

Chapter - 1

Land Revenue Systems of the Jalpaiguri District

The Jalpaiguri district was consisted with two widely different tracts of country, viz, the parganas of Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram formerly included in the Rangpur district, and the Western Duars, wrested from Bhutan in 1864, and in giving an account of the land revenue administration, it is necessary to deal separately with them. ¹

Land Revenue Systems of the Duars in the Pre-Colonial Period

There was no uniform system or law in the field of land and agriculture in all over the district as a whole under the regime of any ruler. The geographical boundaries of the district have also been changed time to time. Before 1772, the area of the Western Duars was under the Royal Koch kings, but since 1765, for the weakness and conflicts of the Koch dynasty, Bhutanese occupied this area one by one gradually. As there was no alternative way to protect the kingdom, Koch Nazir Deb surrendered to the British and signed a treaty in 1773, by the provisions of the treaty Coochbehar became a tributary state of the British and the Britishers rescued the areas of Western Duars from Bhutanese, king Dhairjendra Narayan who was highjacked by the Bhutias was also rescued. During the reign of Koch kings the Baikunthapur pargana was ruled by Raikot dynasty of Jalpaiguri, the relative of Koch Kings.

Under the reign of Koch kings, there were two kinds of lands in accordance with revenue systems, namely– (1) Revenue free land and (2) revenue paying land, Revenue free lands were given some special cases to the tenures namely Brahmattor, Devottor, Pirpal, Lakheraj and Petbhata. Brahmattar lands were those which

would be given to the Brahmans for their livelihood so that they could pursue knowledge and devotion the brahmottor lands were hereditary and transferable Devottor tenure was granted for religious purpose such as worships of various idols and religious meetings or discussions, Pirpal tenure was same as Devottor but it would have been granted for the muslims, Lakheraj tenure was granted as a satisfactory service to the royal kings, Petbhata tenure was granted to the members of the royal family or relatives only for their maintenance of livelihood as for example Sishwa Singha or Sishu, step – brother of Biswa Singha got the Baikunthapur pergana as a Petbhata (revenue free)

It is found from different sources that there was huge number of revenue free tenures which were granted by the Koch Kings as a result of which the economic condition of the kingdom was going to be destroyed. Ultimately British Government interfered about this matter and Henry Douglas took over the administration of the state on behalf of the minor king. He recovered all such lands as had been illegally acquired and converted them into revenue paying holdings. To ensure regular collection, Douglas introduced the ijaradari system.²

There were five kinds of revenue paying land namely, Khalsa, Khangir, Khasbash, Sairati and Baje mahal. All lands of the Government under control were called Khalsa which was directly under control of Diwan of the state. Khangir was a demesne land of the king. Khasbash and Bajemahal were two distinct parts of the khangir. Sairati lands were those which covered by tanks.

During the time of Bhutanese rule in the western Duars, no uniform system or law was introduced in the field of land and land revenue, they, mainly, collected revenue by their officials with the help of local leaders of different communities. Out of their systematic collection of revenue, the Bhutanese attacked at any time on the people of the Duars and plundered everything and for

that aggressive attitude of the Bhutanese, the people of the Duars had been living in a intolerable and panic circumstances. Surgeon Renie wrote, "the revenue and judicial system necessarily be in a very imperfect condition."³

Western Duars was under Paro Penlop, the Governor of Western Division of Bhutan. J. C. Haughton showed the land tenures in different parts of the Duars in such way Goomah, Raphoo and Bhalka were under small Zamindar or Teshildars (petty revenue collectors) wholly under Bhutia rules, Buxa was under a Bhutia officer (Dooar Deo), the northern part of the Duars were under Mech sardars and the plain of Mainaguri was divided among the Zamindars the family of Hargoinda Katham one khurgodher Karji and the Raikot of Jalpaiguri.⁴ The officials under Bhutanese who were involved in collecting revenue and sending to Bhutan, the Royal power, can be furnished from the point of power and position in such way – soobah at the highest level. The exact powers and functions of each of these officials can not be ascertained with any degree of accuracy, but all of them were important links in the chain of tribute extraction; each was responsible for passing on the tribute to their immediate superiors.⁵ The Kathams in the Duars took a significant role in collecting revenue, though their position was under Subah. Arabinda Deb wrote, "Below the Subah there were a class of subordinate officials known as kathams. They were resident in the plains and exercised immediate control in the management of the Duars in the great majority of cases the kathams were directly appointed by the tittle – deed (sanad) of the Deb Raja, though subordinate in rank of Bhutanese administration in the plains. It seems that the appealation 'katham' was prevalent only to the west of the Gadadhar. Eastward it took the forms of 'Luskar Wuzder or Mundal.'⁶

Under the Bhutanese rule no revenue or tax was imposed on the peasants for five years in preparing the land for cultivation after clearing Jungles. But after five years revenue was imposed on them. "Grunning pointed out that after forest had been cleared and

was then assessed at area rates according to the Hal or plough, a local measure about 5 acres There was a special cess on mustard seed and local rate of Rs1 a Hal and Rs. 2 a house was levied for religious festivals.”⁷ The meches in the Duars were habituated with shifting cultivation or Jhum cultivation; particularly they cultivated cotton – plant. After few years of cultivation, they shifted into another place, settled there and cultivated the same way in a traditional manner. After long discussion Col. Rowlat and Col. Haughton imposed tax on the Meches called ‘capitation tax’ (a) Rs.2 Per year. About the taxes on the Duars Capt. Lance wrote, ”..... taxes were imposed on each ryots house on the estate. In addition they had to pay certain fixed tribute and presentation of nuzzars (presents to officials).”⁸

From the above discussions and various sources it can be said that during the period of Bhutanese rule no particular system was introduced for revenue or tax collection in addition with that there was no particular estimate of revenue or tax as most of the taxes were collected by kind instead of cash for which it was difficult to estimate the values of various things which were collected. Ashley Eden pointed out that the Duars held by the Paro Penlop are a very small portion of the whole Bengal Duars and if he receive a lakh for his portion the total revenue of the Duars must be seven lakhs. I do not think however that any real estimate can be formed of the revenue derived from the Duars,”⁹

Land Revenue Under The Permanent Settlement

Siswa Singha the step brother of Biswa Singha, the founder of Koch Dynasty got the Baikunthapur Pargana as a petbhata (expenditure for livelihood) which was revenue free holding umbrella on the head of Koch King taking the title ‘Raikat’ means head of the Fort, since then the landlord of Baikunthapur Pargana had been using the title ‘Raikat’. At the initial stage the relation between Baikunthapur and Coochbehar was good but the 12th

‘Raikat’ Darpadev retarded the relation with Coochbehar and made an alliance with Bhutan and the relation between Coochbehar and Bhutan became bitter.

After aquisition of Diwani, the English East India Company obtained Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Shaha Alam, the Mughal Emperor, since then Baikunthapur Pargana and Boda came under British East India Company by consisting with Rangpur district. The northern portion of the Baikunthapur estate contains 71 square miles of compact forest, which grows valuable sal timber. The reserved forest in the Duars extended to 505 square miles, 45 square miles of which near Buxa stand on hilly ground.¹⁰ The East India Company collected Rs. ten thousand from this pargana. There was no record by which it would be shown that the Mughals imposed any taxes or revenue on Baikunthapur Pargana. Grunning wrote, “It is not included in any sarkar or Muhammadan division of the country, having only been added to Bengal since the British assumed the government of the country.”¹¹ Raikats used to give revenue to Coochbehar Raj for the jaigirs other than Baikunthapur¹² The East India Company enhanced the revenue of Baikunthapur from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 25,000 and Rs 32,000, for which Baikunthapur was treated as “Batris hajari”. In 1777 Raikat Darpadev complained to the collector of Rangpur against the heavy revenue imposed on them and in the complain paper Darpadev mentioned himself as the “king of Batris hajari.”¹³ In 1780 a deduction of Rs. 6,238 was allowed on account of lands made over to the Bhutias and the revenue paid in that year was Rs. 25,935. On the basis of it, the Permanent Settlement was made and a treaty was concluded between Raikat and East India Company. But the Bhutan did not accede with the treaty between Company and Raikat. He (Bhutan) demanded Ambari Falakata and Jalpesh situated to the east of Teesta. As there was economic and commercial interest of the company in the Tibet through Bhutan, Ambari Falakata and Jalpesh were ceded to Bhutan by the company ignoring the consent of Baikunthapur and Coochbehar.

