrepreneurial class" who brought capitalism in England or in other parts were conspicuous by its absence in the small principality of Cooch Behar.

The "babus" of Cooch Behar had hardly the skill, acumen or mentality to be entrepreneur. But they were the emerging middle class -- so-called modern in outlook. These 'babus' were hardly suitable to take risk. The 'babus' preferred secured job in the government officer to the risk taking ventures of industrial activities. Another middle class of Cooch Behar namely jotedars, small peasants or 'new elites' of the rural areas were more interested in investment in land rather than in the risk taking ventures. They were rooted to the soil, conservative in outlook, tradition bound, and not 'urban' in outlook or spirit. The commercial class mainly composed of Marwari banias came from far away place and became virtual shopkeepers of the area. They were not local, speak a different language, have different customs and remained perpetually outsiders to the system of Cooch Behar.

New capitalism to emerge and to be economically effective, may require additional capital, changes in the scale of enterprise and a trained and a disciplined labour force. In an even deeper sense, they may require a society which is willing and able to adjust itself to economic change. Economic changes had always been a gradual process. In societies like Cooch Behar, attitudes and institutions are necessarily geared not to what is new but to what is traditional. Technological progress in the modern sense depends, of course, on applied science and ultimately on pure science. Abstract speculations on the nature of universe, motivated originally by the simple desire to know and understand, will often come to root in some practical appliance that reduces labour and provides for hitherto unsuspected needs. In a certain sense the 'scientific attitude' is the root of the whole thing. The notion of a rational and comprehensible universe, of natural laws which can be used to unlock nature's secrets- this kind of approach is by no means a necessary or universal one and in fact was the product of a long process of intellectual evolution in the western world. Therefore "generalisation" from certain common features of feudalism is not a valid procedure. Generalisation that feudalism is a distinct stage of human history and capitalism will come out of it (as part of Marxist doctrine) is again not valid. Feudalism has certain laws of development in the West and a set of different pattern in the east-or in a place like Cooch Behar and no generalisation is possible. The doministic-feudalism - must give- rise- to capitalism" a la Dobb do not give any room for "uncertainty".

But the World is full of uncertainty. The ability of organisation to deal with uncertainty is a function of internal characteristics, the diversity of their members as measured in terms of their backgrounds and their personality characteristics and the diversity of their interaction, as measured in terms of

the randomness of their communications. Unless we understand the background of Cooch Behar we cannot predict that capitalism is bound to emerge from feudal structure.

Social reality is tragically misshapen, intractable and untidy social theory is not. It imposes order and clarity by forcing the "facts" of social existence into pre-conceived ideological boxes - all in the name of objective science. Superficially it appears that what separates one "social theory" from another is the way in which some "objective facts" are arranged and combined. But it is the underlying ideology that determines with a social fact is to begin with and then proceeds to arrange the ones it finds to be theoretically relevant and compatible in a certain order. Different theories, being different constructions of "reality" have different objectives. Some seek to eternalise and thereby justify whatever is, while others seek to depass it to what ought to be. One thing all social theories have common, however, is that they all, in time, become obsolete as historical events unfold along lines no theory could have possibly anticipated.

In a sense, all social theories specialise in predicting the past and having done so, in accordance with their own "scientific" canons and thus to their satisfaction, they then turn their theoretical axes 180 degrees into the future, falsifying themselves in the act. Then comes the problem of reconstruction, after the patchwork attempts of the theoretical diehards repeatedly fail. And so the process goes on and on though by no means smoothly. For any major social theory with a large body of adherents, it is often a turbulent process that can turn ugly. But as ugly as it may turn, the

need to reconstitute social theories continues and new formulations more relevant to their times and places continue to appear.

The "feudal society" of Cooch Behar does not give signal for change. Here feudalism does not give rise to capitalism. Dobb talked about "internal forces" and Sweezy emphasised on "external forces". In Cooch Behar there was hardly anything "internal" to the system which allowed capitalism to emerge. Nor there was anything "external" which brought any transformation. If there were forces of change these were at best "potential" or to use Marxian terminology "transitional". At least changes were not automatic as Marxists would ask to accept.

Hence, Cooch Behar remained an agricultural society. Land has still remained the primary productive asset. From the womb of feudalism capitalism has not "sprouted" in Cooch Behar. What ultimately happened in western Europe was manifestly very different from what happened in other parts of the world, where the feudal mode of production in some sense prevailed. No 'revolutionary changes' occurred in our sample study namely Cooch Behar. The extent to which this may be due to variations among different feudal systems and the extent to which it may be due to "external" factors, are, of course very important questions. Feudalism is subject to different laws of development.

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GLOSSARY

Abawls	:	Miscellaneous cesses levied by the Zamindars or public servants.
Adhiar	:	Half crop sharer.
Ahilkar	:	A native officer.
Amla	:	Officer.
Arcot Rupee	:	Official currency of french India.
Bigha	:	A measure of land varying in extent in different parts. One bigha = 14,400 Sq.feet.
Bandar	:	Riverine trade centre.
Brahmottar	:	Personal grant made in favour of Brahmana (Priest).
Chaklah	:	A territorial demarcation for revenue and administrative purposes.
Chaukidar	:	Watchman.
Chukani	:	Undertennt of a Jotedar.
Debotter	:	Land granted for the maintenance of deities.
Dewan	:	The Chief Minister of an Indian Prince or Chief Officer in charge of the Revenue Department.
Durbar	:	The meeting place of the King.
Estafasar	:	Forms i.e. the Stamped applicatins for maps.
Fauzadari Ahilkar	:	Native Officer, who is invested with the ordinary power of a Magistrate in the regulation provinces.

Godidi	:	Throne, Literally the cushion of an Indian Prince.
Hastobund	:	Investigation and Survey, detailed inquiry.
Hustabood	:	Annual revenue statement of the state.
Ijara	:	Tax Farming.
Ijaradar	:	Farmer.
Jagir	:	A grant of land, usually made by a Rajah in exchange for service.
Jagirdar	:	Holder of Jagir.
Jangle	:	Forest.
Jhum	:	Shifting cultivation.
Jama	:	Rate of revenue.
Jamabandi	:	Revenue-roll.
Jote	:	A unit of land.
Kabuliyat	:	A written agreement, especially signifying assent to pay the amount assessed upon his lands.
Kanungo	:	A revenue officer.
Khalsa	:	Land or villages held immediately under Government and of which the State is the manager or holder.
Khas	:	The possession of an individual indicating his authority on something.
Khatian	:	Abstract of field register.
Lakhiraj	:	Exempt from revenue.
Mahal	:	A revenue paying unit.

Mauza	:	A village or group of villages having a separate name in the revenue records and known limits - a fiscal division.
Mahajana	:	Businessman.
Maī	:	Land revenue.
Mal-guari land	:	Revenue paying land.
Mokarari	:	Permanently settled.
Naib Ahilkar	:	A native officer, who tries petty offences in the rank of sub-divisional officer.
Narainy rupee	:	Traditional currency of the Cooch Behar State.
Nazir Deo	:	The Commander-in-chief of the State.
Nuzzer	:	Presentations given to a King.
Paik	:	Soldier/able-bodied adult persn who had to work for the state, free of charges.
Pargana	:	A territorial demarcation for revenue and administrative purposes.
Patta	:	Document given to tenants - lease.
Patit	:	Waste.
Raiyat or Ryot	:	A tenant.
Raiyatwari	:	According to or with raiyats applied to revenue settlement-system of settling land direct with tenants.
Salami	;	Presents given to a King as a mark of respect to him.

Sannad : Official title deed.

Sicca rupee : Standard silver rupee of the country.

Taluk : Estate/Small revenue unit.

Terije : Details of land.

Thana : Police Station.

Zamindar : Zamin-land, day-holder ; in general any holder of land, the great land agents of Bengal and Orissa, whose gradual growth in power and connection with the land necessiated the Zamindari settlements, both permanent and temporary, - the middleman with whom land was settled.

Zilla ; District.

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APPENDIX

Spelling of "Cooch Behar".

The spelling of "Cooch Behar" used in different forms in different times. To avoid diversity, the State of Cooch Behar has directed by an order published in 1896, that "Cooch Behar" shall be the spelling to be used.

"His Highness the Maharaja Bhup Bahadur having signified his approval of the use of the Spelling "Cooch Behar", all other spelling of the Word should be dropped" - Cooch Behar Gazette, Part - I, 1896, p. 28.

APPENDIX A

COOCH BEHAR MERGER AGREEMENT

AGREEMENT MADE THIS Twenty-eighth day of August 1949 between the Governor-General of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.

WHEREAS in the best interests of the State of Cooch Behar as well as of the Dominion of India it is desirable to provide for the administration of the said State by or under the authority of the Dominion Government:

IT IS HEREBY AGREED as follows:—

Article 1

His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar hereby cedes to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the State and agrees to transfer the administration of the State to the Dominion Government on the 12th day of September 1949 (hereinafter referred to as "the said day").

As from the said day the Dominion Government will be competent to exercise the said powers, authority and jurisdiction in such manner and through such agency as it may think fit.

Article 2

His Highness the Maharaja shall continue to enjoy the same personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles which he would have enjoyed had this agreement not been made.

