

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, Juddhavars a General. A Pandit with the tile "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	32,484-13-4-0
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
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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.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- [2] Harendra Narayan Choudhuri, - The Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlements, published in the year 1903 from Cooch Behar State Press, p. 441.
- [3] H. N. Choudhury, - ibid, p. 441.
- [4] Sarat Chandra Ghoshal, - A History of Cooch Behar, translated from original Bengali, Printed at the State Press, Cooch Behar, in 1942, p. 70.
- [5] S. G. Ghoshal, - ibid, p. 70.
- [6] S. C. Ghoshal, - ibid, p. 71.
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- [8] S. C. Ghoshal, - ibid, p. 118.
- [9] Goutam Bhadra, Mughal Yugar Krishi Arthanity O Krishak, (In Bengali), Calcutta, 1983, p. 165.
- [10] Amalendu Guha, The medieval Economy of Assam in the Cambridge Economic History of India (Ed.), Tapan Roy Choudhury, Irfan Habib, Vol. 1, New Delhi, Reprinted 1984, p. 485.
- [11] Goutam Bhadra, Op. cit., p. 165.
Durgadas Majumder, West Bengal District Gazetteers, Cooch Behar, Feb. 1978, p. 33 and also see S. N. Bhattacharyya. A History of Mughal North East Frontier Policy, Calcutta, 1929, p. 310.

- [13] The letter dated the 14th August, 1800 written by the Government in the name of the Revenue Board. Also see S. C. Ghoshal, Op. cit., p. 263.
- [14] S. C. Ghoshal, ibid, p. 263.
- [15] S. C. Ghoshal, ibid, p. 264.
- [16] S. C. Ghoshal, ibid, p. 269.
- [17] S. C. Ghoshal, ibid, p. 270.
- [18] S. C. Ghoshal, ibid, p. 278.
- [19] H. N. Choudhuri, Op. cit., p. 441.
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- [21] S. C. Ghoshal, Op. cit., p. 225.
- [22] S. C. Ghoshal, Op. cit., p. 213.
- [23] Mr. Ahmuty's report to the Board of Revenue in 1798. Cooch Behar Select records, Vol. 1, p. 47, Cooch Behar, 1882.
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- [25] Annual Administration Report, 1866-67, Cooch Behar, 1867, p. 49.
- [26] Annual Administration Report, 1871-72, Cooch Behar, 1872, p. 42.
- [27] H. N. Choudhuri, Op. cit., p. 449.
- [28] Select Records, Vol. 1, p. 50.
- [29] Assistant Commissioner Mr. W.O.A.Beckett's letter No. 398, dated the 30th May, 1872, Para 20.
- [30] Report of the Dewan, Kalica Doss Dutt, No. 478, dated, Cooch Behar, 31.7.1877.
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