The land of Baikunthapur was divided into five categories namely (1) Auwal (fertile), (2) Daiyam (down land or dohla), (3) Seyam (land under town), (4) Baharam (land laying in danga), (5) Mayaji (uncultivated or patit)¹⁴ The population in Baikunthapur pargana were meagre due to economically backwardness, communicational disadvantages, unhealthy environment as it was full of jungles with ferocious animals. There was huge uncultivated land for which many unsettled cultivators cultivated their land from one place to another. So, the land revenue in Baikunthapur was not fixed amount it was seen generally that the rent of land was 4 annas to one rupees per every don (86 Bighas of land)¹⁵. W. W Hunter showed that the raiyots of Baikunthapur would not pay revenue in fixed way by measuring their lands, rather they used to pay revenue by guess measurement according to their jots.¹⁶ Grunning said about the land revenue of this pargana, "the actual rent realised from the tenants is, I understand, about $4\frac{3}{4}$ annas per don of land, good and bad, containing 12,472 square feet or about 0.86 of Calcutta bigha. The maximum rent for a farm, 20 don in extent, is said to be as follows : House and garden land, Rs. 15; first quality land, Rs. 9; third quality land, Rs. 7; fourth quality land, Rs. 4; total Rs. 47. Originally the farms were let by guess measurement or by Kaldara or "Ploughs"¹⁷

It seems that there was no uniform system in the land in precolonial period. Revenue was assessed by assumed basis or guess measurement. Grunning said, "..... a farm was estimated to contain as much as could be cultivated by a certain number of ploughs, and paid a fixed sum for each, a custom which once probably extended all over Kamrup."¹⁸ There was no proper settlement in the pargana. Land was also assessed by guess measurement like jot, gaon, bish, don, kali. One don is equal to 20 kali or 86 bigha, bish is equal to 20 don, 1 gaon is equal to 16 bish, 1 hal is equal to 15 bigha.¹⁹ About the year 1788 land measure was first introduced. The whole estate is divided into fifteen taluks, and the establishment is a very moderate one.²⁰ A record of right was

prepared under chapter x of Bengal Tenancy Act. In the course of that proceedings, The area of each tenancy ,the facts of its possession and the status of the tenant were determined. Jagadindra Dev Raikat in his article “Raikat Bangsha O Tahader Rajwer Sankhipta Parichay” divided the tenants in such a way (1) Zamindar, (2) Jotdar, (3) Mulander or Chukanidar and (4) Proja or Ryot.²¹ But, according to Grunning the tenants in these estates are divided into tenants in chief (jotdars), sub-tenants (chukanidars, dar chukanidars and dar-a-dar chukanidars) and holders under the Metayer system (adihiars). The jotdars are tenants holding immediately under the zamindars; a large number of them rank as tenure holders and others as raiyots under the provisions of Bengal Tenancy Act.²²

Chukanidars, dar- chukanidars and dar-a-dar chukanidars all were middle ranking tenure holders in the agrarian economy in this tract. Chukanidars had a right of occupancy and could transfer their lands by sale or gift.²³ But here is a question avoided by grunning that the chukanidars or mulanders were not proprietors of the land, they were under jotdars, and jotdars were under zaminders, then how could they (chukanidars or mulanders) sell their land?

The dar- chukanidars hold their land in the same way under the chukanidars and the dar-a-dar chukanidars under the dar chukanidars. Most of these inferior tenants had acquired a right of occupancy under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act.

The most victimised tenants in the agrarian economy were adhiars or projas who had no proprietorship or occupancy right on land. They only cultivated their lands, without any right under a jotdar, chukanidar or derivative chukanidar, but whatever the designation or status of the adhiars immediate superior may be , he is known as ‘Giri’. The adhiars had to pay half of the produce in the land to their ‘Giris’, not only that they had to pay more from

their share called 'abwab' and instead of advance of seed or cash supplied at the time of cultivation. The pauperous condition of the adhiars or projas will discuss later in the next chapter.

Like Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram were also under Permanent Settlement since 1793 and settled permanently with the zamindars regarding land revenue purposes. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton (1809) gave an account with regard to land revenue and agrarian systems of Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram. According to him "Patgram estate, which comprises the police division of the same name, is the property of the Coochbehar Raja, contains 62 mouzas or collections of villages. More than half the estate is let to large farmers, some of whom hold under leases called Upanchaki, which are granted for a certain specified farm and not according to a particular area, so that their rent can not be increased not their lands measured There are 30 jotdars who pay their rents directly into the office of the Raja's collector; these are called Kharji jotdars. The others who pay their rents to the village officers, are called dihibandi. The large farmers let out to under tenants as much land as suffices to pay their rent and cultivate the remainder through projas, on the usual sharing of tenure"²⁴

About the land and land revenue systems of Boda Dr. Hamilton pointed out that Boda was a very fine estate also belonging to the Coochbehar Raja. It contains 402 mouzas or dihis besides 27 large kharij farms, such as he had mentioned in the collector's papers; but it was said that a very large part has been granted rent free by the Raja, both to religious persons and to his servants. The whole estate was divided into Taluks and these again into mahals, each of which was originally farm.²⁵ In every taluk there two to five tahutdars, who were wealthy farmers appointed by the Raja according to the wishes of the other tenants. The lands were not measured at the time of settlement of the Raja's estate, the tenants being very averse to such a course as might naturally be expected, for the rent which they paid very small. The leases

specified neither the term of years for which the holdings were let nor the measurement of the farm, but only the rent stipulated to be paid for the farm. If any tenant would go away, the others paid the rent until they could procure a new tenant, or else they divided the land among themselves. Dr. Hamilton again wrote, "In some taluks no tahudars could be found, and these were managed by gomastas, or agents, each with a large establishment... The tahudars, who were men of property and who ought to pay their whole rent into the Raja's office, made delays, so that six tahsildars or stewards are required to refresh their memories. The twenty seven original large farms, which are not dependent on the tahudars, but which, if undivided, would have paid their rents immediately into the Raja's office, have now subdivided into so many small shares, that a whole host of subordinate is required to manage them. In fact the Raja's interests in these estate seem to have been very much neglected".²⁶

It can be said from the above information that the permanently settled areas of the district, Jalpaiguri, Baikunthapur pargana, parganas of Boda and patgram formerly under Coochbehar state and then Rangpur district, had no uniform system in the land, varying from different places, somewhere zamindars were the proprietors of the land and paid revenue directly through the officers of the Raja, somewhere land was let to the tenants. Moreover there were large amount of land which were revenue free. According to the survey and settlement operations of 1906-16, there were 122 revenue paying estates and 212 revenue - free estates in the permanent- settled portions of Jalpaiguri district. . So the state was deprived economically failing to have revenue from a large portion of revenue-free lands.