Article 3

His Highness the Maharaja shall with effect from the said day be entitled to receive for his life-time from the revenues of the State annually for his privy purse the sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand free of all taxes. After him the privy purse will be fixed at Rupees seven lakhs only. This amount is intended to cover all the expenses of the Ruler and his family, including expenses on account of his personal staff, maintenance of his residences, marriages and other ceremonies, etc., and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever.

The Government of India undertakes that the said sum of Rupees eight lakhs fifty thousand shall be paid to His Highness the Maharaja in four equal instalments in advance at the beginning of each quarter from the State Treasury or at such Treasury as may be specified by the Government of India.

Article 4

His Highness the Maharaja shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as distinct from State properties) belonging to him on the date of this agreement.

His Highness the Maharaja will furnish to the Dominion Government before the 15th September 1949, an inventory of all the immovable property, securities and cash balances held by him as such private property.

If any dispute arises as to whether any item of property is the private property of His Highness the Maharaja or State property, it shall be referred to a judicial officer qualified to be appointed as a High Court Judge, and the decision of that officer shall be final and binding on both parties.

Article 5

All the members of His Highness' family shall be entitled to all the personal privileges, dignities and titles enjoyed by them whether within or outside the territories of the State, immediately before the 15th day of August 1947.

Article 6

The Dominion Government guarantees the succession, according to law and custom, to the gaddi of the State and to His Highness the Maharaja's personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles.

Article 7

No enquiry shall be made by or under the authority of the Government of India, and no proceedings shall lie in any Court in Cooch Behar, against His Highness the Maharaja, whether in a personal capacity or otherwise, in respect of anything done or omitted to be done by him or under his authority during the period of his administration of that State.

Article 8

(1) The Government of India hereby guarantees either the continuance in service of the permanent members of the Public Services of Cooch Behar on conditions which will be not less advantageous than those on which they were serving before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India or the payment of reasonable compensation.

(2) The Government of India further guarantees the continuance of pensions and leave salaries sanctioned by His Highness the Maharaja to servants of the State who have retired or proceeded on leave preparatory to retirement, before the date on which the administration of Cooch Behar is made over to the Government of India.

Article 9

Except with the previous sanction of the Government of India no proceedings, civil and criminal, shall be instituted against any person in respect of any act done or purporting to be done in the execution of his duties as a servant of the State before the day on which the administration is made over to the Government of India.

In confirmation whereof Mr. Vapal Pangunni Menon, Adviser to the Government of India in the Ministry of States has appended his signature on behalf and with the authority of the Governor-General of India and Lieutenant Colonel His Highness the Maharaja Jagaddipendranarayan Bhuj Bahadur, Maharaja of Cooch Behar, has appended his signature on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.

JAGADDIPENDRANARAYAN

Maharaja of Cooch Behar

V. P. MENON

Adviser to the Govt. of India
Ministry of States

APPENDIX B

ARTICLES OF TREATY BETWEEN THE HONOURABLE
EAST INDIA COMPANY AND DHARENDRANARAYAN
RAJA OF COOCH BEHAR

Dharendranarayan, Raja of Cooch Behar, having represented to the Honourable the President and Council of Calcutta the present distressed State of the country, owing to its being harassed by the independent Rajas, who are in league to depose him, the Honourable the President and Council, from a love of justice and desire of assisting the distressed, have agreed to send a force, consisting of four companies of *sipahies*, and a field-piece, for the protection of the said Raja and his country against his enemies; and the following conditions are mutually agreed on:

1st.—That the said Raja will immediately pay into the hands of the Collector of Rangpur Rs. 50,000 to defray the expenses of the force sent to assist him.

2nd.—That if more than Rs. 50,000 are expended, the Raja will make it good to the Honourable the English East India Company, but in case any part of it remains unexpended that it be delivered back.

3rd.—That the Raja will acknowledge subjection to the will of the English East India Company upon his country being cleared of his enemies, and will allow the Cooch Behar country to be annexed to the Province of Bengal.

4th.—That the Raja further agrees to make over to the English East India Company one-half of the annual revenues of Cooch Behar for ever.

5th.—That the other moiety shall remain in the Raja and his heirs for ever, provided he is firm in his allegiance to the Honourable United East India Company.

6th.—That in order to ascertain the value of the Cooch Behar country, the Raja will deliver a "hustabud" (revenue statement) of his district into the hands of such person as the Honourable the President and Council of Calcutta shall think proper to depute for that purpose, upon which valuation the annual Malguzari (assessment) which the Raja is to pay, shall be established.

7th.—That the amount of Malguzari settled by such person as the Honourable East India Company shall depute, shall be perpetual.

8th.—That the Honourable East India Company shall always assist the Raja with a force when he has occasion for it, for the defence of the country, the Raja bearing the expense.

9th.—That this treaty shall remain in force for the space of two years, or till such time as advices may be received from the Court of Directors empowering the President and Council to ratify the same for ever.

This treaty signed, and sealed, and concluded, by the Honourable the President and Council at Fort William, the fifth day of April 1773, on the one part, and by Dharendra-narayan Raja of Cooch Behar, at Behar Fort, the 6th Magh 1179, Bengal Style, on the other part.

**An appeal by the Maharaja Jogaddipendra Narayan
to the people of Cooch Behar on the eve of
merger of Cooch Behar State with Indian Union**

On this solemn occasion which marks the end of long and happy association, my mother and I send you our very best wishes, my beloved people.

Wherever we may be, we shall never forget you, your loyalty, and your devotion, we hope you will always maintain the peace, goodwill and harmony which has been our common heritage.

We shall always watch with keen interest your moral and material welfare and always pray for your happiness and prosperity.

May God Almighty bless you all

Jagaddipendra Narayan

THE
ANNUAL ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

Department of General Administration & Criminal Justice

OF THE

Cooch Behar State

FOR THE

YEAR 1884-85.



COOCH BEHAR:

PRINTED AT THE COOCH BEHAR STATE PRESS.

1886.

No. I.—Statement showing the Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooch Behar State Treasuries for the year ending 31st March, 1885.

	Budget Estimates for 1884-85.	Accounts for 1884-85.	DIFFERENCES.		EXPENDITURE.	Budget Estimates for 1884-85.	Accounts for 1884-85.	DIFFERENCES.	
			Increase.	Decrease.				Increase.	Decrease.
I—Land Revenue	Rs. 8,88,000	Rs. 8,28,468	.....	Rs. 59,532	1. Household Expenses	Rs. 4,29,020	Rs. 6,97,119	Rs. 2,68,099	Rs.
II—Stamps	1,10,000	1,55,038	45,038	.....	2. Land Revenue	1,77,887	1,75,415	.....	2,472
III—Interest on Investments	77,500	60,397	.....	17,103	3. Education, Science and Arts	61,090	58,973	.....	2,117
IV—Debutter	88,000	76,912	.....	11,088	4. Law and Justice	70,595	71,136	541	.....
V—Excise	61,600	69,153	7,553	.....	5. Administration	64,879	66,928	2,049	.....
VI—Law and Justice	9,300	6,774	.....	2,526	6. Jail	22,006	24,068	2,062	.....
VII—Jail	7,000	4,681	.....	2,319	7. Police	55,846	53,388	.....	2,463
VIII—Registration	7,100	7,189	89	.....	8. Military	21,587	18,773	.....	2,759
IX—Education, Science & Arts	740	1,238	498	.....	9. Pensions and Allowances	11,574	9,487	.....	2,087
X—Miscellaneous	7,660	42,986	35,276	.....	10. Debutter	39,360	88,123	.....	1,237
XI—Darjeeling Estates	64,170	69,089	4,919	.....	11. Medical	24,680	24,388	.....	292
XII—Public Works	11,000	73,358	62,358	.....	12. Registration	3,767	3,708	.....	59
XIII—Chaklajal Estate	3,69,760	3,50,298	.....	19,462	13. Excise	7,118	7,073	.....	45
Total Revenue	17,01,830	17,45,481	43,651	.....	14. Printing Charges	13,660	13,701	41	.....
Debit	2,52,849	6,96,072	3,44,129	.....	15. Stamp Charges	6,388	7,383	945	.....
Grand Total	19,54,679	23,42,453	3,87,774	.....	16. Miscellaneous	1,31,976	2,09,234	77,258	.....
					17. Municipality	9,000	9,000	.....	.....
					18. Darjeeling Estates	21,700	21,228	.....	472
					Total	11,72,083	15,09,075	3,36,992	.....
					19. Public Works	5,24,507	5,90,700	66,398	.....
					20. Chaklajal Estate	2,58,289	2,42,678	.....	15,611
					Grand Total	19,54,679	23,42,453	3,87,774	.....

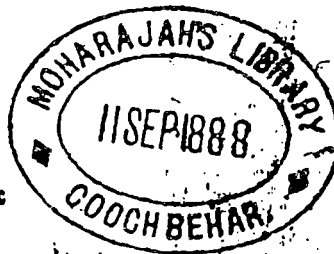
COOCH BEHAR, AUDIT OFFICE;
12th November, 1885.

NOBIL CHUNDER SEN,
Auditor.

ANNUAL ADMINISTRATION REPORT

OF THE

COOCH BEHAR STATE



FOR THE

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was

YEAR 1885-86.

