

CHAPTER - II

FIRST CONTACT WITH THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE TREATY OF 1773.

East India Company's intervention in the affairs of Cooch Behar presents an interesting narrative, British expansion in the north-east Bengal was not so rapid as in other parts of the country. (1) East India Company's contact with Cooch Behar in 1772 was the stepping stone of the British in the northern frontiers of Bengal. In the year 1772, Khagendranarayan, the Nazir Deo (2) of Cooch Behar applied to the East India Company for help against Bhutan, who had commenced hostilities and carried away the Raja and the Dewan Deo (3) of Cooch Behar as prisoners. This help was readily given by the Company. Before going into details it would be better to (take into account) ^{discuss} under what circumstances Cooch Behar - a State hitherto independent of foreign control, voluntarily invited British protection and what was the motive and interest on the part of the East India Company to intervene in the affairs of such a small state.

The background of these developments date back to the year 1765. The year is momentous in the history of British expansionism in India and is equally significant in the history

1. Sen, S.N., Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan - Introduction.
2. The Post of Nazir Deo was an important post in Cooch Behar's administration. He was the Commander of the army.
3. The post of Dewan Deo was also important. He was in charge of civil affairs in the state.

of Cooch Behar state. The Grant of Diwani to the East India Company on 12th August, 1765 offered fresh advantage and legal status to the Company to consolidate its position in Bengal. At about this time, Cooch Behar - simmering under perpetual family feuds and patricidal strifes witnessed the emergence of yet another worthless king Dhairjendranarayan (1765-70) who ushered in an era of darkness in the State's affairs which turned from bad to worse. This situation was further aggravated by the menacing attitude of Bhutan, a northern neighbour of Cooch Behar. Systematic expansion of Bhutanese power in the plains began during this period of decadence of Cooch Behar state. ⁽⁴⁾ To trace the background of Bhutanese expansion towards Cooch Behar it is interesting to note that in the early stages of their history Bhutan had a good relation with Cooch Behar. Bhutanese merchants carried ^{on} their trade in Cooch Behar and through Cooch Behar into Rangpur. It is difficult to give an exact date how and when the table was turned. It is also said that in this extra-territorial ambition, the role of the penlos of paro and Tongsa were not negligible. ⁽⁵⁾

The story of Bhutanese expansion in the north of Bengal is very interesting. There were as many as eleven

4. Deb, A., Bhutan and India, p. 72.

5. Majumdar, A. B., Anglo-Bhotanese Relations, p.15.

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Duars on the northern part of Bengal. The fertile area which stretched from river Tista to Sankos was known as western Duars and was held by Koch Chieftains. (7) H. N. Choudhury says that before the first Bhutan war, the Bhutanese systematically occupied a large number of Taluks (a land unit) in the western Duars. According to Choudhury, these areas "formerly held in farm under Cooch Behar, were usurped by them and the payment of Revenue was stopped. They also openly dispossessed some other lands covered by Taluks Chichakhata, Paglahat, Lackiduar, Kyranti and Maraghat which were under direct management of the state". (8) This gives us an idea about the Bhutanese advance and occupation of the Duars. Dalton wrote : "There were no doubt conflicts between the Kuch and the Bhutias about three hundred or four hundred years ago but these were struggles for supremacy in the Duars which ended in many of the Kuch leaders as Sidli and Bijni (9) and other chiefs submitting to the Bhutias". (10)

Misfortune dogged the kingdom of Cooch Behar from the 17th century. The Raikats of Baikunthapur declared its independence and wanted to capture Cooch Behar. Taking this opportunity Bhutan came down from the hills and began to expand

6. Permberton, R. B., Report on Bootan, Reprint, 1961, p. 29.
7. Deb, A., op.cit., p. 73.
8. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., pp. 263, 264.
9. Bijni and Sidli was situated between the river Sankosh and Manas. Their rulers belonged to King Ragu's line.
10. Dalton, E.T., Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, Cal, 1872, p.96.

in the Duars. "Territorial expansion convinced the Bhutanese that permanent hold over the Duars could not be retained without extending their political hegemony over Cooch Behar"⁽¹¹⁾. So the history of the rise and advance of a foreign power and the gradual decline and fall of an independent state is the subject matter of our present discussion.

It is an agreed view that the East India Company originally settled down in this land with the explicit purpose of trade. It is true that their main occupation as traders outweighed any desire to make territorial acquisitions. As Firminger wrote "... we find that the Company was on the whole, averse to the acquisition of "territory" or "possessions" and that their servants in Bengal, unless actuated by some momentous emergency were unwilling to interfere in native politics or to depart from the position of traders."⁽¹²⁾ A directive from the court of Directors in their letter dated February 16, 1771 also indicates almost the same opinion". Remember, we are not fond of much territory, especially if it lies at a great distance from you, or is not pretty near the waterside, nor indeed of any, unless you have a moral assurance if it will contribute directly to our real benefit".⁽¹³⁾ In spite of all these forewarnings on the part of the Company, the native rulers of the "18th century

11. Deb, A., op.cit., p. 74.

12. Firminger, W. K., Introduction to the Fifth Report - Introduction, p. III.

13. Op.cit., p. 16.

India, strife-ridden, chaotic and anarchic in the absence of a central authority,"⁽¹⁴⁾ invited the clever merchants to sort out their domestic disputes and thus paved the grounds for their steady infiltration into the native politics.⁽¹⁵⁾ Dr. Surendra Nath Sen also expressed the same opinion : "The growth of British power in India has perhaps no parallel in history. It was not a case of outright conquest of one country by other but a story of slow penetration in which the people of the land themselves helped the intruders."⁽¹⁶⁾ The distinctly organised military strength of the Company attracted the attention of the 'indigenous states of (this) region (who) suffered from chronic anarchy and disorder and relied on the new rulers of Bengal for protection and support'.⁽¹⁷⁾ In this way the Company fortified its position in the South by championing the cause of the Nawab of the Carnatic. And in the same manner the company operated in Bengal in the name and under the authority of the Nawab Nazim of Murshidabad. Even after the Company became the virtual ruler of Bengal it never clamoured for its sovereign right and status. Although the Grant of Diwani authorised the Governor General to use his own seal, he was always humble enough to

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14. Raghuvanshi, V.P.S., Indian Society in the 18th Century, Introduction.
 15. Muir, John, A History of the British interests in India, Chapter 5, p. III.
 16. Sen, S. N., 1957, Introduction, p. x.
 17. Ibid.

describe himself as the servant of Shah Alam II. Thus the period from 1757 to 1765 is characterised by a gradual transfer of loyalty from the native governments to the Company. (18) Thereafter in 1765 the East India Company obtained the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It finally gave a legal shape to what had already been achieved by the Company through their ceaseless efforts and military involvements.