In the permanently settled portion of the district namely Baikunthapur, Boda and Patgram the zamindari system was there and there were two large and some small zamindari estates. Zamindars were the proprietors of the lands who enjoyed heritable

rights and rights of transfer by gifts and sale including parcelling out land for rent. Revenue payable by them were fixed except for cesses and other levies on them by executive orders and under the provisions of relevant acts ²⁷

It is mentioned in the Government record, "In the permanently settled parganas the system of land tenure is in itself simple, but it does not adapt itself very readily to the tenancy Act and difficult questions of status arose. There are few patni taluks and rent free tenures, but the great taluks and rent free tenures, but the great bulk of the land is held by jotdars, most of whom have sublet to at least a part of their land to chukanidars on exactly the same terms as those on which they themselves hold under the proprietor and the zamaindar to produce paying tenants called in this district "adhiars" long course of custom had entirely ceased to differentiate between those jotes which had originally been taken up sometimes by non-residents with the idea of establishing tenants, and those held by the descendents of genuine cultivators."²⁸

The zamindars used to give land to the jotdars on lease or agreement to obtain surplus of the production. The jotdars were a class of intermediaries between the zamindars and the cultivators as well as they were the first degree pattaniders who else where in Bengal known as talukdars. While proceeding of settlement, the indifference to the existence of any legal distinction rapidly disappeared and the jotdar as a class boldly demanded to be recorded them as raiyots. They all claimed mokorrari rights and section 50 of the tenancy act which was their main stand by had been held not to apply to tenures partitioned subsequent to the permanent settlement.

About the rights of jotdars it is referred "Those jotdars whose residence was within the tenancy and who had in their own possession at least one third of arable land and those jotdars, whose

homestead was outside the boundaries of the tenancy but who had at least half the arable land in their own possession were recorded as raiyots. Land held by adhiars was not considered to be in khas possession. The remaining jotes were either recorded as permanent tenures or as tenures for fixed number of year according to the terms of the documents creating them. The claims of transferability without the landlord's consent was decided against all classes of tenants except those recorded as permanent tenure holders.²⁹

Under the provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act they became raiyots who could not be evicted at will. The rents paid by them became fixed and they came to enjoy rights of inheritance and transfer of land.³⁰ The jotdars, most of their land used to give to the chukanidars or mulandars. The chukanidars or mulandars also used to parcel out their land to the Dar- chukanidars and Dar- chukanidars again, in their turn, gave portions of their holding in further pattani to Dar- a- darchukanidars.³¹

At the bottom of the agrarian structure in this tract and elsewhere in Bengal were adhiars or projas who were most sufferer and victimised. About the condition of adhiars or projas including new agrarian classes emerging the colonial period became aggravated gradually. We have been saying since the inception of Grambarta that the permanent settlement between zamindars and raiyots should have been implemented like the permanent settlement between Government and the raiyots, then all problems will be solved, the relation of hostility between zamindars and raiyots will be left out. Without implementation of this system the trouble of the raiyots will not be removed whatever laws are to be implemented by the Government.³²

The Following table shows the classification of raiyots and average rent³³ :

	Area in acres	Average rent		
		Rs.	A	P
Rent paying, fixed	68867	0	11	0
Ditto enhanceable	392159	1	2	7
Rent Free	15623	--	--	--
Raiyot at fixed rents	12795	1	2	11
Settled raiyats on cash rents	366565	2	4	11
Ditto on produce rents	14135	2	14	1
Ditto ditto on produce rents	2833	--	--	--
Rent Free	3402	--	--	--
Under raiyots, cash paying	58617	3	9	0
Ditto produce paying	9937	--	--	--

Waste Land in the Duars

A debate regarding definition nature and classification of waste land has been going on all over the world among the scholars. Simply, land founded in empty or scanty population and unused or uncultivated were treated as waste land. The Students English Dictionary defines waste land as the tract of land not in cultivation, profitless. The term was very frequently used by the old writers simply to indicate the little used common land, usually on light less fertile soils which failed to yield a return to the cultivators. This definition is not acceptable in the changing scenario of modern science and technology, because the productive potential of land increases with improvement in technology. Besides, because of its heavy bias on economies, it neglects ecological consideration. Thus, any land which is giving proper economic returns, but is an ecological hazard shall not be counted as a Waste land.³⁴

Prof. A. B. Mukherjee remarked in the presidential address in the Proceedings of the National Seminar on Utilisation of Waste lands for Sustainable Development in India at Balrampur in 1987 that much of the land recorded as Waste lands in revenue records. He also pointed out that Waste lands were practically a part of some feudal extension. It is the socially and politically dominant castes and classes that decide in the villages as to which land be declared as waste land so that their vested interests could be served. Giving example of 'Bir' lands of Punjab and Haryana, he observed these lands were mainly located in the areas which were under the control of Royal families.³⁵

It is true that the uncultivated lands, forests, deserts, mountains all were under Government control. A huge number of lands were uncultivated and without inhabitants in the pre-colonial period. In the Mughal period revenues were collected in various

ways - sometimes it was collected directly by official staff of the Mughals, sometimes it was collected indirectly by the intermediaries from Khalisa land, in addition with these revenue was collected by mansabdars who obtained jagirs for their livelihood instead of monthly salary, other than these there were chieftains or local Rajas who lived in deep jungles autonomously and collected revenue from the peasants under his possession. Sometimes these autonomous Rajas gave revenue to the Mughal Kings, sometimes they did not give, actually they played a role of intermediaries of the Mughal state. Very often, a substantial part of the peshkash (tribute) that many of the autonomous chiefs sent to the emperors consisted either of forest produce or pastoral products which implies the harnessing of grazing land. Despite their inability to exercise direct economic control over these areas of mixed (agrarian, pastoral, forest) economics, the Mughals were thus able to extract from them, over irregular periods, a small portion of their wealth in the form of peshkash.³⁶

Besides autonomous chieftains or Rajas in the Mughal state there were also to be found tribal chieftains that had accepted Mughal suzerainty or even been incorporated into its military structure, side by side there were more fiercely autarchic tribes which probably lay even further from the Mughal 'system' - as it has come to be understood by scholars. Many such tribes were, from time to time to be found in conflict with Mughal authority and had established a reputation as 'Thieves' and 'plunders' of the king's territories.³⁷

After annexation of the Duars with British India in 1865 with the treaty of 'Sinchula' after 2nd Anglo-Bhutanese War, they found the Duars with full of natural resources, full of jungles, scanty people, only few people namely, Mech, Totos, Drucpas and Garos lived there. So, the Government declared the land of the Duars as Wasteland and all property went under Government control by the Bhutan-Duars Act, 1869.

The Western Dooars is a flat alluvial strip of country, averaging about 22 miles in width running along the foot of the Bhutan Himalayas. The North edge of this narrow tract is, however, hilly in certain places, specially in the immediate neighbourhood of the military outpost of Buxa. This portion of the Subdivision is being gradually opened out by tea-planters and has so far given prominence to the Western Dooars. This hilly tract is inhabited by the Bhutias and other Non-aryan tribes and is agriculturally very poor.³⁸

The lands in the Duars were divided into three categories - (1) Lands for Tea cultivation, (2) Lands for agriculture and (3) Lands for Reserve forest. After survey and settlement works gradually held on, lands were given to the jotdars by agreement or lease, lands were also given to the proprietors of Tea garden for tea-cultivation, as a result number of tea-garden increased day by day, the number of jotdars growing up, they took the lands by agreement and gave 'pattani to the middle ranking tenure holders. The people of different types, castes and classes immigrated into the Duars from neighbouring Coochbehar, Rangpur, Behar and Nepal as a result the demand of land increased land revenue was imposed to every section of the people which was increased gradually, traditional socio-economic and cultural condition started to be collapsed.