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1885-86

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| 1.—Report of the State Council. | 3.—Revenue Administration. |
| 2.—General Administration. | 4.—Judicial |
| 5.—Registration. | |

COOCH BEHAR:

PRINTED AT THE COOCH BEHAR STATE PRESS.

1887.

Memo. showing how surplus money in the Bank was spent.

Nature of charges.	Amount.	Remarks.
	Rs-	
Excess expenditure in His Highness' expenses during 1883-84.	1,75,173	Amount provided in the Budget for the first portion of 1883-84 was Rs- 1,08,000 and that for the second portion was Rs- 92,000. The total was thus Rs- 2,00,000. The actual expenditure was Rs- 3,75,173; the excess was thus Rs- 1,75,173.
Do. during 1884-85....	2,18,540	Amount sanctioned in Budget was Rs- 2,25,000. The total expenditure, as shown in Audit office books, is Rs- 4,43,350. The excess is thus Rs- 2,18,540.
Amount of outstanding bills against His Highness at the close of 1884-85 which are being adjusted	1,39,617	Promissory Notes have been sold to enable the Private Secretary to pay these bills. The amount is therefore included in the Memo.
Payments to Mr. Kueller during 1883-84 and 1884-85.	85,000	
Installation expenses paid during second portion of 1883-84.	2,00,023	Total expenses were Rs- 2,63,942 of which Rs- 36,919 was debited in the account for the first portion of 1883-84.
Purchase of Kennedy House and remittance for repairs.	1,05,000	
Cost of additions to Woodlands and of other works there during second portion of 1883-84 and 1884-85.	84,000	This is not the correct figure the total amount may have probably exceeded this.
Furniture for Palace	1,00,000	Out of this Rs- 63,787 (£5,000) has been remitted to Mr. John Pollen, Rs- 20,000 to Messers Gillanders Arbutnot & Co. and Rs- 7,000 advanced to Mr. Barclay. There may have been some other small payments.
Purchase of Tea shares	1,00,000	
Payment on account of Darjeeling Capital account from 3rd October 1883 to close of 1884-85.	3,04,586	Out of this Rs- 1,80,000 paid in the 2nd portion of 1883-84 and Rs- 1,24,586 in 1884-85.
Reserve Fund	2,00,000	
Excess in Pilkhana charges during 1884-85	17,784	
Do. Stable charges during 1884-85	15,984	
Do. Band charges do.	6,058	
Do. Hospitality charges do.	11,185	
Loss in selling Promissory Notes &c. ...	15,000	
TOTAL	17,77,950	

NOTE.—Payments for Palace and Stables from 3rd October 1883 to close of 1884-85, amounting to Rs- 4,33,131 were made out of ordinary revenue and Cash balance, and the surplus had not to be touched for the purpose.

66. Since the close of the year some further reductions have been made, and Your Highness has been pleased to abandon the project of the English trip. This subject will be dealt with in the report for the current year.

67. The Palace was not completed during the year. But the unexpended money provided on this account was spent for other purposes.

68. There was a provision of Rs. 60,000 for the improvement of the Palace grounds. Certain improvements have already been effected, and some are being still carried out. The construction of a pucca house for the Mekligunj Sub-divisional office has since been completed, and we have taken care to see that the tide of progress set on foot during Your Highness' minority is not too suddenly checked.

69. Full particulars on the subject of finance are given in the Report of the Superintendent of the State.

We have the honor to be,

YOUR HIGHNESS'

Most obedient servants,

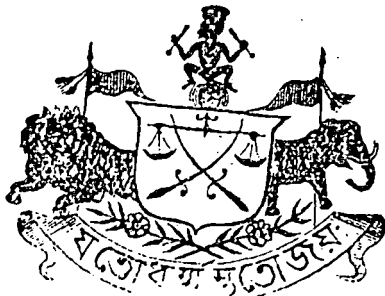
A. EVANS-GORDON, MAJOR,

Supdt. of the State & Vice-President.

CALICA DOSS DUTT, *Dewan & Member.*

JADUB CHANDER CHACKERBUTTY,

Civil Judge & Member.



The Cooch Behar Gazette.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1896.

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PART I.

NOTICE.

It has been brought to my notice that Istahars and other matters for publication in the Gazette are sent to the Press not properly filled up. Such omissions may frustrate the purpose for which publication is made and for them the Press cannot be held responsible. It is therefore notified that officers sending matters for the Gazette should be careful to see that all particulars are properly filled up.

E. E. LOWIS,
Supdt. of the State.

Orders and Notifications by His Highness the Maharajah and the State Council, &c.

ORDERS BY THE STATE COUNCIL COOCH BEHAR.

THE STATE COUNCIL, COOCH BEHAR.

NOTIFICATION.

The 4th February 1896.

With the sanction of His Highness the Maharajah Bhup Bahadur and in supersession of any previous orders in this matter, it is hereby notified for general information that from the date of publication of this notification in the *Cooch Behar Gazette*, no Pleader, Mookhtear, or Revenue Agent holding license in British India, with the exception of the Bachelors of Law, shall be granted license to practise as such in the Courts and Offices of this State.

By order,

S^r CHANDRA MUSTAFI,
Secretary, State Council, Cooch Behar.

February 17th, 1896.

ORDERS BY THE STATE COUNCIL, COOCH BEHAR.

[First publication.]

THE STATE COUNCIL, COOCH BEHAR.

GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

Circular order No. 4.

REGISTRATION.

The 14th May 1896.

On the recommendation of the Registrar of Deeds, the Vice-President in Council has been pleased to order the introduction into the State of Circular No. 16 of the 30th March, 1896, issued by the Inspector General of Bengal with effect from the 14th May, 1896 for easy reference and convenience of office work a separate Register for thumb impression under Sir W. Herschel's system of identification shall be appended and kept in all Registration offices of the State for cases of commission.

D. R. LYALL,

Vice-President, State Council, Cooch Behar.

[Third publication.]

NOTIFICATION.

THE STATE COUNCIL, COOCH BEHAR.

GENERAL AND EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

Dated the 16th April, 1896.

In supercession of all previous orders on the subject, it is notified for general information that the Cooch Behar Pleadership, Mukhtearship and Revenue Agentship Examinations will be held on the 7th of December next and the following days.

By order,

SATIS CHANDRA MUSTAFI,

Secretary to the State Council, Cooch Behar.

ORDERS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF THE STATE.

[Third publication.]

NOTICE.

His Highness the Maharajah Bhup Bahadur having signified his approval of the use of the spelling "Cooch Behar" all other spelling of the word should be dropped.

D. R. LYALL,

Superintendent of the State, Cooch Behar.

MALCUTCHERY NOTICE.

ইস্তাহার নামা কাছারী নাগ মোতালকে নিজ বেহার সন ১৮৯৬ ইং ৩০এ মার্চ

মোতাবেক ১৩০২ সন, ১৮ই চৈত্র, ১৮৬ শকা।

নং ৯ ভূমি গ্রহণ ১৮৯৫১৬ ইং ।

টাকাগাছ তালুকের ম্যালেরিয়া আক্রান্ত মুসলমানদিগের আবাসস্থান ও চূতন সড়কের দক্ষিণ চিটল খাসনাইয়ার জায়গীর হইতে ২৮৩৮/০ ধর ও বোদং খাশনাইয়ার জায়গীরের ১১১০/০ ধর এবং রসিক খাশনাইয়ার হইতে ২১০৪০ ধর মোট ৬১৮৮৮/০ ধর ভূমি সরকারে গৃহীত হওয়ায় তৎ পরিবর্তে পং বেহার ১০২২ নং থাকতুক তালুক কামিনীরঘাট মধ্যে সাবেক ১৫৫২ নং ভৌজির লিখিত আশমতুল্যা

APPENDIX

[The exact copy of the original letter written by Jenkins, Agent to the governor-general, North East Frontier to Maharaja Narendra Narayan, Cooch Behar on January 7, 1861.]

My dear Negah,

I have had the pleasure

of receiving your letter of the 28th ult. for which I thank you very much.

I am very glad to hear you are commencing on Public Buildings for the different offices round the large Tank, & a Reading Room is especially of the last necessity, and I hope it will be completed early. — The other works are almost equally requisite and I shall watch their progress with much interest. — I am obliged to you for laying the foundation of the school

