

BRITISH RELATIONS
WITH
COOCH BEHAR STATE—1772—1839
(Corrected)

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P R E F A C E

In the present work an attempt has been made to highlight the history of Cooch Behar state and its relations with the British from 1773 to 1839. Cooch Behar was the only native state situated in the North Eastern part of India. British contact with the state had a great impact on the region. There are so many works on the British policy and relations with the other native states on India. But Cooch Behar has not received sufficient attention of the Scholars. Recently some work has done on Cooch Behar's history of the earlier period; But the British era hitherto remains untouched.

I have selected this particular period of Cooch Behar's history because this period marks the most remarkable period of the development of British relationship with the state. The year 1773 was a transitional period in the history of Cooch Behar. The conclusion of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty in the year 1773 had a great bearing upon the state. Moreover, this treaty gave the East India Company the firm footing in the Eastern region and an opportunity for a new venture for trade and commerce with the Himalayan states which was the long cherished desire of the company.

The selection of the year 1839 had also a great importance both for the history of Cooch Behar and the East India Company. This is the year of the death of Maharaja Harendra

Narayan, last independent ruler of Cooch Behar who throughout his reign opposed the British overlordship. All the efforts of the British Government during his reign proved abortive. But after the death of this feudal Ruler the British had a free access over the state. Though British relationship with the state continued upto the Merger but I think the glamour of the relationship ends in the year 1839. Because from this time Cooch Behar became a friendly state to the British. Naturally, it was nothing but the continuation of the former policy towards the state. The British contact ultimately smoothed the transition of Cooch Behar to the threshold of modern age.

No authentic and systematic study on the period is available. Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. I & II, Merger ^{Merger} and Chauvet's Report on Cooch Behar are the two valuable printed source for the history of the period. Amanatullah Ahmed's History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali), Cooch Behar state and its land Revenue Settlement by Harendra Narayan Choudhury are the two book available on the history of the state. Sarat Chandra Ghosal's History of Cooch Behar is the English translation of Amanatullah Ahmed. Dr. Surendra Nath Sen's Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan (Collection of letters in Bengali) throws some light on the period. There are ample Records on the later period of the history of the state but it needs a separate study.

Paucity of source materials for such a regional study and prolonged search for it demanded a long time for the completion of the work.

This dissertation has been prepared under the supervision of Professor D. P. Sinha, M.A. (Lond.), Ph.D. (Lond), formerly Sir Jadunath Sarkar Professor and Head of the Department of History University of North Bengal. This is an opportunity to express my sincerest gratitude for the kind guidance and valuable criticisms I received from him without which it would have been impossible on my part to complete the thesis.

Both published and unpublished records preserved in the repositories of the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal have been utilised in preparing the Thesis. To the authorities of the National Archives of India, and the state Archives of West Bengal, my thanks are due. As to the collection of the secondary source materials, I gratefully remember the facilities I received from the Librarian and the staff of the National Library, ^{Calcutta,} the Asiatic Society, the Cooch Behar State Library, Record Room, Cooch Behar, West Bengal Central Secretariat Library, the Libraries of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri.

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Lastly, I would like to express my thanks particularly to my husband and all the members of my family for their continued inspiration and sincerest help during my period of study. I should also recollect the memory of my father and father-in-law, during their life always inspired me for such study.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The nature of British economic, political and social impact on India has remained a controversial and exciting theme of Indian historiography since the later half of the Eighteenth century. The theme has attracted the Indian and the British scholars and administrators for academic and pragmatic reasons, and even to-day historians have been digging the past to understand and evaluate the nature of the British impact on Indian Society. It was a unique feature of British policy that after they established themselves as the sovereign power in India, they evolved relationship with the princely state in such a legalistic way and with such sophistication and skills that the ruling chiefs increasingly found themselves playing subservient role in the development of their states. "The growth of British power in India has perhaps no parallel in history. It was not the case of outright conquest one country by of another, but a story of slow penetration in which the country themselves helped the intruders."⁽¹⁾ By and large, they tended to serve the political and economic interests of the British Paramount power.

The object of this thesis is to discuss the history of Cooch Behar state and its relations with the British 1773-1839. Although some work has been done on Cooch Behar's history of the earlier period, the British era has not received sufficient attention. The policy which the East India Company followed towards this Tiny state to

1. Sen, S. N., 1857 - Introduction.

great extent typifies the general attitude towards the states of India which they found in existence and which sank into a position of dependence.

British policy in this area was mainly dictated by considerations of trade and commerce with the Himalayan states and the countries beyond. But the question of a fixed and stable northern frontier and peace in the northern districts of the company's possession, were no less significant than the question of trade and commerce.

British relation with Cooch Behar state developed in the later half of the eighteenth century in the wake of Cooch Behar Bhutan conflict. Being threatened by Bhutan, Cooch Behar asked the help of the East India Company which was renowned for its military superiority. (Warren Hastings was then the Governor General of Bengal. The ambition to trade through the Himalayas, and thereby link the British territories in India with the vast regions of Tibet and China. beyond, was the essential pre-occupations of the trading company and its authorities. The appeal for military help by Cooch Behar offered the company not only a golden opportunity to fulfill their by cherished commercial interests. But also opened a new horizon to the company for political foothold in this region which she was hankering for since the occupation of Rangpur, the last frontier of the British.

By giving military help to Cooch Behar and subduing Bhutan, Warren Hastings wanted to use Bhutan as a channel to Tibet and from Tibet to China. The control over Cooch Behar was also of a great advantage to the company. The geographical and strategical position of Cooch Behar attracted Warren Hastings and Charles Durling, the Collector of Rangpur very much. Hitherto the East India Company's northern frontier was confined to Rangpur. The occupation of Cooch Behar would complete and secure their northern boundary. The economic importance of Cooch Behar also provoked the company's response to the appeal of the Cooch Behar authorities.

With these ends in view, the company, under the governor generalship of Warren Hastings agreed to help Cooch Behar and a treaty was concluded in the year April 5, 1773. The Anglo Cooch Behar treaty marked a turning point in the history of Cooch Behar. A new relationship with the British developed therefrom. The far reaching impact of the Anglo Cooch Behar treaty was not confined to the Cooch Behar state only. In the long run, it re-shaped the political boundaries of the entire North Eastern part of India. Because Cooch Behar was the 1st native state of this part of India which came into contact with the company. The process which had been started with the Anglo Cooch Behar Treaty, was ended in 1826 with the acquisition of Ahom kingdom and other states.)

The Anglo Cooch Behar treaty did not specifically mentions the area of British interference in the state. The political instability and internal strifes within the state required its occasional interference. This interference, gradually and very systematically began to exert upon the state which reached its culmination during the time of Maharaja Harendra Narayan.

Harendra Narayan was very much aversive to the British interference in the state. His reign was eventful phase in the history of Anglo Cooch Behar relations. During this time owing to the minority of the ruler and mal-administration of the state the British Government wanted to introduce some Regulations in the state which would benefit its administration. But the king was adamant not to accept it. The British Government during this time was very much disturbed with regards to their security in Eastern as well as north-eastern frontier. In the Northern frontier in Nepal, the rising Gurkkhas became a challenge to the company. The importance of Nepal was very much with regards to the opening of the trans-Himalayan trade route of the East India Company. Formerly, the trade between Bengal and Tibet via Nepal had been very considerable. But with the coming of the Gurkhas as the ruling power in Nepal, the rhythm of interchange had been broken, merchants deterred and the trade all but destroyed. So it was not continuing desire to open channels for commerce through the Himalaya: which contributed to a serious war against the

Gurkhas in 1814.

The favourable conclusion of the Anglo Nepalese war and the treaty of Segouli (1816) gave the British that firm footing in the eastern Himalaya. Nepal became a permanent ally of the East India Company. In the Eastern frontier also, the East India Company was busy with regards to its security because of the activities of the Burmese in the bordering areas of Assam, Arakan, and Chittagong. The 1st Anglo Burmese war (1824-26) and the Treaty of Yandaboo established British hold over the region. So after the guarantee of a peaceful and secure frontier towards Nepal, and Burma the company now fall back upon Cooch Behar. The path of request and conciliation was over and the British tightened their policy on Cooch Behar. Harendra Narayan had no other way but to succumb to the reality. The status and position of the state of Cooch Behar changed after Harendra Narayan. The British Government, in a very cautious and systematic way tightened its hold on the state. British interference in Cooch Behar state, after Harendra Narayan was more confident and it was fulfilled during the time of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan.

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CHAPTER - I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF COOCH BEHAR

Cooch Behar was the only native state of undivided Bengal. Geographically, it was a part of greater Bengal and occupied a place in the north-east corner of the province. The present district of Cooch Behar was bounded on the north by the district of Jalpaiguri; on the east by Goalpara; on the south by Rangpur; and on the west by Rangpur and Jalpaiguri. The state lay between 25°57'40" and 26°32'20" north latitude, and between 88°47'40" and 89°54'35" east longitude. ⁽¹⁾

The state was a low-lying plain, almost of a triangular shape, intersected by numerous rivers, streams and marshes which appear to have been a great factor in the formation of its soil. The general direction of the river is from

1. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. x, p. 379.

Choudhury, H. N., Cooch Behar State and its Land Revenue Settlement, p.2.

It is not possible to give the exact boundary of Cooch Behar State as it was in the second half of the Eighteenth century. The extension of the state during the time of Nara Narayan may be regarded as the probable boundary line of Cooch Behar in the later period also. During the time of Nara Narayan the kingdom extended to the east to the wild tribes near the borders of Burma, to the north to Tibet, to the west to the borders of Mithila or tirabhukti (Trihut) and to the south to Ghoraghat.

(Ahmed, A. - History of Cooch Behar, (In Bengali,) p. 123).

the north-west to the south-east. They originated in the Himalayas and fall into the main stream of Brahmaputra. The most important are the Tista on the west and Sankosh on the east. Between these two are situated the Dharala, the Torsa, the Kaljani, the Raidak and other small rivers. The Jaldhaka enters the state at the north-west corner and flows more or less parallel to Tista. The country is level and open, unvarigated by hills or any large sheet of water. The low lands are sometimes only few inches above the level of the marshes. The high lands were selected by the people for their homestead and garden which were also ordinarily fit for the cultivation of tobacco, the most valuable crop of the Cooch Behar rayats. The low lands were chiefly fit for winter paddy. The greater part of the land was well-cultivated. The Koch and Mech appears to have been the most prominent racial elements in the region. (2)

With regard to the ethonological entity and racial affinities of the Koch Scholars are not unanimous. Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, who visited eastern India in the beginning of the nineteenth century, is of opinion that all tribes having the name of "Koch" are sprung from the same stock, and that most of the Rajbansis are "Koches". (3) He regarded this Koch tribes to be

2. Choudhury, H. N. - op.cit., pp. 3-4

3. Hamilton, Buchanan - Eastern India, p. 25-26.

aboriginals of Kamrup and finds a common origin with the Chinese and other nations. He also distinguishes the Koches from the Garos, Rabhas, Meches and the like. ⁽⁴⁾

The widely accepted opinion of Risley is that the Koch are of Mongolo-Dravidian origin with the Dravidian elements predominating in them. ⁽⁵⁾ Waddel, on the other hand disagree with the view and describes the people as "distinctly Mongoloid", though somewhat heterogenous. Dalton, however, attributes their origin to the Dravidian stock, and therefore supports the contention of Risley. ⁽⁶⁾ Hodgson and Latham, on the other hand, identify the Koch as members of the Mongolian race. ⁽⁷⁾

W. W. Hunter supported the opinion of Hodgson and Latham, that the Koches are connected with the neighbouring tribes of Meches and Kachharis, and are of Mongolian or trans-Himalayan extraction. ⁽⁸⁾

4. Ibid.

Bhattacharjee, S. N. - A History of Mughal N.E. Frontier Policy, pp. 19-21.

According to Grierson the name Koch, in fact, everywhere connotes a "Hinduised Bodo". The later once spread over the whole of Assam West of Manipur and "one branch of the family, popularly known as Koch extended their power to far wider limits and overran the whole of northern Bengal, at least as far west as Purnea".

(Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. 1, p. 61-62).

5. Risley, Sir Herbert Hope - Tribes and Castes of Bengal, pp.27-34.
6. Dalton, - Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal, pp. 89-90.
7. Hodgson, B.H., Essay on the first of the Kooch, Bodo and Dhumal tribe, pp. 137-42.
8. Hunter, W.W., Statistical Account of Cooch Behar, p. 331.

Dr. Sunity Kumar Chatterjee classified the Koches as "Indo-Mongoloid Bodo" people.⁽⁹⁾ His contention was that "if the Lichhabis, Koliyas and Vajjis of North Bihar in the 6th century B.C. were of Indo-Mongoloid origin, pure or mixed, then it is quite easy to think of North Bengal as much as Assam as having an Indo-Mongoloid population from quite early times".⁽¹⁰⁾ S. K. Chatterjee supported the evidence of Tabaquat-i-Nasiri where it was stated that from early in the 13th century, the Koches, Meches and Tharus of pronounced Turkic or Mongoloid features and a distinct Sino-Tibetan speech populated in North Bengal. The Eastern Bodos (Chutiyas and Kacharis) and the western Bodos (the Koches of Hazo and Kamata and the Koches of Koch Behar) disputed the possession of the Brahmaputra valley with the Ahoms.⁽¹¹⁾ Though the Koches freely call themselves Rajbansis, it is believed that the two communities originally sprung from entirely different sources, the Koches being of Mongoloid origin, while the Rajbansis were a Dravidian tribe. So, in Cooch Behar, the persons known as Rajbansi are "either pure

9. Chatterjee, S. K., Kiratajana-Kriti, p. 111.

10. Ibid., p. 114.

11. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 1.

Koches who though dark have a distinctly Mongoloid physiognomy, or else a mixed breed in which the Koch element usually predominates".⁽¹²⁾ There are differences of opinion among the Scholars with regard to the meaning of the name "Cooch Behar". H. N. Choudhury, however, classified it as a compound of two words - Cooch and Behar. According to him "the term Cooch is a corrupted form of Coch, or Koch, being the name of a race of people inhabiting large tract of country in the north-east of Bengal and Behar or more properly, Vihara, denotes abode or sport. Taking the first sense of the second word of the compound Cooch Behar means the abode or land of the Koches." Regarding the meaning of the term Cooch Behar Hunter has some different idea. He identifies Cooch Behar with Sanskrit "Vihara" meaning "recreation" especially applied to a Buddhist monastery. H.N. Choudhury, however, put some argument before considering the opinion of Hunter. He denied any Buddhist influence in the name of Cooch Behar. The name 'Cooch Behar', according to Choudhury is of recent origin, particularly after the Koch Kings had come into power. In ancient time the country was called Kamrup.⁽¹³⁾ Taking into consideration the above opinion, it is justified to

12. Hunter, W.W., op.cit., p. 331.

13. Choudhury, H. N., op. cit. p. 1.

identify the term "Cooch Behar" as the land of the Koches.

We get accounts of Cooch Behar State and her history from various writers who visited the state from early times. Cooch Behar and Assam's political relations with the Muslim Viceroy of Bengal was narrated by Munshi Ghulam Hussain Salim. (14) The history of the occupation of Mughal territory by the Koches and the Ahoms is also described here. Abul Fazl describes the extent of the Koch Kingdom. He also gives us an idea about the products of the Koch Kingdom especially in horses and elephants, the intervention of Isakhan and Man Singha in the Koch affairs and the expedition of Kalapahar to Assam. It was from the year 1578 A.D. that Cooch Behar began to pay peshkash to the Mughal Emperor. Rajah Balgosain (Nara Narayan), who was the Zaminder of Koch, submitted and sent valuable presents including 54 elephants. (15) The following passage from the same work gives a detailed account of the submission of the Koch ruler Lakshmi Narayan to Akbar. This was at the end of the 41st year of Akbar's reign. "About this time Lachmi Narain submitted. He is the ruler of Koch and has 4,000 horse and 200,000 foot, 700 elephants and 1,000 ships. His country is 200 ks. long and from 100 to 40 Koss broad, extending in the east to the Brahmaputra in the North to Tibbat in the south to Ghoraghat and in the west to Trihut". (16) Abul Fazl also in his Ain-i-Akbari, dealt with the Koch-Mughal relations as well as

14. Hussain, Ghulam, Riyaz-us-Salatin, pp. 10-54.

15. Fazl Abul, Akbarnama, Ed. III, p. 206.

16. Fazl-Abul, op.cit., p. 762.

also the products of the Koch Kingdom during this time. Abdul Hamid Lahori was the official historian of Shah Jahan. He, in his Padshahinama, describes the conflict between Lakshmi-Narayan (17) of Cooch Behar and Parikshit Narayan of Koch-Hajo .

Mirja Nathan was an important officer in Mughal Kamrup for a period of thirteen years (1612-25 A.D.). His account (18) was primarily a memoir. But it narrates the political condition of Sylhet, Cachar, Cooch Behar and Kamrup during the period (1608-24). It also portrays the dynastic history of the powerful Koch Kingdom (19) . His account also gives the history of the growth of Ahom power that halted the Koch-Mughal advance (20) towards Kamrup as far west as the river Manas.

Shihab-ud-din Talish wrote about Mirjumla's expedition to Cooch Behar and Assam. He gave an account on the history of Cooch Behar under its ruler Pran-Narayan (1632-65 A.D.). King Pran Narayan is described as a powerful ruler and owner of a magnificent palace. There are also references to the towns, war-weapons and spells and magic of the land. (21)

The history of Cooch Behar is described by the writings of the European travellers also. Ralph Fitch was the first Englishman to enter the territory of North-East. His

17. Lahori, Abdul Hamid, Padshahinama, p. 28.
18. Nathan, Mirja, Baharistan-i-Ghaybi, pp. 222-253.
19. Acharya, N. N., North East as viewed by foreigners, p. 57.
20. Ibid.
21. Acharya, N. N. op. cit. p. 57-58.

account⁽²²⁾ about Cooch Behar gives us some idea of the reign of Nara Narayan. Though Fitch mentions the king's name as Suckel Course which Sir Edward Gait⁽²³⁾ is disposed to regard as equivalent to Sukladvaj, a title borne by Silarai, the illustrious brother of King Nara Narayan.⁽²⁴⁾

Portuguese Jessuit travellers Father Stephen Cacella and Father John Cabral visited Hajo, Pandu and Cooch Bihar in A.D. 1626. Their account tells us that when the Koch King Parikshit Narayan and Lakshmi Narayan were kept under detention at Dacca, the people of Kamrup rose in open rebellion. Besides Koch-Mughal relation, this account narrates the contemporary transactions⁽²⁵⁾ between Assam, Cooch Behar, Tibet, Patna, Rajmahal and Gaur.

The Cooch Behar State, which is the subject of our present discourse, had its origin in the remote past. On the basis of the records available most of the historians generally confirm that the state was a part of the ancient kingdom of Kamrupa. The geographical extent of the kingdom had varied from time to time. The extent of Kamrupa roughly comprised almost the whole region of Brahmaputra valley, the north east part of

22. Foster, W., Early travels in India - p. 24-25.

23. Gait, Edward, History of Assam, p. 59.

24. There is one difficulty in accepting Fitch's description as Silarai had died a few years before Fitch's arrival.

25. Wessels, S.G., Early Jessuit travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721, pp. 123-27.

Mymensingh and possibly also ⁽²⁶⁾ the Garo hills. About the origin of Cooch Behar State, Hunter ⁽²⁷⁾ left behind an account that had been supported by Buchanan Hamilton. According to both Hamilton and Hunter, Kamatapur was the capital and the principal city of the kingdom of Kamrupa. Raja Nilambar described as an ambitious king, was the last independent ruler of Kamrup and belonged to the Khen community that dominated the country between the Karotoya in the west and Brahmaputra in the east. ⁽²⁸⁾ In the last decade of the 15th century Ala-ud-din Hussain Shah, the Afghan king became the ruler of Gaud. In 1498, ^(of the 15th century) ^{omit} he launched a vigorous campaign against Kamrupa. The invasion was led by the famous Ismail Gazi who overwhelmed the Khen resistance and captured the capital. The whole kingdom of Kamrup was eventually ⁽²⁹⁾ conquered and subjugated to Gaud. The Sultan then made a daring attack upon the Ahom domain, which, at that time stretched eastward of the Bara Nadi far into the upper Brahmaputra Valley. ⁽³⁰⁾ But the enterprise ultimately ended in disaster.

The futility of this campaign had an adverse reaction on the position of the Sultan of Gaud in the newly acquired

26. Bhattacharjee, S. N., A History of Mughal N.E. Frontier Policy, p. 48.
27. Hunter, W.W., Statistical Account of Rangpur, Vol. VII, pp.310-18.
28. Ibid., Statistical Account of Bengal, p. 331.
29. Sarkar, J. N. Ed., History of Bengal, Vol. II, p. 146.
30. Bhattacharjee, S.N., op. cit., p. 71.

territory of Kamrupa. The end of the Khen rule created a Vacuum in U that region, for Gaud did not provide for an organised Government, save an army of occupation to hold the country. The failure of the Campaign against the Ahoms made the role of that army of occupation ineffective. Political revolution followed in Bengal. Anarchy and lawlessness reigned supreme. A number of petty Chiefs (Bhuiyans)⁽³¹⁾ consolidated their position and set up small and isolated spheres of influence on the ruins of the old kingdom of Kamrupa. Of them the most prominent was Viswasingha, who organised the Koch people into a formidable power and coerced the neighbouring Bhuiyans into subjection. He extended his authority from the river Karotoya on the west to the Baranadi in the east. Thus under the leadership on Viswa-Singha, the Koch kingdom or Cooch Behar was born (1510).⁽³²⁾

At the time of the emergence of Cooch Behar as an independent principality in the northern fringes of Bengal, Gaud was having difficult times. Nasrat Shah (1519-32 A.D.), the son and successor of Hussain Shah proved to be an idle and inefficient ruler. Meanwhile, Ibrahim Lodi, the last Afghan emperor of Delhi was defeated at the hands of Babur, the Mughal adventurer. Nasrat Shah involved himself in this grave political complications which

31. Gait, Ed., Koch Kings of Kamrupa, p. 28.

32. Sarkar, J. N., Ed., op.cit., p. 158,
Gait, Ed., History of Assam, pp. 45-48.
Hunter, W.N., op.cit., p. 331.

prevented him from giving attention towards Kamrupa where things has began to take its own course. Viswa Singha did not fail to grasp this opportunity to consolidate his position. (33)

The early part of Viswa Singha's reign was spent in encountering the rival elements. The credit of eliminating the Muhammadan influence in Kamrupa may be attributed to him. No detailed account is available of his warfare against his neighbours. (34) He extended his kingdom right and left but took care to be on good terms with the Bengal Sultans on his south and the Ahom Rajas on his east. (35)

During his reign Assam was convulsed for many years by Muhammadan invasions. In 1533 A.D. the Ahoms defeated and followed the army of Gaud to the banks of Karotoya. At that time Nasrat Shah was the ruler of Gaud. Visvakosh, (36) mentions that Nasrat Shah, the ruler of Gaud was defeated by Viswa Singha and fled. Rajopakhyan (37) tells that Viswa Singha conquered Gaud, when Islam Shah was the emperor of Delhi. (38) But Muslim historians are silent about the achievements of Viswa Singha.

The first period of the independent sultanate in Bengal ended in 1538, when Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad Shah, the last

33. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op.cit., p. 75.

34. Bhattacharjee, S. N. op.cit.

35. Sarkar, J. N. op.cit., p. 134.

36. Basu, N. N. Viswakosh, p. 62.

37. This work is written in Bengali Prose by Munshi Joynath Ghosh.

38. Ghosh, Munshi Joynath, Rajopakhyan - Narakhanda, Adhyaya-I.

king of the Hussain Shah's dynasty died in his struggle against Sher Shah Afghan. Sher Shah also defeated Humayun and thus (39) Delhi also passed under his control.

During this period of political turmoil in Delhi and as well as in Bengal, the new born Kingdom of Cooch Behar was passing its golden days under King Nara Narayan (1533-1587 A.D.), the brilliant successor of Viswa Singha. Nara Narayan's brother and valiant general Chila Rai was also another illustrious figure of Cooch Behar during this time. After Nara Narayan's accession to the throne news came from Gaud that the power of the Muhammedans was increasing and that the territories subjugated by Viswa Singh, were being attacked by them. The king forthwith marched upon Gaud at the head of a large army, Sukladvaja (Chila-rai) being the commander in-Chief. The Governor of Gaud was defeated and the country as far as the Ganges was conquered. (40) Sukladvaja next invaded Ghoraghat and the adjoining tracts. After this Nara Narayan conquered Assam and reduced the neighbouring countries of Kachar, Manipur, Jaintia, Tipperah and Sylhet into submission. (41) Thus the state reached its high watermark of glory during his reign. The kingdom extended to the east to the all wild (42) tribes near the borders of Burma, to the

39. Bhattacharjee, S. N. op.cit. pp. 75-76.

40. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 230.

41. Ibid., p. 231.

42. Ghosh, Joyanath, Rajopakhyan, Narakhandā, A dhyaya-I.

north to Tibet, to the west to Trihut and to the south to
(43)
Goraghat.

Cooch Behar, however, could not enjoy her lonely eminence for a long time. In the last quarter of the 16th century Mughal-Afghan contest in Bengal reached her door and broke her peace. This resulted in Koch-Mughal friendship. The Afghan Chiefs, hard pressed by the invading Mughals chose Ghoraghat as their base of operations in North Bengal. The purpose of this strategy was that in the event of any reverse in battle it would be possible for them to take asylum in the neighbouring state of Cooch Behar. So, in order to hold the Afghans at bay, Akbar decided to make a friendly alliance with Nara Narayan. But paradoxically it was not the Mughal Emperor but the Koch ruler who broke the ice and took the initiative in contracting the alliance. Nara Narayan did not want to involve himself in the contest between the Afghans and the Mughals and invite the opposition of the Mughals, who were by far the most powerful. Moreover, during this time the position of the Koches in Bengal was also not favourable. (44) This enables the north-eastern states to reassert themselves. The death of Chilarai also made Nara Narayan's military strength to some extent weak. All these

43. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 232.

Ghosal, S.C., History of Cooch Behar, pp. 154-55.

44. According to Stewars in 1569 Soliman Shah Kerony (Suleman Karrani) is said to have invaded and plundered Cooch Behar (Hist. of Bengal, p. 156).

compelled Nara Narayan to enter into a friendly alliance with Akbar⁽⁴⁵⁾ in 1578 A.D. The Mughal Emperor appears to have been highly gratified by this friendly gesture on the part of the Koch King and heartily reciprocated it.