According to K. M. Chauhan, the concept of Waste lands is a fallacy and in reality there is nothing like Waste land as every part and parcel of earth's surface is serving man and that in order to understand the concept of Waste land correctly it is required to evaluate the biomass and biological productivity of any region with an ecological eye.. Prof. Mukherjee did not agree that desert or snow covered peaks were Waste lands. Right from the ancient times, there were Waste lands, there were grass lands and estates which had a function to perform.³⁹

Actually, no land would be waste land or worthless on the face of the earth if we can utilize them in the modern way using scientific method of modern technology. If we go through in the past of the history, even to day, we can follow that the people of different tribes lived in the deep jungle, keeping them out of civilized society or culture they subsisted depending on jungle doing jhum cultivation and hunting. It is followed in desert and mountain also. Actually there was a politics, imperialism behind the declaration of waste land to occupy all the lands and natural resources refusing the authority of the community on the jungles, deserts, mountains or any kind of waste land. So, Prof. Misra pointed out that no land can be a waste land if natural principles of land-use are adopted and land resources are treated as trust property to be equitably accessible to all is conformity with their basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, education, health and security at an increasingly higher levels in quality. In fact, no natural resource should be treated as private property. It should not be owned by individuals. It should belong to the community as a whole.⁴⁰

Land Revenue in the Duars

After possession of the Duars in 1865 by the treaty of 'Sinchula' after the second Anglo-Bhutan War, the Britishers cast their commercial eyes on the whole areas of Duars, because it was full of natural resources and somewhere the soil was appropriate for tea-cultivation and somewhere it was appropriate for agrarian purpose. B.C. Basu, Esq. Assistant to the Director of the Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal wrote to the Director of the Dept. of Land Records and Agriculture, Bengal –

“In its physical aspects the Western Dooars, exclusively the hilly tract, may be distinguished into two belts of country, running east and West Parallel to the hills. The first of these stretches along the base of the hills and is popularly spoken as the Terai. It may be described as a natural sal forest, interspersed with a few sisu, khayer, magnolias palas and various other less characteristic jungle-trees.⁴¹

He also added – “It is the lower belt of country that we are agriculturally concerned. A quarter of a century ago, when the Dooars was annexed there must have been very little of regular cultivation, Since, however a steady tide of immigration from the neighboring districts of Rangpur and Coochbehar has set in.... The Western portion of the subdivision seems to be better cultivated, but as we proceed eastward the quantity of cultivated land gets smaller and villages fewer and smaller in size. The census 1881 returned the density of the population of the western Dooars at only 69 souls per square mile which about one-tenth of the average density of population of the districts of the presidency Division.⁴² So, the Government realized the importance of land and resources of the Duars and thought to start survey and settlement works initially to have been gained economically.

It is mentioned in the Government Report, “As regards the survey procedure should be as follows⁴³

- (a) Fields permanently cultivated should be separately surveyed, plotted and recorded.
- (b) The boundary of each village should be surveyed and connected to topographically with fixed marks or with the nearest surveyed village .
- (c) In side the villages, the blocks within which Jhuming is regularly practised as well as the uncultivable blocks and the Govt. forest whether reserved or protected, should be indicated on the Map. The area of such blocks need not always be measured but their boundaries should be marked and surveyed and plotted
- (d) Where a tenants has received permission to cultivate a separate block of hill side on the jhuming system, such block shall be separately measured, plotted and recorded.

The first British settlement was made by Mr. W. O. A. Becket, Deputy Commissioner, in 1871, after a detailed measurement and classification of all cultivated land and of such waste land as the jotdars desired to include in their holdings area rates were fixed as follows :⁴⁴

Description of land	Rent per acre in North Mainaguri			Rent per acre in the rest of the Duars		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Homestead and Rupit	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	1	6	0	1	6

Altogether 142,127 acres waste and 80,398 acres of jot-lands were settled with the jotdars at a revenue of Rs. 86,330 against Rs. 39, 526, the revenue previously paid to Government.

The period of first settlement was extended for two years for South Mainaguri, which had been formed to the Raja of Baikunthapur and which was, on the expiry of the farming lease, brought under settlement which took effect from 1st April, 1876, resulted in raising the revenue of South Mainaguri from Rs. 42,706 to Rs. 65,133.

The following rates were adopted⁴⁵ :

	Rs.	A.	P.
Homestead	2	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0
Farinagati	1	2	0
Waste	0	3	0

Not only South Mainaguri but also in the other parts of the Dooars, the revenue was increased after the first settlement as follows :⁴⁶

Name of ryot	Land held (acres)	Amount of rent Formerly paid			Total land revenue to the Govt. paid after the first settlement		
		Rs.	A	P	Rs.	A	P
JuglooDoss	93.1	7	0	0	109	11	4
JuglooDoss	117.1	35	0	0	162	12	4
Jhaproo Doss	48.10	7	0	0	55	1	0
Jowal Mundul	31.8	12	0	0	47	2	7
Shooltan Doss	24.1	12	0	0	35	2	3

The Government was not satisfied with the work of first settlement and the rate of land revenue by Becket. In paragraph 6 of the letter No. 5109, dated 4th December 1872 of Government of Bengal, Revenue Department pointed out several important

omissions in Mr. Becket's settlement, and subsequently condemned it on the ground that his survey was inaccurate, that insufficient enquiry was made into the ownership of the jotdar's tenure and for other reasons.

As the Government was discontented about the Beckett's settlement, a resurvey and resettlement of the parganas Ambari Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri, Moraghat, Lakhipur, West Madari, East Madari, Chakwakheta, Buxa, Bhatibari and Bhalka were ordered by Government under the supervision of Lord Ulick Brown, Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division. To solve the problem about the rates of revenue in different parganas Brown recommended the adoption of the South Maynaguri rates in parganas Ambair Falakata, North Maynaguri and Chengmari with the old North Maynaguri rates in Lakhipur and West Madari and the rest of the Duars rates in East Madari and Chakwakheta those rates are being :-⁴⁷

Discription of Land	South Mynaguri Rates			North Mynaguri Rates			Rest of the Duars Rates		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Basti	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Doba	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	6

From the above table, it is found that the rate of land revenue of south Maynaguri was high than the other parts of the Dooars as it (South Maynaguri) was agriculturally developed. It is mentioned in the book of S. Roy. "But what were the factors which turned the issue decisively in favour of the jotdars from the beginning of the

first survey and settlement operations. The most important was obviously was the example of this class in the chaklajot estates and the agriculturally developed parts of the Dooars such as South Maynaguri.”⁴⁸

According to Lord Ulick Brown, the rates were fair and it would be generally accepted by the jotdars. The Board of Revenue reported to the Government vide letter No. 211A. dated 25th March 1878 recommending that the rates suggested by the commissioner may be adopted, but at the same time reserving to themselves the right of reconsidering them after wards, if necessary.

The Government of Bengal in Revenue Department Letter No. 286T, dated 5th June 1879, sanctioned the South Mynaguri rates for parganas Ambari Falakata, Chengmari, North Mynaguri, and Moraghat, as recommended by the commission and the Board of Revenue, and slightly modified rates from those proposed by them for the remaining parganas.

The scale of rates which was adopted under the above orders was as follows⁴⁹ :

Discription of Land	In ambari Falakata Chengmari, North Maynaguri and Moraghat			In Lakshipur and West Madari			East Madari Chokwakhetsi and Bhalka		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
Basti	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Garden	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Doba	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	4	0	1	2	0

Foringats	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	9	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0

The result of the settlement was as follows⁵⁰ :

(1) <u>Rental</u>		<u>Rs.</u>
Former rental	-	88618
New rental	-	151862
Increase	-	63246

(2) <u>Area</u>		<u>Acres</u>
Total area surveyed	-	119322

<u>Assessed area -</u>		<u>Acres</u>
(a) Softled	-	217294
(b) Under arable land		
Lease rules	-	47386
(c) Under tea lease rules	-	<u>19607</u>
		287287

<u>Unassessed area</u>		
Culturable Waste	-	288006
Reserved Forest	-	267220
Rent free	-	<u>272937</u>
		835035

(3) <u>Tenures</u>		<u>No.</u>	<u>Land in Acres</u>
Jotdars	-	3440	217294
Chukanidars	-	4027	67673
Dar-Chukanidars	-	901	6661
Dar-dar chukanidars	-	44	291

Lt. Col. H. Boilean Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri wrote to the Commissioner of Rajshahi division, "I would no briefly remark on the causes of collection of rents being so much in arrear this year. For the year 1887, 1888, 1889, the collection were

good; but during the early part of this year a very large number of people from Mainaguri attended on pilgrimage at the Ardhadoy Yog held at Nuddia , Hooghly & e. They spent all the spare money and move and returned in a impoverish state.