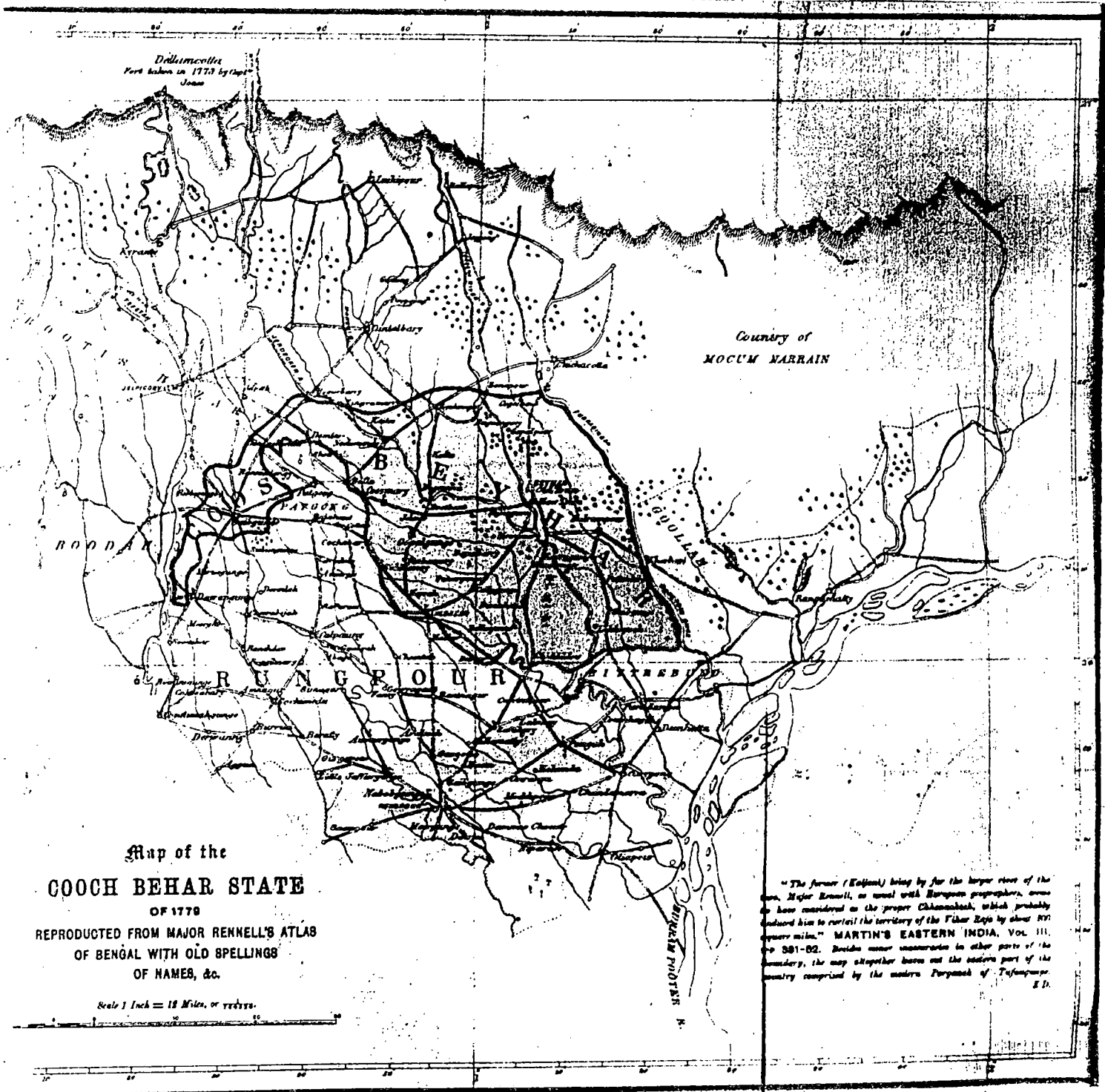
in my name, and I hope you
will take measures to provide
for its being a prosperous Institution.
— The great thing is to have proper
well educated Masters and to
place it under efficient & super-
intendence. — I have been told that
you propose placing it under
Renehan's superintendence,
and I think you will not select
another man. — He is well educated
himself and appears to me to
take genuine pleasure in promoting
education. — But who are
your Masters and will depend
on them? — Look to your benefit
to your people from this
School — it is impossible that
any one will now be content
with the old state of things.

and you must conform
to the use as well as the
use of the world and for
the advancement of your
kingdom to enable it to keep
pace with the surrounding
states an improvement in the
education of the masses of the
people is the one thing essential.

I think well of your
proposal to get up History
Schools further - notwithstanding
his being ejected in Calcutta, there
is no doubt but he is a well
educated gentleman and an
able official officer. How
are you to provide for the fu-
-ture? If you can however
do so & remove him without
giving much offence I am satis-
-fied you will be doing what
is very desirable - You will
not only possess a competent
teacher but you will have a
friend whose interests in
Calcutta may be serviceable

In these days when we must
 be able to appear before them
 through the papers - I am afraid
 his long absence may not be worth
 the receipt of service in justice -
 I must be able to see you without
 your service all the other off days
 - If you can make his absence
 that I want to stay in command
 that he should have the whole
 of the in the case of your Police
 in the day of it altogether and
 show all the other things
 into his hands - for unless he
 has the entire control of the
 Police - there he can do little
 good - I tried to have written
 you a small longer letter but I
 have been interrupted - I wish
 however to have this to know

at least this: *Polizia* and
Rajil & *Kapitan Rajil*
Herende Marjuna } the very first of
Schupa - } *the first*



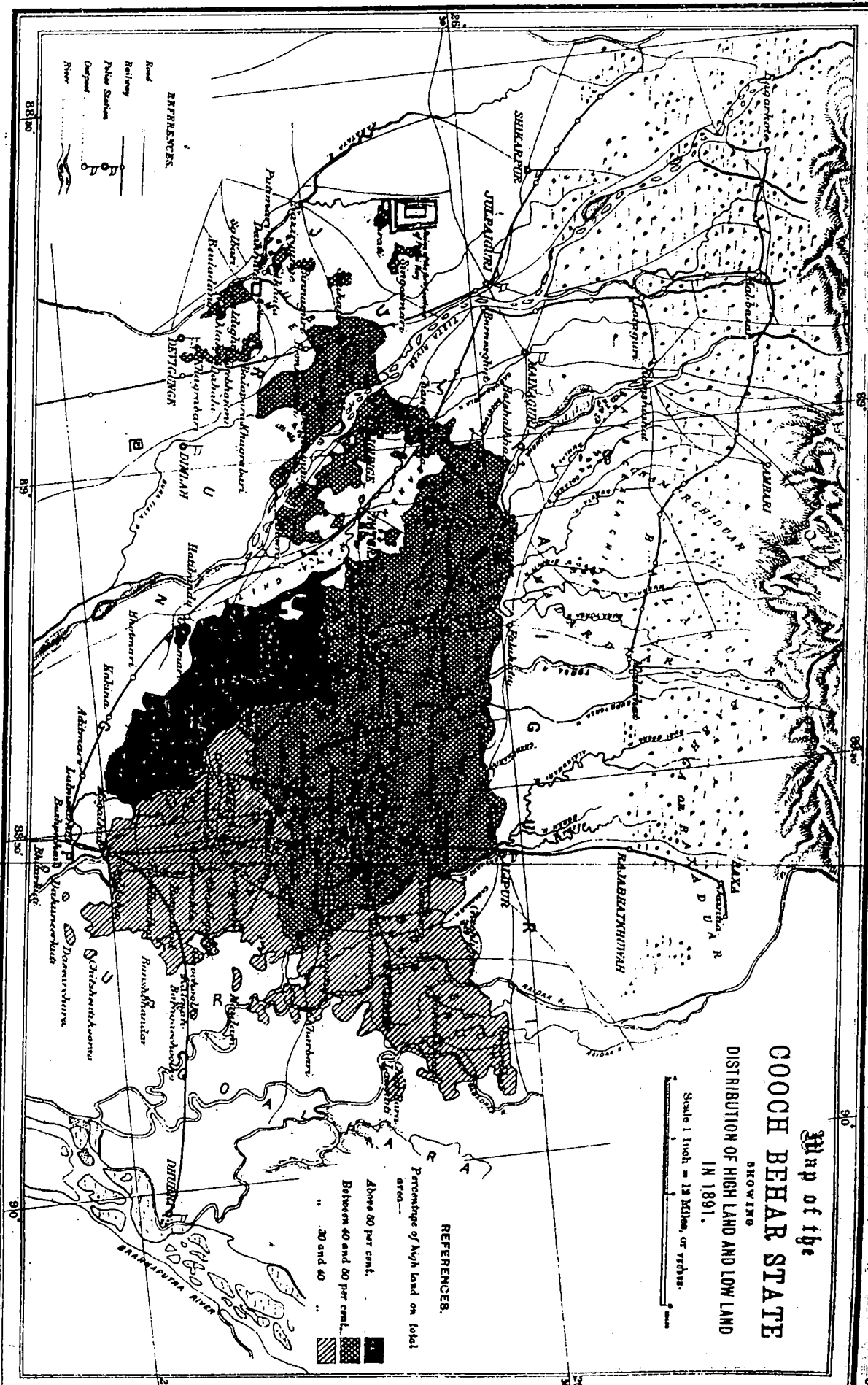
Délémoville
 Fort taken in 1773 by the
 French

Country of
 MOCUM NARRAIN

Map of the
COOCH BEHAR STATE
 OF 1778
 REPRODUCED FROM MAJOR RENNELL'S ATLAS
 OF BENGAL WITH OLD SPELLINGS
 OF NAMES, &c.

Scale 1 Inch = 12 Miles, or reverse.

"The former (Kojal) being by far the larger river of the
 area, Major Rennell, as usual with European geographers, seems
 to have considered as the proper Chittanagong, which probably
 induced him to curtail the territory of the Fikar Raja by about 800
 square miles." MARTIN'S EASTERN INDIA, Vol. III,
 pp 581-82. Besides minor inaccuracies in other parts of the
 boundary, the map altogether leaves out the eastern part of the
 country comprised by the modern Parganah of Tufanpore.
 E.D.