After the death of Chila rai, his son Raghu Dev laid his claim on the throne of Cooch Behar and rebelled against Nara Narayan. Ultimately the Kingdom was divided into two halves by Nara Narayan before his death. The portion of his Kingdom lying to the west of the river Sonkos, which included Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Rangpur fell to the share of his son Lakshmi Narayan, while the portion lying to the east of Sonkos and a both banks of the Grahmaputra, which included Baharbund and Bhitarbund⁽⁴⁶⁾ was given to Raghudev, the nephew of Nara Narayan. Muhammedan writers⁽⁴⁷⁾ refer to the two kingdoms as "Koch Bihar" and "Koch Hajo"⁽⁴⁸⁾ respectively. The cousins bitterly differed on the said arrangement of their respective shares and indulged themselves in in-fighting.⁽⁴⁹⁾ These domestic disputes in Koch

45. Again in 1578 A.D. Hossain Kooly Khan, it is said, compelled the Raja of Cooch Behar to pay a tribute and to acknowledge himself a vassal of the Mughal Empire. Stewart - p. 166.

Akbarnama III, pp. 207, 762-63; Ain-i-Akbari (Garrett), pp. 190-95, Blochmann, op.cit., pp. 52-55.

46. Vas, I.A., Rangpur, p. 25.

47. Abdul Hamid Loheri in his Padshahinama describes the conflict between Lakshminarayan of Koch Bihar and Parikshit Narayan of Koch-Hajo.

48. Ibid., p. 26.

49. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op.cit., p. 105.

Vas, I.A., op.cit., p. 26.

Stewart, C. H. op.cit., pp. 137-38.

Politics offered the Afghans and the Mughals and ideal opportunity to advance their own political influence in this region. Lakshmi Narayan, on his part looked up the Mughals for help while his cousin Raghudev invited Isa Khan, the Afghan Chief of South-East Bengal, for assistance. With the help of the Mughals, Lakshmi Narayan ultimately defeated his cousin, but was obliged to enter into a subordinate alliance with the Mughals. (50)

The Mughals on the other hand, treated Cooch Behar as a vassal state but pursued an aggressive policy towards Kamrup. Raja Parikshit Narayan, son and successor of Raghudev, also had unfriendly relations with Lakshmi Narayan and thus incurred the displeasure of the Mughals. Parikshit strengthened his army and launched an attack upon Cooch Behar which resulted in Mughal expedition in 1612 A.D. Parikshit was defeated and was taken as a prisoner to the Mughal Court. His territory was also annexed to Mughal dominion. (51) Taking the opportunity, the Ahoms installed Bali Narayan, brother of Parikshit Narayan as a vassal ruler in Darrang whom they wanted to utilise as a buffer against the Mughals and the western Koches. (52)

50. Sarkar, J. N., Ed., History of Bengal, Vol. II, p. 234. Akbarnamah - Lucknow Ed. III, p. 762 refers to the 41st year of Akbar's reign "About this Lachmi Narain submitted. He is the ruler of Koch and has 4,000 horse and 200,000 foot, 700 elephants and 1,000 ships, His country is 200 ks long and from 100 to 40 koss broad, extending in the east to the Brahmaputra in the North to Tibbat in the South to Choraghat and in the West to Trihut".
51. M.L.Bora, (tr.), Baharistan-i-Ghaybi, Vol. I, pp. 528-29.
52. Blochmann, H., op.cit., pp.54
- Datta, S.C., op.cit., Introduction.

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Thus the political condition of Cooch Behar State, during the seventeenth century was in a fluid state full of Chaos and confusion; because two imperial powers - Ahom on the east and Mughal in the west - vigorously followed the policy of expansionism and met with direct confrontation for the possession of Koch Kingdom. ⁽⁵³⁾ (The partition of the Koch territories not only weakened the material prosperity of the state but also sowed the seeds of ill-will between the two branches which had a disastrous effect, leading to imperial intervention in Koch politics.) ⁵⁴ Omit

The Mughals, during the reign of Emperor Jehangir, under subedar Islam Khan of Bengal, utilised the subordinate alliance with Cooch Behar as an alibi for subjection of the state and thereby succeeded in establishing political supremacy over the kingdom. The Mughals also conquered Kamrup and made it a part and parcel of the Bengal Subah. The boundary of Mughal India ⁽⁵⁵⁾ reached as far as the bank of the river Bara Nadi. The Mughals then advanced against the Ahoms in Upper Brahmaputra valley. However, the reigning Ahom King Pratap Singh was not to be vanquished with one blow. So hostilities ensued between the Ahoms and the Mughals and continued greater part of the seventeenth century which may be described as an eventful phase in the history of Mughal ⁽⁵⁶⁾ relation with the North East Frontier. The subjugation of Kamrup

53. Ahmed, Amanatullah, Cooch Beharer Itihas, (in Bengali), pp.141-42.

54. Blochmann, H., op.cit., pp. 54-59.

55. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op.cit., pp. 103-105.

56. Sarkar, J. N., Ed., op.cit., Vol. II, p. 235.

and the subordinate alliance with Cooch Behar had offered' the desired opportunity to aggrandise the Ahom territory.

The war of succession following the illness of Shah Jehan, however, halted the progress of the Mughals in the North-east frontier of Bengal. Taking advantage of the disorder in Mughal camp the Ahoms from the right and Cooch Behar from the left, started nibbling at the territories of Koch-Hajo or the eastern part of the Old Koch Kingdom. Pran Narayan, Raja of Cooch Behar made a series of plundering raids into the Ghoraghat region, carrying off a number of Imperial subjects as captives and declared himself as an independent ruler by stopping payment of tribute to the Mughal Emperor. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ The Ahoms thereupon took instant possession of Gauhati, Pandu and Saraighat and many war equipments were acquired. ⁽⁵⁸⁾ Pran Narayan advanced to Dhubri and took its possession by defeating the Mughal Faujdar of Kamrup. ⁽⁵⁹⁾ This attitude of the rulers of these territories made the Mughal position in the North-East-Frontier extremely precarious.

Meanwhile Aurangzeb emerged triumphant in the War of succession for Mughal throne. Immediately after assuming power he appointed Mirjuna as the subedar of Bengal (1661-1663 A.D.) to re-establish Mughal authority in the North-East Frontier,

57. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op.cit., pp. 293-300.

58. Bhuiyan, S. K., Assam Buranji, p. 75.

59. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op. cit., p. 302.

to crush the adventurism of the Koch ruler and to recover Kamrup from the Ahoms. The presence of Mir Jumla in the North-East Frontier, although for a very brief period, had a remarkable bearing on the history of this region. With him, in fact, there was a revival of military imperialism of the Mughals in the North East Frontier. ⁽⁶⁰⁾ (Mir Jumla immediately advanced to thwart the designs of the rulers of Cooch Behar and the Ahoms. He himself led a fairly large army against Cooch Behar. But Maharaja Pran Narayan fled the country. The subedar captured Cooch Behar and the state was ultimately annexed to Mughal India. The name of the town was changed to Alamgirnagar. ⁽⁶¹⁾ The subjugation of Cooch Behar was followed by the recapture of Kamrup. Apparently, after establishing his authority in Cooch Behar, Mir Jumla, on 4th January, 1662 launched a massive invasion in Ahom territories. He left behind Isfandier Beg ⁽⁶²⁾ as the acting faujdar of Cooch Behar, pending the arrival of Askar Khan, the faujdar designate. The Nawab halted at Cooch Behar for Sixteen days upto Jan., 3, 1662 and directed the officials to reorganise the political and revenue set up in the imperial line ⁽⁶³⁾ in addition to other administrative affairs. But the arrogant Mughal officers in Cooch Behar

60. Datta, S.C., op.cit.

61. Datta, S.C., op.cit., p. 61

62. Sarker, J. N., History of Bengal, Vol. II, p. 376.
Blochman, H., "Koch Bihar and Assam", J.A.S.B. Vol. XLII, Part I, p. 67.

63. Ahamed, A., op.cit., p. 68.

started introducing the revenue collection system of Northern India which was unknown to and unsuitable for Cooch Behar. This made the people of Cooch Behar revolt against the Mughals. Moreover, in the absence of the Subedar, the acting faujdar and his officers let loose a reign of terror by coercive means. Consequently the wrath of the people of Cooch Behar compelled Isfandier Beg to leave the country; and the land that had been very systematically captured by the Mughals, eventually slipped away from their grip.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Meanwhile Mir Jumla's operations against the Ahoms ended in disaster. The situation became worst by the death of Mir Jumla. The faujdar designate Askar Khan attempted to reconquer Cooch Behar but could only occupy Fatehpore - a Chakla or a revenue division of Cooch Behar at its southern gate and Askar Khan waited for the arrival of the successor of Mir Jumla.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The failure of the Assam operations of Mir Jumla obliged the Mughals to accept Ahom domination over Kamrup. All the efforts made afterwards to make a friendly relation with the Ahoms did not succeed. By all calculations the North-East Frontier policy of the Mughals was barren.⁽⁶⁶⁾ By 1632 they were ultimately forced to abandon their activities against Kamrup and to be contented with their limited authority over South-western part of the Brahmaputra valley upto Rangamatty as the frontier

64. Sarkar, J. N., Ed., op.cit., pp. 376-77.

65. Ibid.

66. Datta, S. C. op.cit., p. 34.

(67)
station. Despite Mir Jumla's unfulfilled mission in Assam and Cooch Behar, his military carnage left a sad memory full of agony and terror to the inhabitants of north-east India.

Shaista Khan, the successor of Mir Jumla as the Subedar of Bengal, arrived at Rajmahal in March, 1664. The Koch King feared that the new Subedar would attack Cooch Behar to retrieve the injured pride of the imperial Mughals. So he sent a proposal to the subedar admitting fealty and promising Rs. 5½ lacs as guarantee for preserving the safety of the kingdom. The subedar accepted these terms and as soon as the indemnity reached him, removed the army from the border of the kingdom. The "tribute" reached the Emperor on 6th December, 1665. (68)

After this Cooch Behar enjoyed a respite from the raids of the Mughals for about 20 years (1666-1685 A.D.). Maharaja Pran Narayan, who had consistently opposed Mughal expansionism and had offended Mir Jumla died in 1665 A.D. After his death the kingdom of Cooch Behar was under the grip of internal strifes and civil wars. This offered the Mughals again a good opportunity for extending their sway over the southern and eastern portions of the Cooch Behar Kingdom. But the Mughals failed to take advantage of the situation. The Bengal subedar was busy elsewhere. The Arakan pirates, the East India Company and the internal problems of their own occupied the energy and resources of

67. Bhattacharjee, S. N., op.cit., p. 395.

68. Sarkar, J. N., History of Aurangzeb, Vol. III, p. 218.

(69)

the subedar. He had therefore, no time to engage in an expedition against Cooch Behar. Taking the opportunity of the pre-occupations of the Bengal subedar, several of the bordering zamindars and tributary Rajas withdrew their necks from the collar of obedience, and not only neglected to send any part of their revenues to the Imperial treasury, but even invaded the provinces. Amongst the most prominent of these was Beernarain, the Raja of Cooch Behar, whose country, although frequently plundered by the Mahammedans, and compelled to pay tribute, was never absolutely subdued. It was during the reign of Vasudeva's successor, Mahendra Narayan (1681-1693 A.D.), the great grandson of Pran Narayan, that the imperial policy of the Mughals again was given a trial. They began to encroach upon the southern and eastern parts of the kingdom of Cooch Behar. Ibrahim Khan was the subedar during this period. Ebadat Khan, son of Shaista Khan, captured the Central Chaklas of Fatehpore, Quazirhat and Kankina in 1687 A.D. and the Raja's officers-in-Charge of these places as well as other Parganas agreed to pay tribute to the sebedar of Bengal. After securing their authority over the Central Chaklas of Cooch Behar, the Mughals attacked the remaining three Chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purvabhag. Cooch Behar resisted strongly. Simultaneously, however, Janga Dev and Bhuja Dev of Baikunthapur invaded Cooch Behar. In the face of this unprecendented danger Cooch Behar

69. Bhattacharjee, S.N., op.cit., p. 311.

70. Stewart, Hist. of Bengal, p. 287.

71. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 240.

72. Gruning, G. F., op.cit., p. 19.

73. Ibid.

74. Vas, J. A., op.cit., p. 27.

fought valiantly. But at last being exhausted agreed to a compromise with the Mughals. In 1711 A.D. a treaty was made by which the three Chaklas mentioned before were ceded to the Mughals who allowed them to be held in farm by Shantonarayan, the Nazir Dev, on behalf of the king of Cooch Behar.⁽⁷⁵⁾ King Rup Narayan (1693-1714 A.D.) was the ruler of Cooch Behar during this period of turmoils and he is regarded as the last Koch king who hold sway over western Kamrup. The fact that although the Mughal forced the cession, they never wrested these Chaklas from the hands of Cooch Behar princes. The reason for this may be attributed to the irregular boundary between the Mughals and the Cooch Behar proper.⁽⁷⁶⁾ After the conclusion of the treaty, friendship was established between Cooch Behar and the Nawab of Bengal and King Rup Narayan sent an Ukil (ambassador) to the Durbar of Nawab Murshid Kuli Khan.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Murshid Kuli Khan was the Subedar of Bengal from A.D. 1717 to 1727. The Subedar was an ardent champion of austerity in administrative expenses, and was essentially pre-occupied with economy measures in administration. Moreover the Nawab did not dare to antagonise the Raja of Cooch Behar keeping in view that there was every possibility of loosing the prospective revenues from the captured Chaklas. Cooch Behar, during this period, was

75. Vas, J.A., op.cit., p. 27

76. Ibid.

77. Gladwin, A Narrative of Bengal, p. 33.

fortunate to escape fresh troubles from the Mughals.

Shuja-ud-din (1727-1739 A.D.) succeeded Murshid Kuli Khan as the Subedar of Bengal. The friendly relation between Cooch Behar and Murshid Kuli Khan, ⁽⁷⁸⁾ did not ensure under Shuja-ud-din. He appointed Saulat Jang, the son of Haji Ahmad and the nephew of Alivardi Khan, as the Naib Faujdar of Ghoraghat and Rangpur. At that time Upendra Narayan (1714-1763 A.D.) was the Raja of Cooch Behar. His adopted son Dinanarayan was involved in bitter quarrels over the royal throne. Saulat Jang being approached by Dinanarayan, took up his cause and ⁽⁷⁹⁾ installed him as the ruler of Cooch Behar ousting Upendranarayan. However with the help of Bhutan Upendranarayan ultimately regained his position. Saulat Jang, in the meantime, invaded Baikunthapur and took away Darpa Dev and Bikram Dev - the Raikats* as hostages to Rangpur.

78. Datta, S. C., op.cit., p. 169.

79. Mercer and Chauvet's Report on Cooch Behar in 1788, Vol.II, p. 169.

Martin, M., Eastern India, Vol. III, pp. 419-20.

* The title "Raikat" (Raj-Kot-Chief of the fort) was created by Maharaja Viswa Singha. They (Raikats) became the hereditary grand minister of the kingdom and hold umbrella over the king during the time of his installation. Even when, this connection with the ruling family of Cooch Behar ceased; whoever was the zamindar of the Pargana of Baikunthapur, assumed the title Raikat (Choudhury, A., op.cit., p. 232)

Alivardi Khan who succeeded Shuja-ud-din as the Subedar of Bengal in 1740, handed over the charge of Rangpur to Qasim Ali, his borther-in-Law. The new faujdar released the two Raikat brothers held in captivity in Rangpur for 17 years. The collection of Revenue of Baikunthapur was sometimes made "by an officer supported by a force from the Phougedar of Rangpore", sometimes was "given into the management of the Cooch Behar Raja's Naib for Boda" and then "settled for with Durrup Deo". Baikunthapur, however, was completely separated from Cooch Behar since it had been first conquered by Saulat Jang. (80)

During the administration of Alivardi Khan the affairs of Cooch Behar were ignored as Alivardi Khan was fully engaged in meeting the menace from the Marathas. He had no time to attend to the problems of the North East Frontier nor his successors were in a better position to do so, encumbered as they were, by the political revolution of 1757. (81)

After the acquisition of the Diwani in 1765 by the East India Company, the northern frontier of Bengal again came into prominence. The Muhammedans called their conquests in North Bengal Fakirkundi after the Kundi Pargana which was situated across Ghoraghat. This territory together with the Pargana of

80. Com. cir. pros. ^{23rd Dec, 1772,} pp. 34-36. Letter from the Committee of circuit to Purding.
81. Ibid.

Kundi and the Chaklas constituted the district of Rangpur. It was the frontier district bordering on Nepal, Bhutan, Cooch Behar and Assam. (82) During this time Rangpur had an area of 2679 square miles. (83) The province was "productive of the valuable articles of raw silk, opium, tobacco, and sugar, besides a superabundance of grain with the other necessaries of life beyond the wants of home consumption carried abroad for sale." (84) The thanadari with the district of Rangamati which stretched on both sides of the river Brahmaputra extending eastwards to the independent kingdom of Ahom, was within the jurisdiction of Rangpur. (85)

Cooch Behar state, during this period, presented a very tragic picture. Repeated Mughal incursion had already made its foundation very weak. The Raikats of Baikunthapur ceased to pay their allegiance towards Cooch Behar. (86) To add to it, mutual animosity among the royal princes, internal disorder, incapacity and weakness of the ruler to impose a strong Government - all these let loose the forces of disruption. This was an opportunity for Bhutan, a northern neighbour, who had already fixed her eyes on Cooch Behar. This distracted state

82. Vas, J.A., Rangpur, Dist. Gazetteers, pp. 27-28.

83. Firminger, J. W. K., Fifth Report from the Select Committee, Vol. 2, p. 259.

84. Ibid., p. 341.

85. Ibid.

86. Mazumdar, A.B., Anglo - Bhotanese Relations, p. 31.

of affairs within Cooch Behar from the mid-eighteenth century revived the ambition of Darpa Dev to aggrandise himself, and in view of this, he entered into an alliance with Bhutan.

In the early period of their relations, Bhutan being the northern neighbour of Cooch Behar, carried their trade in Cooch Behar, and through Cooch Behar into Rangpur. Krishnakanta Bose, an officer of the Company, in his "Mission to Bhutan" (1815) stated that till the 17th century Koch tribes were the rulers of Bhutan. (87) Sir Ashley Eden says, "Apparently the Bhutias have not possessed Bhutan for more than two centuries; it formerly belonged to a tribe called by the Bhutias Tephu; they are generally believed to have been the people of Cooch Behar." (88) The Tephu were driven down into the plains by some Tibetan soldiers who had been sent from Lhasa to take permanent possession of the country. According to the family history of the kings of Darrang in Assam, Prince Narasingha, the eldest son of king Viswasingha of Cooch Behar, was deprived of the throne. He left Cooch Behar and after much wandering came to Bhutan and became their Dharmaraja. (89) Sir Edward Gait, however, writes that "Although there is no confirmation of this statement, the occurrence is not altogether impossible". (90) Alexander Cosma de koros stated that the Bhutanese adopted in their manners and

87. Bose, Krishnakanta, Political Mission to Bhutan, p. 18.

88. Gruning, G.F., op.cit., p. 19

89. Goswami, H.C., Darrang Raj Vamsabali, p. 34.

90. Gait, Edward, History of Assam, pp. 48-54.

customs much from the Indians.⁽⁹¹⁾ This was evidently a result of Bhutan's early contact with Cooch Behar; the rulers of which had also adopted the traditional culture of the Hindus. The use of the Koch Raj Saka or the era of the Cooch Behar Kings (calculated from 1510) by the Government of Bhutan in its Bengali letters further testified to the impact of Koch influence upon that country.⁽⁹²⁾ The use of Narayani coins was prevalent in Bhutan for a long time. Sir Edward Gait has quoted the remark of Shihab-ud-din Talish, who accompanied Mir Jumla in Assam campaigns that the people of Bhutan "spoke a dialect allied to that of the Koches".⁽⁹³⁾

From all these opinions it might be presumed that Bhutan had (for sometimes) submitted to Koch influence; but that a prince of Cooch Behar sat on the throne of Bhutan can not be accepted without more definite evidence; In Rajopakhayan (story of the Kings of Cooch Behar) it is remarked that Prince Narasingha abdicated the throne "in fulfilment of a promise".⁽⁹⁴⁾ In the account of Ralph Fitch, who visited Cooch Behar during his travels in Bengal (1585-86), mention is made of Bhutan and her Dharma Raja⁽⁹⁵⁾ but there is no reference of so remarkable an episode of Narasingha in Bhutan, although Nara Narayan was then reigning in

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91. Koros, A.C., "Geographical Notice of Tibet", J.A.S.B., April 1832, p. 125.
 92. Majumdar, A.B., Anglo-Bhutanese relations in the 18th and 19th centuries, p. 31.
 93. Gait, Ed., op.cit., p. 49.
 94. Choudhury, H.N., op.cit., p. 229.
 95. Foster, W., "Ralph Fitch", 1583-91 (Early travels in India), p. 27.

Cooch Behar.

Considering all these aspects of Cooch Behar's influence over Bhutan from a very early period, the eventual deterioration of this relation was confusing. The paucity of evidence in this regard prevents us from determining how this cordiality turned into a hostile one. The nearest hypothesis is that Bhutan, during the period under review ~~was~~ under the rulership of Debraja, was aspiring for territorial expansion; and the gradual decline of Cooch Behar from the 17th century encouraged Bhutan to throw away her submissive attitude. Systematic expansion of Bhutanese power in the plains began during this period. They interfered in issues of succession in Cooch Behar as early as 1680. We have noted earlier, that Koch king Upendra Narayan sought the help of Bhutan to retaliate against Dinanarayan and to dislodge him from the throne. Debraja, who had already contemplated interfering in Koch politics, extended military help to Upendranarayan to retrieve his lost position. This dependence on the part of Cooch Behar ⁽⁹⁶⁾ afforded Bhutan the opportunity to fulfil their cherished desire. They now took advantage of the disorder and worthlessness of the ruling authority of

96. Ahmed, A., Hist. of Cooch Behar, (Bengali Ed.), pp. 183-84.

Cooch Behar and began to interfere into the domestic affairs of the state. A Bhutia representative named Pensu Toma permanently resided at the capital of Cooch Behar and his opinion about the succession to the kingly office was respectfully considered. At Chechakhata ⁽⁹⁷⁾ a border post of Cooch Behar towards Bhutan, the delegates of both Governments used to exchange their commercial articles ⁽⁹⁸⁾ as presents and a grand feast used to be arranged on this occasion. This ceremony was an annual feature, and illustrated the mark of friendship and cordiality that existed between the two countries. ⁽⁹⁹⁾ Ironically enough it was at this place that Bhutan demonstrated the worst type of treachery by capturing the ruler of Cooch Behar and taking him away as prisoner, and that brought the English at her door.

Debendranarayan (1763-65) was installed on the throne of Cooch Behar after the death of his father Upendranarayan. Misfortune dogged the Kingdom for a long time. Now it came upon the surface. Debendranarayan, soon after his accession was murdered at the instigation of Ramananda Goswami, the King's spiritual

97. Ghosal, S. C., *op. cit.*, p. 187.

Ahmed, A. - op. cit. - p. 188.

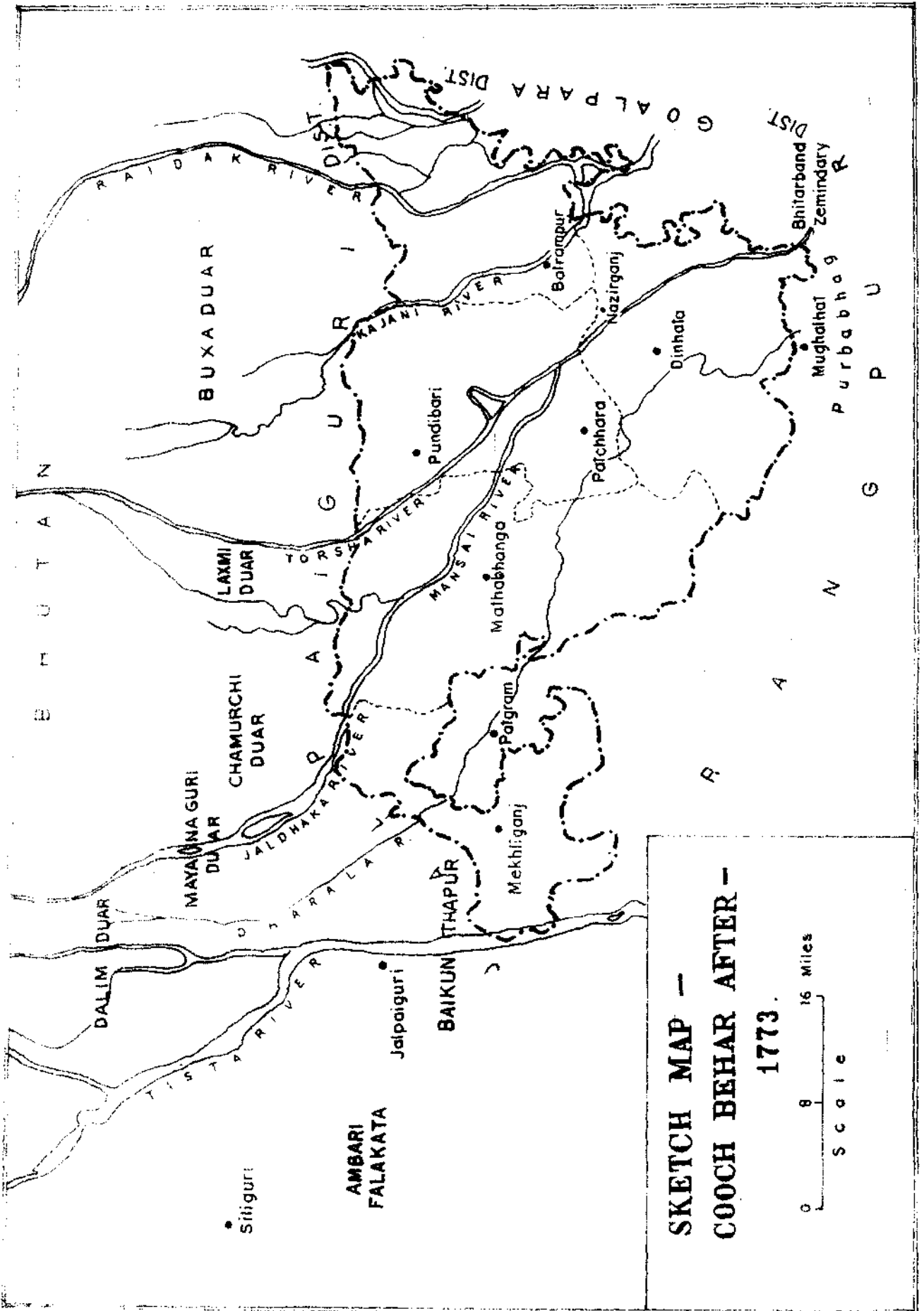
98. The Bhutias offered horses, Koch in and Babanga clothes, Svetamala, Bhotmala, musk, walnuts, Bot ghee, Bhot plums etc. the King of Cooch Behar presents worth double those brought by the Bhutias (S.C. Ghosal, *Hist. of Cooch Behar*, p. 234).