East India Company's acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal should, therefore, be regarded as the first constitutionally valid authority of the Company as revenue collectors and this served as an instrument for their systematic infiltration into Indian politics. The entire panorama of native politics sharply changed and the disconcerting advancement of a foreign power took its own course of consolidation which, ultimately determined the destiny of the land. The Company after the Grant of Diwani and as a natural consequence, immediately busied themselves to keep their house in order and hastened to organise a revenue administration to protect their newly acquired power. This was a machinery obviously created to supplement the Company's developing philosophy of political expansionism geared up by the mercantile character; to reap benefit out of the

18. Misra, B. B., The Central administration of the East India Company in Bengal, p. 5.

in-fightings amongst the native rulers, sometimes to go along with the natives and win their hearts under pretext of necessary reforms and social welfare'.⁽¹⁹⁾ Cooch Behar state as described hereinafter, became a victim of the said political motive of the Company supported by its organised military strength.

Before we come across the happenings leading to the British intervention into Cooch Behar and the relationship which developed therefrom, we have to take into account the existing British involvement and interest in the northern part of the Bengal Subah. This assessment may enable us to pursue the general policy of trade interest of the Company and the subsequent British involvement in Cooch Behar in the wake of Cooch Behar - Bhutan conflict. The major trade interest of the British in this region mainly centred round Nepal which was the gateway of Tibet and through it to west China. Tibet was then considered valuable by the British for its vast potential of gold and precious metals.⁽²⁰⁾ A localised trade relation of substantial amount had already developed between the people of North Bengal and Nepal.⁽²¹⁾ The Company for their own commercial interest were not only eager to maintain this intercourse

19. Muir, John, op. cit.

20. Pemble, John, Invasion of Nepal, p. 55.

21. Ibid., p. 54.

but also initiated the idea of extending its possibilities. But a political turmoil swept over Nepal in the year 1767. The indomitable Gurkhas of Nepal revolted against the ruling race of Newars. They even resorted to an invasion under their leader Prithivinarayan against the Newar Raja. As a result of this political upheaval trade between Bengal and Nepal languished²².

Therefore the whole scheme of the company was in jeopardy. In fact the Gurkhas in Nepal and the British in northern part of Bengal Subah were following parallel policies with regard to Tibet²³. While the British were bent upon opening trans-Himalayan market, the Gurkhas realised that Nepal's prosperity depended on close economic ties with Tibet²⁴. However, in the midst of these disturbances came an opportunity for the Company. The Newar Raja of Kathmandu solicited their military help against the Gurkhas. The Calcutta authorities felt it wise to respond to the request and resolved military intervention against the Gurkhas. Consequently an expedition under Captain Kinloch marched into Nepal to help the Newars²⁵.

22. Ibid,

23. Ibid, pp. 61-63.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

But unfortunately the expedition failed to achieve the desired result. Kinloch, while commanding the expedition found it necessary to request the authorities for reinforcements. But incidentally, the British were then pitted against Nyder Ali of Mysore where continuous flow of reinforcement was a matter of top priority. The expedition therefore was recalled and the Gurkhas finally captured power of the land. (26)

In spite of the unsuccessful Kinloch expedition and the ultimate recognition of Gurkha regime by the Company, the British did not turn back from the idea of finding an easy route to Tibet, and for exploring markets for cloth and other European commodities there and in West China through Nepal. (27) "Gold Dust", Musk, Cowtails, Fine wool etc. were the valuable commodities found in Tibet and were extensively exchanged with "Broad cloth, coral, Bengal manufactures and other goods either native of these provinces or imported from England. (28) In 1771, the court of Directors also suggested exploration into Assam and Bhutan for alternative trade routes. (29)

Assam or the kingdom of the Ahoms lay on the north-east frontier of Cooch Behar. During this time the

26. Auber, P., Rise and Progress of the British Power in India, pp. 180-81.
27. Public letter from Court - 16th March, 1768, para 41. Sarcar, S.C., 'Some notes on the intercourse of Bengal with Northern countries in the Second half of the 18th Century'- Bengal past and present, Vol. XII, 1931, pp. 124-25.
28. Home consultations, No. I, April, 19, 1729.
29. Home consultations, 9th December, 1771(1)

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Ahoms were in a state of decline. The administration of the country was organised on purely military lines and the five principal officers of the state ⁽³⁰⁾ were vested with quasi sovereign authority.* The king was a puppet in the hands of the Bara Barua and other ministers were on the look out for an opportunity to aggrandise themselves at his expense. ⁽³¹⁾ Edward Gait wrote - "the war-like spirit which animated their ancestors had almost evaporated the people were already priest-ridden and Sectarian disputes began to strangle their patriotic inspirations". ⁽³²⁾ In spite of these signs of decay, a large trade brought Bengal and Assam close to each other. In 1808-9, export from Bengal amounted to more than two lacs of rupees, while export from Assam, more than a lac. ⁽³³⁾

30. These officers were the three Gohains, the Bara Barua and the Bara Phukan.

31. Sen, S. N., P.X.

32. Gait, Ed., A History of Assam, p. 133.

33. Martin, M., Eastern India, Vol. 3, pp. 660-61.

* "The Ahom king was nominally placed at the head of the Constitution. Immediately under him in rank were three great council of states, called Gohains, whose duty was to give advice to the king. With them, the king was expected to consult on the affairs of the Government; he was not permitted to issue any orders without their approval or enter into any negotiations without consulting them". W. Robinson - A Descriptive Account of Assam, p. 139, Shillong, 1841.

So it is clear that this trade in the mid-eighteenth century have been three to four times in volume in the first decade nineteenth and the English merchants like Daniel Rausch, Dow, Wheatland, Lear, Hugh Baillie and many others, with permission had crowded the north-eastern part of Rangpur established factories and vied with each other to reap the of Assam trade³⁵

Assam trade.