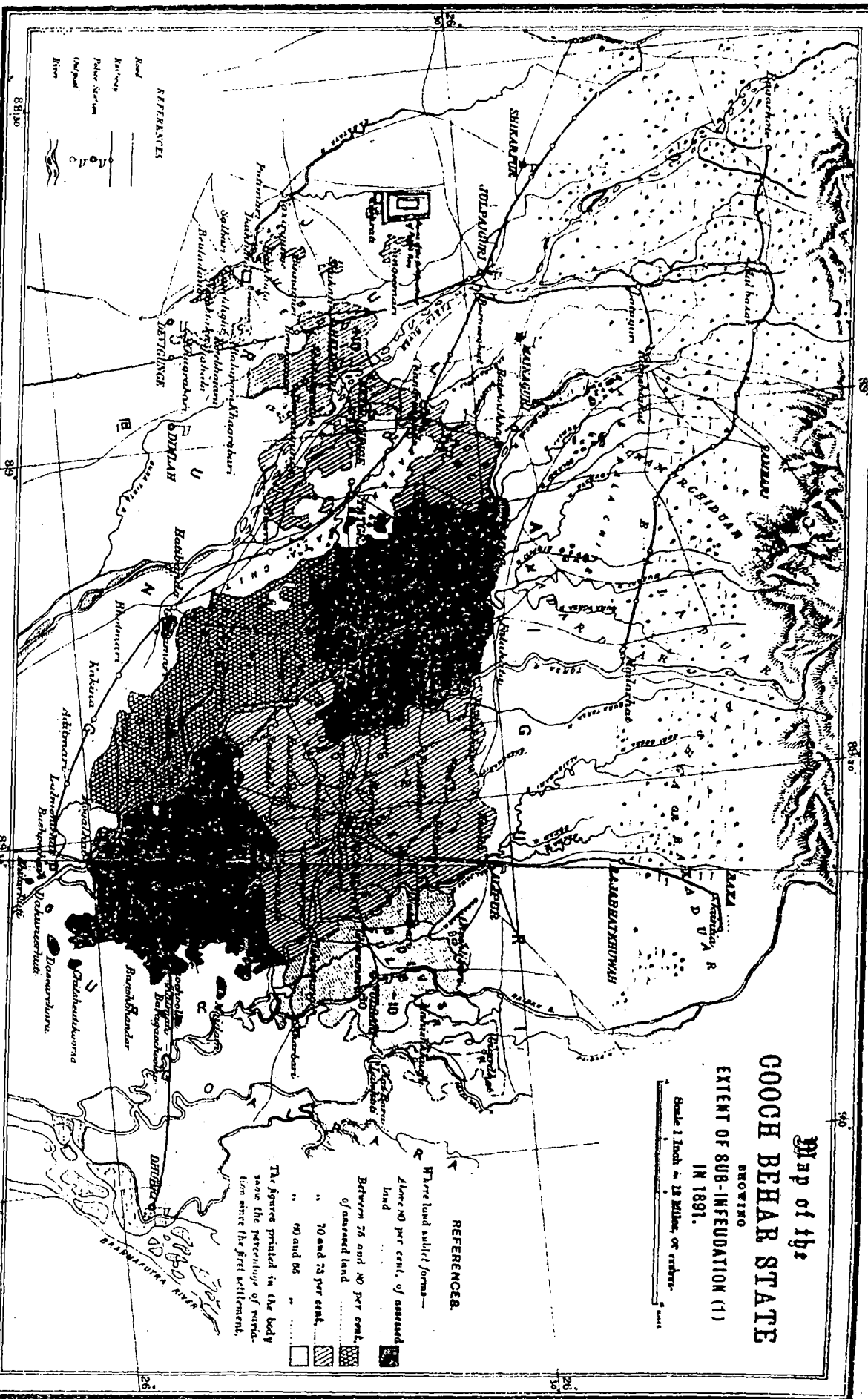
Map of the GOUGH BEHAR STATE SHOWING EXTENT OF SUB-INFEUDATION (1) IN 1891.

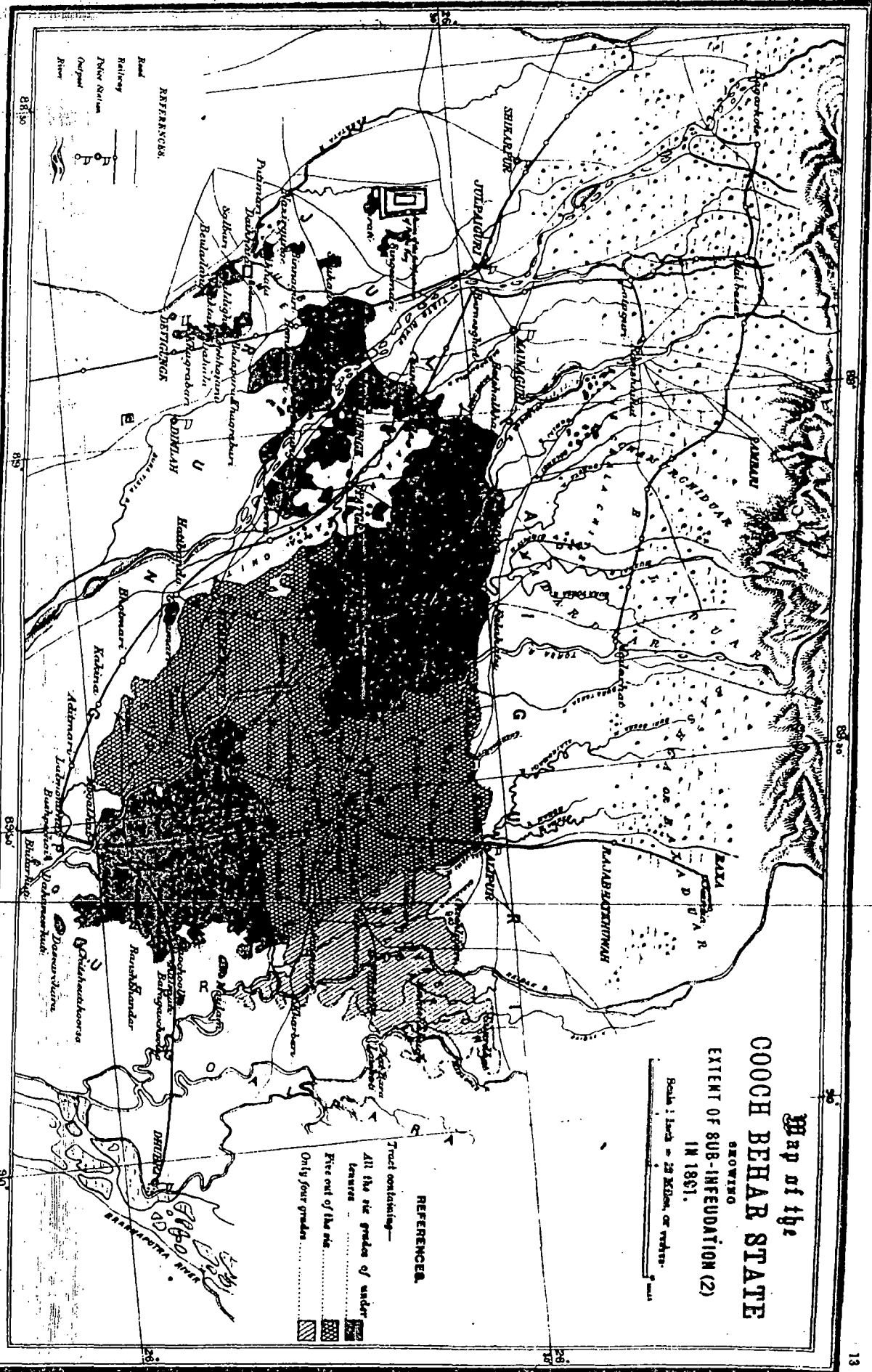
Scale 1 Inch = 12 Miles, or reverse.

REFERENCE.

Three land sublet forms—
 1. Above 80 per cent. of assessed
 land
 2. Between 75 and 80 per cent.
 of assessed land
 3. 70 and 75 per cent.
 " 40 and 65 "

The figures printed in the body
 show the percentage of extra-
 tion since the first settlement.





**Map of the
COOCH BEHAR STATE**

**SHOWING
EXTENT OF SUB-INFEUDATION (2)
IN 1861.**

Scale: 1 inch = 25 Miles, or 40 Kiloms.

REFERENCE.

- Tract containing—
- All the six grades of under tenures
 - Five out of the six
 - Only four grades

REFERENCE.