99. Op.cit., p. 183.

teacher. (100) Everyone ^{WTD} (took with) dismay^{ed} at this ghastly incident; the murderer was instantaneously disposed of, and that removed any possibility of probing the incident. The incident, however, offered Bhutan a plea to take Cooch Behar under her protection, as she had done, once before to ward off the Muslim invasion of Cooch Behar in early 18th century. This time Bhutan arrested Ramananda and gave him capital punishment. The ministers of Cooch Behar, during this time played no significant role. The ministers Gaurinath Bara Kayastha Karji, Gaurinandan Mustafi, Gauri Prasad Bakshi and others consulted together with the Dewan Deo Ramnarayan and the Nazir Deo Rudranarayan. As Upendranarayan had no son, Nazir Deo had a desire to make his son Khagendranarayan, the king of Cooch Behar. But it was averted by the presence of mind of Gaurinath. (101) Ultimately the selection of the king went to Dhairjendra Narayan, Upendranarayan's brother's son and third brother of Ramnarayan. The Dewan Deo, though he himself was ambitious, assented to the decision of the ministers. Thus Dhairjendranarayan became the king of Cooch Behar. The first part of his reign (1765-70 A.D.) from all aspects was a very significant chapter in the history of the State. These years were also important in the history of the East India Company. Having secured the Diwani (12th August, 1765) the East India Company became interested in the northern part of the Bengal Subah and eventually got involved in them.

100. Ghosal, S.C., History of Cooch Behar, p. 236.

101. Ibid., p. 238.



**SKETCH MAP -
COOCH BEHAR AFTER -**

1773.



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.

(6)
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 Koch 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 Koch 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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28. Home consultations, No. 3, April, 19, 1729.
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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

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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.J., 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 op.cit. 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 Company. 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. 333-84.

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, Khagendronarayan 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, which was supported and approved by the court of Directors. (106) (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.

CHAPTER - III

East India Company and the years of Misrule in Cooch Behar 1774 - 1789

The anglo-Cooch Behar treaty (1773) succeeded in saving Cooch Behar from the clutches of Bhutan. But elimination of Bhutan's hold upon Cooch Behar did not result in peace and tranquility in that state. ⁽¹⁾ Old feuds and old jealousies between the branches of the ruling house that ^{had remained} (only lay) dormant for a few years again came upon the surface. The result was that from 1774 to 1789 the state was convulsed with internal disorders and confusion which had a great effect upon the people of Cooch Behar in the near future.

During the captivity of king Dhairjendra Narayan in Bhutan his son Dharendra Narayan ⁽²⁾ (1772-75) was the Naib-Raja or Deputy king of Cooch Behar. Rajendra Narayan, whom the Bhutanese agent in Cooch Behar had declared king in the fateful year of 1770 and kept him under Bhutanese protection, died within two years. ⁽³⁾ Bhutan then placed Bijendra Narayan on the throne but took him to Chechakhata to ensure his safety. British advance into Cooch Behar, however, turned the table against Bhutan. The Nazir Deo Khagendranarayan and the Naib-Raja Dharendra Narayan had their chance to set the house in

1. Sen, S. N. - Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan, Introduction.
2. Ahmed, A., - History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali), p. 203.
3. Ahmed, A. - History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali), p. 201.

ibid.

order, (after (with British help Cooch Behar had got rid of
mit Bhutan.) But this was not to be. A new combination of
personalities had taken place and that ultimately decided the
future course of Cooch Behar's history.

Khagendranarayan, who had saved Cooch Behar by
timely imploring British help against Bhutan, and had installed
Dharendra Narayan as the deputy-king so long as Dhairjendra
Narayan was away from Cooch Behar, was soon disillusioned by
the prospect of a new combination aspiring for the real
authority in the state. This fortuitous combination was made
of queen Kamateswari, the royal preceptor Sarbananda and
Dewan Kashikanta Lahiri. While Sarbananda and Kashikanta
sought to enrich themselves at the cost of the kingdom, the
Queen, swayed by her reverence for the royal preceptor, failed
to see through his game and allowed herself to become an ins-
trument for satisfying the greed of Sarbananda for power and
riches. (4) There is no evidence of Dharendra Narayan taking
any step against those officers. The Nazir Dev also felt
helpless. Not even the return of king Dhairjendra Narayan (5)
to his capital after the Anglo-Bhutanese war was concluded saw
any improvement of the situation. It is said that Dhairjen-
dra Narayan was very much shocked to learn that Cooch Behar

4. Sen, S. N. op.cit., Introduction.

5. Choudhury, H. N. - Cooch Behar State and its land Revenue Settlement, p. 247.

had been rendered a tributary state. He is said to have rebuked the Nazir Dev for arranging the deal with the British and bartering away the independence of the kingdom. (6) He said to the Nazir - "Baba Nazir, why did you give the state to the Company?" Since his return Dhairjendra Narayan practically stood away from all state affairs and became more and more absorbed with religious rites. (7)

Dharendra Narayan dying in 1775, the officers requested Dhairjendra Narayan to look into royal affairs. But as he was totally indifferent to it, his second term of rule was insignificant for the country. The real administrative power lay with the queen Kamateswari whose evil genius was Sarbananda Goswami. On his part Sarbananda took the fullest advantage of the situation and became virtually the man behind the throne. (8) Within no time he became the "Mukhtiar" (representative) of the Maharani (9) and also the real administrator of the state.

With regards to the history of Sarbananda's rise to prominence it is stated that at the beginning of the 18th century two brothers Satananda and Panchananda Goswami came to Cooch Behar from Sadikhan Diara near Murshidabad. (10) Satananda became the spiritual preceptor to the ruler and Panchananda to

6. Ahmed, A. - History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali), p. 211.

7. Ibid.

8. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, pp. 11, 24, 152.

9. Ibid.

10. Ghosal, S.C., Ed., A history of Cooch Behar, p. 362.

the Nazir Dev and Dewan Dev. Satananda had a son Ramananda and Panchananda had three sons, Nayananda, Sarbananda and Asananda. When Ramananda was killed by the Bhutias, Sarbananda became Rajguru. There was also a dispute with regards to this. It is said that Maharaja Shivendra Narayan, in a letter dated in 1841 A.D. to the Agent at Gauhati had stated that the predecessors of Sarbananda Goswami were not Gurus of the Cooch Behar dynasty. Sarbananda first became Guru of Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan. But Joynath Ghose mentioned that Sarbananda's uncle was Guru to Maharaja Upendra Narayan. (11)

Sarbananda Goswami was "intelligent" and "energetic", and would not easily deviate from his policy. (12) By ability and firmness he gradually became one of the most influential persons in the state. The Maharani was devoted to him and depended upon him. (13) All royal orders were passed through him. The influence of the Goswami thus gradually increased even in administrative matters. Papers sent to the Maharani for orders, were forwarded by her for disposal by Goswami. (14) Realising the power of Goswami, the principal officers of the king sided with him except Nazir Deo Khagendra Narayan and, the Dewan Deo Surendra Narayan. The seeds of future troubles were gradually visible in the state.

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11. Ghosh, Joynath - Rajopakhyan, Narakhand, Adhyaya - 12.
 12. Ghosal, S.C. - op.cit., p. 362.
 13. Ibid.
 14. Mercier and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, p. 152.

Sarbananda Goswami was not satisfied with merely working as a disinterested adviser. ⁽¹⁵⁾ His greed knew no bounds. He acquired great wealth by purchasing landed property in Rangpur and also obtained many estates in Cooch Behar as Brahmottar. It is not possible to ascertain how much Brahmottara land Sarbananda owned in Cooch Behar. Rani Kamateswari had a blind faith in Sarbananda and the king was disillusioned by the queen's reverence for the royal preceptor. There is a mention of the names of 22 Dehas belonging to Sarbananda in the papers containing the orders of the East India Company. ⁽¹⁶⁾ In the papers preserved in the Council Record Room of Cooch Behar, there is a series of references of Dhairjendra Narayan's granting lands to Sarbananda. On 13th February, 1775, Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan permitted Sarbananda ^{to} enjoying a fee of Rs. 1.8.0 per chala. (parcel of land). ⁽¹⁷⁾ In spite of Sarbananda's extensive property at Rajbari, he was further granted 2 villages in Punjarbarighar near Sitalkuchi. ⁽¹⁸⁾ There is a reference that on July 26, 1782, Sarbananda getting grant of 4 villages in Taluk Panimara. ⁽¹⁹⁾ On 12th February, 1783 Sarbananda was granted Brahmottara in Taluk Nabamidola. Again on 23rd May 1783 Dhairjendra Narayan ⁽²⁰⁾ granted 24 Chalas to Sarbananda in Taluk

15. Ghosal, S.C., - op.cit., p. 363.

16. For details of the names of the Dehas, vide Ahmed, 'A - A History of Cooch Behar (in Bengali)' p. 299.

17. Report of January, 1888 of Record Room, Basta-1, File 59, p.30.

18. Ibid. - Basta 1, File-66.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., Basta, 1, File-86.

(21) Maghpala. In addition to these lands, Sarbananda extracted orders to realise one rupee and eight annas per house in the whole raj as Gurupranami (offering to Guru).⁽²²⁾ All these possessions of Rajguru help us to understand how much power he enjoyed during the lifetime of king Dhairjendra Narayan and even after his death.

The pattern of administration prevailing in Cooch Behar at this time was also ridden with medieval features. Community between the interests of the king and his people is the solid argument in support of the king's personal rule. But it was totally absent in Cooch Behar. The king was the head of the state and had the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo to assist him. The Nazir Deo was in charge of the army, and the Dewan Deo of Civil affairs.⁽²³⁾ They were all paid from the royal treasury. The three had, by an arrangement, distributed the revenue of the kingdom amongst themselves. While the Nazir Deo kept a little more than 56% of the state revenue for his expenses, the Dewan Deo was allotted only 12% and the rest went to the Maharaja.⁽²⁴⁾ This distribution of state revenue among the highest dignitaries of the kingdom lacked all principles of sound administration of the finances. The recipients enjoyed their portions without having much to do for the material well-being of the country and its

21. Ibid., File-89.

22. C.B.S.R. - Vol. 1, pp.72-73.

23. Bengal District Record, Rangpur, Vol. IV, Let. No. 237.

24. Long, C. - Selection from the unpublished Records of Bengal, Vol. I, pp. 542-46.

people. This unbecoming nature of the Nobility had a bad effect upon the country. They never bothered about the prosperity of the country. Moreover, the jealousy and distrust amongst the highest dignitaries were also harmful for the country.

The long-standing cold war between the family of Nazir Dev and the royal family was a great hindrance to the country's welfare. Ever since the time of Mahinarayan, the first Nazir Dev, from whom both the present king and the Nazir Dev traced their descent, the Nazir Dev cherished the ambition for the foremost place in the state, Shantanarayan, one of the grandsons of Mahinarayan, played the role of kingmaker and became the owner of the 9/16 of the states revenue for the maintenance of the army and the defence of the country against the Mughal subedar of Bengal. (25) Thus when the King's authority in the state had waned, the Nazir Dev became the most powerful prince of the royal house. No wonder he should try to secure the throne for a scion of his own family. Thus Rudranarayan, the Sixth Nazir Dev made a serious effort to place on the throne his nephew and the present Nazir Dev Khagendranarayan. A bid for supremacy among the princes of the blood was already in existence. The inglorious reign of Dhairjendra Narayan (1765-1783) marked the real beginning

25. Choudhury, H. N. - Cooch Behar state and its land Revenue settlement, p. 249.

Meser and Chauvets Report on Cooch Behar - Vol II-
Pp - 181-182.

of evil days for Cooch Behar. His neglect of kingly duties (26) let loose the forces of disruption and caused boundless misery to the subjects. There was no cohesion in any part of the administration. Every officer did whatever was right in his own eyes, acknowledged no authority but that of the King and his subordination to the crown again was in most cases only lip-service. (27) The enmity between the Nazir Khagendranarayan and Sarbananda Goswami was the greatest blow for the kingdom which was already in decadence. They were always intriguing against each other to succeed in their designs.

The death of Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan in 1783 left Cooch Behar at the tender mercy of the corrupt and irresponsible officialdom. Dhairjendra Narayan's written instructions gave all administrative power of the kingdom to Rani Kamateswari (28) as the guardian of the minor king Harendra Narayan. The dowager queen's blind faith in Sarbananda even in matters of the state irritated Khagendranarayan. The Nazir Dev considered himself as the saviour of Cooch Behar in the worst hour of Bhutanese oppression. When he found that he had been totally excluded from any share in the management of the State by the dowager queen, he

26. Ahmed, A., op. cit., p. 216.

27. Annual Administrative Report, 1865-66, No. 78.

28. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, pp. 152.

looked upon Sarbananda as an usurper. The Nazir Dev was deter-
mined to regain his rightful authority even by questionable means. (29)

Rani Kamateswari was not the mother of Harendra Narayan. Her position as the guardian of the minor ruler and the regent of the State during his minority was disputed. (30) The dowager queen drew the attention of the Company's authorities to the distress caused by the Nazir Dev to herself and to the minor king of Cooch Behar. She reported that Nazir Dev and his agent Shyam Chand Roy, in collusion with Goodlad, Collector of Rangpur had confined Sarbananda Gosain, the royal preceptor, Kashinath Lahiri, the Khasnovish and several other officials of the state. He had also forcibly taken away the King's seal, ignored the claims of Harendra Narayan to the throne, and gave out himself to be ruler and his son, the heir apparent. The Nazir Dev even struck coins in his own name and looted the properties of the palace. The people of the land, by his oppression and cruelty fled the country. Nazir Dev even planned to murder the minor king. (31)

The Nazir Dev also had his grievances against the Kamateswari-Sarbananda clique. It was he who had made Cooch Behar a protected state of the Company and ensured it of a handsome annual tribute. Ever since the late king of Cooch Behar

29. Long, James - op.cit., p. 11.

30. Proceedings of the G.G. in Council - Revenue Department, Vol. 129, pp. 83-4., 3rd April, 1786

31. Cal. Pers. Cores - Vol. VII. Lett. No. 968.
Sen. S.N.; op. cit. p. 7.

(Dhairjendranarayan) had grown indifferent towards the administration, Queen Kamateswari and her mentor, Sarbananda had virtually ruled the country; but theirs was a tyrannical rule. In 1783-84 Sarbananda had influenced Peter Moore, the Collector of Rangpur, and dared to humiliate the Nazir Dev. Nazir Dev was for sometime put behind the bars by Peter Moore. His estate was plundered and laid waste and he was ousted from power. (32) This inflamed the Nazir Dev and he decided to hit back. He fled to Assam and took shelter with Bulchand Barua, his father-in-law and the quanungo of Rangamatty. (33) There he gathered a force. He then attacked the Palace, seized the persons of the king and the Dowager queen, and kept them confined in his house in Balrampur. (34) He also won over to his side Gulab Singh, the Subedar, of the King's guards, who was on duty in the palace. The Nazir Dev forced the king and the Dowager-queen to put their seal on several blank sheets of paper and on some written documents. (35) He also drew support from the King's own uncle, his mother and grandmother who were very much displeased at the favour showered by the Dowager-queen upon Sarbananda who laid hands upon every piece of rich cultivable land in Cooch Behar. The priest-patron relation of the two was not favourably looked upon by the royal relations. (36)

32. Cal. Per. Corés - Vol. VII, Lett. No. 1183.

Sen, S. N. - op.cit., p.V

33. Cal. Per. Corés - Vol. VIII, Lett. No. 179, pp.74-76.

34. Long, J. - op.cit., pp. 542-46.

35. Cal. Per. Corés - Vol. VIII, Lett. No. 1901-2.

Sen, S.N. - op.cit., p. 5, Lett. No. 12.

36. Mercer and Chauvet's report - Vol. II, p. 286.

The consequences of the daring act of Nazir Dev was that Sarbananda Goswami lodged a complaint to Macdowell, Collector of Rangpur, who under orders of the Governor General, (37) sent forces to Balrampur and rescued the minor king.

The East India Company at first was indifferent towards the happenings in Cooch Behar. The Anglo-Cooch Behar Treaty did not say anything about the exact rights of the Company to interfere in the internal dissensions of Cooch Behar. The main point of that treaty was about the tribute payable to the Company and Cooch Behar's allegiance to the Company's authority. The present internal dissensions did not call into question her fidelity to the British but the growing disorder in Cooch Behar raised doubt about the payment of her tribute. The repeated complaints and claims of both the parties at last induced the Government to interfere in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar. A Commission consisting of Lawrence Mercer and John Lewis Chauvet was appointed to conduct a local enquiry into the recent happenings in Cooch Behar. (38) The Commissioner were also instructed to investigate various other issues of material

37. Proceedings of the G.G. in Council - Vol. 129, pp. 83-96, Brd
38. Cal. Per. Cores - Vol. VII, p. 130, Lett. No. 316. April, 1788

(39)
importance to the British. Amongst them the primary investigations were connected with the disturbances in Cooch Behar after the death of Dhairjendra Narayan the real rights and powers over the kingdom of Cooch Behar of the king, the Nazir and the Dewan, nature of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty, the amount of tribute stipulated in the treaty, the rights of the king regarding maintaining a mint and administering the kingdom and the ascertainment of the real owner of the Chaklajat Zamin-

(40)
dary. In order to put an end to future disturbances the Board pardoned all the offences of Khagendra Narayan and issued a proclamation for his surrender within six months. The opinion of the court of Directors in this regard was the most effectual means of putting a final stop to any future disturbances in Cooch Behar would be by publishing an Act of Amnesty to Nazir Deo and others concerned in the late disturbances. (41) If Nazir Dev surrendered himself either to the Collector of Rangpur or to the Khalsa at Calcutta within six months from the date of the publication of the Act, he would be admitted to a full pardon for all his offences and would not suffer any punishment. But if he

39. Pro. of the G.G. in Council Vol. 129, pp. 83-96. 3rd April, 1788
For details of the issues of enquiry Mercer and Chauvet's Report - Vol. II, P.1.

There are twentyfour (24) Articles on which the Commissioners were instructed to investigate - See Appendix.

40. Ibid.

41. Lett. from the C. of Directors - Vol. 6 (1785-89) Para 47, p. 165.

failed to appear within the stipulated period, he would forfeit all claim to pardon. (42)

After the publication of the Act of Amnesty, the Nazir Dev appeared before the Commissioner and pleaded for mercy for his Companions too; but that was not granted. The Nazir then asked for the restoration of his official position with full dignity and power which he had been dispossessed of in 1785. He claimed nine-sixteenths of the revenue of the State, which, according to him, was his undoubted inheritance. (43) He laid claim to the Chaklas of Boda, Paigram and Purbabhag as his personal zamindari for which he formerly used to pay rent to the East India Company. He further demanded the prerogative of the Nazir Dev of Cooch Behar to install the ruler on the Throne. It was a prerogative that had been exercised by all Nazir Dev's before him. (44)

As opposed to the claims of the Nazir Dev the King's party insisted on the king's right to dismiss the Nazir Dev for his rebellious conduct. He, being a disloyal servant of the state had not only forfeited all claims upon Cooch Behar, but he ought to be brought to condign punishment for his past conduct. The Nazir Dev of Cooch Behar enjoyed lands only to defray the

42. Ibid.

43. Calender of Persian Correspondence, Vol. VIII, p. 333, Let. No. 803, 1st Nov, 1788

44. Mercey Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, p. 26.

military charges of the state. But after the treaty with the East India Company the office of the Nazir Dev was no longer necessary. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ He was only a subordinate officer of the crown and could not claim to have enjoyed any prerogative. Though the Nazir Dev's role during the installation of the king was important, this practice of installing the Maharaja was derived from the overgrown power of the Nazir Dev Shantanarayan and upheld ever since by the official influence of the subsequent Nazir Dev against the weakness of the crown. ⁽⁴⁶⁾ The institution of Nazir Dev, therefore, was by no means an indispensable part of the Constitution of the government of Cooch Behar. ⁽⁴⁷⁾

The Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet began to hold their enquiry at Mogalhat. Sibnarayan Roy and Krishnaprasad were appointed on behalf of the Maharaja and Maharani. On the other side, ⁽⁴⁸⁾ Baidyanath and Nemaicharan were pleaders for the Nazir. After a thorough investigation at Mogalhat and Cooch Behar, the Commissioners submitted their report to Lord Cornwallis on December, 10, 1783. ⁽⁴⁹⁾ According to their findings some allegations of the Dowager queen against the Nazir were established but others were found to be exaggerated. These were related to the Nazir's

45. Rangpur Dist. Records - Vol. IV, Let. No. 237.

46. Ibid.

47. Sen, S.N. - op.cit. p. vi.

48. Ghosal, S.C. - op.cit., p. 397.

49. Ibid., p. 40.

maltreatment of Sarbananda. The Commissioners were of opinion that the Dowager-queen was a helpless tool in the hands of the notorious Gossain Sarbananda, who had no natural connection with the country. (50) The complaints preferred by the Rani may be said in great measure to have been the effect of the Gossain's instigations, particularly when it is considered that the preservation of his own power depended on the depression and perhaps final ruin of the Nazir Dev. The letters written by the Rani from Balrampore were the effect of compulsion. (51)

As to the allegation against the Nazir Dev proclaiming himself the king of Cooch Behar and coining money in his own name, the Nazir Dev's confession was that "to prevent the disgrace of the infant Rajah, I sat upon the Raja's masnad and had it proclaimed that I had become Rajah; besides doing this, without driving the Rajah from Rajbari I could not have become Raja. The Goasain is my enemy; he now possess the whole authority of the Raj. The Mint is under him; he can easily coin money with my name impressed on them." (52) As to the tripartite division of the state revenues between the Rajah, the Nazir Dev and the Dewan Dev, the Commissioners were "fully convinced that such a division of Cooch Behar was real and not merely nominal". (53) "Dewan Deo" and "Nazir Deo" are titles only peculiar to the history of Cooch Behar.

50. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, p. 188.

51. Ibid., p. 186.

52. Ibid., p. 188.

The business of the Kingdom was divided into three nominal branches and the resources of the country into three nominal divisions :

Rajah or offices of the Rajah - Annan	6
Dewan Deo or Naib Rajah	1
Nazir Deo or Commander of the forces and pay master	9

But these are only official distinctions, not personal appendages.

The office of Nazir Deo is that of "Senaputty" or Commander of the forces and pay master. He, from his allotted share, used to pay the troops, but after the treaty the responsibility of the defence of the country was transferred to the Company and the office of the Nazir Dev became *sinecure*. The Chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag were held by the Nazir Dev merely as a farmer on behalf of the king from the early 18th century. (54) These three Chaklas were taken possession by the arms of the Emperor of Delhi. A treaty was concluded by which for the consideration of a certain amount of revenue, these three Chaklas were ceded by the Emperor to the Rajah of Cooch Behar, who deeming it beneath his dignity to enter into such an engagement in his own name, requested the Emperor to give the Chaklas in farm to the Nazir Dev. (55)

53. Rangpur Dist. Records-Vol. II, Lett. No. 237.
54. Mercer & Chauvet's Report - Vol. II, pp. 181-82.
55. Ibid.

The Commissioners also opined that the right of appointing and dismissing the Nazir Dev was originally invested in the king till Nazir Dev Shantanarayan's rise to power in the early years of the century. Regarding the question of the settlement of succession, the Commissioners wrote "It was proved in a very satisfactory manner by their evidence that the ceremony of the investiture of the Rajahs, in which the Nazir Dev perform a principal and the Dewan Deo, a subordinate part, is deemed indispensable".⁽⁵⁶⁾ There is a point of ceremony respecting inheritance said to be peculiar to this family. It is that on the death of a Nazir Dev, no new one can succeed but by the Rajah's appointment, and similarly on the demise of a Rajah, no new one can be appointed but by the Nazir Dev.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The former part of this position is authentic for the office of the Nazir Dev is solely in the gift and disposal of the Rajah but the latter part of the position is founded on misinformation - a singular custom of this family that on the death of a Rajah, the successor shall be proclaimed and seated on the masnad before the funeral ceremony of the deceased be performed. At this ceremony the Nazir Dev holds Chattre (umbrella) over the new Rajah without which the ceremony would be incomplete. The Commissioners attitude towards the Nazir Dev⁽⁵⁸⁾ was found to be not unkind. The

56. C.B.S.R. - Vol. 1, p. 41.

57. Beng. Dist. Records, Rangpur, Vol. IV, Lett. No. 237.

58. Ibid.

grievances of the Nazir Dev succeeded in drawing their sympathy. They also held the view that the misery and sufferings which the Nazir Dev had to undergo since the disputes started were more than he deserved. "The total sequestration of his rights and an exile of four years under circumstances of the utmost indigeneous and distress will, we presume, be considered as a degree of punishment adequate to and capable of atoning for the greater of his offences".⁽⁵⁹⁾ Nevertheless there was an admirable frankness about Khagendranarayan. He did not hesitate to disclose before Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet that he had more than once administered corporal punishment on Goswami. Men who were suspected to intrigue against him, he often had beaten.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The Commissioners had also been directed to investigate the Dowager-queen's allegations against Lieutenant Duncanson and Subedar Gulab Singh. Duncanson had been appointed by the Governor General for the protection of the minor king and his mother.⁽⁶¹⁾ But Duncanson did not take proper measures for preventing the Nazir Dev from carrying off the minor king. Subedar Gulab Singh also neglected his duty. Another charge against Lieut. Duncanson was that of usury. Duncanson disclaimed any responsibility for the conduct of the Subedar, as he

59. C.B.S.R. - Vol. I, pp. 134-35.

60. Ibid., p. 174.

61. Calendar of Persian Cores- Vol. VIII, Lett. No. 569, pp.231-32, 23rd July, 1788

See, op.cit - Lett. No - 18, p - 8.

at that time, was absent from Cooch Behar. But his financial transactions were undoubtedly questionable. (62) At first Duncanson tried to avoid giving a straight answer but was at last compelled to admit that he had lent to the minor king of Cooch Behar a large sum of money at 7% interest and he had received the sum of Rs. 7,000 on the eve of his departure for Rangpur.* The Subedar's conduct was also highly suspicious. In the words of the Commissioners "he was shamefully deficient in his duty when he permitted the party under Dangar-Deo (Nazir's brother) to carry off the Raja and the Rani from the place of

62. Lett. to the C. of Director (Revenue), Vol. 7, 31st Jan. 1971, para 13, p. 72.

* The grievances of king Harendra Narayan was that he borrowed through his amlah (officer) from Capt. Duncanson Rs. 14,901 at one per cent per month but Duncanson made him to enter into a separate agreement to pay 7% percent, thus raising the total interest to 8 percent per month. In 1735 A.D. the king paid him (the Captain) Rs. 20,996 but he did not come to Cooch Behar on the plea of non-payment of dues. Finding no other way Sarbananda Goswami gave him a further sum of Rs. 7,000 upto May, 1787. Thus the total payment made over to Duncanson was Rs. 27,996. Moreover, Duncanson forced him to execute a bond in the name of Radha-charan Saha for Rs. 22,963/3 as and a promissary note for Rs. 2,425. Thus, the total amount was Rs. 25,388/8 as. (Sen, S.N., op. cit., p. 8).

their residence without any endeavour on his part to resist so flagrant an act of violence for which the force under his command consisting independently of his own sepoys, of a considerable number of Barkandazes was fully adequate to the prevention. (63) The Commissioners, therefore concluded that "he was in league with the party whom he so unwarrantedly allowed to besiege the Palace and carry off the persons of the Raja and Rany from under his immediate protection". (64)

The role of the Collector of Rangpur, during the period of turmoil, had not been to the best interest of Cooch Behar or its people. Goodlad had a blind faith in Khagendra-narayan. He was the Collector from 1781 to 1784 A.D. He (Goodlad), acting on the information from the agent (Shyamchandra) of the Nazir Dev arrested the Gossain and Kashikanta (65) and kept them under surveillance in Rangpur. Many officers of the Goswami's party were imprisoned at the same time, and the administration of the country was placed in the hands of the Nazir. Kashikanta Lahiri was dismissed and Shyamchandra Roy was appointed Khasnovis. (66) Repeated appeals on the part of the Goswami to Goodlad were in vain, the latter was convinced from the information of Shyamchandra that the ruler then a minor and his

63. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, p. 195.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid., pp. 156-157.