Cooch Behar State, during the second half of the 18th century, was suffering from the chaos and dissension of the ruling authorities which encouraged Bhutan to meddle in Cooch Behar's affairs and make her own position secure in the state. The situation was aggravated by the accession of Dhairjendra Narayan who was a weak and (as well as) suspicious king. Mutual animosity, internal disorder, unlimited power in the hands of the ministers, incapacity and weakness of the ruler to maintain his position - all these were the dismal features of the state during this period. The highest administrative authorities were the king, the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo. The Nazir Deo was in charge of the army and Dewan Deo was in charge of the civil affairs. They held the major portion of the States Revenue leaving a small portion for the King. Naturally royalty depended upon the loyalty of the other two functionaries but they

34. Sen, S. N., Introduction.

35. Bengal District Records, Rangpur, Vol. I, p. 46.

never acted in harmony. Therefore, the only way left open to the king was to play the one against the other and thus the real welfare of the kingdom was neglected. The evil councillors also ill-advised the king. When such was the state of affairs, Ramnarayan, the King's brother and also the Dewan Deo of Cooch Behar became all powerful. (36) This drove Dhairjendra Narayan to despair. In the meantime in 1769, the Deb Raja of Bhutan in return for her past assistance asked Cooch Behar to help him in his expedition against Vijaypur, situated in Morang territory to the north of Purnea. (37) A force under the command of Ramnarayan was despatched to help Bhutan. And it was said that a handsome booty was grabbed by Ramnarayan himself. (38) The advisers of the king then began to instigate him against Ramnarayan. The king was utterly displeased and removed Ramnarayan from his position and installed his other brother Surendranarayan as Dewan Deo. (39) Ramnarayan fled to Bhutan and with the help of Deb Raja regained his former position. But this attitude of Ramnarayan had a bad repercussion on the king who cruelly murdered his own brother. (40)

Bhutan at that time was passing through a state of internal troubles. The Deb Raja defied the authority of Dharmaraja, the spiritual head of the state. The Govt. of Bhutan was

36. Ahmed, A., History of Cooch Behar (Bengali), pp. 195-96.

37. Markham, C.O., Narratives of the Bogle Mission, pp. 150, 161-65.

38. Ahmed, A., op.cit., p. 196.

39. Ibid., p. 198.

a combination of the clergy and the laity, represented respectively by the Dharma Raja and the Deb Raja. The Dharma Raja, the spiritual Chief, held a superior position, the Deb Raja, the temporal Chief was appointed by the deity of the land, and was to govern as his Vice-regent. The position of Dharma Raja and Deb Raja in Bhutan was of a peculiar nature. Dr. A. Deb refers to this as "Diarchy in Bhutan"⁽⁴⁰⁾. The first Dharma Raja aloofed himself from administrative affairs. He came to be regarded as high incarnation. In the period under review the office of the Deb Raja had gained much in power and esteem. The Dharma Raja was the spiritual guide, incarnate Deity and Sovereign prince." In Bhutanese eyes the Deb Raja Always held a subordinate position. However, the murder of Ramnarayan created an opportunity for Deb Raja who had nurtured within him the ambition of making Cooch Behar an appendage of Bhutan. He planned to avenge the murder of Ramnarayan. At the annual feast at Chechakhata⁽⁴¹⁾ when the king and the Dewan Deo of Cooch Behar went to participate, they were kidnapped by the agents of Deb Raja, carried off to Bhutan and retained as captives there. The Bhutias installed Rajendra Narayan on the throne of Cooch Behar and (in practice) began to rule the country. This de-facto rulership of Bhutan over Cooch Behar, however, suffered an initial

40: Deb, A., "Diarchy in Bhutan" - Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XCI, Part II, No. 172, July-Dec. 1972.

41. Chechakhata or "Cachhegate" was an important trading centre in the northern part of Cooch Behar.

setback on the death of Rajendra Narayan. Dispute for succession ensued. Deb Raja wanted to place Bijendra Narayan ⁽⁴²⁾ the son of late Ramnarayan on the throne of Cooch Behar whereas Dharendra Narayan, the son of the captive king Dhairjendra Narayan, was the choice of Nazir Deo and other grandee of the kingdom. Finally in 1772, Kragendranarayan, the Nazir Deo succeeded in installing Dharendra Narayan on the throne. Deb Raja could not reconcile himself with this defeat and decided to venture on a full scale invasion of Cooch Behar. A large number of soldiers under the command of Jimpe moved towards the plain ⁽⁴³⁾ of Cooch Behar and overran the country. Nazir Deo with all his might resisted the advancing Bhutia soldiers but failed to stop their penetration. After achieving military command over Cooch Behar the Bhutias consolidated their position by erecting forts in different parts of the country and adopted measures to protect the capital town. Finding no other alternative to save ⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cooch Behar, Nazir Deo, in consultation with the Rajguru Sarbananda Goswami and Khasnovis Kashikanta Lahiri approached the East India Company for military assistance against Bhutan which was readily accepted by the company. Thus Nazir Deo of Cooch Behar, on behalf of the minor Raja promised to pay 'an immediate Nuzzar to the Company or an annual Mulguzzary from Cooch Behar

42. Ahmed, A., op.cit., p. 203.
43. Markham, C.U. op.cit., p. 147.
44. Ahmed, A., op.cit., p. 206.

country'⁽⁴⁵⁾ for help against the Bhutanese. The request as such and the fact that Bhutan was in the picture, induced the British to try for an uninterrupted trade route from Bengal to Tibet. Purposeful and policy-oriented exchange of opinions between Charles Purling and Warren Hastings, the then collector of Rangpur and the Governor General of Bengal Subah respectively, assumed a new dimension. The expedition into Cooch Behar was originally projected and recommended by Purling. In order to extract the maximum benefit out of the prospective deal with Cooch Behar, the Company took into account all aspects of economic and political consequences.⁽⁴⁶⁾ In July, 1772, Purling intimated Warren Hastings about the political confusion in Cooch Behar. He also gave a detailed account of the different interests which had occasioned these commotions.⁽⁴⁷⁾ During this political crisis in Cooch Behar, Darpa Dev of Baikunthapur was in league with Bhutan. Purling also requested Darpa Dev to sever his alliance with Bhutan but received a negative reply.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Purling also gave some hint of his bargain with Cooch Behar. He wrote to Hastings "I told Nazir Deo's Vakeel that the Company would easily protect the Cooch Behar country, but that it was requisite that the Company should reap some benefit if their troops were employed".⁽⁴⁹⁾ In November, 1772 Purling again wrote that the