- Road
- Railway
- River Station
- Outpost
- River

87° 30'

88°

89° 30'

90°

25° 30'

26°

26° 30'

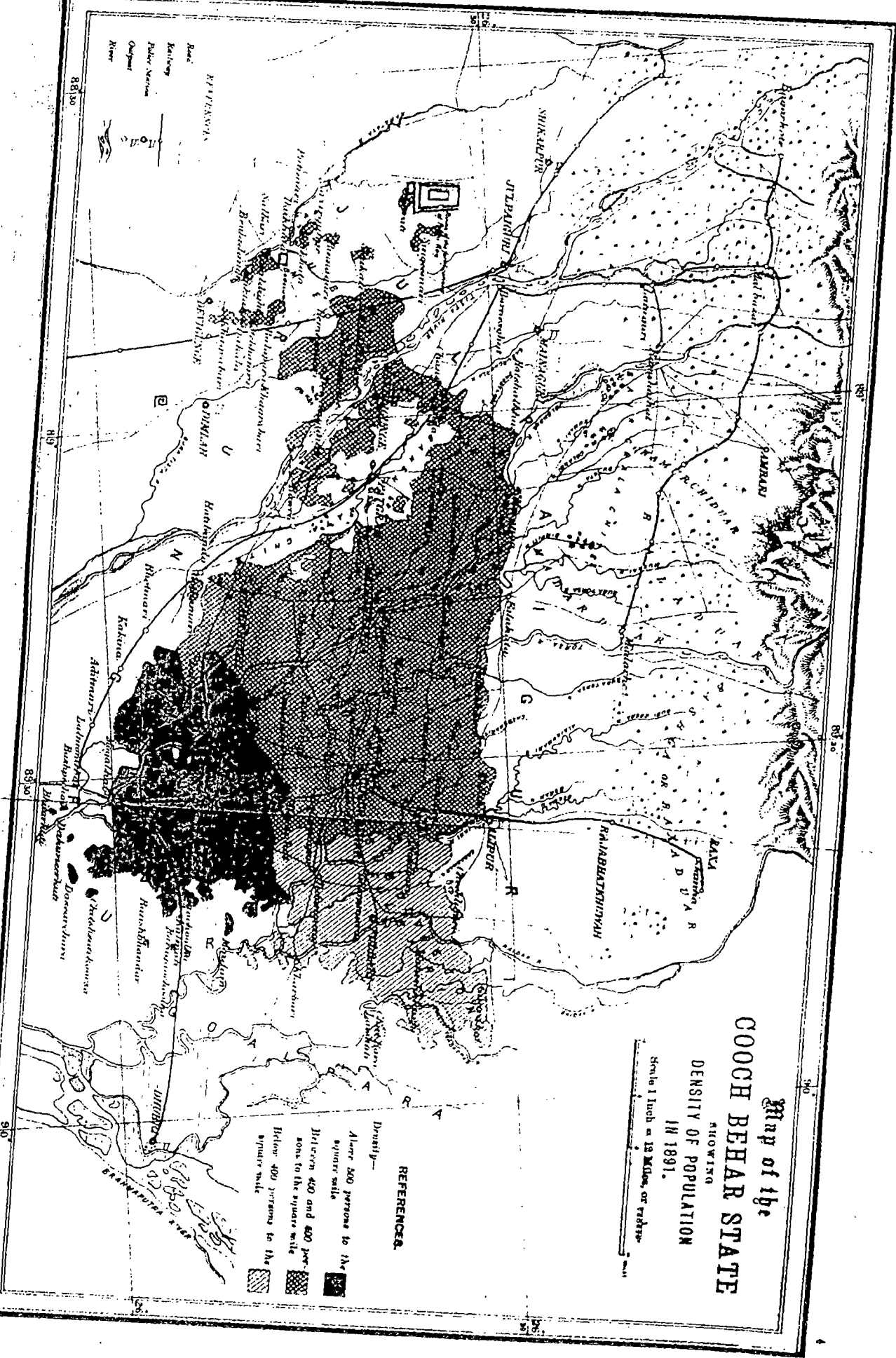
Map of the COOCH BEHAR STATE

SHOWING
DENSITY OF POPULATION
IN 1891.

Scale 1 Inch = 15 Miles, or 24000 Feet

REFERENCE.

- Density—
- ▲ Above 500 persons to the square mile
 - Between 400 and 500 persons to the square mile
 - ▨ Below 400 persons to the square mile



Road
 Railway
 Public Station
 Outpost
 River

88°30'

89°

89°30'

90°

25°

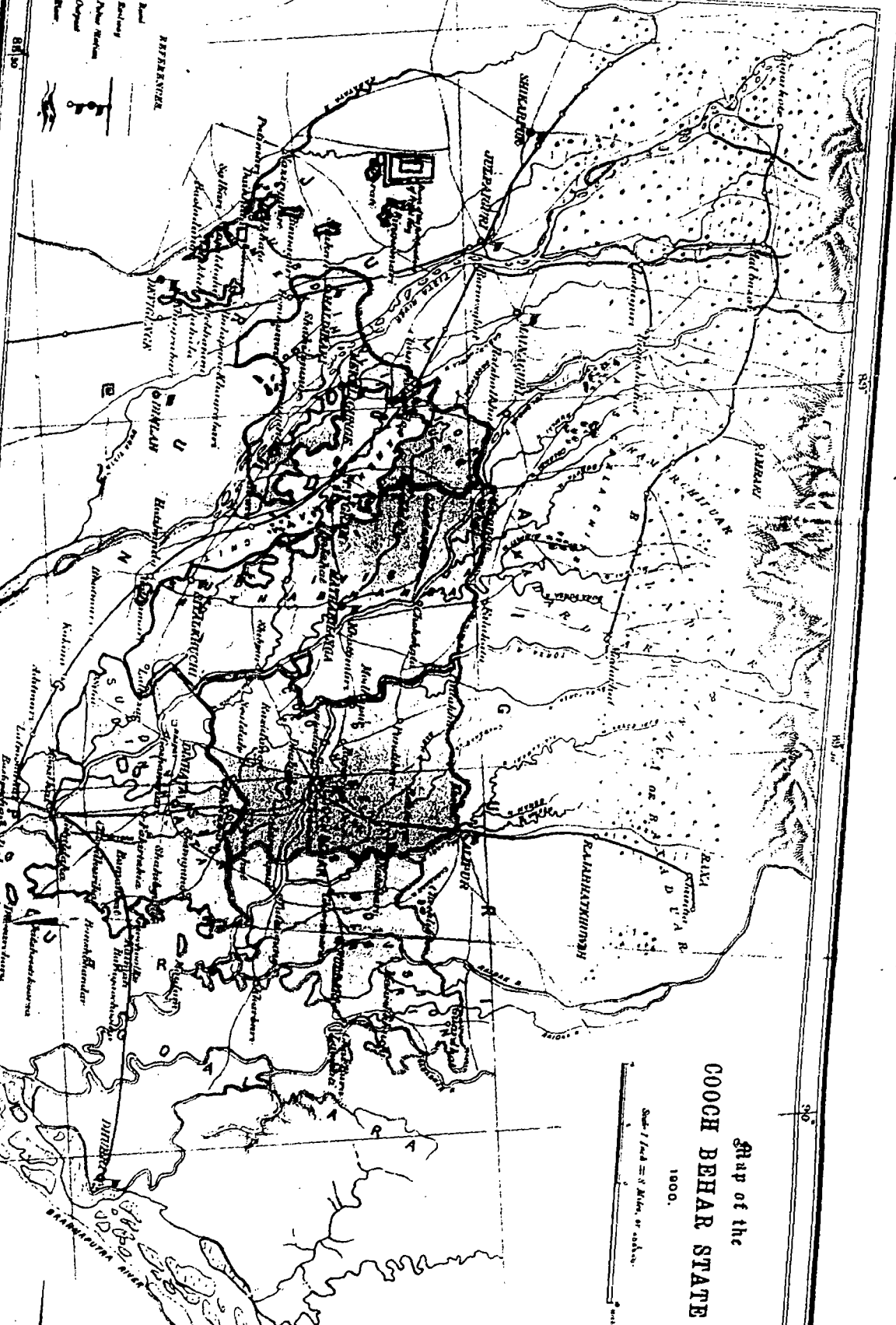
25°30'

26°

26°30'

Map of the
COOCH BEHAR STATE
1800.

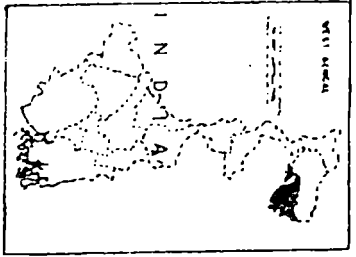
Scale 1 inch = 8 Miles or 12800 Yards.