66. Munshi Joynath Ghosh, Rajopakhyan Pratyakhasakanda, Adhyaya-1.

66. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, pp. 17, 22, 25.

guardians Rani Kamateswari ^{and} Goswami took no interest in the affairs of the State. Nazir Dev Khagendranarayan was the only reliable authority. (67) Repeated complaints of Goswami against the Nazir did not succeed to remove the favourable impression which Mr. Goodlad had formed of the Nazir. (68)

But the situation changed soon after with the arrival of Peter Moore as the Collector of Rangpur in place of Goodlad, Peter Moore came to Cooch Behar biased against Khagendra Narayan. Rani's faction succeeded in enlisting the support of Peter Moore. (69) Sarbananda and Kashikanta were set free. Moore, at Rangpur was welcomed by the skills of Sarbananda Goswami and Kashikanta Lahiri with many presents. (70) Evidently Sarbananda had succeeded in invoking the sympathy of Peter Moore. It was alleged that they had decorated the house selected for the residence of the new collector with furniture of good taste. Peter Moore appreciated their gesture and was well-pleased with them. The Maharani had sent information to the Council alleging plundering of the State by Khagendranarayan and his misappropriating the Chaklajat Zamindaries. (71) In 1784 A.D. under orders of the Council, the right to administer the raj and the royal seal,

67. Ghosal, S.C. op. cit., p. 276.

68. Ibid.

69. Sen, S. N. - op. cit., p.V.

70. Ahmed, A. - op. cit., p. 312.

71. Ahmed, A. - op. cit., p. 313.

were taken away from Khagendranarayan and given to the Maharani. It was also decided by the Council that the Zamindari of Chakla-⁽⁷²⁾ zat belonged to the Maharaja. The Petbhata Lands of Khagendranarayan situated in the zamindari were confiscated. Moreover Sarbananda conspired with the Collector (Mr. Moore) and deprived the Nazir of his lands and other property. Shyam Chandra was imprisoned. Besieging the house with the help of two to three hundred men including the sepoy's of Mr. Moore, Sarbananda arrested the Nazir Dev who was going to the Governor General to move him in the matters.⁽⁷³⁾ Not only that, the Nazir Dev was brought back to Cooch Behar and disgraced in the presence of three to four hundred men.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Major Jenkins, the agent to the Governor General in the North East Frontier at a later period, could not but make comments on this questionable conduct of the Collector of Rangpur. Jenkins reported that - "the Nazir Deo, who had solely projected and negotiated the treaty with the English Government, was entirely set aside, through the intrigues and influence of the Rani and the Gosain with the Collector of Rangpur, and the Nazir driven a fugitive from the Country."⁽⁷⁵⁾

72. Ghosal, S.C. - op.cit., p. 378, Ahmed, A, op.cit - p-312

73. Ibid.

74. Cal. Per, Cores, Vol. VIII, 9th March, 1787, Lett. No. 1183, p. 327.

75. Ibid.

The Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet at the end of their enquiry into the late incidents in Cooch Behar made an impartial Report on the affairs. There was no indication on the part of the Nazir Dev of throwing off allegiance to the British Government. The part he had played was only to suppress the power of his immediate rivals for the management of the affairs of the infant king. ⁽⁷⁶⁾ The disputing parties were by treaty wholly independent of this government with respect to the internal policy of the country any disturbances existing amongst themselves could not be considered as an offence against the laws of this government to which they were subject. ⁽⁷⁷⁾

It would be fair to mention that, the East India Company's main concern with regard to Cooch Behar was the amount of tribute which was agreed to by the treaty of 1773. So long as that tribute was regularly paid, the British government had no other stake in the internal disputes of Cooch Behar. It is true that the period of Lord Cornwallis administration was a period of non-intervention in the internal affairs of Indian States. ^{His war with Tipu and the annexation of a part of Mysore State was the best example of it.} But there were exceptions also. [^] The progress of the civil war in Cooch Behar gave real causes of alarm to Cornwallis. The reported behaviour of the Collector of Rangpur taking the side of the one or the other parties in dispute appeared

76. Major Jenkin's Report, p. 33.

77. C.E.S.R. - pp. 156-57.

unbecoming. The remedy lay in a friendly intervention in Cooch Behar and giving her administration a sound base.

The Governor General informed the Raja that the British should temporarily take over the management of Cooch Behar till the king came of age. ⁽⁷⁸⁾ The Governor General also made it clear that the British Government had no other desire but to protect the country from being ruined by designing persons. The Ruler's independent rights and privileges which had been secured to his family by the treaty of 1773 would be honoured. A Commissioner for Cooch Behar ⁽⁷⁹⁾ would be appointed to discharge the duties of the Company towards Cooch Behar. The Control of the Board of Revenue over the Commissioner should not be extended beyond the limits prescribed for the Resident at Benaras. ⁽⁸⁰⁾

To the British government these happenings in Cooch Behar was not so serious. They held that "the disturbances excited in Cooch Behar, if they can properly be said to come under that appellation (rebellion), did not proceed so much from a desire in the authors of them to throw off their allegiance to this government, as to suppress the power of their own immediate competitors for the management of the

78. Mercer and Chauvet's Report - Vol. II, pp. 184-5.

79. Choudhury, H. N. - op.cit., p. 252.

80. Ibid.

affairs of the infant Rajah." ⁽⁸¹⁾ [They further observed that "as the parties were by treaty wholly independent of this Government with respect to the internal policy of the Country, any disturbances existing amongst themselves could not be considered as an offence against the laws of this Government, to which they are now subject." ⁽⁸²⁾] Omit

The Commissioner Mercer and Chauvet also had been asked to ascertain the most proper persons to be entrusted with the guardianship of the Rajah and the management of the country during his minority. The Commissioner's advice was against the Maharani's authority which would again mean the revival of Sarbananda's misrule. For the same reason, they were also equally opposed to "entrusting the management of the country to any of the Behar family as every person in the country at all qualified by his rank for so important a situation has been in some degree concerned in the late disputes, their passions and prejudices are so much inflamed against each other that slender hope of any permanent settlement of the country taking place could be entertained, while the sole management of it should remain with their party." ⁽⁸³⁾

81. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, pp. 134-35.

82. Sen, S. N. - op. cit., p. VIII.

83. Ibid.

Thus in 1789, Henry Douglas was appointed the Commissioner for Cooch Behar. Douglas was instructed to take upon himself the exclusive management of the Raja's territory of Cooch Behar, the Chaklas of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag. He was also authorised to collect the Revenue thereof. Both the Nazir Dev and Dewan Dev were made to relinquish their offices. The Government granted 2 crores or 4 miles of land around Balrampur to the Nazir Dev and Patchhara to the Dewan Dev, along with a monthly stipend of Rs. 500/- to each of them for their maintenance. The Maharani was also pensioned off. (84)

(85)
With the coming of Douglas the Chronic malady of Cooch Behar appeared to be over. The guardianship of the minor king and the management of the country during his minority was the bone of contention between the parties. Both the parties were guided by self-interest and material gains. Rani Kanateswari had exerted her influence in administration during the life time of king Dhairjendra Narayan. Her power, in fact, served the interests of Sarvananda than the welfare of the State. Dhairjendra Narayan, during this time was incapable of performing any royal duties. Half a century later Major Jenkins wrote - "Long before (Raja's) death he was reduced to such a state of imbecility as was currently believed by the machinations of the

84. Ibid.

85. Mercer and Chauvet's Report - Vol. II, p. 203.

Ranee and the Gossain, that he was quite incapable of performing any of the duties of his rank."⁽⁸⁶⁾

When Dhairjendra Narayan died, Harendra Narayan was a boy of three years and nine months. Rani Kamateswari was not his real mother. His mother, by an irony of fate, was thrown into the background and ever remained there. Rani Kamateswari was placed by circumstances in the forefront. Assuming the role of guardian of the minor king she promoted the interests of the vain royal preceptor and his favourite Kashikanta Lahiri, and with their help restored her position in the state, such were her bounties that even the greater part of the royal desmene were transferred to Sarvananda Goswami and Kashikanta Lahiri as gift.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Douglas wrote : "Maharani possessed for herself the whole of the Raja's private lands in Behar."⁽⁸⁸⁾

Sarbananda and Kashikanta annexed jaigirs and Devottora lands for their own benefit.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Douglas also reported, "As very considerable grants of Jagheer, Brahmattara lands etc. have been made, the possessor of them should be called on to produce their Sanads if I may credit the information I have received, the Gosain Sarbananda is in the possession of the greater part of these lands."⁽⁹⁰⁾ Moreover, from the days of

Dhairjendra Narayan Sarbananda enjoyed a daily Salami (Pranami)

86. Choudhury, H.N., op. cit., p. 252.

87. Major Jenkin's Report, p. 33.

88. Cal. Per. Cores - Vol. VIII, Lett. No. 1229. 9th June, 1789

89. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 23-32.

90. Ibid.

of Rs. 2/- as well as "a contribution of a rupee and a half levied upon every house within his raj".⁽⁹¹⁾

Their allegations against Khagendra Narayan as a conspirator and usurper were partially true. No doubt, the Nazir Dev's claim to be the Chief man of the realm was inconsistent with his status as a subject in relation to the crown. His arrogance, in fact, had its origin in the tradition of Nazir Dev Shanta Narayan who had enjoyed unlimited power and influence in the state.⁽⁹²⁾

The continuance of such pretension, was, however, inadmissible, as that would virtually establish that the king had ceased to rule. At the same time it was also doubtful if the Nazir Dev really had a dishonest motive. Had he any such motive within him, he could avail himself of the opportunity during the investiture of Dharendra Narayan - a time when the country was in a state of confusion and distress caused by Bhutanese invasion. In reality the highhandedness of the Nazir Dev was the occasion for the Rani and the Gosain to use it to their advantage by vilifying him.

Indeed, Khagendra Narayan was the person who planned and negotiated the treaty with the East India Company.⁽⁹³⁾ It was

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 72.

93. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, p. 72.

natural to expect that the British Government should at least consider the case of the Nazir Dev with full sympathy. The imploration of Murrichmutti, the aunt of the Nazir Dev, will bear it out. In her petition to the Company in December, 1787, she stated that - "the descendants of the late Nawab Jafar Ali Khan who handed over the country of Bengal to the Company as well as others who rendered any service to the Company, are in full enjoyment of their high rank and position. But the Nazir Dev who gave thana Behar into the Company's possession is suffering so miserably".⁽⁹⁴⁾

However, the attitude of the government towards the Nazir spoke of its displeasure. This was possibly due to Khagendra Narayan's involvement in Assam's affairs at about this time. He, as a fugitive, was in Assam for four years. Assam was then convulsed by the "Moamaria Rebellion".⁽⁹⁵⁾ The rebels succeeded in defeating Gaurinath, the reigning Ahom ruler and placed one of their nominee on the throne. The people of lower Assam were also disgusted with the Ahom rule. Haradatta was their leader. Khagendra Narayan succeeded in drawing his sympathy for his cause. He cherished within him the hope of making his son the king of lower Assam by getting him married to the daughter of Haradatta.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Unfortunately for Khagendra Narayan, king

94. Ahmed, A., op.cit., p. 333.

95. Pro. G.G. in Council, Vol. 124, pp. 229-34., Dec. 12, 1787
Sen, S.N., op.cit. p. 4.

96. Cal. Per Cores - Vol. VIII, Lett. No. 1884.

Gaurinath was able to enlist the sympathy of the East India Company and with their help succeeded in suppressing the "Moamaria Rebellion" and regained his former position. At this Khagendra Narayan gave up all his hopes of getting help from Assam. ⁽⁹⁷⁾ His contact with Haradatta only resulted in the Company's disgust for him.

Thus the struggle between the Goswami and the Nazir ultimately brought no gains to either of the parties. In (inter-
Considering (discussions)
preting) the struggle which followed it should be borne in mind that the real nature of the issues was only dimly realised by the two sides. ^{For} For both of them the question of power remained the most immediate and pressing issue. Satish Chandra ^{while} analyses the background ^{of} the rise of parties at the Mughal court. ^(He) emphasises that the decline in the prestige of the monarchy, civil wars following the death of the emperor - all these weakened the position of the monarchy specially as no competent monarch emerged successful from them. ⁽⁹⁸⁾ This ^{same} was the picture of Cooch Behar in the second half of the eighteenth century. Taking the opportunity, the leading nobles - the Nazir Dev, the Dewan Dev, the Maharani and the Gossain, who could have helped to institute policies and measures designed to consolidate and strengthen the state during the minority of King Harendra Narayan, became

97. Banerjee, A.C. - Eastern Frontier of British India, p. 11.

98. Ahmed, A. - opcit., p. 315.

Chandra, S. Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, p.258.

themselves a prime factor ⁱⁿ of the misrule in the country. None of them regained his former position. The management of the State eventually passed into the hands of the Commissioners appointed by the British Government. Douglas (1789-91), Bruce (1791-95), Smith (1795-97) and Ahmuty (1797-1800) were the successive Commissioners of Cooch Behar and for eleven years Cooch Behar was directly under the administrative control of the British Government. * [It might have been reasonably expected that supervision of the State by British Officers would usher in a new era in Cooch Behar. The result, however, was far from it] ^{omul} The Commissioners were not inclined to reform the evil and corrupt administrative system of Cooch Behar. Their main concern was the Revenue administration of the state so that the Company's share of the Revenue was regularly paid. The British officers never tried to remove the anomalies in Cooch Behar's land Revenue by developing the resources of the State. When Harendra Narayan took the reins of the Government and British Commissioners were withdrawn, the state of the country was as pitiable as in the days of Harendra Narayan's minority.

* Thus, for Cooch Behar, 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 asserted its rights to interfere in the internal affairs of the state.

CHAPTER - IV

Commissioner's rule in Cooch Behar 1789-1800.

By the appointment of British Commissioner in Cooch Behar in 1789, Lord Cornwallis wanted to put an end to the long 'years of misrule' in the State. The State had been convulsed by the traditional rivalry of the Nazir Dev and the Dewan Dev. Also the role of the dowager-queen Kamateswari and that of the royal preceptor Sarbananda in this commotion were not negligible. However the Nazir Dev and the Dewan Dev, ignoring the welfare of the country wanted to enrich themselves by grabbing as much state property as they could lay hands upon and thus consolidate their own power in the State. Inevitably Cooch Behar presented a tragic picture produced by economic decadence and administrative corruption. The minority of the ruler (Harendra Narayan) was the occasion for this.

This unsettled state of affairs brought the British to the scene. Not that appeal had been made to the British on behalf of the minor king but the Company's Government, too was very much concerned for its own Share of Cooch Behar's revenue that had fallen in default on the plea of Civil disturbances in the state. The result was the enquiry team of John Mercer and Lewis Chauvets', appointed by the

(1)
Company's government. The Commissioners were directed to report on the pretensions of the rival parties, and on various other subjects connected with the State of the country. They were also asked to enquire into the mode in which British influence should be exercised for better management in future.

The Commissioners submitted their report on 10th December, 1788. In this report, among other matters the Commissioners recommended the appointment of a Commissioner or Resident at Cooch Behar for superintending the affairs of the State during the minority of Maharaja Harendra Narayan. (2) They also recommended that the Governor-General in Council should assume the temporary management of Cooch Behar, with a view to protect it from the ignorant and designing persons. The full management of the country was to be restored to the Raja as soon as he will attain maturity. The Commissioner's upheld the view that the Board of Control should exercise such control (3) over the Commissioner as they did over the resident at Benaras. On the recommendation of the team, Lord Cornwallis appointed a British Commissioner for Cooch Behar. It might be reasonably expected that after a long period of misrule Cooch Behar would enjoy the benefit of the British Commissioner's regime. From 1789 to 1800, Henry Douglas, C.A. Bruce, T. W. Smith and Richard Ahmuty were the successive Commissioners of Cooch Behar and they

1. Choudhury, H. N. op. cit., p. 251.

2. Ibid., p. 252.

3. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II, p. 205.

occupied a vital position in controlling Cooch Behar's administration, particularly the revenue administration, during this period.

It may be noted in this connection that, the Commissioners - from Henry Douglas to Richard Ahmuty (1789 to 1800) were instructed by the authority about the administrative steps they followed in Cooch Behar. A series of letters were exchanged with the Governor General, the Secretary and the sub-Secretary to Government and the Commissioners from time to time. The Commissioners informed the Government of their day to day decisions with regard to the numerous problems of the State.

Before going into the detailed history of the Commissioner's regime in Cooch Behar, a review of the general economic condition of the State is essential to understand the situation in which the British Commissioner had to work. Whatever information regarding the material prosperity of the State could be obtained was mainly due to the efforts of British administrators placed in Cooch Behar since the late 18th century.⁽⁴⁾ The economy of the State rested on agriculture but nothing definite could be known about the system of land tenure, mode of assessment of Revenue, total quantity of land or its distribution till the British had made a probe into these.⁽⁵⁾ From

4. Choudhury, H. N., op. cit., p. 441.

5. Ibid.

very early times the lands were divided into two categories, (a) Revenue paying and (b) Rent free. Persons holding the first variety of land had to pay revenue to the state. The holders of rent free land, on the other hand, were private individuals who obtained such lands for special purposes and enjoyed them free of any charge as Debutter, Brahmatter, Lakheraj and Petbhata according to the purposes for which these were allotted. (6) Lands were also granted to persons for doing personal service to the State, and they were called Jaigirs.

(a) Debutter grants are lands given for the support of an idol, they can not be sold or alienated in any way. In Cooch Behar there are two kinds of such grants : (i) state Debutteras, or grants made to idols which are supported and looked after directly by the officers of the state, the necessary Pujas or acts of worship, being performed under the superintendence of the State Officers.

(b) Private Devotteras for instance a Brahman asks the reigning Raja for a Devotter grant to support his own idol.

(c) Brahmatter lands given to Brahmanas for their support; when made by a reigning Raja, such grants are hereditary and transferable.

(d) Lakherjaj-Lands allotted to persons for doing some praise-worthy work for the welfare of the state.

(e) Petbhata lands are rent free holdings, generally given by a Raja for the maintenance of their relatives during their lives. A Petbhata grant lapsed at the death of the original guarantee, and his heirs must apply to the Raja for a renewal.

Revenue paying lands were classified under Mal Debottar and Khangi. The first were available for State purposes; the Second was devoted to religious purposes; and the third was set apart for the maintenance of the King's household.⁽⁷⁾

Persons paying the charge on the land immediately to the State, or to the persons authorised to receive the same, were called the jotedars and formed the first grade in the tenancy of the country.⁽⁸⁾ Originally these men were perhaps the cultivators of the soil and residents of the State, and the different grades of under-tenure did not probably exist. When Mr. Purling prepared the account of the Revenue of Cooch Behar in 1180 B.E. corresponding to 1774 A.D., he found that the Revenue payable by the rayat consisted of two parts, viz. assal or original rent

7. Hunter, W. W., op. cit., p. 391.

8. Tbid.

and abwab or additional cesses, which were consolidated into one. ⁽⁹⁾ There was, however, no fixation of rent and regular Pattas were not granted to the tenants. The settlement of land-revenue was made annually, but the land was never measured and assessed. ⁽¹⁰⁾ The system of collection and the mode of assessment were under no fixed rule. The condition of the country was very deplorable particularly due to the Chaos and dissensions before and after the first Anglo-Bhutanese war. The dishonesty and the greed of the State Officials further aggravated it. ⁽¹¹⁾ The royal palace was a hotbed of Villainy, conspiracy and debauchery. In the second half of the 18th century these influential state officials acquired illegal grants of Lakheraj and Petbhata lands. Taking the opportunity of Harendra Narayan's minority they acquired vast lands with the help of queen Kamateswari.

⁽¹²⁾ The rent-free lands were hereditary and transferable. There was also another category of rent-free lands called "Jaigir". This "Jaigir" did not connote the same meaning of Jaigir system of the remaining parts of Bengal. The Jaigirdars of Cooch Behar essentially belonged to labour class. They enjoyed the Jaigir land against their labour in the

9. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1, p. 47.

10. Ibid.

11. Choudhury, H. N., op. cit., pp. 441-43.

12. Todarmal, Bhumi, Rajasya O Jarip (In Bengali) - p. 70.

'Palace' (Rajbari). These Jaigir lands were not hereditary and transferable. These Jaigirdari system, in later years was converted into the 'Chakran' system which was prevalent in Bengal. (13) In Cooch Behar this Jaigirdari system was first introduced during the time of Maharaja Nara Narayan. In the later part of the 16th century, the king of Morang, presented some Morangi slaves to King Nara Narayan as a token of goodwill. (14) These slaves were given settlement to Kodalkheti, Bhogmara in the Pargana of Mathabhanga. They were allotted lands as Jaigir in exchange of their personal service in the Palace. If the jaigirdars became unable to work, his lands were forfeited. (15) With the passage of time these jaigir system was abolished in the second half of the 20th century.

We have already mentioned that Revenue paying lands were classified under Mal (Khalsa), Debettara and Khangri. Apart from these there were other classifications also such as Dewanbos, Khasbos and Baje Mahal. (16) Mal or Khalsa land means Government's land proper. The revenue collection of these lands was made by Dewan himself. About 2/3% of the total revenue was collected from the Khalsa. There was a peculiarity with regards to the Khangri lands. It appears that it was only in Cooch Behar that Khangri was officially applied to the demesne lands

13. Ibid.

14. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 546.

15. Todarmal, op. cit., p. 71.

16. Hunter, W. W., op. cit., pp. 428-30.

(17)
of the Raja. The follow lands which were converted into cultivable lands is called 'Dewanbos'. Dewan himself was in charge of these Mahals. Khasbos and Baje Mahal were the two branches of Khangī Mahal. (18)

Khangī Mahal was divided into three parts and was under the supervision of three different officers. Above them was the Chief Supervisor who also the Faujdari Ahilkar. The Revenue of the Khangī Mahal and this Revenue was allotted for Maharaja's personal expenditure. In the 1814 all the Khangī Mahals were incorporated with the Khalsa lands. But when Maharaja Harandra Narayan took charge of the administration in his own hand, the Khalsa and Khangī lands were again separated. This practice continued upto 1863.

The earliest information available about the land Revenue of Cooch Behar dates from 1773 when Purling, the Collector of Rangpur, prepared a hast-O-bud (Revenue Accounts) of Cooch Behar. The land Revenue was then realised in three parts appropriated respectfully to the Maharaja, the Nazir Dev and the Dewan Dev. The total hast-O-bud was Rs. 2,71,587 inclusive of Abwabs. Of these the share of the Maharaja was Rs. 1,51,031 and the share of Dewan Dev was Rs. 19,331. (19)

17. Ibid.

18. Todārmal, op. cit. p. 73.

19. Majumdar, Durgādās, C. B. Dist. Gazetters - p. 142.

Purling deducted Rs. 12,558 from this on account of collection charges, Jaagir, Brahmottar, Devottora etc. Half the net amount was of Rs. 199,120 i.e. Rs. 99,560 was determined as the tribute payable in Narayani Rupees. In 1777 this was converted into Rs. 72,207 Sicca Rs. (20)

Cooch Behar's tribute payable to the British by the treaty of 1773 was collected by the Collector of Rangpur. (21) Upto 1780 the tribute was realised by committing the total collections of the State to Sezwals or Teshildars appointed by British government. The collection was made twice from each jotedar, once by the East India Company's Sezwal for half the amount and a second time by the Revenue Collector of the Maharaja for the remaining half. (22) The amount of tribute was permanently fixed at Rs. 67,70000-15-0 in 1780 on the strength of Purling's Revenue accounts. (23) From the year 1780 to 1789 Izaradar Debi Singh appointed the Sezwals. Oppression which he committed on the ryots at the time of collection led to the outburst of the well-known 'Peasant Revolt' (1783) at Rangpur. (24) The ryots of Cooch Behar also were subjected to torture and extortion by Hararam Sen, one of the agents of Debi Singh. (25)

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Choudhury, H. N. Op. cit., p. 243.