45. Com. Cir. Pros., August 2, 1772, pp. 38-39, Vol. 3,

46. Rev. Bd. Pros., 23rd March, 1773, Part II, p. 609.

47. Com. Cir. Pros., 31st July, 1772, p. 24, Purling to Hastings.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

Raja of Cooch Behar has agreed ^{to} Company's terms for their protection. A Company of sepoy's was sent to Nazir Deo to remain with King's independent rights of coining ~~Narainy~~ Rupees which were current through Rangpur and also to prevent Darpa Deo from his audacious acts and bring him into subjection. (50)

In 1771, the court of Directors had enquired about the possibilities of sending explorers to Bhutan. Hasting's policy of by-passing the Gurkhas and the idea of forcing open a passage for Trade had faded away since the abortive kinlock expedition. So they suggested the idea to try another route. (51)

Bhutan was a buffer state between China and India. As during this time, Bhutanese came down from their mountains and attacked Cooch Behar, the hope ^{of} the trans-Himalayan trade attracted the East India Company. It was obvious to the British that the opening of Bhutan would be the British riposte to the Gurkhas' closure of Nepal. (52) Bhutan's invasion of Cooch Behar and the Raja's request for help fulfilled their desire. Warren Hastings sent a force to help the Nazir Deo and at the same time to use the opportunity "to acquire Cooch Behar for the Company." (53) This had been further explained by Camman Schuyler. He contends

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50. Rev. Bd. Pros., 21st Nov., 1772, Vol. I, Part II, pp.698-700.
51. Pemble, John, op. cit., p. 56.
52. Regmi, B.R., Modern Nepal, pp. 128-29.
53. Pemble, John, op. cit.

that "Warren Hastings motives were far from being unselfish and that he was deliberately fishing in the troubled waters of the state."⁽⁵⁴⁾

Writing on Warren Hastings gleig also admitted that his real purpose was to gain possession of Cooch Behar for the Company.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Forrest also admits that in the plan of helping Cooch Behar against Bhutan, Warren Hastings had the designs of opening friendly commercial intercourse with the natives of the lofty tableland behind the snowy peaks to the north.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Hastings wanted to establish relations with China, through the good offices of the Tashi Lama who had great influence over the Emperor and his advisors.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Hastings himself referred to this project in these characteristic words : "Like the Navigation of unknown seas, which are explored not for the attainment of any certain and prescribed object but for the discovery of what they may contain, in so new and remote a search, we can only propose to adventure for possibilities."⁽⁵⁸⁾

Departing from the earlier policy of the Company to desist from military engagements, simply because to gain 'possessions', Warren Hasting's', apart from his own interest to sieze this opportunity to extend his areas of influence success-

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54. Camman, S., Trade through the Himalayas, The early attempt to open Tibet, pp. 26, 155-56.
 55. Gleig, G. R., Memoirs of Warren Hastings, Vol. I, pp.295-96.
 56. Forrest, W., Administration of Warren Hastings, p. 301.
 57. Home Deptt., O.C., No. 1, 19.4.1779.
 58. Ibid.

fully managed to impress upon the Board to accede to his proposals. In a letter to Sir George Colebrooke, of Fort St. George, Hastings explained this. He wrote, "We have engaged lately in an expedition in the country of Cooch Behar", a province lying between Rangpur and the mountains of Bhutan, against the Bhutaneers, who had possession of it I shall ever oppose remote project of conquest, yet I shall sedulously promote every undertaking which can complete the line of our possessions or add to its security".⁽⁵⁹⁾ Thus helping Cooch Behar against Bhutan and subjecting the state to the Company, Hastings wanted to complete and secure the northern boundary which was hitherto confined to Rangpur.

There was a trade intercourse between Bhutan and Rangpur⁽⁶⁰⁾ which was carried on through Cooch Behar. It was on the high road of communication with the North. The prevailing bitter relation between the two state badly affected that channels of trade. Before engaging in a war with Bhutan, Hasting firmly believed that in the course of the war, a moment must come when the Bhutias would be glad to come to terms with them to secure communications and trading outlets to Bengal as they lie through Cooch Behar.⁽⁶¹⁾ Charles Purling had promptly decided to straighten the affairs of his frontiers at one stroke. He

59. Gleig, G.R., op. cit., Letter from Hastings to Colebrooke, Jan. 15, 1773, p. 279.

60. Turner, S., Embassy to Tibet, Introduction.

61. Gleig, G. R., op.cit., pp. 295-96.

correctly anticipated that by responding to Cooch Behar's appeal the Company could get the hills "as our boundaries".⁽⁶²⁾ Hastings also agreed to this. In a letter to Dupre, of St. Ft. George. On 9th March, 1773, he wrote "The country is equal in fertility and cultivation to any in Bengal besides that it will complete our boundary and confine this hardy neighbours to their own hills."⁽⁶³⁾

The prospect of a handsome revenue from Cooch Behar also appealed to Purling. In his letter dated August 2, 1772, he earnestly requested Hastings to expedite the decision to extend help to Cooch Behar on this ground. He contended that "a country which has a great character and the state of cultivation" should not be allowed to pass into the hands of the Bhutaneers to enjoy. He emphasised "if you have any wish to make an easy acquisition to Company's territories and Revenues I suppose that some speedy Resolution be formed"⁽⁶⁴⁾

Thus the initial interest of opening the northern boundaries turned into real opportunity for the Company to fortify their boundaries to compel the hardy mountain people to come to terms and to get a very handsome revenue. Inspired by all these calculations the Company, under the leadership of Western Warren

62. Com. Cir. Pros., p. 24. August, 1772, Purling to Hastings.

63. Gleig, G. R., op. cit., p. 306.

64. Com. Cir. Pros., August 2, 1772, pp. 38-39. Letter from Purling.

Hastings and ably assisted by Purling began to devise the ways and means to help Cooch Behar. These led to a number of communications between ^{Charles Purling and Warren Hastings} (the two) which rested with the traditional diplomatic manoeuvre of a colonial administration. Letters were exchanged between them in this regard to consider the pros and cons in helping Cooch Behar.