Also on their return cholera of a virulent type broke out all over the tahshil and in the Dooars generally it spread rapidly and raged for nearly four months. Few families escaped without deaths of one or more members.”⁵¹

Lord Ulick Brown, the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner Colonel Morton informed to the Board of Revenue that the jotdars were unable to pay the Government Revenue and to recover the revenue jotdars sold their lands. In this circumstance it became necessary to make a reduction of the assessment and the reduction sanctioned to Rs. 17800 in 1295 jotes.

The 3rd settlement, known as Sunder's settlement, was made in 1889-95 for a period of fifteen years in four tahsils of the Western Duars and for ten years in Ambari Falakata taking subsequent alterations in order that the term of settlement should expire in all cases on March 31st, 1908.⁵² As the previous settlement by Lord Ulick Brown had to expire at the end of March 1890, a resurvey and settlement was ordered by the Government of India in its letter No. 70IR - 149 d2, dated 27th September, 1888.

Mr. Lowis, the then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, submitted a report in his letter No. 352 Ret. Dated October 1888, in which he briefly informed the Government (1) of the various classes of tenants found in the Duars, namely jotdars, Chukanidars, Dar-chukanidars and adhiars; (2) of some of the mistakes which had been made with regard to assessment in last settlement and (3) how the settlement which has just been concluded should be carried out.⁵³ Mr. Lowis recommendations were supported with slight revision by the Director of the Department of Land Records

and Agriculture, Bengal in his letter No. 833 T.A., dated 20th December 1888.

Mr. Finucane, the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture reserved his opinion on the question of (1) rates, (2) markets (3) the limitation of new jotes to 20 acres blocks and (4) to marking off certain lands for village commons. Mr. Finucane recommended to recruit a junior civilian as a settlement officer. In accordance with the recommendation Mr. E. Walsh, C.S., was appointed as a settlement officer on 13th February, 1889. But due to unhealthiness of the climate Mr. Walsh became ill and ultimately, he was compelled to retire from the post and Babu Chunder Kanta Ganguli was given the charge of the work as an assistant officer upto 20th January 1890, when Mr. Sunder was appointed as a settlement officer. The settlement was conducted under the provisions of the Bhutan Duars Act. XVI of 1869. In accordance with the notification dated 17th March 1892 of the Revenue Dept., Government of Bengal, Mr. Sunder was empowered to exercise jurisdiction under the section 2 and 3 of the Bhutan Duars Act. XVI of 1869 and under the schedule of rules attached to that Act with effect from the date of appointment of Mr. Sunder as settlement officer.

Regarding the rates of land revenue in the Duars, Sunder tried to follow Lord Ulick Brown, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, who had a full knowledge of the Duars and wrote in his letter *No. 24 Ret, dated 15th April 1870*, to the Board of Revenue as follows - "A thoroughly satisfactory settlement throughout the Duars could, in fact, only be effected by making a separate arrangement with each individual jotdar according to the particular circumstances of his jote." According to Mr. Sunder this was the only correct method of making a settlement which would be acceptable to the jotdar. So, he asked for permission to assess the jotes in three classes according to situation with respect to proximity to markets, roads & c.⁵⁴

The recommendations made by Mr. Sunder were supported by Finucane with slight revision and Government wrote in Revenue Department Letter No. 353T. - R., dated October 1890 as follows :⁵⁵

"The Lieutenant Government accepts the classification of land and the rates for the various classes, recommended by you, as noted on the margin, and sanctions your proposals (a) that these rates be applied to jotes, and that, where necessary, the lands of individual jotes be divided into first and second class and assessed at the soil class rates ; (b) that the fact of the jotdar's revenue being increased be not of itself sufficient, or any reason for enhancement of the rents now paid by Chukanidar, but that if the jotdars can show legal reason for enhancement of the rents of their chukanidars, they be allowed to institute suits for such enhancement either at the time of settlement or afterwards ; (c) that the rents of chukanidars and dar-chukanidars as now ascertained and recorded continue unchanged until they are altered by a decree of competent court." ⁵⁶

	Present Rate		Proposed Rate		
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	
Rupit-					In exceptional cases which should be the subject of special report, Rs. 2 for the best lands and the existing or a lower rate for the worst lands.
First Class			1	12	
Second Class	1	3	1	9	
Foringati -					In exceptional cases which should be the
First Class	1	2	1	6	

Second Class			1	3	subject of special report, Rs. 1.8 for best, and present of lower rates for worst lands.
Homusted	2	0	1	9	
Bamboo	2	0	2	0	
Betelnut Garden	2	0	2	12	
Dolas	1	6	1 1	12 9	According to class of land.
Waste	0	3	0	3	

The Lieutenant Governor visited Jalpaiguri on 3rd April 1891 and suggested for the rates of Rs. 2 per acre for homestead land, and Rs. 2-12 for bamboo and betel nut gardens should be abandoned, and that a separate class, to be called basti which was to include homestead, bamboo and betel nut garden, should be adopted, and charged for at Rs. 3 per acre which was sanctioned by telegram in April, 1891.

After completion of 3rd settlement by Mr. Sunder, created 9971 jotes covering 384895.91 acres in the Duars of which these 7228 jotes were of last settlement and 2743 jotes were by this settlement. The average area of a jote was 38.6 acres. The average number of jotdars per jote was 2.37. The area of the largest jote was 2608.94 acres, and that of the smallest jote was 0.06 acre. There were 21724 resident jotdars and 1615 non-resident jotdars, most of whom were pleaders, mookhtars, and kyan traders and money lenders immigrated from Coochbehar, Rangpur, Monghyr, Dacca, Nadia and other district of Bengal.⁵⁷

P. Nolan, Esq. Commissioner of Rajshahi Divission wrote to the Secretary to the Govt. of Gengal, Revenue Department.

“I have the honour to forward of Mr. Renny’s letter No. 615 G. dated the 14th June, 1894 submitting proposals to carry out the provision of the arable Wasteland Reclamation Rules after the Completion of the Western Duars Settlement operations, and to state that. I support the proposal therein made. It is quite true that the new settlement has increased the amount of the routine work to be done raising the number of jote from 6953 to 9976 and the revenue from Rs. 233999 to Rs. 370316.”⁵⁸

The revenue is paid by two kists or instalments, namely 10 anna kist on 15th February and 6 anna kist on 31st October. The amount payable for each pargana at each of those kists is shown in the statement given below⁵⁹:-

Name & Tahsil	Name of Parganas	Demand according to present settlement		
		Six – anna Kist	Ten – anna Kist	Total
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Maynaguri	Chengmari	23258	38819	62077
	North	10204	17072	27276
	Maynagury	44860	74888	119748
	South Ditto			
	Total	78322	130779	209101
Falakata	Moraghat	29785	49310	79095
	West Madari	7991	13277	21268
	Lakhipur	5223	8702	13925
	Total	42999	71289	114288
Alipur	Bhatibari	5271	8768	14039
	Chakwakheta	1966	3081	4947
	Boxa	2706	4540	7246
	East Madiri	1654	2755	4409
	Total	11497	19144	30641
Bhalka	Bhalka	3802	6368	10170

Siliguri	Ambari Falakata	4011	6690	10701
	Grand Total	140631	234270	374901

In the South Maynaguri some jotes were found of which the revenue paid to the Bhutias to be more than the revenue which was obtained in the former settlement at the rates. The Bhutia revenue was again found to be more than the revenue at area rates in the present settlement. Under orders of the commissioner's letter No. 624 Ret, dated 29th July 1892, no reduction has been allowed, the Bhutia revenue being considered as fair.