24. Firminger, W. K., The District of Rangpur, p. 20.

Roy, Nikhilnath, Murshidabad Kahini (Bengali), p. 23

25. Ghosal, S. C., op. cit., p. 281.

The ruler of Cooch Behar was a helpless spectator and could not protest against this injustice upon his subjects; the King's own officers were also equally helpless. This was the year of the death of Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan and accession of Harendra Narayan as a minor king, with queen Kamateswari as the guardian. Practically the stability and the strength of the state began to diminish after the return of Dhairjendra Narayan from Bhutan. There was none amongst his officials to run the administration properly. So Cooch Behar became too weak even to protest against the oppression committed by Debi Singh and his agents. In the year 1790, Douglas, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar reported to Cornwallis "Since that time of the Hastabood (Rev. Account) of Behar, made by Purling the tribute suffered a very considerable diminution owing principally to the mal-administration of the Raja's minister, who has not only himself been guilty of the greatest oppressions, but also connived at them in his dependants. Large portions of lands have been alienated, a variety of new taxes introduced, every species of abuse committed in the collection of Revenues, and the administration of justice has been perverted to the purpose of emolument"⁽²⁶⁾
⁽²⁷⁾
This oppression ultimately led many ryots to leave the country.

26. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1, pp. 28-32.

27. Ibid.

The officers of the Company also began a money-lending business in Cooch Behar. In 1784 A.D. Captain Duncanson lent Rs. 14,901 to the Maharaja and was apparently dissatisfied with a return of Rs. 21,000 after one year. The Company's sepoys also engaged themselves in the money-lending business and lent money to the peasants and charged a monthly interest of two to three annas in the rupee. They even used force to realise their dues. On account of these undesirable conditions many people left the country. To borrow money was to be ruined. Generally the rate of interest was not less than 72 per cent per annum. But there was no regulation about the rate of interest. But sometimes it exceeded all limitations and in many instances rose upto 360%.

Nearly all the Commerce of Cooch Behar was in the hands of the foreign merchants. They were chiefly of Marwaris from Bikanir, who had more energy and enterprise than the Koch Beharis. The chief export from the state were tobacco, jute, mustard seed, rice and mustard oil. The principal imports in the state were piece-goods, salt, brass and copper utensils,

28. Ghosal, S.C., op. cit., p. 280

In his letter dated the 21st August, 1788 A.D. Capt. Duncanson did not admit receiving this amount - Mercer and Chauvet's Report Vol. II, p. 74.

29. Munshi, Jayanath Ghosh, Rajopakhyan, Pratyaksha Khanda, Adhyaya-4.

30. C. B. S.R., Vol. I, p. 29.

○ Ghosh, Munshi Jayanath,

sugar, molasses, pulses of sorts, spices, coconuts, betel-nuts,
(31)
dried fish etc.

The tone of the society was that of medieval age. Usury was a thriving occupation and any one who could spare some money for investment had the chance of a lucrative return. Slavery was tolerated by the society and there was a regular slave trade. Poor people mortgaged or sold themselves as slaves. Their children were sold in the hats or bazars. (32) Every year, boys and girls from Cooch Behar and Assam were sent to various parts of Bengal for sale. About 100 of boys and girls were annually sold to Bengal. The price of a girl varied from Rs. 12 to Rs. 15. (33) But a Koch boy cost Rs. 25; a Kalita boy Rs. 50.

Children of the lower castes were sold to the Garos. Some were exported to Burma through Assam. People of the neighbouring Bhot or Garo tribe often abducted men and women from Mughal or Cooch Behar territory and made them slaves. (34)

At this time there was only one law court in Cooch Behar. There was no system of realising costs of proceedings. No register of cases was maintained. The Kotowal who was responsible for law and order in the country, had no judicial powers. There

31. Turner, S., Embassy to Tibet, p. 11.
32. Martin, M., Eastern India, Vol. III, p. 681.
32. Hunter - p. 398.
33. Ibid. Ghosal, S.C., op.cit., p. 279.
34. Ibid.

was no system of fixing dates of hearings. All paper regarding Revenue and finance were preserved. (35)

W. W. Hunter depicted a picture of general economic condition of Cooch Behar. He narrated that a well-to-do shop-keeper having 5 adult and 4 child members would meet the expenses of his family on Rs. 20/- per month. A well off husbandman would meet the expense of his family on Rs. 14/- having his own rice and fuel from forests. (36) The mean value of the produce of one Bigha of the first quality of land was Rs. 8.12 as and the worst quality of land was 5.4 as. So, a small farm of 15 bighas might be considered comfortable holding for a peasant. (37) Between the years 1797 to 1801, the price of paddy in Cooch Behar was 4½ mds. to the rupee. In the middle of the 19th century it was 2 mds to the rupee. (38) The picture of the contemporary Bengal Subah, (almost) during the same period, shows that in 1729, the prices of the necessaries of life in Murshidabad were: (a) bansephool fine rice - first sort 1 md, 10 seers a rupees; second sort 1 md. 23 seers a rupees, and third short 1 md., 35 seers a rupee. (39) In 1754 fine rice was sold in Calcutta at 32½ seers a rupee and coarse rice 40 seers. (40) In 1776 some articles of necessity

35. Mercer and Chauvets Report, Vol. II, pp. 149-151.

36. Hunter, W. W., op. cit., p. 371.

37. Ibid., p. 465.

38. Chaudhury, H. W., op. cit., p. 190.

39. Datta, K. K., Bengal Subah, p. 463.

40. Ibid., p. 465.

were sold as : fine bausephool Rice - first sort 16 seers a rupee, second sort 18 seers a rupee and third sort 21 seers rupee. (41)

The economic degeneration of the Bengal Subah can be viewed not only by the oppressions of the Company's servants also and gomosthas but was a natural sequel to the general political disorders which had began many years before plassey. In Cooch Behar, the weakness of royal authority, want of strong governance in the country, conflicts amongst the elites for power, the oppression of the Revenue Collectors all these together led to its economic degradation very quickly. The material condition of the people was poor. Beveridge, the Deputy Commissioner, in his Report of 1865-67 points out that mal-administration and want of communication was mainly responsible for the degeneration in Cooch Behar. (42)

Under the circumstances the Commissioners were appointed in Cooch Behar. Henry Douglas was the first Commissioner of Cooch Behar. On the assumption of charge by Mr. Douglas, changes were introduced in every sphere of administration in the state. The Gossain, the Khasnobis all were deprived of their offices and services. Commissioner's seal was put on side by side with the Maharajas Seal. Separate seals were prepared for the criminal and Revenue Courts. The Maharaja's orders were carried out under the

41. Ibid., p. 473.

42. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., pp. 296-98.
Annual Administrative Report - 1864-65, No. 73.

commissioner's signature. (43) After his arrival in Cooch Behar Douglas found the pitiable condition of the State. Unlimited power in the hands of Kamateswari and Sarbananda had paralysed the administration of the country. The whole of private lands of the Maharaja had been enjoyed by the Rani. (44) Very considerable grants of Jaigir and Brahmottar lands had been made since the death of Dhairjendra Narayan. The greater portion of the Nazir Dev's Petbhata lands which had been confiscated, has been divided between Kashikanta and Sarbananda. (45) The maintenance of law and order in the royal palace was among others, a tough and complicated problems for the commissioner.

Douglas entirely supplanted the authority of the Rani and her favourite Goswami. All the possessions of Maharani were confiscated and she was granted a monthly pension of 600 Narayani rupees. (46) With the appointment of Douglas as Commissioner, a regular law course of procedure was introduced in the administration of the State. He took his hand all the offices, whether judicial or Revenue of the State, superintended the proceedings of the courts, and influenced their decisions. He made quarterly returns to the Sadar Diwani Adalat and the Revenue Board of Calcutta, according to the different departments to which his work belonged. (47)

43. Choudhury, H. N., op. cit., p. 252.

44. Ibid., p. 253.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Hunter, W. W., op. cit., Vol. x, p. 420.

Besides these duties Douglas had to look after several other business of the state which was a hindrance to his smooth management of the administration. He was given the charge of the management of the Raja's estates at Rangpur. Nevertheless the sole charge of the District which was under the superintendence of the Resident at Goalpara was also transferred to Douglas. (48) This district, together with a few Zamindaries, were then in a very unsettled state; and they continued for a long time to distract the attention of the successive commissioners of Cooch Behar. (49)

The reform in the system of Land Revenue Administration engaged Douglas' first attention. When he took charge of his office, the condition of the exchequer was very deplorable. Douglas made a detailed report to the Governor General on the affairs of the country on the 19th May, 1790. He observed, "From the monthly accounts, which have been transmitted to your Lordship, will have been perceived the very impoverished State of the Cooch Behar Treasury : that the expenses have exceeded the revenue, and the deficiency has been obliged to be supplied by loans". (50)

According to the Must-O-bood of Purling in 1774 the annual Revenue of Cooch Behar exclusive of jaigir and private

48. Ibid., pp. 420-21.

49. Ibid.

50. C.E.S.R., Vol. I, p. 30.

lands was Rs. 1,99,120-3-0-15 (Narayani). Since that time mal-administration of the country by the Raja's minister and his dependents led to the exaction of various new taxes. Large portions of lands were alienated. The Ryots were oppressed severely. There was no justice in the law court. In the year 1195 i.e. 1789 the revenue including the whole of Nazir Deo and part of Dewan Deo's private lands amounted to Rs. 141-230-3-3 and next year came down to Rs. 119-946-11-16-1. (51) Douglas failed to get from the Raja's officers any authentic information relative to the state of Cooch Behar. (52) The interests of the Officers (of the Raja) were deeply involved in the matter and they tried their best to prevent any knowledge being acquired by the commissioner of the abuses which had so long prevailed in Cooch Behar. They injected in the minds of the common people the idea that the interference of the British Commissioner was of a short duration and henceforth any complaint to the commissioner would be fruitless. (53) Douglas, after his arrival in Cooch Behar as a Commissioner, noticed many abuses and irregularities with regards to the land Revenue Settlement (of Cooch Behar). There were too many taxes in the state. It was not the practice to fix rent. (54) Nor any regular deed of agreement was given to the cultivators.

51. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1, pp. 29-32.

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

* There were certain charges called Mufassil Khurcha which were not inserted in public accounts. This was as equal to one fifth part of the whole revenue. This will be in the next page.

1/3rd of the whole revenue was realised was consumed by those engaged in the collection Mufussil Khurtha* and not shown in public accounts. The ryots had to pay Nazzars and Salamis to the officials entrusted with the collection of Revenue and for this purpose as well as for clearing the arrears of rent, they had to borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest. (55) Douglas came to know that quite a large portion of the lands had been in the possession of Sarbananda Goswami. The Maharani herself enjoyed the whole of the Raja's private lands, the revenue of which amounted to Rs. 15,883/- per year. (56) The high officers of the state also did not lag behind. All these were possible due to the infancy of the ruler.

Under these circumstances Douglas proposed some regular system for the future management of Cooch Behar. He suggested certain measures which were absolutely necessary at the time. He proposed that the different taxes which existed in Cooch Behar, should be consolidated into one sum, which will be a great relief to the ryots, as the ^{ryots} ~~ryots~~ will then know exactly what they would have to pay and less room will be left for extortion than if their rent consisted of so many distinct articles. Regular Pattas (deed of agreement) should be granted to the ryots

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

so that they would be confident of their position. Moreover every exaction beyond the amount of specified in them should be severely punished. Nazar and Salami granted to the Raja's officers should be abolished, as these officers had no right whatsoever to receive nazar and Salami, and if the ryots from Casalties of season should fall into arrears of rent, suspension should be granted to them. The rate of interest on borrowing should be fixed at 9% for each month and this in future if required also should be reduced. As very considerable grants of jaigir Brahmottar lands had been made, the possessor of them should produce their Sands^A and where the grant appears to be illegal, it should be resumed. (57)

With regard to the revenue of Boda, Patgram and Purbabhag to be paid to the Company, Douglas informed the Governor General that the revenue of the above mentioned chaklas for the year 1191 (1785) amounted to Arcot Rupees 1,74,734-14-6. (58)

However, the rent of these Chaklas had reduced in the following year. The Assal had been increased in these areas. Exclusive of charges the revenue of the above mentioned Chaklas for 1195 (1789) was Arcot Rupees 1,24,954-7-14-1. The produce of the Khas Mahals or confiscated lands (those of Nazir Deo excepted) in Cooch Behar was in Narainy Rupees 1,1009 in Boda, Arcot Rupees

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

7,769-14-6-2. From these statements Douglas gave an idea of the amount of the Revenues of Cooch Behar Raja for the year 1196 (59) (1790).

Behar : Narainy Rs.....	1,19,946-11-16-1	
or		
Sicca Rs.	88,034-4-17-0	
Boda + Sc - Arcot Rs.....	1,06,085-7-14-1	1790 A.D.
or		
Rs.....	97,103-6-13-0	
Khas mehals-Narainy Rs....	1,100-0-0-0	
or		
Arcot Rs.	9,769-14-6-3	
Total:	<u>1,94,887-12-2-0</u>	

The proposal of Douglas was approved by the Government and from July 28, 1790 settlement work for Cooch Behar started. (60) The ryots were assessed at the same rate as that of the preceding year. The undue exactions upon them by the Raja's officers stopped. As a result, the production considerably increased and there was progressive improvement in the State. All the taxes were consolidated into one, and the servants of the Raja and farmers for the greater part of the country to whom the collection of Revenue had been formed for the year 1773 A.D. had to

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

execute a muchelkas (bonds) to pay a penalty amounting to ten times the amount of illegal exactions made by them. (61) The rents of the private lands of the Raja as well as the rents of the Khas Mahal or confiscated land of Dangar Deo (Nazir Deo's aunt) were also increased. With Government's permission Douglas abolished the duties on several of the gunjes, hats and bazars in Cooch Behar whose vicinity to the Company's districts where no duties were collected, rendered such a measure absolutely necessary. This would also facilitate larger amount of trade between Cooch Behar and neighbouring districts of British India, which was restricted for the exaction of the duties. This disparity with regard to exaction of duties between Cooch Behar and the neighbouring districts hampered the trade-intercourse. Moreover, the people of Cooch Behar had to suffer a great loss. The amount of exemption was Narainy Rs. 1,083-15-7-1 and Douglas informed the Government that if occasion to extend this exemption further necessitate, the Government would be duly intimated. (62)

On July, 1791 Douglas put before Lord Cornwallis some proposals relative to the Settlement of Cooch Behar. (63) The Commissioner wanted the settlement to be concluded for a term of ten years, provided it should be thought proper to extend

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Douglas to Cornwallis, 1st July, 1791.
C.E.S.R., Vol. I, p. 45.

it beyond the expiration of the minority of the Rajah who was then eleven years of age. It was decided that the settlement was to be made at the same rate of assessment payable by each individual ryot as for the year 1197, when the assal, abooabs and curtesy (or different taxes bearing these names) were consolidated. The charges for collection payable by the ryots were to be fixed at a certain rate on the consolidated taxes in order to put a stop to any abuses in future. (64)

The country was divided into lots of one or more villages each and these were to be put up to auction. The system of holding the lands khas was very much disadvantageous. At there was twenty to thirty thousand ryots, it was not possible for the proprietor or his manager to be minutely acquainted with the circumstances of every individual. He had not the idea when to assist the honest and industrious husbandman and when to exact with regour his revenue from the Knavish ryot. (65) The ill-organised machinery of government could not prevent frauds or oppression. For, the officers had no interest in the improvements of the lands. (66) A general measurement of the country had never been made before. Each villages was divided into so many Challas or parcels of land bearing the name of the ryot

64. Ibid., p. 45.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

who first cultivated the land. But on the death of or relinquishment by any of the ryots his lands were encroached upon by neighbouring ryots which affects the Revenue of the state. The ryots were averse to re-measurement of their lands. So in order to prevent bad consequences Douglas wanted to proceed cautiously. Douglas' intention was to ascertain the quantity of land in the possession of the ryots and fixation without enhancing the rate of assessment per bigha. In Douglas' days these rates were Rs. 20 per 13 Bighas of first class land; Rs. 15 for the second class and Rs. 10 for the third class of land. (67) These proposals of Mr. Douglas with regards to the Revenue Settlement of Cooch Behar leads us to think that these ideas were not a new one. It was quite natural that as a service holder of the Company he had been largely influenced by the pattern of farming system of Bengal. Ifran Habib points out that in the eighteenth century, despite "administrative anarchy", "elements of the Mughal system of Revenue assessment still survived", which implied payment of revenue by the peasant on the basis of measurement of land. But in the Jaagir or assigned lands, even in the 17th century "many assignees found it simpler to farm out these assignment". (68) This system was known as ijara or Revenue farming. But Revenue farming gave rise to a class of bankers and speculators who invested their money in it and emerged as intermediaries distinct from

67. Choudhury, H. N. op. cit., p. 444.

68. Prasad, Bisweswar, Bondage and Freedom, Vol. I, p. 300.

that of hereditary zamindars (Absentee landlord). Thus developed a class of intermediaries between the state and the peasant. These middle agencies ranged from the village headman who contracted for payment of revenue on behalf of his community fixing the individual contribution by agreement or measurement, to a big zaminder or Revenue farmer. In Bengal by the middle of the century, the existence of such a class of intermediaries seems to have been well-established:

The basis of collection was generally one half of the produce but a large number of abwabs or cesses had cumulatively enhanced the burden of the peasants.

When Warren Hastings assumed the office of the Governor of Fort William, he plunged himself into the task of reorganising revenue administration. The settlement made in 1772 was based on two ideas; one was the "letting of the revenue in farm and the second one at a latter stage was the Settlement with the established Zamindars and Talukdars, on condition similar to those required from the farmers". The assessment was graduated to rise in five years. (69)

As we know that though Cooch Behar was a separate native state, it is geographically contiguous to the rest of Bengal. So Bouglas had an intention to introduce a uniform

69. Ibid.

system of Revenue collection pattern in this region also.

Douglas introduced the Ijaradari system in land revenue Settlement of Cooch Behar. In fact it was a necessity at the time of ensure collection of Revenue since organisation for and close supervision of revenue collection was not very easy under the loose form of Government of those days. The settlements were made annually. Before (Douglas') arrival the revenue of Cooch Behar appears to have been collected by the State officers under the name of Sazwals. As the country was extensive and the number of jotedars was large, the amlas could not be controlled properly and the consequences was much oppression on the ryots. Douglas let out the jotesin Ijaras or farms to persons in convenient lots, and made them responsible for the state revenue. (70) Under this system, the profits of the Ijaradars was that they used to collect from the ryots two charges called Ijaradari and Saranjami, each forming one twelfth, and the two together one sixth, part of the rent payable by the Ryots. (71)

The Ijaradari system, however, on which Mr. Douglas had placed so much faith as a suitable settlement for Cooch Behar, eventually proved to be unsuccessful and gave rise to greater abuses (which was not possible under the Khas collection system). The defect of the system was due to the loose

70. Choudhury, H. N., op. cit., 254.

71. Ibid., p. 444.

administrative organisation of the State. Moreover, any attempt at curing and reforming any particular drawback without going to the source of evil could not but be fruitless. (72)

Richard Ahmuty, another Commissioner, commented in 1798 that the system appeared to have been ill-calculated for the happiness of the people and permanent prosperity of the country. He was of opinion that the system adopted by Douglas was the mode to obtain the highest possible revenue for a short period. He observed "Exclusive of the loss sustained by the proprietor, the actual cultivators of the soil have suffered considerably from the lands being let at a rack - rent to individuals, many of whom could have no interest in their welfare and who availed themselves of every opportunity of extorting from them as much as possible. Consequently, whole villages deserted and retired into the adjacent districts of Rungpore, and Dinajpur, where they found greater security and encouragement of their labour." (73) In fact, the defects of the Ijaradari system was that it resulted in the degeneration of both the soil and the farmers. For, the tenure of the Ijaradars being of a limited duration, they tried to extract as much as possible out of the poor ryots, without spending a single pie on the improvement of the soil. The State meticulously realised the revenue from the Ijaradars but the con-

72. Ibid., p. 445.

73. Ahmuty to Charles Buller, Sub-Secretary to the Board of Revenue, C.B.S.R., Vol. I, p. 47, par II.

dition of the ryot continued to deteriorate owing to oppression. The system was subversive of any healthy village organisation. The "Ijaradar was a parasite on both the state and the ryot"⁽⁷⁴⁾.

The principal officers of the state used to take out the farms of mehals and could thus easily make exactions from the ryots. Even in the letting out of the mehals they were guided by their self-interests and got the farms on easy terms to the detriment of the interest of the state. These men rented the taluks of the state, and lands under them were much underrated. The deficiency caused by this process was sought to be made up by over-assessing such mehals as were farmed by the jotedars and natives of the country.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Mr. Beckett, in his completion report on the settlement of Pargana Mekhliganj mentioned that "The Ijaras, instead of being Geographically defined were composed of Jotes scattered all over the state. An Ijaradar could not himself tell where the jotes that made up his Ijara were situated; he only knew the names of the jotedars from whom he had to collect rent." There was no registers of Lakheraj holdings or of any thing else.⁽⁷⁶⁾

The evils of this system were recapitulated by Mr.

74. Journal of Indian History, Diamond Jubilee Volume, pp. 107-119.

75. Choudhury, H. N., *op. cit.*, p. 446.

76. Beckett - Land Revenue Settlement of Cooch Behar, p. 52.

Smith, the Deputy Commissioner in the Administrative report of the State. ⁽⁷⁷⁾ As the report went, "The lands of the state are mostly let in farm, the farms being taken by the ladies of the palace the Amlas, and the friends and relatives of the Amlas etc. As the Amlas did not settle in the Raja's territory, a great portion of the farmers namely those who are retired Amla and Amla's relatives are absentees, and a great portion of those who are residents in the country remits their profits to their houses in British zillas. Owing to this cause and the practice of sub-letting, the profits of the farmers make scarcely any show and the country is devoid of any class corresponding to the zamindars, Talukdars etc. of British districts".

Another evil that grew up under this system was the extensive sub-infeudation. It is not known from what period the ~~under~~-tenures, known as Chukanies, Dar-Chukanies and so forth had their origin. It is probable that some of them at least existed in the pre-Ijaradari times. But it is also a fact that oppressions and undue influence exercised by these official farmers degraded many jotedaras into Chukanidars with a corresponding lowering of the status of the undertenants below the jotedaras ⁽⁷⁸⁾

After Douglas C.A. Bruce became the Commissioner of

77. Administrative Report of Cooch Behar - 1866-67.

Choudhury, N.N. op. cit.

78. Ibid., p. 447.

Cooch Behar. The Government acquainted Bruce about all the papers with regard to the Revenue Settlement. The Government also gave option to Bruce to continue the previous settlement or to adopt any other plan different from that suggested by the previous commissioner. (79) Bruce intimated the government that before him the revenues had been assessed "by giving the villages to the highest bidders on the best security", which increased the collection. But the mode had one defect. These villages were let by the Sudder farmers. to others who let them again and the intermediate 'agents lived upon the people to the detriment of the revenues.' (80) Bruce did not desire the system to continue. He put forward certain proposals to remedy the evils. He would introduce his reforms first in Boda, Patgram and Purbahag, the areas that were held in farm by Cooch Behar from the British. Accordingly, every village therein should be distinctly farmed by the Pradhan or the head-ryot of the village; that the ryots should pay the expense of the village Patwaries and other established charges that the Pradhan should take engagements for one year from the Commissioner and pay the revenue in instalments calculated on their crops. This system chalked out by Bruce was calculated to produce benefits both for the ryot and the government. Expense of the collection of revenues through Pradhan

79. Select Records, Vol. I, pp. 74-75.

Letter from G.H. Barlow to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar.

80. Ibid., p. 75.

would be less than that incurred presently through Teshildars or Sezvals. By these measures, Bruce thought that the exorbitant interest on money in Cooch Behar would fall. There would be little scope for undue influence on the ryots. The Commissioner imagined that "any deduction by losses from the calamities of the season could be exactly proportioned to each village that the Raja might raise his revenues in as much as the intermediate agents received for themselves, and that if the Rajah gave up the difference, the revenues would stand just as they were."⁽⁸¹⁾ In early October of 1795, the Government desired Commissioner W.T. Smith, who came to Cooch Behar as Bruce's successor to follow the recommendations of Bruce.⁽⁸²⁾ The Government, at the same time was anxious for settlement of lands by granting Pattas to ryots. But the government did not think it advisable to make a general measurement of lands "unless it was absolutely necessary in special cases."⁽⁸³⁾ In the meantime⁽⁸⁴⁾ the government received a letter from Harendra Narayan then a lad of 14 years only. Harendra Narayan possibly on pressure from Sarbananda Goswami wrote that Sarbananda was the guru of the royal family. From the days of his father the Guru enjoyed

81. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

82. Ibid., p. 76.

83. Letter to W. T. Smith, 15th July, 1796.

84. Ibid., p. 72.

a daily salami of Rs. 2/- as well as "a contribution of a rupee and a half levied upon every house within his Raj". Both the sources of the Guru's income were closed by orders of the Government. Harendra Narayan prayed for the reopening of the sources. The government turned down the claims of Guru Sarbananda Goswami. (85)

After Smith, Ahmuty took charge of the state in 1797 and continued the new system. During his time the revenue of the state increased to Narayani Rs. 2,23-647 and there was even an accumulation in promissory notes worth Rs. 69,638. (86) The system adopted upto the year 1796 was the mode to obtain the highest possible revenue for a short period without any regard for the happiness of the people and the permanent prosperity of the country. (87)

A difference of Rupees 70,000/- was noticed in the Junmah of the year 1201 B.S. (1796 A.D.) upon this, Ahmuty considered a further increase of assessment, as impolitic. That would oblige the ryots to quit their lands. (88) More than 1/3 of the country was in waste. Ahmuty encouraged ryots to break new grounds and bring more areas under the plough and got a good response from the cultivators. Many new ryots had taken Pattas for lands of this description. Consequently a large portion of land, situated on the banks of the Teesta had been cultivated. Only

85. Ibid., Letter to W. T. Smith, p. 74.

86. Ibid., pp. 46-49.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

Mekhligung, which was rented the preceding year at 141 Rupees, had been let at 1,500 rupees during the year 1798 A.D. As there was no system of measurement of holdings, Ahmuty directed the lands to be measured wherever practicable, and granted pattas to the ryots for their holdings. ⁽⁸⁹⁾ As the annual settlement of revenue was not working well, Ahmuty raised the term to at least for five years. Then, he for the first time in the history of land revenue settlement, introduced a proper register of the lands. ⁽⁹⁰⁾ "In the meantime there was a decision of the Governor-General to reduce as far as practicable the establishment of Tehshildary in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Because the establishment did not benefit the Government. Accordingly a letter was sent to Ahmuty, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, on 21st June, 1799, telling him to make every proprietor or farmer of land living within 20 miles of the collector's office, or every proprietor or farmer paying Rs. 5,000/- or above pay at the Collector's office. Revenue payer, living beyond that ~~distance~~ or liable to pay less, might however, be permitted to pay to the Teshildar as before. ⁽⁹¹⁾ This letter of the Revenue Department proves that the Government wanted to set up a uniform pattern of Revenue collection system in Cooch Behar also

The reforming hands of Ahmuty largely benefited

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Revenue Deptt.'s letter to Ahmuty, Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. I, pp. 129-30.