In spite of the repeated warning of the Court of Directors to desist from territorial expansion, Warren Hastings involved himself in a war with Bhutan in the wake of Cooch Behar - Bhutan conflict. The intention of Warren Hastings behind this military expedition is not far to seek. To 'complete' and 'secure' the frontier of the East India Company's territory towards the north of Bengal Subah Hastings was eager to undertake any project of expansion in this part of the country. (65)

The account left by Warren Hastings naturally leads us to examine the question of security of the Company's Rangpur frontier. But there was not a single symptom of any disturbance to warrant such misgivings about this frontier. Neighbouring Cooch Behar was also a very weak state to violate the British frontier. Though Bhutan at this time encroached on

Cooch Behar yet it never tried to cross the frontier towards Rangpur or enter into East India Company's boundary.

One possible hypothesis is that Warren Hastings had a misconception that Cooch Behar in the past was a part of the Bengal Subah. He wanted to reannex and incorporate it within the sphere of the East India Company and thus to complete and secure this frontier.⁽⁶⁶⁾ But it was also a wrong estimate. Cooch Behar was never within the Bengal Subah. The Mughal success from the last quarter of the 16th century to the first half of the 17th century also left no permanent results in Cooch Behar. Even the subjugation of Cooch Behar and Assam by Mir Jumla during the reign of Aurangzeb did not allow the Mughals a proper footing.

The letter of Charles Purling to Warren Hastings in this regard was perhaps nearer to truth. Purling, the then Collector of Rangpur, was very much attracted by the agricultural wealth of Cooch Behar.⁽⁶⁷⁾ A handsome revenue from this agriculturally rich state would multiply the income of the trading Company. Besides, to guard against Bhutanese expansionism in future he wanted to secure the Company's northern frontier by extending the natural line of control beyond Rangpur.

66. Com. Cir. Pros., Feb. 27, 1772, pp. 43-44.

67. Op.cit., pp. 38-39.

Another possible reason behind the East India Company's treaty with Cooch Behar was perhaps the Sannyasi menace. (68) During this time the activities of the Sannyasis became prejudicial to law and order in the Company's territories in the North of Bengal. They were met by bands of people in mendicant's robes consisting of bonafide Sannyasis and Fakirs, as well as, of merchants, depredators and fighting elements. They were distributed in considerable number over a large area from the hills and forests at the foot of the mountains on the borders of Rangpur, Dinajepore and Purnea districts. (69) The English apprehended the security of Rangpur - their northern frontier district and Warren Hastings already decided upon their suppression. (70) No wonder, therefore, that Cooch Behar, being assured of the protection of the Company was also required to dismiss any Sannyasis either in the army or in the royal guards.

Also the East India Company wanted to help Cooch Behar against Bhutan in pursuit of its Commercial interests in the Himalaya and beyond. The opening of a trade route with Tibet via Bhutan was the essential pre-occupation of the Company at that time. The rich commercial product of this trans-Himalayan region lured the Company. The 'drain of money' from

68. Ghosh, J. M., Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal, pp.76-82.

69. Ibid.

70. Cal. Per. Cores, Vol. IV, pp. 705-07.

Chandra, A.N., The Sannyasi Rebellion, pp. 47-48.

Bengal being alarming it was necessary to supply that money by opening new channels of Commerce. ⁽⁷¹⁾ The disastrous effects of the great famine of 1770 accelerated the search for new commercial ventures in the north. The famine caused enormous financial losses, especially in the export of grain and the cotton industry on which the economy of Bengal so much depended.

So, Warren Hastings accepted Purling's views and on 27th October, 1772, the Council of Calcutta decided to undertake the defence of Cooch Behar. Accordingly a treaty was concluded on 5th April, ⁽⁷²⁾ 1773 in which the following conditions were mutually agreed on:

- 1st - that the said Raja will immediately pay into the hands of the Collector of Rangpur Rs. 50,000 to defray the expenses of the force sent to assist him.
- 2nd - That if more than 50,000 are expended, the Raja make it good to the Honourable the English East India Company, but in case any part of it remains unexpended that it be delivered back.

71. Sarcar, S. C., Bengal Past and Present, Vol. XLI, 1931, p. 121.

72. Turner, S., op. cit., p. 373.

- 3rd - That the Raja will acknowledge subjection to the English East India Company upon his country being cleared of his enemies, and will allow the Cooch Behar country to be annexed to the province of Bengal.
- 4th - That the Raja further agrees to make over to the English East India Company one-half of the annual revenues of Cooch Behar for ever.
- 5th - That the other moiety shall remain to the Raja and his heirs for ever, provided he is firm in his allegiance to the Honourable United East India Company.
- 6th - That in order to ascertain the value of Cooch Behar country, the Raja will deliver a fair hastabud of his district into the hand of such person as the Honourable the President and Council of Calcutta shall think proper to depute for that purpose, upon which valuation the annual Malguzari, which the Raja is to pay, shall be established.

- '7th - That the amount of Malguzari settled by such person of the Honourable the East India Company shall depute, shall be perpetual.
- '8th - That the Honourable English East India Company shall always assist the Raja with a force when he has occasion for it for the defence of the Country, the Raja bearing the expense.
- '9th - That the treaty shall remain in force for the space of two years, or till such time as advices may be received from the court of Directors, empowering the President and Council to ratify the same for ever. ⁽⁷³⁾

After the conclusion of the treaty prompt action was taken by the British for the defence of Cooch Behar. Four Companies of sepoys were to be ordered on this service. ⁽⁷⁴⁾ At first the English defeated the Bhutias in two engagements and their main fort of Behar was occupied by the English. In the encounter the English lost 13 persons. The Bhutias had retreated leaving 600 of their men dead. In spite of their victory the English had to face serious troubles as the Bhutias were a

73. C.B.S.R. - Vol.II, pp. 245-46.

Aitchison, C.U., Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India, Vol.II. pp- 189-192.

74. Com. Cir. Pros. Feb. 27, 1772, pp. 43-44.

sturdy, intrepid race of people. They began to move out of Cooch Behar and took shelter at Chechakhata from where they made proposal for peace. But on pretension of peace they really wanted to reorganise themselves. This deceived Purling, and he was evidently moved by their pretensions. Purling informed the Committee of circuit that he had succeeded in convincing the Bhutias that they should return to their boundary "about 4 coss (75) below the hills". But within a very short time the actual motives of the Bhutias were unveiled. In fact Chechakhata was a land that had belonged to Cooch Behar. For the last sixty years Bhutan was permitted to enjoy it on payment of 5 Tangon (76) horses each year to Cooch Behar. The geographical position of Chechakhata was also very strategic and it had a direct link with Bhutan. Stationing their forces at Chechakhata, the Bhutias planned to give battle to the English. A dense forest covered the lands to beyond Chechakhata and none but the sturdy mountainous race like the Bhutanese could move there. (77) It was an ideal ground from where Bhutan kept constant watch on the activities of the English and could muster her troop to give battle. This was an advantage for the Bhutanese to fight against the English.