There were 44 unassessed jotes up to the time of Sunder's settlement in the pargana of South Maynaguri which were devoted to the up-keep of the Jalpesh temple. Under the orders of Government, Revenue Department, No. 494 L.R., dated 17th April, 1891. Those jotes have been resumed and assessed to revenue, amounting to Rs. 2465 to the Jalpesh Temple Committee which uses the money for the purposes of the Temple.⁶⁰

Colonel (then Major) Hedayat Ali obtained a rent-free lease of twenty Taluks for five years in Feb, 1866 with a promise that all lands so brought under cultivations for his great achievement in 2nd Anglo-Bhutan War in favour of the British Army. This lease was cancelled later on, as were also several other leases. In May, 1868, Hedayat Ali obtained a lease of the whole of the unoccupied or waste lands in the possession of Government raiyots. The terms and conditions of the lease made with Hedayat Ali were modified in 1871 and again in 1876. In 1883 settlement of 46754 acres of land including waste in Parganas West Madari, Moraghat and Lakhipur of the Falakata tahashil was made with his heirs on the following conditions: "That all the cleared and cultivated lands shall now be settled with the heirs of the grantee at half rates for 39 years, and that the uncleaned and waste shall remain with them for seven years longer free of revenue." The leases failed to fulfill the

conditions as to reclamation and, at Mr. Sunder's settlement, 19191 acres of waste land were resumed, the remaining 22563 acres being settled with them at half rates. The present revenue of the estate is Rs. 7897.⁶¹

Rai Upendra Nath Duarder was granted 2000 acres of arable land rent free in perpetuity and certain other lands rent-free for life in Alipurduar tahashil as a reward for his services to the Government at the time of Bhutan Campaign. Upendra Nath Duarder sold his land which was obtained rent free in perpetuity for Rs. 20000 before his death. After the death of Duarder, the Government of India, Revenue and Agricultural Dept. ordered on the 18th December, 1890 that the land which had been granted rent-free for life should be allowed to the family of the Duarder at one-fourth rates for a period of 15 years from the date of the Duarder decease. The sum of Rs. 477 will have to be paid to Government in future by the sons of the Duarder, to whom lease for the land has been issued.

The following statement shows what the revenue was before Sunders settlement and after Sunders settlement :-⁶²

Discription of Land	Revenue payable according to last settlement	Revenue payable according to Sunder's settlement	Increase
From old jotes settled before sender's settlement	229104	317890	88786
From new jotes created by sunders settlement	--	46198	46198
Lands under Jalpesh	--	2465	2465

Temple			
Land obtained by colonel Hadayat Ali	4895	7897	3002
Land granted to Rai Upendra North Duardev.	--	451	451
Total -	233999	374901	140902

From the above table it is found that the revenue increased at the time of Sunder's settlement and the increasing was a contious process since the first settlement in 1871. If any jotdar became failure to pay revenue in the scheduled dates of the year, his jote would have been sold by the procedure of the Government. E. E Lewis Esq, Commissioner of the Rajshahi division wrote to the Secretery to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department , "The point in which his wishes to have report in whether the sale notice, which are at present issued with an earliar date, so to bring the collections within the financial year. The present practice appear to be this. The sale of jote in arrear is commenced at the tahshil office on the 16th ; the names of bidders who present themselves there on the occasion one written with the bids made by them on a lathbandi paper attached to the sale record, which is sent to the head quarters and instructors are given at the same time to the intending purchases by the tahshildars to appear before the Deputy Commissioner at Jalpaiguri on the 20th when the sale is financially knocked down.⁶³ He also pointed out, "On the 20th the defaulting jote is again put up for sale at Jalpaiguri in presence of the bidders who were present at the tahshil office, as well as those present at quarter. Here the sale commences again from the highest bid obtained at the tahshil office and an indeavour is made to get the jote sold at a still higher bid than that obtained previously. In the event of no higher bid being obtained, the sale is finally concluded with the highest bidder at the tahshil office. It is reported that this procedure a good price is often secured and

malpractices are checked.⁶⁴ Besides land revenue, various kind of revenue were collected from different sources in the Duars. Capitation tax was collected annually from Meches, Nepalese and Garos who were nomadic cultivators. The rates of capitation tax were sanctioned by the Government, Revenue Department, letter No. 1744 L.R., dated 10th April, 1893. The rates were for each adult male of Meches or Nepalese Rs. 4 a year and for each adult Garo or Bhutia was Rs. 3 a year.⁶⁵

Goalas and the others have to pay a tax at the following rates for grazing cattle on Government khas lands.

For each buffalo	-	8 annas a year
For each cow	-	4 annas a year
For each goat or sheep	-	2 annas a year

The totos of totopara of Jalpaiguri have to pay Rs. 105 annually for their orange grove.

The revenue for cutting or selling trees have been fixed by the Deputy Commissioner which was 25 percent less than the forest Dept.

Thatching grass taken from khas lands was paid for one piece per coolly-load.

Collecting pipli in khas lands and fishing in khas streams was settled annually by auction at the tahsildar with the highest bidder. Revenue was also collected from khus khus, ruber and lae.

From the above informations it can be said that no one was exempted from paying revenue or rent to the Government, as a result of which different tribal people including local people of other communities of the Duars lost their right in the natural resources of the forest. The meches, Garos etc. who were

habituated with shifting cultivation, lost their right and were bound to settle in a particular place, many of whom left the place and went towards east which is shown in the next chapter.

After completion of the 3rd settlement, the authority relating to the land and land revenue tried to change the rules and regulations of the land revenue and give a systematic process so that Government could have land revenue regularly and maintain every thing in a process of regularise. They tried to keep record of lands in the record rooms. P. Nolan, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division reported--

“At the conference held on 18th March, 1893, it was agreed that alterations on the external boundaries of jots caused by alluvion, delluvion, resumptions for roads or otherwise should be noted from year to year and that changes by the reclamation of adjoining waste land should be generally recorded by constituting the new tillage into a separate jote. The Lt. Governor in a note 29th April, 1893 observes that there is no great advantage in this, and the amins to be kept for the purpose may be struck out of the estimate.⁶⁶

In the opinion of P. Nolan the work of registering alterations in jot boundaries might be minimised, but could not be altogether neglected. Under the conditions of the pattah, they were bound to grant remissions on account of land taken for public purposes and measurement is a necessary preliminary to remission.

Again P. Nolan reported, “The alternative is given to the jotdar when a great proportion of his land is washed away, loss to Govt. when alluvion takes place. And large reclamations beyond jot boundaries are well worth assessing immediately, though I am quite in favour of being easy when the encroachment is trifling.

We decided not to record mutation of chukanidars and adhiars to save expenses. The Lt. Governor desires to have intered

changes among those chukanidars who are permanent lease holders.⁶⁷

After completion of 3rd settlement, the survey and settlement work in the District had not been completed earstwhile. So another settlement was necessary, that was 4th settlement started in the cold weather of 1907 and completed in 1916 by J.A. Milligan. This settlement recorded a big change vis-à-vis the settlement of 1889-95.⁶⁸ A large portion of land in the east of the Torsa river was unsettled called waste land of forest.

The 4th settlement conducted by Milligan was primarily undertaken for the purpose of reassessing, the Western Duars where the current leases were on the point of expiring and then the creation of new jotes by this current settlement.

Mr. Sunder assessed 3926 mal jotes at Rs. 209101⁶⁹. But Milligan found only 3893 mal jotes remaining together, with 260 jotes created under the Arable Waste Land Rules. The demand from those 4153 jotes before reassessment was Rs. 200437. After 4th settlement the demand was Rs. 251724 from the new rates.

Regarding classification of land slight difference had been followed with Mr. Sunder. Sunder classified lands into Basti (Homestead, garden, orchard and bamboos), Rupit or Doba (low land), Faringati/High land), Waste, markets etc. But Mr. Milligan classified in such way (1) Basti, (2) Dohla - low-laying arable land. In the backward parganas it was again subdivided into Dohla-I (selected tracts of specially good paddy land) and Dohla-II (ordinary low arable lands), (3) Danga - High arable land, corresponding to Mr. Sunder's Faringati. This was again subdivided through the Duars into Danga-I - Cropped or current fallow. Danga-II - arable but not in cultivation, (4) Shohuri - This type of lands was considered as midway between Danga and Dohla growing much winter as well as summer rice, and also the back of

the jute crope, (5) Doba - Lands which permanently under water, pits used for steeping jute and other non-arable depressions, (6) Patit - Land unfit from natural causes to bear a crop at the time of making settlement, (7) Unassessable - Lands include public roads and other lands falling within the peripheri of a jote but not covered by the terms of the Jotdar's lease.