Cooch Behar, and when he left the state in 1801, he had increased the revenue of the state to Rupees 2,33,771, besides an accumulated reserve in promissory notes worth Rs. 79,565. ⁽⁹²⁾ An abstract of the Jumma of the several years since Mr. Douglas took charge of the office as a Commissioner to the time of Richard Ahmuty would give a clear picture of this.

Year	Rs. (Jumma)
1789 A.D. - 1195 B.S. - 1790 A.D.	1,28,534
1790 A.D. - 1196 B.S. - 1791 A.D.	1,26,391
1791 A.D. - 1197 B.S. - 1792 A.D.	1,58,562
1792 A.D. - 1198 B.S. - 1793 A.D.	1,92,990
1793 A.D. - 1199 B.S. - 1794 A.D.	2,34,917
1794 A.D. - 1200 B.S. - 1795 A.D.	2,56,967
1795 A.D. - 1201 B.S. - 1796 A.D.	2,64,187
1796 A.D. - 1202 B.S. - 1797 A.D.	1,94,778
1797 A.D. - 1203 B.S. - 1798 A.D.	2,23,647
1798 A.D. - 1204 B.S. - 1799 A.D.	2,27,261
1799 A.D. - 1205 B.S. - 1800 A.D.	2,33,771 (93)

However, during the twelve years for which British Commissioners were posted in Cooch Behar, no remarkable improvement was visible in any sphere other than that of revenue

92. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 46-49.

93. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1, p. 48.

administration. So, the condition of Cooch Behar remained as it was before the advent of British Commissioners. There was no doubt that the main concern of the British Government was to increase the amount of the total revenue of the state - so as to ensure regular payment of British government's tribute. From Henry Douglas to Richard Ahmuty the constant endeavour was towards the betterment of the revenue administration only. The British Officers never tried to eradicate the maladies in other spheres of the state or society. No remarkable change was visible in the administration of justice. Justice was dispensed by the Raja or his minister in primitive fashion. Douglas had taken administration of civil and criminal justice into his own hands. The court of the Dewani Ahilkar and that of the Faujdari Ahilkar had been constituted in imitation of the Muffusil courts of the East India Company. Hindu law was applied to in both civil and criminal cases. (94) Though civil and criminal justice was comparatively neglected by the Commissioners, their attention was not so serious in this respect as was with regards to land Revenue administration.

But the pay of all the officers was on a wretchedly small scale. In the case of judicial establishments, the officers had to pay themselves and bear the expenses of their establishments out of the collections of their courts. (95) The

94. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit. p. 303.

95. Ibid., p. 297.

only way in which an officer could honestly live was by holding three or four different offices. The Maharajas, too, appointed the nominal charge of an office. The pay of some very important offices was ridiculously low. There were several instances of pluralities of appointments. The number of offices was unduly large. Naturally, under the above circumstances and abuse and corruption were rampant in every branch of administration and instances of even the officers took ^{illegal} undue gratification were not uncommon. (96)

The state of the finances was also in a deplorable condition. There was no control over the receipts and expenditure of the different departments, which made their own collections and disbursements and only remitted the surplus to what was called the 'Majudut'. There was no system of framing budgets of revenue and expenditure. The receipts and disbursements were without proper control. Though there was an Account office in name, the accounts were kept in loose manner and were not properly checked. (97)

So a thorough reform in every sphere of administration was the need of the time which the Commissioners had failed to undertake. It was true that the Commissioner did not get proper information about the real sufferings of the people. We have already noted that Douglas regretted about peoples' non-cooperative attitude towards them. So, even if the commissioner had real intention for removing the existing maladies, that was not

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., p. 411.

possible. A thorough reform of the state to be undertaken by British officers was not the policy of the British government either.

Under a weak and corrupt system of native administration, and owing to the want of proper arrangement for the suppression of crimes and maintenance of peace, the material prosperity of the people of Cooch Behar was at a low-ebb, notwithstanding its excellent natural resources. Absence of suitable means of communication kept the farmer and his produce confined within a limited market, and the products of agriculture fetched a fabulously low price. In short, Cooch Behar was far behind the British districts of Bengal in all respects.

CHAPTER - V

KING HARENDRA NARAYAN AND THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT - 1801-1814.

In the year 1801 Harendra Narayan came to age and took the administration of the country of Cooch Behar in his own hand. The Commissioner's regime in Cooch Behar ended and the magistrate of Rangpur became the Commissioner of Cooch Behar. Wellesley, the then Governor General, decided that the Commissioner would not interfere in the administrative affairs of Cooch Behar but would give advice on administration to the ⁽¹⁾ Raja.

The period of Harendra Narayan, however, proved to be an utter disappointment both to the people of Cooch Behar/^{and} to the British Government. ⁽²⁾ He was twenty years old but was not competent enough to run the administration of the state. After the removal of the British Commissioner many of the old abuses again crept into the Government of the country. The duties connected with the administration of the state was performed by native officers since 1801. ⁽³⁾ These officers had a great influence on the Raja. Among the (native) officers, Guru Prasad Rai, a companion of the Maharaja in his boyhood, possessed much influence and he held the office of the head of the criminal administration and the Dewan. The other principal officers of the state was

1. Sen, S.N., Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan, p. 21.
2. Choudhury, H. N., Cooch Behar State and its land Revenue Settlement, p. 258.
3. Ibid., p. 256.

Brajananda Mustafi, Radhakanta Lahiri and Jayanath Ghosh. Radhakanta Lahiri once performed the duties of Dewan and Joyanath Ghosh was the personal assistant to Harendra Narayan. ⁽⁴⁾ Brajanandan Mustafi was in charge of Accounts and he always ill-advised Harendra Narayan. ⁽⁵⁾ The Maharaja possessing an indolent disposition and being averse to all matters which required his personal attention, the management of his affairs were entrusted to this person. It was evident that Brajananda Mustafi succeeded in winning the Raja's confidence and perverting his mind. Ahmuty had observed that the King's affairs would be irretrievably ruined unless his evil councillors were removed from his person. ⁽⁶⁾ So, after 1801, the administration of Cooch Behar presented a picture of utter despair. Harendra Narayan from his boyhood, had experienced the troubled condition of the state. As a boy he grew up under the guidance of his step-mother Kamateswari, who never thought of training up the future ruler of the state; she in fact had no ability and no ideas either. Thus as the ruler of Cooch Behar with full administrative power, Harendra Narayan began to express his anti-British feelings only and appeared to have no concern for the welfare of the State.

This anti-British attitude of Harendra Narayan was quite unusual for him who had passed his boyhood under the care

4. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 256.

5. Cooch Behar Select Records - Vol. 1, pp. 34-35.

6. Ibid., Letter from Ahmuty to the Secretary to the Government in the Revenue and Judicial Department.

and guidance of British Commissioners. It was under the commissioner's regime that peace was established in Cooch Behar after long years of misrule. The possible explanation of Harendra Narayan's anti-British feeling was that he was always ill-advised by his evil councillors - to whom the commissioner's regime was a great hindrance to the fulfilment of their own interests. Moreover he was convinced that British interference would ultimately lead to the extinction of his state. So, after Harendra Narayan's attaining majority, his activities created more trouble in the state and the evils grew so serious that the British Government had to interfere. In fact, the character of the Raja stood against all principles of good government and throughout his reign disputes - both domestic and external paralysed the internal administration. (7)

The first and foremost trouble started with regard to the claim of Nazir Dev Khagendra Narayan. The position of Khagendra Narayan, during this time was that, after the revolt of 1785, he was dismissed from office and all his land was confiscated. The Commissioner Mercer and Chauvet recommended for the Nazir Dev a monthly pension of Rs. 500/- and a jaigir of two cro- (8) shes of land around his residence at Balrampur for his maintenance. This recommendation was approved by the Government. Nazir Dev

7. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 258.

8. Ibid.

Khagendra Narayan was not satisfied with the Government's decision and reopened the issue again in 1791. Henry Douglas was then the Commissioner of Cooch Behar. Douglas supported the opinion of the special commission, ⁽⁹⁾ set aside the claims of Nazir Dev, and held that the Nazir could claim nothing but the allowance and the two croshes of lands around Balrampur. ⁽¹⁰⁾ But the Nazir Dev had not been paid his allowance of Rs. 500/- since ⁽¹¹⁾ Harendra Narayan's attaining maturity. Ahmuty, a former Commissioner, had on his own, paid one month's allowance to him as he was in distress. The arrear of Nazir Dev, in the year 1806, amounted to Rs. 32,000/- and the British Government at last decided to interfere. During the time of Montgomery, Collector of Rangpur and Commissioner of Cooch Behar, an amicable settlement was made over the dispute. Government ordered Montgomery to pay all arrears as well as the monthly pension of Rs. 500/- due to Nazir Dev, from the Rangpur treasury and adjust the account with the Raja's tribute. Montgomery wrote to the government that the Raja had agreed to pay off Nazir Deo and deposit his money in Rangpur treasury. ⁽¹²⁾

Harendranarayan agreed to make over to Khagendra Narayan land to the extent of one crosh each way round his house at Balrampur. ⁽¹³⁾ Khagendra Narayan died on 1808 and after his ⁽¹⁴⁾ death the dispute was renewed by his son Birendra Narayan. In

9. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1 pgs. 40-41.

10. Choudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 259.

11. Ibid.

12. C.B.S.R. Vol.1, p. 165, Montgomery to Government July, 7, 1806.

13. Ibid.,

14. Ibid.

1820 Mr. David Scott suggested a judicial procedure to safeguard the interests of the Nazir Dev, but Khagendra Narayan's grandson, the last titular Nazir, did not agree to the proposed regulations. Ultimately in the year 1824 the office of Nazirship was separated from Balrampur family and the Maharaja was left unfettered in his choice of his own Nazirs, on condition of his leaving to the heirs of the late Nazir Dev the enjoyment of the pension and the Jaagir. ⁽¹⁵⁾ In 1830, a dispute arose between the Maharaja and the Nazir Dev's family regarding the limits of the jaigirs of Balrampur. In 1834, Mr. Robertson, Governor General's Agent on the North Eastern frontier, appointed Ensign Brodie, to settle it. The boundaries of Balrampur was settled in 1837.

Harendra Narayan's relation with Dewan Dev was also not good. Dewan Dev Jibendra Narayan like the Nazir Dev had set himself up as a co-sharer of the Raj and did not rest satisfy with the decision of the government. He, in his petition to Lord Minto, stated that his father and the deceased Maharaja Dhairjendra Narayan were brothers. In 1774 A.D. when the tribute of Cooch Behar was settled by Purling, the Dewan Dev was required to pay annual Rs. 6,160,11 anna 4 gandas to the King, and deposit the same in the Company's treasury. ⁽¹⁶⁾ This revenue was for the lands the Dewan Dev had traditilnally enjoyed as owner of 2 as

15. Sen, S. N., op.cit., Introduction, p. IX.

16. C.P.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 175-6.

share of Cooch Behar. But Harendra Narayan after attaining majority refused to accept the Dewan Dev's right to the 2 anna share of Cooch Behar State, as well as his pretensions that upheld the Dewan Dev as co-sharer of Cooch Behar's territory, on the contrary, the Dewan was shown as a zamindar in revenue records. ⁽¹⁷⁾ This attitude of the Maharaja according to Dewan Dev, undermined his prestige and usurped his privilege to hold court within his jurisdiction. He claimed powers of administering justice within his jaagir lands. But the British government turned down the claims of Dewan Dev, Commissioner Montgomery instructed the Raja to behave well with the Dewan. But Maharaja Harendra Narayan tried every means to oppress and insult the Dewan. ⁽¹⁸⁾ So peace was not established.

Lord Wellesley was the Governor General at that time. The State of Cooch Behar and the activities of its ruler attracted his attention. A man of imperious character, Wellesley did not brook this easy going nature of the ruler. To improve the administration of the state Wellesley communicated to Harendra Narayan his desire to appoint a commissioner to act in concert with the Maharaja for the collection of Public revenue, administration of justice and of the police. ⁽¹⁹⁾ It was nothing new for the British Statesman. He did the same in other parts of the Company's territories too. The treaty of 1801 with Oudh gave the Company

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 215.

19. Ibid., pp. 135-36.

Letter to the Court, 2nd February, 1802, Vol. IX para, 52-53.

the right to interfere in the internal administration of Oudh with the object of preventing misrule. "The ruler had engaged to maintain order and good government in his state, but he was dependent entirely on the British government both for the counsel which was to determine his policy and for the force which was requisite for the enforcement of his authority."⁽²⁰⁾ Similar provisions were made in the case of Travancore and other states also.

With regards to British relations with Cooch Behar, on August 26, 1802 the Governor General in Council put on record that, "The Rajahs of Cooch Behar have not only been permitted, subsequently to the date of the Treaty, to coin money, to administer justice, and to exercise other powers of Sovereignty, but that their rights to the exercise of such powers has been fully and unreservedly acknowledged by the British government of India."⁽²¹⁾ Yet there was nothing more certain than that the Government (of India) had tended from the earliest days of their power to enlarge their interventions and to reduce the authority of the rulers. The appointment of a Commissioner for Cooch Behar may be cited as the best example of it.*

20. Prasad, Bisweswar, Bondage and Freedom, p. 188.

21. C.E.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 133-35.

* Wellesley as Governor-General, had his determination to build a British Empire in India, that created the grandiose and ramshackle structure of what was later to be known as "Princely India". Wellesley was a man in a hurry. It it was easier to neutralise a local ruler with a treaty and passed quickly on to more difficult problems. In the Seven years Wellesley was Governor General, Aitchison records about 100 treaties.

So, in 1803, Lord Wellesley appointed Francis Pierard as the Commissioner for Cooch Behar. The immediate reaction of Harendra Narayan was his reluctance to accept the arrangement, for introduction of British Regulations would signify the end of his independence.

But the Governor-General gave assurance to the Maharaja that in introducing the new arrangements the British had no intention to subject the ruler of Cooch Behar to the jurisdiction of a British Court.

Dispute, however, went on between Raja Harendra Narayan and the British Government on the question of introduction of the proposed British measure of reforms in Cooch Behar. Lord Wellesley was dissatisfied with the antipathy of Harendra Narayan towards measures proposed to be adopted for improvement of Cooch Behar's administration. (22) The Governor-General at last came to the conclusion that only by exercising immediate authority of the British Government any codes of law could be established. The important branches of the administration could not be left in the hands of the local officers "on whose integrity, ability, and industry little reliance could be placed" (23)

Wellesley instructed the Commissioner appointed for Cooch Behar, that "should the Rajah, however, contrary to the

22. Ibid., pp. 137-38.

23. Ibid.

reasonable expectations, which have been formed of a cheerful compliance on his part, still persists in his opposition to the introduction of the proposed Regulations, you are desired to acquaint the Rajah, as the final determination of His Excellency in Council, that the claim which the natives of Cooch Behar have to the protection of the British Government, from the connection which has so long subsisted between the government and the country of Cooch Behar, and the unquestionable right, which the Governor-General in Council possesses, to provide effectually for the regular payment of the stipulated tribute from Cooch Behar, and to prevent the disorders, which would undoubtedly prevail in Cooch Behar under the Rajah's management, from affecting the peace and tranquility of the adjacent territories in Bengal, will not permit His Excellency to relinquish the intention of extending the operation of the general Regulations, in force in the Province of Bengal, to Cooch Behar, or even to suspend the adoption of that important and salutary arrangements".⁽²⁴⁾

On September 2, 1803 Harendra Narayan put forward his objections against the move of the British.⁽²⁵⁾ He referred to the instance of Lord Cornwallis. On 4th July, 1789,

24. Ibid., Letter from G. Dodeswell, Sec. to Govt. Rev. Deptt. to Francis Pierard, Commissioner of Cooch Behar. The 28th July, 1803.

25. (Ibid., pp. 143-5) letter from Maharaja Harendra Narayan, to Govt. of India, 8th August, 1803 - C.B.S.R - vol-I, pp-143-5.

Lord Cornwallis had informed him of the appointment of a Commissioner for the affairs of Cooch Behar. But he had been assured that as soon he would attain majority the Commissioner would be withdrawn. And Ahmuty was withdrawn in the year 1801. But the present intention of the government went against the assurance of Cornwallis. Harendra Narayan, therefore, felt that, the transfer of the administration of civil and criminal justice into the hands of the company was against the honour and independence of his Raj. ⁽²⁶⁾ So, he prayed that his country might be spared from the present intentions of the government. He wrote, "The Company's dominions are as wide as the ocean, he added, "a drop out of the ocean would not occasion it to decrease." ⁽²⁷⁾

The British Government, in reply to the Rajas letter, informed him that the Governor General had only put forward "a title to the exercise of all rights, powers and privileges vested in the government by the terms of the treaty of 1772". ⁽²⁸⁾ Since that treaty with Cooch Behar was not annulled, nor any part of the conditions of it formally modified. The British government had no intention to relinquish the powers of control over the country of Cooch Behar founded both on terms of the treaty and the practice, which had subsisted during a long course of years in that country. The Commissioners had been withdrawn not because the government abandoned the principles on which the

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. pp. 140-42.

country of Cooch Behar had been managed during a long course
of years, but because of Harendra Narayan's attaining majority.⁽²⁹⁾
The continuance of that Officer at that time was considered
less important. Now, the British government decided to extend
Regulations to Cooch Behar. The administration of justice
through the agency of native officers would affect peace and
tranquility of Cooch Behar and her contiguous countries.⁽³⁰⁾

On February, 18, 1805, John French was appointed to
the post of commissioner for Cooch Behar and was furnished with
all necessary instructions. The Governor-General particularly
felt that from the time of first British contact with Cooch
Behar, the British Government had never acted upon the letter
of the treaty. On the contrary, the Raja of Cooch Behar had
been enjoying their full independence subject only to the pay-
ment of annual tribute.⁽³¹⁾ But the gradually worsening condi-
tion of Cooch Behar called for British intervention. After
Harendra Narayan came of age, the British government desired
to introduce some Regulation for better administration of civil
and criminal justice. And Francis Pierard was appointed to
carry on the task with the King's concurrence. However,
Pierard communicated to the Government his inability to carry
on with the King and John French was appointed. Meanwhile
Lord Cornwallis was appointed as Governor General for the

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid. p. 148.

31. Ibid., p. 148.

second time. As a follower of the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of native states, Cornwallis did not want to employ force for the introduction of the said Regulations in Cooch Behar. The Government was aware of the fact that there was no chance of obtaining the assent of Harendra Narayan but by conciliatory treatment and by impressing on his mind a sense of substantial advantage that should follow from the measure. (32)

But Harendra Narayan remained firm in his notions about the rights of his forefathers. John French failing in his efforts to convince the Raja, Montgomery succeeded him.

Montgomery reported that Harendra Narayan was as adamant as before. But he hoped that the Raja was going to establish both civil and criminal courts and three thanas in addition of the two that had already existed in Cooch Behar. (33)

On the death of Lord Cornwallis (Oct. 1805), Sir George Barlow became the Governor General. The British while believing in their undoubted rights in Cooch Behar were inclined to keep the adoption of Regulations in abeyance in the hope of obtaining the Raja's willing acceptance in future. They hoped that a time would come when the King would realise that no system other than that in force throughout the Company's territories could secure the punctual collection of Revenue, prompt and pure

32. Ibid., pp. 152-53.

33. Ibid., Govt. to Harendra Narayan, Nov., 13, 1805.

administration of justice and provide for the regular and efficient maintenance of the police in the country.⁽³⁴⁾ The government expected, therefore, that the Raja of Cooch Behar would, whenever necessary, take advice from Montogamery, the collector of Rangpur, who was also performing the Commissioner's duty at Cooch Behar.⁽³⁵⁾

One wonders at the forbearance of the British preferring a path of request and conciliation to coercing the Raja of Cooch Behar to accept British Regulations. The superiority of the strength of the company at that time was beyond question. Moreover, the general trend of British policy towards the Indian states was to intervene in the internal conditions on one pretext or another, and that became, as Panikkar observed, "the fertile ground of controversy and ill-feeling between the Indian States and the Government of India".⁽³⁶⁾ As regards the nature of British intervention, in later years, Sir George Campbell opined - "It must be admitted that in our interference with the internal concerns of the native States we do in practice go much beyond the letter of the original stipulations whatever the original stipulation, there is in fact almost no state with the internal affairs of which we have not had something to do. There is no uniform system, and it is almost impossible to give any defi-

34. *Ibid.*, Govt. to Harendra Narayan, Nov. 13, 1805.

35. *Ibid.*

36. Panikkar, K.M., Relations of Indian States with the Government of India, p. 106.

nite explanation of what things we do middle and what we do not."⁽³⁷⁾

The British government had all along desired to extend its authority in the internal affairs of Indian States. Taking the opportunity of the weakness of some ruler or through the agency of a minister nominated by the Resident, the government interfered in one matter after another and this extends from precedent to precedent until the sovereignty of the ruler virtually disappeared. Moreover, the powers of the Resident were undefined. His advice was usually an order, and, as there was no limitation in the matters of advice, it was clear that in most cases the powers of the Resident were used in a manner not consistent with the rights of the ruler.⁽³⁸⁾

In fact, during this period Resident after Resident assumed the role of the super-ruler. The role of the Resident in Oudh, Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda may be cited as the best examples of it. In Oudh, "the ruler had engaged to maintain order and good government in his state, but he was dependent entirely on the British government both for the counsel which was to determine his policy and for the force which was requisite for the enforcement of his authority."⁽³⁹⁾ The Nizam's forces were taken under British Control in the guise of their reform and reorganisation. This

37. Panikkar, K.M., op.cit., p. 108.
Campbell, G., Modern India, p. 80.
Warner, Lee, The Native States of India, p. 339.
38. Panikkar, K.M., op.cit., p. 110.
39. Prasad, Bisweswar, op. cit., p. 188.

force came so much under Resident's control that even Governor General Hastings had to admit, "It is perfectly true that these troops are, in fact more ours than those of the sovereign by whom they are maintained."⁽⁴⁰⁾

The cases of Mysore and Baroda were of no exception. Under these circumstances, it was really surprising on the part of the British Government to follow the policy of "wait and see" with regard to the introduction of Regulations into Cooch Behar.

From time immemorial coinage had been looked upon as one of the rights of Sovereignty in India. When States, the right to independent coinage was enjoyed by most of the states. But soon the British government found separate currencies inconvenient for smooth transaction of business, and therefore decided to impose its own currency on the states. It was decided that once the right to coinage of a state was suspended, it could not be revived, and that coins which had for sometime ceased to be current, should not be re-introduced. Cooch Behar's own Narayani currency was similarly forbidden in 1805.⁽⁴¹⁾ As early as 1789, the British government, inspite of agreeing to the Raja's right of coining,⁽⁴²⁾ had expressed desire to restrict it. The Commissioners had been directed to report to the Board any abuses which might appear to have been practised in the Mint, and the

40. Ibid., p. 193.

41. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 160-61.

42. Ibid., p. 73.

best mode of preventing them in future, and whether any bad consequences would result should the Raja be restricted to coining a small number of rupees annually, which, without entirely depriving him of the privilege of coining money, might obviate the evils arising from the unlimited exercise of it. (43) Afterwards, when the British assumed charge of the administration of the state as the guardian of its minor ruler Harendra Narayan, it had almost stopped coining Narayani rupees. However, after the King's attaining majority, the British Government, on August 20, 1802, (44) agreed to the King's rights to coinage only reluctantly. So, in the year 1805, the Governor General again wrote to Harendra Narayan, * As serious inconvenience would be experienced from that measure in the British territories, my public duty will not permit me to concede that point to your wishes. On this subject, I request you to consider my determination to be final, and I, accordingly expect that you will not have recourse to that measure." (45)

But the Governor-General's request, however, caused only annoyance to Harendra Narayan who was not inclined to any compromise in this matter. Moreover, troubles started in the state which eventually brought the British on the scene. We have already noted that the Maharaja had no good relation with the Dewan Dev. During the period, one Harish Chakraborty, a pujari

43. Mercer and Chauvet's Report, Vol. II. p. 152.

44. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, p. 133.

45. Ibid., p. 161.

or worshipper of idols in the services of Dewan Deo, became the cause of anger to the Maharaja by his notorious character. He was imprisoned by the ruler and later died. It was alleged (46) that Harendra Narayan caused the death of Harish Chakraborty.

Mr. Digby, Commissioner, on instructions from the government, enquired of the Raja of Cooch Behar about the death of Harish Chakraborty. Harendra Narayan, however, denied that Harish was dead. He said that Harish had gone to Nepal and so the Commissioner's enquiry was uncalled for. But Digby was not assured. He suggested to the government that in future all disputes involving ryots or dependents of Dewan Dev, and decided in the court of the Raja should be referred to the magistrate's court of Rangpur and that any order passed by the Raja should be held over till it was confirmed by the magistrate of Rangpur. (47)

The British government did not feel happy with the conduct of Harendra Narayan. Digby was asked to see that measures were taken for the safety of the Dewan Dev*. Digby

46. Ibid., pp. 221-22.

47. Ibid., pp. 223.

* Digby made a report to the Government of the cruel and tyrannical behaviour of the Raja towards the Dewan Dev and his dependents. The Raja of Cooch Behar had imprisoned Kamal Poddar, an immediate servant of the Dewan Dev. Guru Prasad, the then Dewan Dev of the Raja made unauthorised encroachment on the Dewan's property and also threatened to inflict direct vengeance on Dewan Dev. A Mooktear and several other of Dewan Dev's dependents also had taken refuge in Rangpur (by the) tyrannical behaviour of the Raja.

was instructed to proceed with force to Cooch Behar and conduct Dewan Dev to Rangpur where he should reside until secure conditions prevailed in the state. (48)

Not only the Raja's conduct towards Dewan Dev, but also the misgovernment of the ruler touched every corner of administration. The Maharaja had no concern with the administration and welfare of the subjects. Commissioner Madeod (appointed in 1813) gave an example of the hard lot of a ryot of Cooch Behar. Normally a ryot took lands on an agreement to pay his rent by autumn in cash. But when he produced his crops he found "that demand for dues in various shapes were made upon him" (49) amounting altogether to three times the stipulated rent. He was pressed upon to pay his dues. But when all his efforts failed, he was compelled to sell his children and "prostitute his wife by disposing her in mortgage." This was one of the causes of widespread slavery in Cooch Behar during this period. Driven by his hard lot, the ryots became desperate, and fled from the country. Some of them tried "to live upon the earnings of theft and robbery in the provinces under the British Empire, others wandering in vagrant search of a precarious subsistence among the mountains of Bhootan".