After the occupation of the Cooch Behar fort by the

75. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

76. For Sec. Cons., 11th March, 1773. (8) :-

77. Com. Cir. Pros., p. 126.

(78)

Company, Captain Jones marched against Darpadev of Baikunthapur who had already become very much confused at the setback of the Bhutanese at Chechakhata. He gathered a large number of Sannyasi forces but they fled before the advancing forces of Captain Jones. (79) Captain Jones also in pursuit of them reached Baikunthapur. Considering the insufficient arms of Captain Jones a battalion was marched from Dinajepore to assist him. Captain Stuart, with the 19th battalion was vigilant in the pursuit against and another battalion from Balarampur was ordered immediately to join hands with Stuart. (80) At the same time another battalion was ordered to march from Dinajpoor Station, through Tyroot and by the northern frontier of Purneah, following the track which the Sannyassis usually took. This battalion, after taking action against the Sannyasis, if occasion offered was directed to follow their march to Cooch Behar. In order to protect the northern boundary of Cooch Behar, Purling ordered Lt. Dickson to occupy Chechakhata and other adjoining lands. On the appearance of the English the Bhutias fled the country. Dickson then attacked Buxa and occupied it. At that time an intimation reached Dickson that a large number of Bhutias was planning to surround him. So Dickson ordered his troops to leave Buxa for Chechakhata. (81)

78. Rev. Bd. Pros. Vol. II, pp. 8-10, 5th Jan. 1773.

79. Ibid., Vol. III, Part II, pp. 604-7, 15th Feb. 1773.

80. Gaz., G. R., op. cit., p. 297.

81. For. Sec. Conc., March, 11, 1773. ④

The English troops reached Chechakhata except one sergeant who was shot to death by the enemies. But the foolishness of a Subedar prevented the safe retreat of the remaining soldiers. He fired upon the enemy and this created an awkward situation for the English. The Bhutias, from their position in the hills, rolled down large blocks of rocks upon the English troops moving through the hill tracts towards the plain. This cost the English 14 Sepoys. (82)

After the return of the English troops at Chechakhata, Purling sent a letter to Bhutan with warning of a future attack of Tassissudan if further hostilities continued and asked them to deliver the Raja of Cooch Behar. When Purling was thinking of a settlement with Bhutan, a sudden night attack upon the English forces at Chechakhata by the Bhutias, made them bewildered. A fierce battle ensued and the English had to fight for self-protection. Lieutenant Dickson admitted that he had to fight for life. (83) The stiffness of the resistance can be visualised from a letter of Lt. Dickson who captured Chechakhata.

"The Bhutias behaved with amazing bravery, but their daring courage was only productive of a greater slaughter. They often rushed upon our baynotes and met their death at the very muzzle of our pieces. At Cooch Behar I fought for glory. But

82. Ibid.

83. For Sec. Cons., 22nd March, 1773. (1-2)

here I was obliged to fight for life." (84) To the British,
the Victory against Bhutan was a "costly" one. (85)

From the autumn of 1773, operations were resumed by the English. Deb Raja of Bhutan wrote a letter to Purling proposing peace and the withdrawal of British forces. Purling referred it to Warren Hastings. (86) Purling had in mind the previous gesture of Bhutan and so he did not reply to the letter of Debraja. (87) Debraja also proposed to deliver up Baikunthopu to the British.

Meanwhile Debraja's position in Bhutan also became worse. He had become Debraja about seven years ago. Debraja, before his succession to the chiefship by his diplomatic tactics had acquired a considerable degree of wealth and importance. Moreover, the means by which he reached this position was not a fair one. He owed his election more to an intrigue and dread of his power than to the free choice of the clergy. (88) His rival group did not tolerate his overbearing manners. Amongst their several arguments against him were Debraja's disregard for the advice of the Lamas, his intrigues to render Bhutan, an independent country, into a Chinese province. (89) The most convincing arguments against him were that Debraja had failed

84. Ibid., 22nd March, 1773 (1-2).

85. Deb, A., India and Bhutan, p. 76.

86. For Sec. Cons., 3th April, 1773 (8)

87. Ibid.

88. Markham, C.A., op.cit., p. 37.

89. Ibid., p. 41.

in his designs on Cooch Behar. The overwhelming defeat of Bhutan at the hands of the English had robbed him of all his glamour and his misfortunes were a powerful lever in the hand of his enemies. The Dharmaraja ousted him from his post and a new Debraja* was nominated. Fear of an impending rising against Deb Jhudher led the Debraja to get away from the country.

At this stage the Teshoo Lama of Tibet intervened in the Anglo-Bhutanese affairs. Teshoo Lama, at that time the role of mediator and sent a letter with Purnagir Gossain to Warren Hastings. (90) On 29th March, 1774, the deputation presented the letter to Warren Hastings. Teshoo Lama tried to convince Hastings that the Debraja being rude and ignorant, committed outrages on the Company's frontiers i.e. in Cooch Behar and thus provoked Hastings to take revenge, but he had met with the desired punishment. Teshoo Lama, now as a mediator requested Hastings to stop sending further troops against Bhutan. He also promised to prevent Debraja in future from such evil practice and to be submissive to the Governor General. "I request", he wrote,

* It was custom in Bhutan that the office of the Deb Raja was tenable for three years. But there were exceptions also. An ambitious person who could muster the support of powerful chiefs could however ignore the time limit.

90. For. Sec. Cons., 14th April, 1774. (5)

"you will cease all hostilities against him and in doing so you will confer the greatest favour and friendship upon me".⁽⁹¹⁾ This proposal was gladly accepted by Warren Hastings and in April, 1774, a treaty was concluded between the English and the Bhutias.⁽⁹²⁾

The treaty of 1774 ended the first Anglo-Bhutanese war which was preceded by an Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty of 1773. This latter treaty, bore a wide significance, in the history of future relations between Cooch Behar Bhutan and the East India Company.