After classified the lands, Milligan drafted rates of land revenue slightly altering of the rates of Mr. Sunder. The rates of Maynaguri Tahshil were as follows :- ⁷⁰

Class of jotes	Basti		Dohla		Shohuri		Danga-I		Dangh-II		Potit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Class - I	3	0	2	4	2	0	1	8	0	10	0	2
Class - II	3	0	2	0	1	12	1	6	0	8	0	2
Class - III	3	0	1	2	1	10	1	4	0	6	0	2

Even after the third settlement there were huge amount of uncultivated waste land in the Duars. Grunning wrote that even if the existing rates were maintained there would be a considerable increase in the revenue, but they are so low that they can be enhanced without hardship to the jotdars. ⁷¹

187, 446 acres lands assessed by this settlement (4th settlement) classifying as follows :- ⁷²

Basti	-	8161 acres
Dohla	-	43560 acres
Shohuri	-	40947 acres
Danga-I	-	31275 acres
Danga-II	-	31061 acres
Potit	-	17536 acres

Doba	-	1269 acres
Unassessable	-	13737 acres

Mr. Sunder classified 211000 acres into -

Basti	-	4917 acres
Rupit	-	63720 acres
Faringati	-	40713 acres
Doba	-	832 acres
Waste	-	100818 acres

But at the time of 4th settlement Milligan found Mr. Sunder's Mal Jotdars in possession of 225,525 acres which were classified as follows :-⁷³

Basti	-	10499 acres
Dohla	-	52325 acres
Shohuri	-	53327 acres
Danga-I	-	59954 acres
Danga-II	-	42880 acres
Doba	-	1011 acres
Waste	-	5529 acres

It is referred in the government report regarding Maljotes, In view of the fact that in the ordinary Mal jote lease provision is now made for compensation for trees and of the report of the Deputy Commissioner that compensation is now as a matter of fact allowed for valueable trees , the Governor in council has no objection to the insertion of the word "trees"after building in this clause.⁷⁴ In addition with these lands, there were 141125 acres Arable Waste Lands which were assessed by this settlement classifying as follows :-⁷⁵

Basti	-	2707 acres
Dohla	-	22086 acres
Shohuri	-	32610 acres
Danga-I	-	31810 acres
Danga-II	-	37604 acres
Doba	-	1150 acres
Waste	-	13571 acres

It is found in the District Gazetteer, Jalpaiguri, 1981, that during the last mentioned settlement, the greater part of land to the east of the Torsa River was unsettled waste land or forest. In the settlement under review 2,93,000 acres of such land had given place to 100 sq miles of tea gardens. Similarly a great development had taken place in the tract lying between the Jaldhaka on the West and the Torsa in the east.⁷⁶ Although this whole tract was shown as 'Tea Grant' during the settlement of 1889-95, but actually this was not practical, large number of jotes were settled under cultivation in this tract.

The comparison of the rates of land revenue between Sunder's settlement and Milligan's settlement given below :-⁷⁷

Class Of Land	Pargana Maraghat				Pargana Laksmipur				Pargana West Madari				Remaining & Backward Parganas			
	Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate		Sunder's Rate		New Rate	
Basti	2	0	2	4	1	12	2	0	1	12	2	0	1	8	2	0
Dohla - I	--	--	2	0	-	--	2	0	--	--	2	0			2	0
Dohla - II	1	12	1	14	1	4	1	6	1	8	1	10	1	2	1	4
Shohuri	--	--	1	12	--	--	1	4	--	--	1	8			1	2
Danga - I	1	4	1	6	0	12	1	0	0	12	1	0	0	9	0	12
Danga - II	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	0	3	0	4
Patit	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2			0	4
Doba	2	0	0	6	1	4	0	6	1	12	0	6	1	2	0	2

In the Ambari Falakata Pargana the rates were as follows⁷⁸ :-

	Basti		Dohla		Danga-I		Danga-II		Doba		Patit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
New rates	2	3	1	12	1	2	0	4	0	4	0	2

	Basti		Rupit		Faringati		Doba		Patit	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
Sunder's rate	2	0	1	8	1	2	1	8	0	3

From the above tables it is followed that the rate of revenue of the land of Basti, dohla, Shohuri and Danga had increased at the time of Milligan's settlement but the rate was decreased in the patit or uncultivated land and Doba or low land.

Col. Hedayet Ali's Estate

Colonel Hedayet Ali got a rent-free lease of 20 taluks for five years in Feb, 1866 for his great achievement in the 2nd Anglo-Bhutan War in 1864.⁷⁹ The terms and conditions of the lease made with Hedayet Ali changed time to time. For the failure to fulfill the terms and conditions of the lease, 19191 acres lands were resumed at the time of Sunder's settlement, the remaining 22563 acres being settled at half rates at the amount of 7897.

At the time of Milligan's settlement the total area held was found to be 28195 acres classified as follows :-⁸⁰

Basti	-	930.24 acres
Dohla	-	6915.22 acres
Shohuri	-	6174.01 acres
Danga-I	-	8517.90 acres
Danga-II	-	3990.41 acres
Doba	-	307.52 acres
Uncultivated Waste	-	819.35 acres
Unassessable	-	<u>840.58 acres</u>
Total	-	28495.23 acres

Of this total area 27119 acres were found to be sublet to chukanidars and rents paid by them during the currency of the last settlement aggregated Rs. 26920, the profit of the heirs being Rs. 17736.⁸¹ A memorial was submitted by the heirs of the distinguished soldier for the further concessions. In accordance with the memorial Government declared an order as follows :-

"The memorialists be informed that after a full consideration of their case the Governor in Council has decided that the lands should be resettled at three-fourths of the pargana rates for a period of 20 years, the term fixed for the present settlement in the Western Duars, after which they will be assessed at full rates. In the event of the chukanidars getting the benefit of progressive enhancements of rents, the revenue assessed and granted to the

memorialists will be graduated accordingly, so that the difference between the rents settled as payable by the chukanidars to the memorialists and the revenue payable by the memorialists in any year may not be less than the present difference. The memorialists are also informed that there will be a clause in the new lease to the effect that unoccupied lands should be sublet to bonafide cultivators only." ⁸²

The new rent of jote No. 101 proposed by Milligan and approved by Government were as follows :-

1st period of 5 years	Rs. 17000
2nd period	Rs. 2000
3rd and 4th period	Rs. 22790

The rents payable by the chukanidars in the same periods being -

<u>1st period</u>	<u>2nd period</u>	<u>3rd and 4th period</u>
36626	41965	45767

Leaving to the colonel's heirs profits of -

19626	21956	22977
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The lands were given to Hedayet Ali on condition to bring under cultivation all the unoccupied lands in twenty Taluks with a promise that all lands so brought under cultivation would be settled with him at the end of the period. ⁸³

The successors of Hedayet Ali failed to fulfil the terms and conditions of the renewed lease and they prayed to the Govt. for remission of rent, the Commissioner of Rajshahi division informed the Government, Land Revenue Department by his letter no.959R. dated, 15th March, 1919. The honourable Mr. Mc Alpin, I.C.S. Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Revenue Department replied that after careful consideration of the memorandum of objection as well as the comments of the Dy, Commissioner

thereon the Governor in Council was pleased to pass the following orders on the points noted below ---

Government are satisfied as to the justification of the claim of the objectors to remission of rent and for reasons explained by the Dy, Commissioner. They approve of the proposal that the arrears Viz. the difference between the new enhanced rent and the old rent for the 3 years 1914-15 to 1916-17 should be remitted. The exact amount involved should, however, be reported for the information of Govt.⁸⁴

In clause 1 of the new lease, the heirs of the late colonel are informed that on the expiry of the present lease, which was for twenty years, jote 101 will be brought into the line with other jotes in the matter of assessment, no further concessions being granted. In the clause 4, provided the jote be transferred as a whole, subject to registration of such transfer within two months and payment of a fee of one anna per acre. Only bonafide resident cultivators of the class known as chukanidars may be settled on the land by the jotdars. In clause 7 and 8 secured the rights of chukanidars, both those in existence at present and future creations during the currency of the lease.⁸⁵