Corruption was rampant amongst the police officers of

48. Ibid., pp. 224-25.

49. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 255.

the state. Their pay was poor and irregular. Naturally, they "let loose upon the country, if not by express order of the ruling power, to earn their daily bread by plundering its inhabitants."⁽⁵⁰⁾ In addition to the 120 personal guard and 150 Barkandazes authorised by the government, Cooch Behar added an additional "rabble of sepoy's" nearly 500 in all. They were superfluous but "as they scarcely ever received any regular pay, they plundered the country for their own subsistence and were also very active instruments of oppression in the hands of the Raja's Amlah."⁽⁵¹⁾ An application from one Nedhan Tewary to John Digby, in November, 1812 narrated the injustice in the king's court. Guru Prasad was then the manager of the Faujdari Adalat and all affairs relating to Cooch Behar. There was no appeal against the decision of any court. The applicant expressed his giving vent to his grievances. The applicant complained that the king "about once in 5 months comes out of his zenana for a few hours." And during the time he was surrounded by Guru Prasad, the Amlahs of the Dewany Adalat and other principal officers. The amlahs communicated with the Raja through maid servants of the palace. Common sufferers had no admission there. The common people of the state had no one to protect them from the oppressive officers.⁽⁵²⁾ Macleod wrote that no improvement

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p. 263.

52. Ibid., pp. 206-7.

could be expected in the affairs of Cooch Behar. The Raja was sunk in "indolence and debauchery" from which he could not come out and engage personally in the administration. (53) He was not willing to make a free and personal communication with the Commissioner. The state of his public finance was also deplorable. The reason behind this was the oppressive system of Ram Prasad and Guru Prasad, the two notorious officers of the state. The measures of these ministers materially hampered all the regular sources of revenue and reduced the Raja's finances to a state of extreme embarrassment. They always tried to conceal from their master the real state of affairs. (54)

The story of Guru Prasad was really an interesting episode in the history of Cooch Behar. He was a native of Murshidabad and came to Cooch Behar at the age of fifteen and became the King's companion. (55) His father was a servant of the state. Harendra Narayan made his companion the Dewan but banished him in 1803. In 1808, he returned to Cooch Behar and was appointed manager of the criminal court. (56) In 1811, in addition to this duty he also held charge of the Dewan of the state. Thus, in reality, he became the governor of Cooch Behar and ruled with an iron hand. It was he who was responsible for the bitter relations between the king and the company that deve-

53. Ibid., pp. 245-46.

54. Ibid., p. 307.

55. Ibid., pp. 245-46

Sen, S. N. op.cit., p. 35.

56. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 245-46

loped on the murder of Harish Chakzaborty. The other two officers of the King were Ram Prasad and Surya Narayan Ghosh. These two persons again were not on cordial relations. Surya Narayan (57) was (a man) from Rangpur and was sober and a man of integrity. Guru Prasad could not tolerate him, for Surya Narayan as a go-between of the Raja and Macleod had least to prominence. Macleod was convinced that unless Guru Prasad was dismissed no improvement could be brought about in the affairs of Cooch Behar. Besides, the King's servants, took the opportunity to cause people believe that the English officer would not remain in Cooch Behar permanently, and thus they discouraged any aggrieved persons bringing complaints to the Commissioner. (58)

Lord Minto thought it necessary to adopt immediate steps for curbing the Raja's depraved tastes and asserting the right of British Government to interfere in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar for the prevention of anarchy, oppression and Bloodshed. The instructions of the Governor-General (went to) dwelt upon the past ~~his~~ relations between Cooch Behar and the British government. On the basis of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty of 1773 the British could easily treat Cooch Behar as a ceded territory and as such incorporate it with Bengal Presidency. But the government at that time did not deem it advisable to pursue that course.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

It did not follow, however, that in voluntarily limiting its own rights the government intended completely to relinquish its permanent political supremacy over Cooch Behar. (59)

Subsequently the Governor-General thought that proper rules should be introduced in that state for the collection of public revenue and prompt administration of justice by the Company's servants. Repeated endeavours were made to appoint a commissioner to implement the said Regulations; but Harendra Narayan constantly objected to any such proposals. Lord Minto believed that the rights of the British government conferred by the treaty of 1773 but hitherto not exercised, (60) for upwards of forty years should not be considered as "extinct". On the contrary, the superior authority of the British was irrevocable.

The conduct of Harendra Narayan in Sheltering the murderers of Harish Chakraborty and non-cooperating with the commissioner for bringing the offenders to book gave just cause for British annoyance. No doubt, the Commissioner also erred in "issuing regular judicial process and ordering summons to be served to the Raja's subjects" which he could dub as an undue interference; but that did not exonerate the Raja from the charge of defying the wishes of the paramount power.

Lord Minto wanted to appoint again a commissioner

59. Ibid., pp. 225-31.

60. Ibid.

exclusively for Cooch Behar. His duty should be to point out the ruler's unjustifiable conduct, and the dangers of listening to his evil councillors. The Commissioner should at first interpose his advice and "ultimately his authority for the redress of any serious grievances"⁽⁶¹⁾. He should also convince Harendra Narayan of the necessity of proper regulations for the administration of justice and collection of revenues. Should his efforts prove futile the Commissioner must frankly tell Harendra Narayan that his recent conduct had necessitated "a paternal and vigilant superintendence which was a privilege of the government sanctioned by the treaty of 1772."⁽⁶²⁾ This was the background of the appointment of Macleod as the Commissioner of Cooch Behar.

The appointment of Macleod, however, was a surprise for Harendra Narayan. He did not feel happy at all. He reassured Digby of every co-operation to find out the cause of the murder of Harish Chakraborty but entreated him to cancel the appointment of a commissioner in Cooch Behar.⁽⁶³⁾ Macleod understood that Harendra Narayan looked upon his appointment and residence in his territories as a violation of the treaty of 1772. But it was not possible for the Company to overlook the arrear of tribute amounting to Rs. 22,952/- payable by the Raja of Cooch Behar.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Raja's neglect of the administration had encouraged the forces of indiscipline in the country. The frontiers of Rangpur and Cooch Behar

61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid., pp. 235-36.

64. Ibid., pp. 238-40.

had become the seat of the depra-dator. The police officer of the Rangpur side remained inactive who also took no notice of its applications. At last, the government finding Raja's disinclination to the affair asked the magistrate of Rangpur to protect the places on the British frontier, and if necessary pursue the offenders to Cooch Behar. ⁽⁶⁵⁾ Macleod asked the government's permission to take action against Cooch Behar on the pretext of arrear of tribute. But Lord Minto desired more substantial grounds than a temporary failure in payment of tribute. ⁽⁶⁶⁾ Macleod was aware of Harendra Narayan's dissatisfaction over his stay in Cooch Behar. He tried to allay the king's unnecessary fears and pointed to his non-cooperation with magistrate Digby. Upon that the King threw the blames upon Dewan Guru Prasad whom he called an 'unfaithful' servant whom he had already dismissed. ⁽⁶⁷⁾ But Macleod came to know from his experience that the Raja could not be trusted for indecision which was a prominent feature of his character. And Harendra Narayan again took Guru Prasad into confidence and deputed him to talk with Macleod. ⁽⁶⁸⁾ Guru Prasad was again reinstated. From an interview with the Raja Macleod came to believe that investigation about the murder of Harish Chakraborty was not possible so long as Guru Prasad was the judge of Faujdari Adalat as well as Dewan. Macleod wanted the suspension of Guru Prasad until investigation was complete, but the

65. Ibid., pp. 241-42.

66. Ibid., p. 244.

67. Ibid., pp. 245-46.

68. Ibid.

(69)
raja refused. Radhakrishna Lahiri was then the Dewani Saristadar and a much respected man. Macleod asked the Raja to authorise Lahiri to help him in investigating the case. But the Raja (also) refused to comply with this request. The Raja would not permit investigation except through Guru Prasad. Macleod suspected some mystery connected with the murder of Harish Chakraborty. Moreover, the Raja had a blind fascination over Guru Prasad and Ram Prasad which he knows not how to shake off. (70)
Macleod's impression was that Harendra Narayan looked upon his position as independent of any control or influence of the English. He got disgusted with the Maharaja. He also suspected that Harendra Narayan wanted to get rid of the English. The Raja had provided himself with considerable amount of ammunition. (71)
Harendra Narayan began to indulge himself in all sorts of wild thoughts. He instructed his Vakeel to represent at Calcutta that in lieu of the removal of any British Commissioner, the Raja was prepared to double his tribute to the Company. (72)
Meanwhile on March, 1814, Macleod reported that Harendra Narayan was helping Brajnath Kumar, who wanted to occupy the throne of Assam after Gaurinath Singh. This act of Harendra Narayan went against the terms of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty by which Harendra Narayan could not make any political connection with any foreign power without the express permission

69. Ibid., pp. 262-68.

Sen, S. N. op.cit. Lett No. 126, p. 55.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid., pp. 273-78.

72. Ibid., p. 280

of the British government. Moreover, the reigning Ahom king maintained friendly relation with the British and so, Cooch Behar could not help his enemies.⁽⁷³⁾ All these activities of Harendra Narayan made the British government very much disgusted with the ruler of Cooch Behar. To Macleod, Harendra Narayan was incorrigible and the situation of the state was past helping. Defence of the state was the Government's concerns and the existence of a band of indisciplined native troops only added to the maladministration of the State and to its miseries. Macleod was getting disgusted.

However, with the coming of Lord Hastings as the Governor General, there was a remarkable change in the attitude of the British Government towards Cooch Behar. Lord Hastings did not hesitate to use the phrase 'Subordinate Co-operation' to express the sub-servience of the Indian rulers to the paramount power.⁽⁷⁴⁾ He enunciated the principle that all the internal states of India should form a confederacy with the British Company as "Senior controlling members."⁽⁷⁵⁾ During the administration of Lord Hastings, the Indian states, big and small, gradually but consistently were being forced into a relationship of absolute dependence and subordination to the East Indian Company. With regard to Cooch Behar, Lord Hastings was of opinion that Cooch Behar was "a tributary State under the protection of the British

73. Ibid., p. 282.

74. Prasad, Bisweswar, op. cit., p. 199.

75. Ibid., p. 200.

Government, and depended even for its existence on that protection." (76) The Governor General noted the charges against Harendra Narayan. Not only had the tribute of Cooch Behar fallen into arrears; the allowance of the Nazir Dev was also not paid. Besides these, attempts were made to usurp possession of lands assigned for his residence. The Dewan Dev also received injuries at his hands; Harendra Narayan's behaviour towards the British agent was not fair either. He was not willing to make a free and personal communication with the Commissioner appointed for the good of the State.

The Governor General held that the treaty of 1772 "imposes upon the Raja the duties and allegiance obligatory" and can demand "the penalty of ^a violation or disregard of those ~~duties~~ duties." (77) That penalty is not merely the dissolution of the existing alliance but the actual annexation of Cooch Behar to the dominions of the Company. The conduct of the Raja was "utterly inconsistent with the most liberal construction of the political duties of subjection and allegiance." (78) The Governor General, however, did not at the moment contemplate the measure of assuming the full exercise of its rights; but the circumstances of Cooch Behar made it necessary "for the Government to interfere decisively for the support of its own honour and dignity, and for the

76. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 286-289.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

prevention of those evils which were evidently depending from the present state of affairs in Cooch Behar. (79)

Macleod was then asked to tell Harendra Narayan to dismiss immediately the Khas sepoy and other extra-body of persons; Guru Prasad and Ram Prasad were to be immediately sacked from service and banished from the state. The appointment of a Dewan, in future, was to be made on the approval of the British Government. Any failure to pay punctually the stipulated instalments of tribute was to be regarded as a violation of one of the conditions of the treaty and consequently of a forfeiture of benefits which he had so long enjoyed from it. The Governor General, however, desired to go further than this at present. (80) Arrears of tribute in the meantime had amounted to Rs. 20,000/- and arrears of allowance to Dewan Dev amounted to Rs. 15,000/-. (81)

In accordance with the desire of his government, Macleod asked the King to dismiss and banish both Guru Prasad and Ramprasad from Cooch Behar. Harendra Narayan informed that agreeably to the desire of the Government both the officers had been dismissed and ordered to leave the boundaries of his territory. Ram Prasad was conducted by the men of Macleod to the frontier where the Daroga took charge of him on behalf of the Rangpur magistrate. Macleod had already requested the magistrate to execute a personal bond of Rs. 10,000/- from the man giving security for

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid., pp. 291-2.

his appearance when desired. Soon after this Guru Prasad surrendered to Macleod who immediately sent him to Rangpur. (82)

Macleod accompanied by Lt. Ford and his troops, went to Harendra Narayan to demand immediate dismissal of his Khas sepoy. The King was strongly asked to meet without delay the demands of those sepoy, the amount of the arrears of the Company's tribute and the subsistence allowance payable to the family of the Nazir Dev. ** (83) Harendra Narayan, in reply, pointed

82. Ibid., pp. 301-02

83. Ibid.

** "Your conduct, however, has been utterly inconsistent with the duties of subjection and allegiance. You must, consequently, be considered to have violated your engagements, and to have forfeited your rights of territorial sovereignty by disregarding the conditions under which they were recognised with a view to prevent the recurrence of any acts of gross outrage or oppression, and for this purpose, on the present occasion, to insist on your compliance with the following demands:

- 1st. That you discharge your Khas sepoy, and any other descriptions of armed force, which may appear to the Commissioner to be unnecessary for the internal administration of the country.
- 2nd. That you discharge from your service the Dewan Gooroo Prasad and Moonshah Ram Prasad and Compel them to quit your territory.
- 3rd. That you dismiss from your service any other officers whom the Commissioner may point out to you, as being unworthy of employment, from their participation in the late transaction, and
- 4thly. That the appointment of a Dewan be in future considered subject to the approval of the British Government.

to his paucity of funds to meet all these demands immediately. Macleod fearing that the disbanded sepoy's being unable to get their arrear pay would create further troubles, took the measure to disarm the troops and placed them under guard of Lt. Ford. He personally ^{stood} security for their arrear pay. (84) From the Raja's officers, Macleod learnt that the arrear pay of sepoy's would amount to Rs. 13,000/-. He asked for the permission of his Government to disburse that sum of money from Cooch Behar's tribute received, and treat it as Cooch Behar's debt to the Company. (85) (86) The Government approved and appreciated the measures of Macleod.

Harendra Narayan realised that the attitude of the British Government towards him was becoming sterner and he now attempted to please them. He asked for the Government's assistance for a better system in the administration of justice. The Governor General was pleased to find this change in the attitude of the King in directly applying for its assistance "is framing a code of laws for the administration of justice in the territory of Cooch Behar". (87)

The Governor General desired that "the Mahomedan law modified according to the spirit of Regulation in force," (88) in

84. Ibid., pp. 302-08.

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid., pp. 315-15.

87. Ibid., 316-17.

88. Ibid.

Benqai should be the basis of any system or criminal law to be introduced in Cooch Behar. Harendra Narayan, on his part, requested the Government to make Hindu law the rule of conduct in the administration of justice; but his prayer, although accepted in Civil disputes, was rejected in criminal disputes. The Government held that "The Mahomedan law is so corrected in essentials that it may be regarded as the administration of the British criminal justice."⁽⁸⁹⁾ Macleod was particularly made aware of the Governments' views. Criminal justice was to be administered in the King's name through the agency of British Commissioner. The Government did not intend to charge upon the King's treasury for the salary of the Commissioner. A permanent force of 50 sepoy was to be stationed in Cooch Behar.

Government also furnished Macleod the detailed scheme of establishing civil and criminal justice in Cooch Behar. The Hindu law that already existed in civil matters in Cooch Behar was retained. The civil court was to be managed by a respectable Hindu assisted by a Pandit thoroughly well-versed in Hindu law. The former would discharge the functions performed by a zillah, or city or provincial judge. In any question of law, the Pandit would give the exposition of the Hindu Law by which the judge would abide. The government desired the British agent in Cooch Behar to exercise" a control over civil justice - a control as general and comprehensive as possible."⁽⁹⁰⁾

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., pp. 321-25.

But it had been too much the practice to impose duties upon public officers in the judicial department for exceeding their natural powers - an error which His Excellency in council was naturally desirous of avoiding in that circumstances. (91)

The Commissioner was directed not to act as the court of appeal in cases of certain magnitude living others to be finally decided by the original court. That would cause abuse of justice in the original court. Rather, the Commissioner should be invested with a "general and unlimited control" over the proceedings of the native judges and that power should be exercised according to circumstances. The power of the Commissioner would serve as a check upon all judicial proceedings of the native judges. (92)

The lengthy note of the government asked Macleod to fix the number of officers to be employed and their salary, particularly of the judge and the Pandit which should be equal to their rank and prestige, in consultation with the Raja. If Muslim community in the state was of real importance, the same procedure by the same officers was to be followed only it was to be declared that the Muslim law was to be followed. It was not difficult to send legal opinions from the Maulavis of Sadar Dewany Adalat, but that would not be necessary. (93)

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

In the criminal court, the Commissioner was to provide in cases affecting life of the convict or other serious offences. In offences of less serious nature, the commissioner, as in civil cases, would exercise a general control over the proceedings and judgements. The native court would have a Kazi and Muffi. The trial should be conducted according to the principles of Muslim law by the Kazi, and the Muffi will deliver the exposition of the laws as applicable to the facts of the case. Raja's jurisdiction in the administration of justice was clearly defined. No capital punishment should be given except under the seal and signature of the Raja, and he would have the privilege of remitting or mitigating with the above exception, the Raja should not interfere in the administration of justice either criminal or civil. (94)

The establishment of the courts of judicature would afford no protection to person or property unless a system of police was established. Police establishment like that in a district town of Bengal was welcomed in the capital, the expense of the establishments would be defrayed by the community for whose benefit they were to be maintained. (95)

Thus a thorough scheme of reform was chalked out by the government for implementation in the judicial administration

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

of Cooch Behar which was the urgent need of the time.

Harendra Narayan's attitude towards the British Govt. in the meantime to some extent changed. He requested Macleod to write to the Governor General on his behalf to frame laws and regulations for the "due administration of civil and criminal justice throughout his territory as may ensure the security and tranquility of his subjects and the proper cultivation and improvement of his land and the regular and punctual distribution of his revenues. He, at the same time, requested that British government should preserve his rank and dignity. (96) The Governor-General addressed a letter to Harendra Narayan congratulating his wise decisions and his willingness to accept British help for the betterment of law and justice in Cooch Behar. (97)

At long last, Wellesley's desire to imprint British paramountcy over Cooch Behar came near success. Harendra Narayan agreed to the British proposal of reforms in the administration of justice in Cooch Behar. But from now onwards the British Government proceeded with cautious steps. Harendra Narayan had bent a little. It would be unstatemanlike to make him prostrate at one stroke. Moreover, the Company's attention during this period was lying elsewhere. Storm clouds at the time hovered over the eastern

96. Sen, S.N. - op.cit., Lett. No. 131, p. 58.

97. C.B.S.R., Vol. I, pp. 316-17.

Himalayan sky. Because of the British pre-occupations in the expansion of trans-Himalayan trade route, the security of the frontier was ignored by them. Storm clouds at that time hovered over the eastern Himalayan sky to this time a new trans-Himalayan trade route attracted the attention of the Company so much that they never thought of the security of the northern frontier of Bengal Subah. It was in the beginning of the nineteenth century that the British Government began to think about the security of the frontier. This was because of British relations with Nepal. During the latter part of the eighteenth century following the Tibeto-Nepalese conflict, China invaded Nepal. The Lhasa authorities had requested the English to remain neutral. ⁽⁹⁸⁾ Nepal, on the other hand, being encouraged by the commercial treaty with the East India Company concluded in March, 1792, appealed to the Governor General for help. ⁽⁹⁹⁾ But the policy of neutrality on the part of the British neither satisfied the Nepalese nor the Tibetans. During this time the attitude of Nepal took an ugly turn. China was an unpredictable power in the eastern Himalayas. From the very conclusion of the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty, Bhutan was in good eye of the British, because of the trade route beyond the Himalayas. Taking the opportunity of the policy of favouritism pursued by the company towards Bhutan, it begun to encroach

98. Diksalkar, D.B., Journal of the Bihar, Orissa Research Society, Vol. 19, 1933, p. 375.

99. Ibid., p. 377.

upon Cooch Behar's territory. Constant disturbances in the frontier was the return of British policy towards Bhutan. Meanwhile, the Anglo-Burmese relations were heading towards a precipice in the eastern frontier. The King of Burma consolidated his power in his country and conquered Arakan', an independent kingdom adjoining the South-east part of Bengal. (101) Many refugees from Arakan had taken shelter in British territories during the coming operations by the new Burmese masters. The Burmese king demanded the surrender of those fugitives; gradually he extended his territorial claim to Chittagong, Manipur as also the petty principalities of Cachar and Jaintia and threatened the British district of sylhet. Besides, a Burmese invasion of Bengal from Goalpara seemed imminent. The success of the Burmese in Assam and their fantastic claim upon Bengal districts had roused dangers from the flank. Naturally, in this respect of Cooch Behar, that stood so near the Himalayas, the British government was reluctant to adopt any stern policy for the time being.

Internal strife in Assam also reached its climax in the first half of the nineteenth century. The non-intervention policy of the British indirectly threw Assam into the clutches of the Burmese. In 1809 an Ahom Prince, Chandra Kanta Singh, was deposed from power by his ministers, and failing to obtain help from the British troops rushing into Assam to help him proved to be dangerous.

101. Bose, M.L., Historical and Constitutional Documents of North Eastern India, Introduction.

CHAPTER - VI

Last years of Harendra Narayan - End of Medieval Age in Cooch Behar. + 1814 - 1839

The British relations with Cooch Behar entered upon a new phase after 1814. Harendra Narayan's changed attitude of accepting British Regulations gave the British a breathing space. They were really very much disturbed at the attitude of Harendra Narayan.

British Government appreciated Macleod, the Commissioner for Cooch Behar for his success in changing Harendra Narayan's attitude without employing force. Their attitude towards the Raja also changed. They never tried to interfere in the Raja's traditional rights and powers. For the betterment of the administration of Cooch Behar, the government proposed to place Prince Shibendra Narayan in charge of all lands of Cooch Behar. They wanted monthly regularised payment of the public establishments, payment of the tribute, payment of the interest of debts made by the Raja, maintenance of the Raja's household and gradual discharge of the principal of the debt contracted by him. They, however, asked Macleod to seek for the ruler's concurrence in effecting these arrangements ⁽¹⁾. Even when it was decided that the trials of Ram Prasad should be according to the laws of Cooch Behar and also in the Raja's court, the government did not object. Though they were aware of

1. C.B.S.R. - Vol. 1, pp. 329-30.

the results of the trial in the Raja's court. After Guru Prasad's removal, question arose with regards to his replacement. Radhakrishna Lahiri persuaded the Raja to request Macleod for his appointment. But Macleod rejected the proposal and wanted to install Shibendra Narayan in charge of the financial affairs. ⁽²⁾ Shibendra Narayan was young, about eighteen years' of age and was candid and liberal. He had some knowledge about Persian and some interests of administration. He was, moreover, the immediate heir to the state. So, Macleod wanted to make the future ruler of Cooch Behar interested in the material welfare of his state and conversant with the problems of administration which Harendra Narayan lacked. To keep him away from ⁽³⁾ administration would be to cripple his abilities.

Upto this time Macleod tackled the situation of Cooch Behar diplomatically. But during this time Macleod became over enthusiastic in undermining the prestige of Harendra Narayan. It was true that Harendra Narayan had a dislike for the British Regulations, but there was no proof of rebellious acts on his part. All the activities of the Raja upto this time made Macleod biased against him. Macleod believed that there was nothing impossible on the part of the capricious ruler. This suspicious attitude of the Commissioner created an awkward

2. Ibid., pp. 354-55

3. Ibid.

situation in Cooch Behar. In 1815, there was a rumour that in order to make an alliance with the Gurkhas of Nepal against the British, Harendra Narayan conspired with the Bhutia Governor at Buxa ⁽⁴⁾. The rumour at first spread from a Zinkaf. ⁽⁵⁾ This person saw Ram Singh, a faithful Sepoy of Harendra Narayan with a letter towards Chamurchi. Sometimes after this incident, this Ram Singh, being discharged by the Raja, told Macleod all about the conspiracy, without judging the truth of Ram Singh's allegation. ⁽⁶⁾ Macleod wrote to the British Government about the treacherous activity of Harendra Narayan. The Raja was not a good book of the authority ^{ies} at Calcutta but they were not in a revengeful mood (of that of) ^{like} Macleod. If the charges against Harendra Narayan proved genuine, the punishment would be the dethronement of the ruler, ⁽⁷⁾ and it was not unnatural for the British Government. But without any proper enquiry they did not want to take any action. There was no doubt that Cooch Behar had no friendly relations with Bhutan. A constant border dispute was going on between the two and it was not possible for Cooch Behar to maintain the border's security without the help of the East India Company. In that case, if Harendra Narayan wanted to make a secret alliance with the Bhutias and the Gorkhas in Nepal, then the time was ripe during the first

4. Sen, S. N. op.cit., Lett. No. 136, p. 61.

5. Ibid., p. 39.

6. Foreign consultations (Pol.) Oct., 1815.

7. Sen, S.N. op.cit., p. 39.

Anglo-Gurkha war (1814) when the British army was in a awkward position. (8) But this time the victory of the British was a foregone conclusion. So the allegations of Macleod was not justified. The British government wanted genuine proof of Harendra Narayan's anti-British activity. (9)

Uptill now Macleod was appreciated for his policies in Cooch Behar. But during this time he tried his best to prove the Raja of Cooch Behar guilty of treacherous activities. Without waiting for authorities' instruction from Calcutta, he begun to enquire into the matter. (10)

Harendra Narayan, like other Hindu prince practised polygamy. Karindranath, one of his brother-in-law, was an employee under the Bhutan government. He was dismissed temporarily but he had a hope that if he met the Debraja of Bhutan, he would be re-instated. But Macleod came to know that Karindra did not go to Bhutan. He went to the border for making arrangement of hunting for Harendra Narayan. (11) Karindranath had his own house at Marichbari, a place near the Bhutan frontier. Macleod scented otherwise at the news of Harendra Narayan's hunting. News also came to him that Karindra was gathering force near the frontier. Moreover Harendra Narayan had handed over Maraghat to Bhutan and Chaprasis to keep watch over Karindranath. One of the

8. Ibid., p. 40.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. p. 42.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

Chaprasi reported that a Zenkauf with Debaraja's letter came to Karindranath who would soon leave for Bhutan. Macleod posted Ensign Pigot with a band of Sepoys on the bank of the river Mansai towards the Bhutan frontier. ⁽¹³⁾ The Sepoys and Chaprasis of Macleod, after returning from Marichbari, reported that they had seen about forty persons returning with hunting materials. After enquiry, they came to know that these men were going to Bhutan, but as the place was quite unknown to them, they returned to the Rajbari (Raja's palace). There was not more than twenty five armed men with Karindranath. After their return to Cooch Behar, Macleod enquired Karindranath and his associates. His answer was evasive. Moreover, they were, to some extent, crazy. So Macleod was sure that Harendra Narayan sent Karindra Nath to obtain Bhutan's military help against the English in exchange of Maraghat. So, within no time ⁽¹⁴⁾ Macleod reported to the government at Calcutta the adventure of Karindra Nath. "From the whole of the information above detailed, it has appeared to me that the following conclusion is evidently and surely deducible that the Raja of Cooch Behar despatched Karindra Nath and his companions for Bhutan in charge of a mission, having for its express object an offer to the Bhutias of the resignation of all lands in Maraghat, and an invitation to them to descend and take immediate possession of those lands, on the condition that

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

they should grant him the aid of a large military force, to assist him in prosecuting the views, which he now unquestionably mediates, of forcibly emancipating his raj from all dependence upon the English government."⁽¹⁵⁾

But this time fortune betrayed Macleod. The authorities rebuked him for his highnandedness with regard to the ruler of Cooch Behar. The government discerns nothing in Macleod's report to apprehend anything from Harendra Narayan. Macleod sent Munsifazzalullah to the Subah of Buxaduar for the original letter. But his attempt also failed. Fazal-ullah returned with some copy of the original letters.⁽¹⁶⁾ Though these letters were comparatively in favour of Macleod,⁽¹⁷⁾ but the government took no steps.