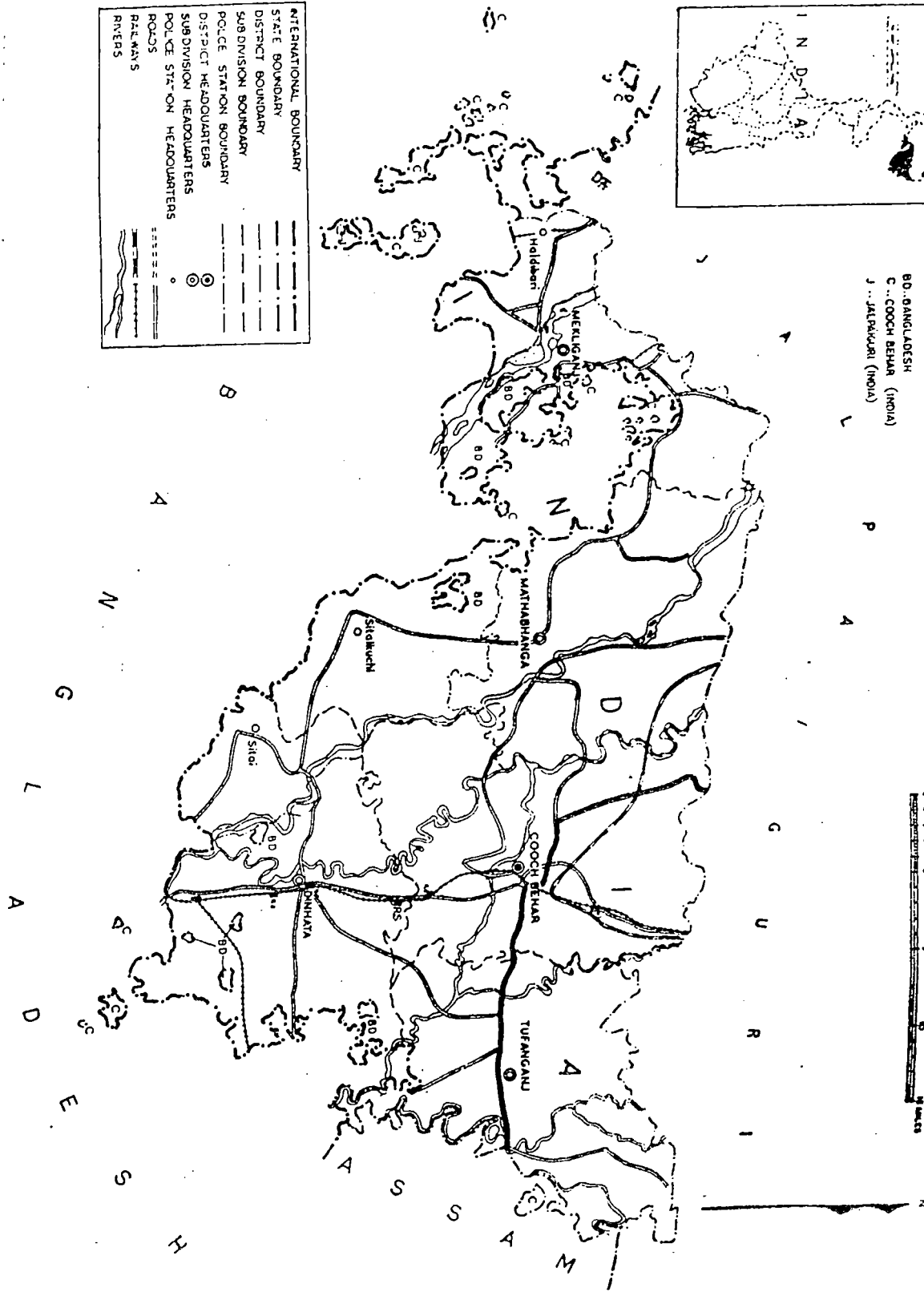
Legend:
Rail
Kailash
Other Station
Original
New

DISTRICT COOCH BEHAR

BD - BANGLADESH
 C - COOCH BEHAR (INDIA)
 J - JALPAIGURI (INDIA)



INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY	---
STATE BOUNDARY	----
DISTRICT BOUNDARY	-----
SUB-DIVISION BOUNDARY	- - - - -
POLICE STATION BOUNDARY	.....
DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS	○
SUB-DIVISION HEADQUARTERS	⊙
POLICE STATION HEADQUARTERS	⊙
ROADS	=====
RAILWAYS	-----
RIVERS	~~~~~





1. Maharaja Harendra Narayan



2. Maharaja Nripendra Narayan



3. Maharaja Jitendra Narayan



4. Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan



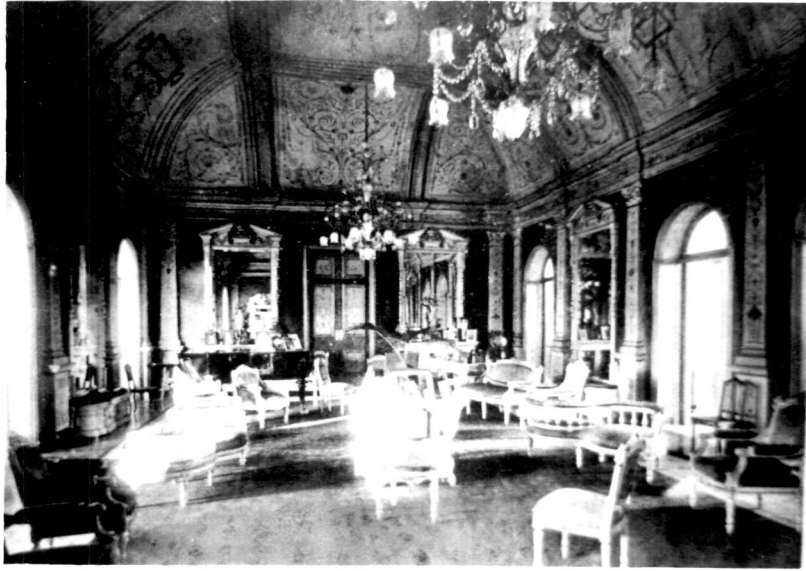
5. Calica Doss Dutt



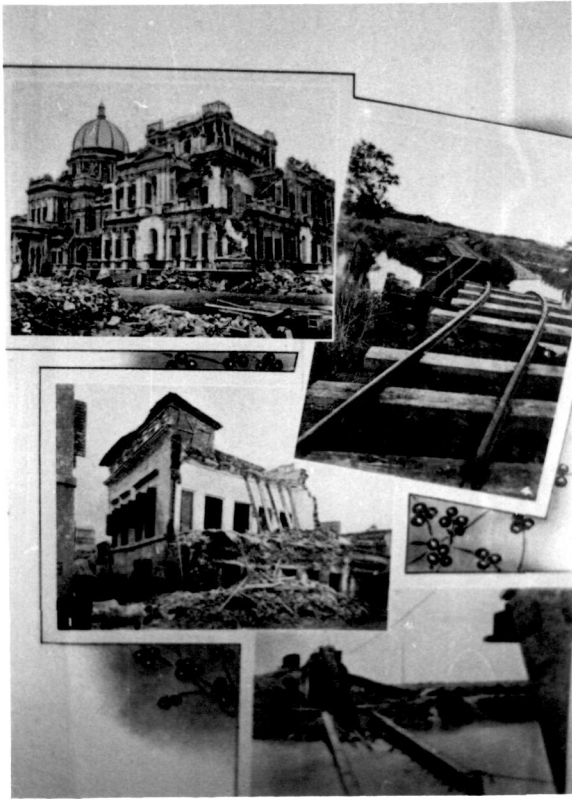
6. Colonel J. C. Haughton



7. The Palace, Cooch Behar



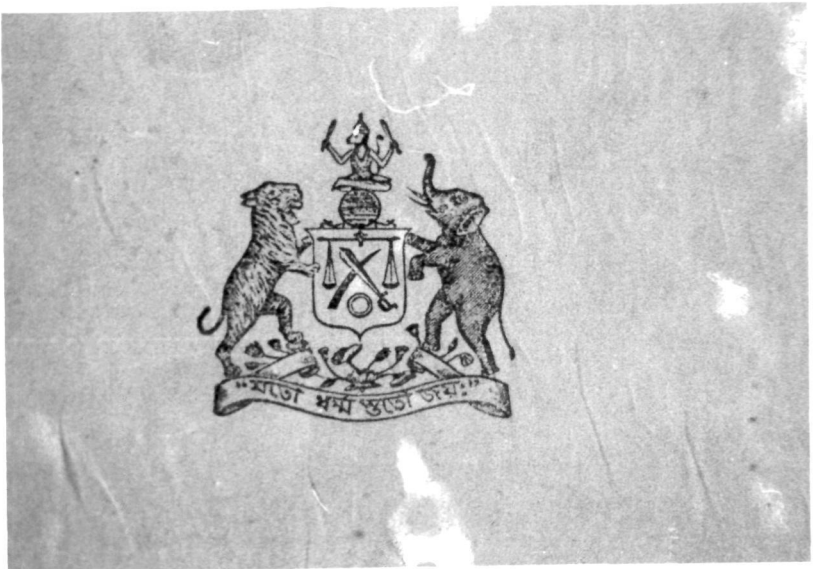
8. The Drawing - Room of the Palace



9. Damage caused by the Earthquake of 1897



10. Coat of arms





11. Naraini Coins & Paper Coins



ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS

1. **Maharaja Harendra Narayan**

Harendra Narayan was 3 years and 9 months old when his father the unhappy Maharaja Dhairyendranarayan died in 1783. Mr. Henry Douglas was appointed Commissioner in 1789 for superintending the affairs of the country during the minority of Harendranarayan. The great reform with which the name of Mr. Douglas is associated was the introduction of the Ijardari system of the Collection of Land Revenue. In the year 1801 Maharaja Harendranarayan coming of age, the Commissioner was removed, and the administration was left in his hands. The relation between the Maharaja and the British Government was not good. The British tried to introduce some reforms and British Regulations in Cooch Behar but the Maharaja expressed his strong repugnance at the measures contemplated and insisted on his right as an independent ruler of his own territories. Due to strong resistance by the Maharaja Harendranarayan against the interference of the British and other circumstances led to the examination and revision by the Government of its Policy towards Cooch Behar, which was finally fixed upon and thus set forth in the Chief Secretary Mr. Adam's letter of the 24th February, 1916 :-

"On the whole the resolution which the Governor - General in Council has now formed, is to abstain from all interference except in the form of advice and representation, in the unlimited management of the affairs of Cooch Behar, and to restrict the power of the Commissioner to the exercise of diplomatic functions only".