Special Settlement for Mech and Garo:

The Meches and Garos, originated from Mangoloid race, lived the nomadic life in nature (jungle) simple way of life habituated in jhum cultivation. In the pre-colonial period they had not to give any tax or revenue. In the colonial period they were assessed to pay capitation tax at Rs. 4 per head per annum, Garos being similarly valued at Rs. 3 per head.⁸⁶ About the life and condition of tribal people in the Duars will be analysed in details in the specific chapter of this thesis, here, I, only shall try to sketch out about the measures of lands allotted to Meches and Garos by Sunder and Milligan (3rd and 4th Settlement). During the survey

and settlement operations of 1889-95, an attempt had been made to group the settled agriculturist among the Meches and Garos together, and give them a separate colony in Alipurduar east of the Torsa river and South of the road leading to the Rajabhatkhawa, as they were being exploited by their more intelligent neighbours and were in danger of losing their land. 766 jotes covering an area of 90593 acres were set apart for the colony.⁸⁷

P. Nolan, Esq, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division wrote to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, lower provinces, "With reference to Board's memorandum no. 329 A dated the 16th July 1895, forwarding a copy Government notification no. 3203 L.R. dated the 6th July, 1895 relating to the reservation of a tract of land in the Alipur Subdivision in the district of Jalpaiguri for a Mech and Garo colony, I have the honour to forward a draft notification consisting of the revised boundaries of the tract and to request that Government be moved to publish it in supersession of the one already published."⁸⁸

(No. 4615 L.R. dated Calcutta, the 22nd Oct. 1895 Notification by the Government of Bengal, Revenue Dept).

In Supersession for the boundaries mentioned in notification No. 3203 L.R. dated the 6th July 1895 published at page 664 of the Calcutta Gazette on the 10th idem the following boundaries are substituted.⁸⁹

North – The Southern boundary of Mr. C. C. Gulliland's tea grant.

East – The western boundary of the Gaburbasa Forest Reserve, and the Alaikuri nadi from the point where it leaves the Gaburbasa Forest to the point where it meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Forest Reserve.

South – The point where the Alaikurinadi meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Forest Reserve.

Unfortunately, no special measures were not taken for encroachment and to prevent to transfer and sub-infeudation of lands to outsiders, as a result, a number of outsiders were settled in the reserve area by the local authorities. A special enquiry was made in 1907-08, it was found then that there was not a single Garo in the Colony and more than half of the jotdars were outsiders, mainly Oraons. In 766 jotes, there were only 218 Mech jotdars ; 177 Mech chukanidars and 219 Mech adhiars.⁹⁰ In accordance with the situation of 1910 Milligan gave an outline - out of a total area of 10550 acres settled Mech jotdars held 7170 acres of which they sub-let 669 acres to chukanidars, and of which 2020 acres were cultivated by possession of Oraons, Rajbansis, Paharias and others. Out of 161 chukani holdings 97 were Mech and 64 were miscellaneous.⁹¹ Milligan wrote, "Soon after this the Mech exodus from the Duars began, and in 1915, I was informed that practically every Mech had moved over into Assam." ⁹²

In 1917 the Deputy Commissioner made certain inquiries about the colony and it was then ascertain that the total area held by Mech jotdars were 6439 acres and the total area held by the other jotdars was 4481 acres. The population of the colony at the census of 1921 was 7363 of whom 2638 were Meches 3303 oraons and the rest family immigrants from chhotanagpur and Nepalis, Meches are, therefore, form 27 per cent of the total population.⁹³

The above figures about the Mech jotdars and their lands showed that the area held by Mech jotdars had increased while two areas held of other jotdars had diminished since 1908, owing to migration to Assam the number of Meches in the colony had diminished and the increase of the area held by the Mech jotdars is due to the purchase of jotes by Meches. There were several big Mech jotdars in the colony and it is found that one Mech jotdar had about 400 acres lands another about 250 acres which other Meches had large areas. The enforcement of the order about the subletting of land was impracticable as were too few Meches in the colony

to cultivate the land and even Mech jotdars had their land cultivated by Oraons and others. No attempt had, therefore, been made to enforce the offer about sub-letting. The immigration of Oraons and other cultivators had resulted in the bringing under cultivation of practically two whole settled areas. The Deputy Commissioner had allowed transfers of jots held by Meches to other than Meches.

In view of the new classes introduced in the new colony leases prescribed for the western Duars in the insertion of special conditions in the leases for land in Taluk Satali Deputy Commissioner who visited the colony in the December 1st is of opinion that the present policy is never likely to meet with any measures of success and its enforcement means unnecessary. According to him, "In my opinion there is no longer any reason for treating Satali Taluk within which the colony is situated, differently from the rest of the Western Duars as it can not be regarded as a Mech colony and the Meches do not require special protection."⁹⁴ As the British administrators had only the intention to be economically benefitted, they allowed to be immigrated outsiders in the colony so that they could earn much more revenue and rent.⁹⁴

Jotes of Totopara :

Totos, another community in the Duars, of the Indo-Mongoloid race, Tibeto-Burman speaking autochthonous tribe lived in Totopara, bounded on the North by Bhutan on the east by Torsa River and the South by Titi forest. They were very simple in the way of life and nomadic and enjoyed in the nature. Their system of cultivation is like that of the Meches which was Jhum cultivation. But it was not their main occupation. Out of their cultivation, they were involved in the work of orange transportation, depended chiefly on their orchards and homestead

products, pan-leaves, bamboos, fowls and pigs. The whole jote containing 2033 acres was settled in Mandali grant given in the name of the traditional headman or Mandal of the Totos for Rs. 120 per annum by the settlement of 1889-95. But the settlement of 1906-16 changed it to a tax of Rs. 2 per adult male per annum.⁹⁵

Many outsiders encroached in the Totopara as a result, Totos lost their peaceful identity. Realizing the situation, Mr. Milligan opined, "I strongly recommend that they be allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of the whole block of 2003 acres, and that all transfers, mortgages, sub-letting or other disturbing practices be totally forbidden and prevented by the district authorities."⁹⁶ But this recommendation had not been initiated in practical, for which many outsiders settled, later on in the Totopara.

Santal Colony :

The Santals had been immigrated in the Duars as a tea-labourers from Bihar, Orissa and South-Western region of West Bengal by labour-contractors. Mr. Sunder selected a piece of waste land in Mahakalguri Taluk in Alipurduar Subdivision. There were some discrimination about the size of the colony and the method of settling the land with the colonists. Ultimately Government declared an order led to the Notification No. 4300 L.R. of 27th August, 1894, referred to by Mr. Sunder limiting the area reserved for the Colony to some 29 square miles as follows :⁹⁷

- (1) in the Commissioner's order to settle the land with individuals direct, and not with the mondals - vide No. 831 Ret. of 23rd July, 1896 ;
- (2) in letter No. 980 Ret. of 18th September 1897 from the Commissioner to Government promising to make a 15 year settlement at an all-round rate of 8 annas an acre, and abandon entirely the initial proposals described by Mr. Sunder on page 89

of his report. Government approved of this scheme in their No. 886 T. - R. of 20th October, 1897.

(3) in the adoption of a form of lease for all colonists - Commissioner's No. 665 R. of 4th December, 1897.

This was finally settled by notification No. 387 T. - R. of the 27th May, 1901 which limited the colony to 14 square miles.

In 1911, there were 1500 Christian and 500 non-Christian Santals in the Colony. Though the colony was only for the Santals named Santals colony, the people of other community encrossed and settled there. A. Mitra, the Superintendent of Census Operations found more Meches than Santals in 1953. Land was inalienable in the Colony to outsiders or non-tribals and all sub-transfers were subject to approved by the Church Missionary Society.⁹⁸

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