Teshoo Lama's letter revived Hasting's long cherished desire of opening trade with Tibet and through Tibet with China.⁽⁹³⁾

To achieve this goal, Hastings tried to win the friendship of Bhutan. He transferred to Bhutan large tracts of territory belonging to Cooch Behar.⁽⁹⁴⁾ The fertile territory of Maraghat and Chamurchi later became a bone of contention between Cooch Behar and Bhutan. The cession of Ambari Falakata and Jalpesh to Bhutan⁽⁹⁵⁾ which belonged to the zamindary of

91. Furner, S. Op.cit., Introduction, pp. IX-XI.

92. For details of the Treaty see C.B.S.R., Vol. 2, pp. 58-59.

93. Turner, S., op.cit., p. 373.

94. Ahmed, A., op.cit., p. 348.

95. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, p. 8.

Baikunthapur* lends support to this motive of the British. Orders/ ^{were}
issued to the Provincial Council at Dinajpur to remove the
grievances of Bhutan and to free her from all exactions and
restrictions on her trade. (96) The repeated orders of Warren
Hastings for concessions to Bhutan's further demands originated
from the same motive. (97)

But the soft policy with regard to Bhutan to win
friendship with Tibet produced no permanent results to the Com-
pany. Their hope for a trans-Himalayan trade faded as soon as
the Tibeto-Nepalese war broke out (1788). The authorities of
Tibet, owing to the friendly overtures of the Company naturally
looked to the Company for help. But the Company under Governor
General Lord Cornwallis followed a policy of non-intervention
and refused to render any assistance. (98) China's invasion of
Nepal three years later made the Tibeto-Nepalese conflict more
acute. Nepal, on the strength of the existing commercial treaty

* The Raikats (Raj-kot = Chief of the Fort) of Baikunthapur were the hereditary grand ministers of the Koch Kingdom. They hold Umbrella over the kings of Cooch Behar at the time of their installation. Cooch Behar became very weak due to court intrigue and internal strife amongst the royal families. Court intrigue and internal strife in the Koch kingdom led it on the path of its decline. Taking this opportunity, Darpa Dev, "The twelfth Raikat" embarked on the project of occupying Cooch Behar. In this treacherous act he asked the assistance of the Bhutanese. After the first Bhutan war (1774) the Bhutanese established their claim over Jalpesh and Ambari-Falakata which belonged to the Zamindari of Baikunthapur as Darpadev had promised to cede these areas to Bhutan in lieu of their assistance. (A. Deb, p. 90). In the interest of trans-Himalayan trade, Warren Hastings acceded to the claims of Bhutan and handed over these areas to her.

96. Ibid., Lett. No. 482-8.

97. Beng. dist. Record. Rangpur, Vol. I, Let. No. 61, p. 70

98. Diskalkar, D.B., Macartney Papers, J.B.O.R.S., Vol. 19, pp. 333-34.

of 1792⁽⁹⁹⁾ with the East India Company appealed to the Governor General for help. [But Lord Cornwallis reiterated his neutrality.]^{Out} The policy of neutrality on the part of the Company however dashed all the dreams it had for a trans-Himalayan trade route. After the war, China's predominance over Tibet tightened and the commercial intercourse of Traders of Bengal and Tibet was stopped. Nepal, also after the war, turned a deaf ear to the treaty of 1792. Taking this opportunity Bhutan began to disregard her obligation to the East India Company. Thus the predominant factor which induced the Company to involve itself in the Cooch Behar-Bhutan conflict did not materialise. The table was turned from this time and instead of friendly intercourse, the relations between the British and the Bhutias has been one of local disputes about frontier and raids.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Forest Wrote, "So completely was the policy of opening a commercial intercourse between India and trans-Himalayan regions abandoned that the very history of Hasting's negotiations was forgotten and most of the valuable records of Tibet and Bhutan missions have been lost."⁽¹⁰¹⁾

But the other objective - the possession of a fertile territory i.e. Cooch Behar on their northern frontier was

99. For details of the Treaty See Appendix. III

100. Markham, C.U., op. cit., Introduction.

The ~~process~~ of the British shown in 1773 A.D. and their friendly appearance in 1774 A.D. became gradually obliterated from the memory of the Bhutiyas.

101. Forrest, G.W., Selection from State papers of the G.G. of India, Vol. I, London, 1910, pp. 313-14.

fulfilled. (By the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty (5th April, 1773) the East India Company, under the Governor Generalship of Warren Hastings agreed to help Cooch Behar against Bhutan. On the part of Cooch Behar, the treaty was concluded at a time when the Raja and the Dewan Deo of Cooch Behar was kidnapped and taken away as prisoner by Bhutan. The prayer of Nazir Dev to the Company was for protection and help. During this time the dual administration of the Company ended in Bengal and the East India Company assumed absolute authority over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Moreover, the military strength of the Company was so reputed that Nazir Deo asked the help of the Company to oust Bhutan. The agreement was one of reciprocal nature. The company agreed to help Cooch Behar in lieu of an annual subsidy of half of the revenue of Cooch Behar. So at the time of the conclusion of the treaty Cooch Behar had nothing to doubt about the future intention of the company. The Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty was concluded before the Anglo-Bhutanese war. It was not possible for Cooch Behar to predict the future course of history. The mercenary spirit of the Company would protect Cooch Behar from her imminent danger; this was why Cooch Behar sought its help. The role of Nazir Deo was of vital importance in the background of the Anglo-Cooch Behar Treaty. Being perplexed by the activities of Bhutan in the absence of the Raja and the Dewan Deo, Khagendronrayan asked the help of the Company. But

But Dhairjendranarayan, after returning from Bhutan could foresee the far-reaching consequences of the treaty. He was very much annoyed with the Nazir and practically became a broken-hearted man, totally indifferent towards the administration of the state. After the treaty a new Chapter started for the history of Cooch Behar.

For the extension of trade possibilities in the Trans-Himalayan region and at the same time to strengthen the northern frontier East India Company wanted to make Cooch Behar a buffer state as Oudh was made a buffer state to protect Bengal against the Afghans in Rohilkhand and the Marathas in Delhi.