The rule of Maharaja Harendranarayan marked a period of transition from the old to the new system, and forms a critical epoch in the history of Cooch Behar.

Harendranarayan died at Banares on the 29th July, 1839. The reign of Maharaja Harendranarayan was the longest, and he was one of the ablest rulers of Cooch Behar of the modern times.

2. Maharaja Nripendra Narayan

After the death of Maharaja Harendra Narayan, the eldest Maharaj Kumar Shivendranarayan was placed on the throne and the succession was recognised by Government on the 28th August, 1839. Shivendra Narayan died at Benares on the 23rd August, 1847, and his adopted son Narendra Narayan was placed on the throne in the evening of that day. At this time the young Maharaja was about 11 years of age. The Maharaja died on 6th August, 1863, after a short reign of 4 years only. Under his dying wishes his only legitimate son Nripendra Narayan was immediately placed on the throne. The succession was subsequently confirmed by the British Government in January, 1864. During the period of minority of Nripendra Narayan the British Government deputed colonel J. C. Haughton to Cooch Behar as Commissioner in charge of the administration. The Commissioner of Cooch Behar was vested by the Government with the full authority of the ruler of the State, except in regard to certain special points. During the reign of Nripendra Narayan there were many reforms adopted by him and many developmental works have been taken. Two land revenue settlements have been made during this period.

When only ten months and four days old, his father died and by his dying wishes left him the sole heir of the country.

On the 6th March, 1878, Nripendra Narayan was married at Cooch Behar to Suniti Devi, daughter of the Babu Keshav Chandra Sen, the celebrated Brahma Reformer and founder of the new Dispensation church.

Nripendra Narayan completed his twenty first year on the 3rd October, 1883. The installation, however, did not take place till the 8th November, 1883. Nripendra Narayan died in 1911.

3. Maharaja Jitendra Narayan

After the death of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, his eldest son Raj Rajendra Narayan was placed in the throne in 1911 but he died only after two years in 1913. After his death the second son of Nripendra Narayan and brother of Raj Rajendra Narayan was placed on the throne in 1913. The relation with the British was not good from the very beginning. One survey and settlement was made during his time. He differs with some proposals of the British Government in respect of period of settlement. He died in 1922 in England.

4. Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan

Maharaja Jagaddipendra Narayan the eldest son of Maharaja Jitendra Narayan was proclaimed Ruler of the country on the 24.12.1922 which was subsequently recognised by the Indian Government. The Rajyavisek ceremony took place on the 10.3.1923 and a Durbar held. Maharaja received Nazars in Nurani Coins.

The last settlement operations in Cooch Behar commenced in 1912-13 and finished in 1927. During the period of this reign many improvements were made. He was the last Maharaja of Cooch Behar. On September 12, 1949 he signed the Instrument of Accession. He transferred the state to India on August 28, 1949. He died in 1970.

5. Calica Doss Dutt

Calica Doss Dutt the Dewan of Cooch Behar State for thirty years and in whose suggestions many of the reforms, both fiscal and revenue, was introduced in the administration.

Calica Doss Dutt was born on 3rd July, 1841 of a respectable family of Bengal which had settled in the village of Meral in the district of Burdwan. His father, Rai Golok Nath was much respected person. His mother died during his infancy. He was educated in Krishnanagar Collegiate School and passed in Junior Scholarship Examination from that institution in 1856 and stood first. Then he joined Presidency College and where he passed the senior Scholarship Examination in 1858. He obtained the degree of B.A. in 1860 and that of B.L. in 1861.

While he was at Catwa in 1869 his services were placed at the disposal of the Cooch Behar state, with a view to his being appointed Dewan of the State. He joined the appointment in September, 1869. During his administration the Land Revenue Settlement was twice revised and various improvements were effected in the other branches. All this has resulted in the development of the wealth of the country and its agricultural resources.

6. Colonel J. C. Haughton

The British Government resolved in assuming charge of the State during the minority of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan and deputed Colonel J. C. Haughton, Governor - General's Agent, North-East Frontier, to Cooch Behar as Commissioner in charge of the administration in the year 1864 and he continued in his post till 1873 with one and half year absence. Besides the work of administration, an important part of his duty was to see that the Young prince was properly cared for and brought up, and this he appears to have done with almost paternal care and affection for his young ward. He commenced as Commissioner of the Cooch Behar State on a salary of Rs.2,000/- per mnth. Colonel Haughton introduced some important reforms in the administration specially in Judicial, Political and Financial matters.

7. Cooch Behar Palace

The attention of the British Government was drawn to the necessity of erecting a suitable palace for the Maharaja as early as 1875, as appears from the resolution of Sir Richard Temple dated 6th July 1875, wherein he recorded the result of his visit to Cooch Behar and interview with the Ranees, who desired that a palace should be built in conformity with native ideas, meaning evidently one suitable for preservation of the traditions of the Zenana system. In 1876, Major Mant was engaged to design a palace which was to cost 6 lakhs of rupees. The design was made and approved. An architect was engaged in England, and Messrs. Geneste and Small Wood, Contractors, came to Cooch Behar and commenced brick-making. Every thing seemed to promise the early completion of the work. But it was detected that Major Mant's estimates had been based on unreliable data. Sir Ashley Eden, who succeeded Sir Richard Temple, refused to sanction the work being proceeded with according to Major Mant's plan, which he considered unsuitable to the climate and locality. Some important alterations being made in the previous plans, and Mr. E. G. Martin was appointed Consulting Engineer. He prepared a fresh plan and his plan was subsequently sanctioned. The entire building was estimated to cost seven lakhs of rupees exclusive of terracotta and ornamental work. The contract was given to Messrs. Marillier and Edwards. The palace took a long time to finish, and was completed by the end of 1887. The actual cost up to that time amounted to Rs. 8,77,203. Painting, marbelling and other decorations were subsequently done to the palace, and the total expenditure on it came up to Rs. 1,11,000 at the end of 1897-98.

8. Earthquake in Cooch Behar on June 12, 1897

The severest shock of earthquake ever known in Bengal occurred about five O'clock in the afternoon, and the town of Cooch Behar was very

considerably damaged. The shock lasted for longer than three minutes, and it was followed throughout the night by a number of threatening tremors. All buildings were more or less severally injured, roads were badly fissured, bridges were damaged, and wells and dams were completely choked up. The damaged caused to the palace and the public buildings in the town amounted to Rs.10,00,000 while private buildings suffered to the extent of about Rs. 75,000.

9. Coat of arms

It appears that the armorial bearings of Cooch Behar State have been changed 4 times since 1868 viz.in 1873, 1877, 1884 and 1902.It also appears from letter No. 10205 P, dated the 12th August, 1919 from the Bengal Government, that a proposal to alter the armorial Bearing of the State will necessiate a reference to British Government.

For the decoratin of the chamber of princes at Delhi the armorial bearing of the Ruling princes were wanted. But the Regency Council thought it desirable to introduce some alterations in the existing coat of arms so as to bring it more into conformity with the legendary/tales known in Cooch Behar about the founder of the State. In the original banner also presented by the Queen Empress to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar at the Imperial Assemblage of 1877 a tiger is shown and not a lion. So the Regency Council decided that a tiger and not a lion should be one of the supporters. This being approved a new coat of arms was made in 1929, accordingly. It cannot be said why Maharaja Nripendra Narayan changed the rampant tiger for a lion in 1889. This was perhaps because the figure of a lion appealed him more and perhaps the Legendary tales were not placed before him at the time.

The description of the coat of arms is as follows:-

[a] Two swords are placed crosswise on the shield.

[b] A tiger and an elephant are placed behind the shield as supporters.

[c] A crowned monkey with clubs in hand is made to sit at the top on a globe.

[d] Two branches and four plants are placed crosswise at the bottom.

[e] Below the swords there is a ring and over them a scale pan.

[f] A motto comes at the bottom " *जय विजय* " "

(conquest follows virtue).

9. Naraini Coins

The Naraini Coins, the currency of Cooch Behar formed the coinage of ancient Kamrup, the Kingdom of the Koch family, of which the principal branch is the Cooch Behar line of Kings. These coins were current in Assam, Bhutan and the neighbouring countries. The Naraini Coin is one of the oldest that can found in India.

The right of coinage was not acknowledged in the treaty of 1773, in consequence of a representation however, through Mr. Parling the right was formally recognised and subsequently the coinage of Naraini rupees continued until 1880 when it was discontinued by order of British Government. Maharaja Harendra Narayan made several attempts to get the right but the request was not granted. The British Government wanted to introduce the Farakkabad Coins and Company's rupees or legal tenders in Cooch Behar, but owing to strenuous

opposition from the Maharaja Harendra Narayan the scheme was not carried out till he was alive.

But the right of coinage of Naraini Coin was not denied at the time of accession of a new Maharaja for ceremonial purpose. Thus when Nripendra Narayan was raised to the Gadi 1001 silver coins and 100 gold coins were struck. The same number of silver and gold coins were also struck in 1923 when Maharaja Jagadipendra Narayan held the Darbar and received Nazar in Naraini Coins. A Calcutta firm supplied the coin.

During the period of 2nd World War there was an accurate crisis of small coins in Cooch Behar State. To overcome this problem, the State Council authorised the Cooch Behar Chamber of Commerce to circulate paper coins in the market.