The Anglo Cooch Behar treaty (April, 1773) was concluded by Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan (on behalf of the minor Raja Dharendra Narayan) with the East India Company. Nazir Dev was the Commander-in-Chief of the royal army. Actually he had not the authority to sign such an important treaty. Acknowledging subjection to a foreign power, agreement to pay tribute and conclusion of a treaty are most important political affairs. (102) ~~omit~~ (For details of the treaty) when the captive king returned from Bhutan, Nazir Deo was rebuked by him. Dhairjendra

102. For details of the terms of the Treaty, See Aitchison, C.U., op. cit., . . .

Narayan considered the treaty to be ^{detrimental} determined to the prestige and traditional rights of the Maharaja. In later years the British Government also did not acknowledge the rights of the Nazir to grant a land on behalf of the Raja. (103) The treaty was concluded at a time when the "dual" administration of the Company was in existence. At that time only the Company had a powerful army in Bengal. During this time the Company had no desire of territorial expansion but to realise money as much as possible. In the terms of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty there is no mention that "any rights or power befitting an independent king like declaring war, concluding treaty, striking coins, maintaining an army, internal administration, etc. were curtailed or that political connections with other royal powers were prohibited". (104) In later years opinion differed amongst the officers and Governor Generals with regard to the nature and clarification of the terms of the treaty. The dispute was with regard to the third article of the treaty in which it was stated "That the Raja will acknowledge subjection to the English East India Company upon his country being cleared of his enemies, and will allow the Cooch Behar country to be annexed to the province of Bengal". The vague and undefined language "subjection" and "annexation" became the issue of the dispute. In 1788 A.D., when

103. Letter dated the 6th May, 1874 written by the Commissioner Hershel. Letters and Proceedings having the force of law, p.13.
104. Ghoshal, S.C., Ed., History of Cooch Behar, p. 461.

the commissioner Mercer and Chauvet were deputed to Cooch Behar, they were directed by Lord Cornwallis, to enquire along with other matters, into the nature of the treaty. Their findings were that the independence of the Raja of Cooch Behar was un-impaired. (105)

According to the report of the Commissioners, Lord Cornwallis passed a Resolution on 13th May, 1789, (106) which was supported and approved by the court of Directors. (107)

105. Mercer and Chauvets' Report, Vol. II, p. 185.

"It will be admitted, that under a liberal construction of the apparent object and spirit of the Treaty no advantage can justly be taken of the loose and undefined expressions of "subjection" and 'annexation' above mentioned to the prejudice of the less powerful contracting party. That no diminution of the independent rights of the Raja within his own Government was intended, is obvious from his having been left in possession of the two great characteristics of sovereignty, the right of coining money and the administration of justice, and from these considerations collectively, our construction of the Treaty is, that Cooch Behar was thenceforward to be regarded in the light of a Tributary District deriving protection from the state to which for that purpose is made a partial and voluntary surrender of its rights; but maintaining in its domestic administration its independence unimpaired."

106. Resolution by the Government on Cooch Behar Report, 13th May, 1789, Mercer and Chauveti Report, Vol. II, p. 202.

Resolution:

"From the above abstract of the principal articles of Treaty, the Board cannot but be of opinion with the Commissioner, that no diminution of the independent rights of the Rajah within his own Government was intended by it, but Cooch Behar was thenceforward to be regarded in the light of a tributary district deriving protection from the State to which for that purpose it made a partial and voluntary surrender of its rights; but maintaining in its domestic administration its independence unimpaired.

107. Extract from letters from the Court of Directors, 19th May, 1790, para 25.

It appears that Wellesley gave his own interpretation of Art. 3 of the Treaty in order to justify his claim. It was unusual for British imperial administrators to interpret their relationship with the Indian States in their own way to suit their purposes.

In spite of the approval of the court of Directors, various Governor Generals passed adverse criticism with regard to the terms of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty. The commissioners, Mercer and Chauvet have rightly mentioned that "the interest of the weaker of the contracting parties might suffer if the stronger party be placed in the position of a judge."⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Wellesley was an imperialist to the tips of his finger. He wanted to introduce British Regulations in Cooch Behar which King Harendra Narayan vehemently opposed. Wellesley clarifies/ (the treaty of) the 3rd Article of the Treaty would warrant the conclusion, that it was the intention of the contracting parties, that the country of Cooch Behar should be ceded in complete Sovereignty to the Hon'ble Company. (It appears, however, that a much more limited interpretation has been annexed to the conditions of the Treaty".⁽¹⁰⁹⁾) Omit

The Government of Lord Minto also expressed a similar view in 1813 A.D.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Thus the Governor General in course of time expressed their own views with regard to the said treaty. But it is surprising that in spite of their adverse views they never tried to force their opinion enough on Cooch Behar. Repeated attempts of Wellesley and Minto for the introduction of Regula-

108. Ghosal, S.C., op.cit., p. 463.

109. Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. I, p. 133.

110. C.S.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 225-231.

tions during Harendra Narayan's time prove this. They could have easily put pressure upon the king. Moreover, a critical analysis of the 8th Article of the treaty proves the contradiction as well as the 'loose' and 'undefined' language of the treaty. In the 3rd Article it is mentioned that Cooch Behar will be annexed to Bengal. If from this expression conclusion was drawn that the independent rights of the Raja of Cooch Behar are hereby abolished, then there was no need of writing the 8th Article (where it is mentioned) that the Hon'ble English East India Company shall always assist the said Raja with a force when he has occasion for it for the defence of the country, the Raja bearing the expense".⁽¹¹¹⁾ These two articles contradict each other. "If under article 3 the kingdom of Cooch Behar being annexed to Bengal becomes the territory of the company, there cannot be any necessity in future for the King to protect that kingdom from outside invasion or pay any cost for help of soldiers sent with that object by the Company."⁽¹¹²⁾ It will be wise to explain the treaty considering the circumstance under which the treaty was concluded. Whatever may be the exact language of the treaty, the fact remains that the East India Company agreed to help Cooch Behar from Bhutanese aggression. The Bhutanese were defeated and the king was rescued but as for Cooch,

111. Ghoshal, S.C., ed. op.cit., p. 465.

112. Ibid.

Ahmed, Amanatullah - op.cit. p- 383.

her independence was already compromised when the treaty with the British was concluded. Helping Cooch Behar in her worst days, the company presumed to be the paramount power and to have reserved its right to interfere in the internal affairs of the state. So long as Harendra Narayan (1783-1839) was living, it was not easy for the Company to bring Cooch Behar under its full control. But after the death of Harendra Narayan, the picture changes and within a very short time the Company had a free run in the state.