Moreover, a Zinhaf from Bhutan had brought no satisfactory answer on the subject of the correspondence stated to have taken place between the Raja of Cooch Behar and the Soobhas of Chamurchi and Buxaduar. He stated that he could not collect any evidence that any letters had also been received.⁽¹⁸⁾ On February 24, 1816

J. Adam, Secretary to the government wrote Macleod that British government, after a careful and thorough examination of the terms of the Anglo-Cooch Behar treaty came to a decision that until and unless the king would violate the terms of the treaty, they had no

15. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

16. vide, Let. No. (Bengali) 151, 152, 153, 154.
Sen, S. N. - op.cit., pp. 183-87.

17. Ibid. p. 43.

18. Ibid., p. 43-44.

jurisdiction over the matter. Adam at the same time asked the ruler of Cooch Behar to earnestly attend to the advice of the Commissioner who would be the best chance of a successful administration. (20)

The policy of the British government was not liked by Macleod. There was no improvement in the administration of justice and police in Cooch Behar. The whole business of ~~the~~ criminal justice and police departments were suffering due to the incapacity of Radhakrishna Lahiri to perform these duties along with his own functions. The Raja was still in the hope of reinstating Guru Prasad and Ram Prasad. He gave hints to Macleod of reserving the criminal court for Guru Prasad. Of course, he himself, personally would pay more attention to its smooth functioning, and for the time being he wanted to keep the department under the charge of Radhakrishna Lahiri, the Dewan. Macleod doubted very much the Raja's sincerity to look

19. C.B.S.R., Vol. 1, pp. 97-98.

On the whole, the Resolution, which the Governor-General in Council has now formed, is to abstain from all interference except in the form of advice and representation in the unlimited management of the affairs of Cooch Behar, and to restrict the powers of the Commissioner, to the exercise of diplomatic functions only. The presence of a commissioner will still, in the judgement of His Lordship in Council, be of considerable utility in aiding the Raja with advice, in serving by his presence as a salutary check on the conduct of the Raja and of his officers, in communicating with the government and in interposing the cases of real magnitude and importance, and under special instructions for the purpose, the authority of government for the prevention of justice and oppression.

20. Ibid., p. 99.

into the affairs and clearly told him of his lack of faith in Radha Krishna's ability to control the two important departments.
(21)

Harendra Narayan and his eldest son Shibendra Narayan were not in good terms. But during this time Harendra Narayan agreed to receive prince Shibendra Narayan into favour provided he could arrange for the return of Guru Prasad as well as Ram Prasad.
(22) Prince Shivenbra Narayan approached Macleod with the request to place Ram Prasad under his security. As Ram Prasad could not be judged or penalised except by the Raja's criminal court, and as there was no certainty of his receiving due punishment at the hands of the Raja for the offence of murdering Harish Chakraborty, Macleod did not find any objection to the request of the crown Prince. As long as he stood guarantee for the man, the government had no cause for anxiety for the offender. Macleod hoped that by granting the request of the crown prince he would be able to bridge the difference
(23) between the royal father and son. So he consented.

But a under current of intrigues was soon disco-

21. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 1-6, Macleod to Govt.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

vered. Ram Prasad succeeded in influencing the Raja who declared that he would vest the former with the powers of Faujdari and Dewani Departments. Lahiri also did not set idle. His friends spread the rumour that Shivendra Narayan, in league with the British officers was planning some project harmful for the Raja's power and position. These prejudiced the mind of the Raja and as a result created distrust in the father for the son again. (24) Macleod was afraid of the inimical attitude of the Raja towards his son and the future heir. He made it a plea for effective interference of the British Government in the said affairs of Cooch Behar. "Consistently with even the modified principles of political influence now adopted the British Government might possibly deem itself justified in a recourse to such a degree of interference as may be requisite to uphold the condition of the heir of the raj." (25)

The commissioner was aggrieved at the limited interference in the administration of Cooch Behar and the practical evil arising therefrom. By limiting "the exertion of our political influence to cases of peculiar magnitude and importance" Macleod feared, the government limited the "salutary effects to be anticipated from our future control over the

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

Raja's administration." (26) He referred to the aspects of the ruler's character that turned a deaf ear to the advice of the British government. The Raja was of over-bearing nature puffed up by a group of self-seeking flatters. The "forebearing policy and the conduct of the British government towards him as past-times", and the recent management confirming to him the free and entire management of the Raj, "inflected his mind with arrogant notions respecting the extent and nature of his political independence". (27) Macleod suspected that Harendra Narayan suffered from jealousy of British paramountcy. He referred to a prophecy current in that state that during his reign Cooch Behar would cease for ever to maintain her separate statehood. Perhaps, the ruler under the influence of the prophecy resisted any form of British interference or supervision of his affairs. (28) The commissioner became very much disgusted with the government's policy towards Cooch Behar. He was of opinion that a mere continuance of the office of the commissioner would not produce considerable benefit unless the government decided to exercise a real control over the "many petty tyrants, who in rapacious exercise of the delegated authority" afflict the

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26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.

subjects "with a reign of terror and extortion." (29) Macleod was succeeded by David Scott, the magistrate of Rangpur as the commissioner of Cooch Behar. Macleod, before his departure, recommended to the government for the liquidation of arrears of Cooch Behar's tribute. The amount of arrear was increasing day by day. The Raja proposed to pay off the dues by periodical instalments within three years. After that period on account of the Raja's failure, to keep his word, he would be "liable to the sequestration of the Raj in like manner as would follow his default in the fulfillment of those terms "on which he held his territory. But he would be provided with a subsistence becoming his rank and condition. (30) Based on this recommendation of Macleod, the government instructed Scott to communicate it to Harendra Narayan.

In the first week of April, 1818, Harendra Narayan, through his agent placed the request at Calcutta for the return of Dewan Guru Prasad and Ram Prasad. The government was surprised at such a request. The two officers were of notoriously bad character. Moreover, they tried to insult to Macleod and so to the government. They were privy to the murder of Harish Chakraborty. The government reminded the Raja of their letter 1816 "authorising you to administer your country through your

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., pp. 17-18.

own officer and putting an end to the direct interference of the
Commissioner".⁽³¹⁾ They also permitted the Raja to "recall to
your counsels and individual of the description of Guru Prasad."
The kingly duties of "prudence, humanity and justice were incom-
patible with the restoration of such a person." Rather, the Raja
was asked to take advice from the Commissioner to manage his affairs
and fulfill his duties.⁽³²⁾

Harendra Narayan's debt to the British, in the mean-
time, amounted to 57,074-7-10-3 on account of balance of tribute
and sums advances to the Nazir. Scott did not like to recommend
any indulgence.⁽³³⁾ Harendra Narayan's position was precarious
from all corners. When Scott was going to visit Goalpara, a party
of Cooch Behar sepoys approached him at Mugalhat and requested him
ask the Raja to pay their arrear pay for two years.⁽³⁴⁾ The troops
were in a mood to revolt. They waylaid the Dewan who was coming
from Rangpur in his palanquin, but he was saved by the Daroga. When
Scott came after sometime to Dinhat, the troops approached him
again, and actually threatend to way lay the Dewan who came to visit
Scott.⁽³⁵⁾

Harendra Narayan appealed against the rebel sepoys.

31. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp. 26-27.

32. Ibid.

The return of Guru Prasad and Ram Prasad was in no way be
suitable for the welfare of the people of Cooch Behar. The
past experience supports this. So the British Govt. advised
Harendra Narayan to administer the country with the advice of
the commissioner appointed by the British government.

33. Ibid., p. 33, Scott to Govt. Feb. 3, 1821.

34. Ibid., pp. 36-38.

35. Ibid.

But Scott was not prepared to commit to help him "for the suppression of internal disturbances created by his own management and disregard of the advice so often given him." He told the Raja to make his own arrangement for the safety of the Dewan. Scott also as per government order of 2nd June, 1818 desisted from advising the Raja to discharge such internal debts "as the immediate payment of the whole of the arrears due to the petitions would necessarily have been followed by a similar demand on the part of the rest of the troops and this could not possibly have been satisfied without putting an entire stop to the payment of the annual tribute and arrears due to government."⁽³⁶⁾

From the beginning of this rule, Harendra Narayan could not satisfy the British government. The condition of the state remained as it was, due to the aversion of the ruler for a good government. So, the governor general, even before the death of Harendra Narayan, decided to select his successor. Prince Shibendra Narayan was the nominee of the government, whether Harendra Narayan liked it or not.

It may be said in this connection that the Anglo Cooch Behar Treaty did not clarify anything with regards to the British jurisdiction over the question of succession in Cooch Behar state. In Cooch Behar it was customary that eldest son should inherit the Raj. But Harendra Narayan's activity puzzled

the British Government. They wanted a person to the throne of Cooch Behar, who, at least should administer the state with the British advice. They wanted a friendly ruler on the throne of Cooch Behar. Scott was told not to speak it out just then. The Government's plan was secret. British intentions might be communicated in a decisive way if the commissioner should see Harendra Narayan set up any other rival of Shibendra Narayan on the throne.⁽³⁷⁾ The Governor General also asked Scott's opinion "on the expediency of requiring from Shibendra Narayan, on his succession, any stipulation calculated to improve the administration of the country or to promote other desirable objects which may not be attainable during the present Raja's rule."⁽³⁸⁾ All these activities of the government leads to the conclusion that Harendra Narayan totally disappointed the British Government. But the time was not yet ripe to take any step against the ruler of Cooch Behar. Because during this time the British government was busy in the North Eastern frontier. The Burmese became very powerful and occupied the Brahmaputra valley and established their authority over Assam. Their empire compised Arakan and all territories bordering on Bengal to its east upto Siam. The confrontation with a powerful kingdom, expansive its nature and aggressive in intent, as the

37. Ibid., pp. 45-46, Government to Scott - 22nd October, 1824.

38. Ibid.

Burmese were, on the frontier of Bengal posed a problem of defence for the British. The governor General was quite conscious of the strategic situation of Assam and its associate kingdoms of Cachar and Jaintia which were in their turn victims of anarchy, internicine conflicts and adventurism of Manipur princes who had been expelled from their kingdom by the Burmese. The presence of the Burmese in the North East, was considered a major threat to the security of Bengal and stability of British empire. Naturally, the British government had no time to look into the affairs of Cooch Behar.

In Cooch Behar the picture was also different. Harendra Narayan wanted to pass his last days at Baneras. He desired Shibendra Narayan to accompany him to Baneras. The prince was unwilling. The Raja wanted to entrust his second son with the management of the state during his absence. Jenkins, the Governor General's Agent to the North Eastern Frontier of India during this time, was of opinion that Shivendra Narayan, the heir apparent, should not proceed to Baneras; rather he should be given an opportunity to learn the art of government, which he will have to take charge in future. The government, also was of opinion that it would have been desirable on the part of Harendra Narayan to give Shibendra Narayan an opportunity to his business of administration. His absence from the Capital would be a opportunity for the crown prince. Though as long as

Harendra Narayan lived, Shibendra Narayan could not interfere in the management of his affairs. ⁽³⁹⁾ As Harendra Narayan became too old and he wanted to spend his last years at Baneras, the British government wanted to place Shibendra Narayan in charge of the affairs of the State. Shibendra Narayan was also the legal heir to the Raj. But a secret letter of Shibendra Narayan, ⁽⁴⁰⁾ addressed to the Governor General ⁽⁴¹⁾ narrated that his father, with the advise of certain intriguing people, proposed to make over the charge of the state to one of his younger step brothers, a person totally ignorant and inexperienced in business of administration. He also wrote that his father advancing in age and suffering from ill health was not in a position to observe the intrigues of his officers. ⁽⁴¹⁾ Shibendra Narayan prayed to the Government that "your Lordship will be graciously pleaded to take my case into your deliberate consideration and issue such an order as will secure my rights to me." ⁽⁴²⁾ In spite of Government's desire, Harendra Narayan did not want to put Shibendra Narayan in charge of the business of the Raj. Jenkins informed the Government that Shibendra Narayan was present in Cooch Behar but he only conducted his usual duties of hearing civil appeals and did not interfere in any way in the management of the general affairs of the country. ⁽⁴³⁾ It was much to be regretted that this son was not

39. Ibid., p. 62.

40. Foreign consultations (Pol.) 25th March, 1834, No. 65.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Foreign consultations (Political), 19th Sept. 1836, No. 84-85.

placed in charge of affairs by the Raja, for he was popular with all class of people of Cooch Behar. (44) Jenkins apprehended that, owing to inveterate dislike of the Raja to this son, there was every doubt that the Raja, would, if possible supersede him (Shibendra Narayan) at the time of his death by his favourite son. It was customary that succession in Cooch Behar had always descended to the eldest son who as in some Hindu kingdoms, was previously appointed as Yuvaraja by the reigning Raja. The eldest son's succession, therefore, could not be all doubtful. It would lead to some disturbances if Harendra Narayan took contrary measures. (45)

Meanwhile troubles arose with regard to the payment of Raja's tribute. British government demanded interest from Harendra Narayan on his arrears. Mr. Scott, during his commissioner-ship, had in several communications to the Government, brought to notice the delays which occurred in the Raja's payments. The governor General in council had authorised Mr. Scott to require payment from the Raja of interest at 12 percent per annum upon all future arrears of tribute. (46)

Jenkins informed the government that a letter from the collector of Goalpara put the total amount of interests received upto June last, Rs. 41,939-13-10-3. (47) Harendra Narayan stated

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 28th August, 1837, No. 72.

47. Ibid.

that the levying of interest from tributary Raja was not customary for the government and on this ground he prayed for the exemption of interests on his tribute. He also prayed to the government that the amount of interest collected from him upto that date might be credited as tribute and that if his lordship would confer this favour on him, he would be able in future to pay all his tribute within the year. (48)

Kalicharan Lahiri, the Dewan of Cooch Behar communicated to Jenkins the financial condition of the Raj and he plainly told that it was not possible for the Raja to continue the payment of his tribute unless the government was pleased to grant the remission applied for. If this be granted, he pledged himself to the punctual liquidation of the government's demands. (49)

Jenkins, to some extent, was liberal and soft in his policy towards Cooch Behar. He recommended that government should abandon interests altogether on the Raja's arrears of tribute and should give the Raja another trial and if he again failed into arrears, then interest should be demanded on the expiration of one quarter after the close of the year. (50)

At last Harendra Narayan went on Pilgrimage to Baneras (1836) Rojopakhyan (51) gives us a detailed account of

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Ghosh, Joynath - op.cit. Pratyakshya Kanda.

the pilgrimage of Maharaja Harendra Narayan to Benaras. Maharani Srijukta Kasir Aye and Nageswari Aye accompanied the Maharaja with all their associates. All the officers who accompanied him always took advice from him for conducting their future business. (52) When the boat of the Maharaja arrived at Sirajganj, the Raja ordered Isan Chandra Mustafi to return to Cooch Behar to assist the two crown prince in the administration. Kashikanta Lahiri returned to the capital with the charge of Dewani Adalat. Thus after a long Journey crossing Bhagalpur, Munger, Patna, Chapra and Gazipur the Maharaja at last reached Benaras. (53) During his stay at Benaras Lord Auckland came to Benaras to observe the situation of western India. Dewan Ramchandra Lahiri went to the Governor General in the name of the Maharaja who received cordial reception from him. (54)

The arrangement which Maharaja Harendra Narayan made in the administration of the country during his absence, led to evil consequences. He appointed one of his son to the head of the Regency formed for the transaction of affairs in the interim arrangement which gave great offence to the eldest son who held only the second place in the Regency, (55) and led to constant friction between the two princes. It appeared, moreover, that even if the Regents could be induced to act together,

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.

55. Foreign consultations (Pol.) 10th October, 1838, No. 56A, para 27.

they had not really any control over the Rangpur Estates, the whole profits of which the Raja had reserved to himself. Under these circumstances captain Jenkins recommended that the government should assume the entire management of the Rangpur estates and lease them out in small farms as proposed by the Board of Revenue for short terms during the Raja's life time. Jenkins, after his visit to Cooch Behar gave a detailed account about the affair of the state. He also had written every details with regards to Cooch Behar, in his Agency Diary.⁽⁵⁶⁾ He was of opinion that the management of affairs in Cooch Behar, during the Raja's absence was much better than he had expected. Many of the petitions against the authorities were groundless or greatly exaggerated.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Jenkins had some sympathy on Shibendra Narayan. He was of opinion that the mismanagement in Cooch Behar during Harendra Narayan's absence was the legacy of the boundless extravagance of Harendra Narayan. Jenkins was of opinion that should Harendra Narayan vacate his Raj or should his death occur, there was no cause of anxiety on the part of British Government with regard to Cooch Behar. Shibendra Narayan would be the worthy successor of the ruler. The necessary reform in expenditure would be readily effected and there would be every prospect of Cooch Behar being well-governed by him.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The disposition of Kumar Shibendra

56. Foreign consultations (Pol.) 6th March, 1837, No. 71.

57. Ibid.,

58. Ibid.

Kalicharan Lahiri was Dewan for 10 years. His father and uncle, before him, held the post of Dewan or high appointments in Cooch Behar for three generations.

Narayan was very highly spoken of and though not a person of much information, he was intellegent and of steady habits and attentive to the business committed to him.

Kalicharan Lahiri was the Dewan of Cooch Behar during this time. He was a very well qualified man. He had a hereditary interest in the well being of Cooch Behar. The conduct of the Faujdari, Dewany and Revenue Departments were much the same as in British Zillahs and their management was carried on in the manner established by Bruce, Ahmuty and Commissioners of Cooch Behar during the ruler's minority and in later years by Macleod.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Harendra Narayan, in his last days wanted to construct a house at Sonarpur and also of some temple for the Lord Shiva, to commemorate his name. But before the work was complete, he died at Beneras on July, 29, 1839. His reign was the longest as well as eventful in the history of Cooch Behar. With regards to the reign of Harendra Narayan, Campbell wrote, "His (Harendra Narayan's) reign marked the transition from the old to the new system of administration, from the days of comparative darkness to the brighter ones and formed a critical epoch in the history of the state."⁽⁶⁰⁾ H. N. Choudhury, in his estimate of Harendra

59. Ibid.

60. Campbell, Glimpses of Bengal - A comprehensive, Archaeological, Biographical and Pictorial history of Bengal, Bihar and Orrisa. Vol. 1, p. 297.

Narayan also wrote ; "The rule of Maharaja Harendra Narayan marked a period of transition from the old to the new system, and forms a critical epoch in the history of the country. During this period the policy of the supreme government towards the country was finally decided upon and its formation was greatly influenced by the attitude of the ruler of the Raj."⁽⁶¹⁾ It is true that it was in the reign of Harendra Narayan that the question whether Cooch Behar should gradually pass into a Zamindari of Bengal arose more than once, and it was greatly due to the representation of the Maharaja that the state of Cooch Behar remained a feudatory state uncontrolled in its internal administration, and having a constitution independent of foreign interference.⁽⁶²⁾

In fact, the long reign of Harendra Narayan is a subject of much criticism to the scholars. In personal life Harendra Narayan possessed remarkable personality. He was famous for his strength. Being an accomplished horseman and rider of elephants, he was very fond of games. The Maharaja was a Skilful archer and good shot.⁽⁶³⁾

The name of Maharaja Harendra Narayan was famous in his days for his scholastic attainment. Being a ruler of

61. Choudhury, H. N. op.cit., p. 258.

62. Ibid.

The state of Cooch Behar, printed by Unwin Bross Ltd.
London.

63. Ibid., p. 277.

such a remote state, his scholarship was unusual. He was well versed in Persian and Bengali. His poetic genius was also not negligible. He wrote several books in verse, both original and translation. His tastes in fine arts was also of worth mentioning. The Maharaja was a skilled Musician and could appreciate the performance of the finest singers. (64)

In spite of all these outstanding qualities the private character of Harendra Narayan has been made the subject of adverse criticism. But if any one try to understand the Maharaja with all his surroundings, then it may be said that this criticism was to some extent unmerited. Maharaja Harendra Narayan was a Tantrik Hindu and a worshipper of Goddess Kali. He had followed the rituals and led a life as a tantrik Hindu lives.

As a ruler and administrator he could not be appreciated. His reign was full of chaos and confusion. This was because of a ruler of old native type, he did not much middle with the details of administration. His peculiar religious faith enjoined seclusion, and in his later years he came to be in a manner inaccessible." (65) And Evils thus crept into the government of the country. Moreover, the minority period of Harendra Narayan was under the guardianship of Maharani Kamateswari who

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid. Negi, A.K.

In projecting the character of Maharaja Harendra have carefully utilised the documents, chronicles, lett Behar State Archives. In projecting his career I have n the British materials but also used the views and comm Choudhury, an official historian of Cooch Behar State. W told about his character is nothing but the assimilation and comments of British Officials and Cooch Behar's offi In fact, Maharaja Harendra Narayan was a person of contr character. Apparently it appears that he was contradicto was not a rare specimen of pre-Colonial India. In some of of India we find such type of ruler who represented the c of Maharaja Harendra Narayan.

Although not an able administrator, Maharaja Haren possessed many rare human qualities. And it is not unlike the Colonial ruling clique had deliberately projected him inefficient ruler just to serve their own interests. But same time it is also to be mentioned that despite human q many of the Indian rulers of the Pre-Colonial times have : political sagacity, diplomatic acumen and wisdom. They c understand the writings on the wall. This was clearly exh: the conquest and annexa tion policy of the company. None c rulers survived the bania-political clique. Naturally, in of dol-drums we can not expect a better product from a Sta North-East India. Maharaja Harendra Narayan was a product

acted with the advice of notoriously ambitious Sarbananda Goswami. Naturally, the minor Raja was not properly trained with all arts of administration which was necessary for a ruler.

But the character of Harendra Narayan as an Indian Chief is of worth mentioning, "He never gave way to what was contrary to his principles, and was not afraid to run any risk to uphold his own conviction."⁽⁶⁶⁾ That is why throughout his reign he constantly opposed the introduction of British Regulations in his country. His sense of independence was great, and he was naturally very sensitive when the independence of his Raj was concerned. The picture totally changed after the demise of this feudal ruler. From this stand point his reign marked a dividing line in the history of Cooch Behar.

66. Ibid., p. 278.

E P I L O G U E

I

In the previous Chapters an attempt has been made to survey the origin and development of British Relations with Cooch Behar state which ends with the death of Harendra Narayan. We find that after the demise of this ruler (1839), no drastic measures were taken by the British Government towards this state. Cooch Behar remained as it was during the time of Harendra Narayan. If we look to the British policy and motives towards the other princely states of India during this period, it is really surprising on their part to follow such a policy towards Cooch Behar.

It is noticeable that by the 1840's most of the major states of India had found themselves deeply in trouble with the British suzerains. Mysore was taken under direct British rule in 1831, Coorg was annexed in 1834, Mandavi in 1839, Kolaba in 1840 and Surat in 1842. Jhansi was taken under direct British rule in the 1830's and restored to a new ruler in 1842. In Gawalior, the army of 40,000 rose in revolt during a minority and had to be engaged and defeated by company's troops in 1843. Oudh, Hyderabad, Travancore, Baroda and Indore were all badly managed and in grave disfavour in the 1840's. ⁽¹⁾ British Government, according to Lee Warner, viewed annexation as the only solution for aggravated misrule. ⁽²⁾ in the state.

1. Warner, Lee, Protected Princes of India - p. 145.

2. Ibid., p. 144.

Naturally, question may be arises why Cooch Behar got a respite from this aggravated policy of the British.

One possible hypothesis is that after 1839, Cooch Behar became a friendly state to the British Government. Harendra Narayan was the last ruler of Cooch Behar to oppose the British. His successor Shivendra Narayan, before his accession, had a pro-British attitude. He, in fear of his future problem of succession, surrendered to the British Government. ⁽³⁾ Shivendra Narayan, was also the secret choice of the British as the future ruler of Cooch Behar. ⁽⁴⁾ Naturally there was no need to follow any stern policy towards Cooch Behar and also of no question of annexation.

British contact with Cooch Behar started from the year 1773. The interests of trade was the predominant factor to the trading company during this time which make it involved in Cooch Behar's affairs. But in course of time the character and policy of the company changed. By the **Charter Act of 1813**, the company lost the monopoly of Indian trade and the Charter Act of 1833 took away company's monopoly on China trade. It converted the trading company into an administrative body. The interests of trade lost its priority and political involvements got the upperhand. The policy of expansionism started and one after another the Indian states came under the control of the company. As

3. For. Pol. Cons., March, 25, 1834, No. 65.

4. C.B.S.R. Vol. II, pp. 45-46, Govt. to Scott.

there was no problem from Cooch Behar's side, the Government did not want to take any drastic step towards her.

Cooch Behar accepted British overlordship of its own, though in its internal administration the authority of the ruler was unimpaired. But this legal position was drastically changed after the Revolt of 1857 by the Queen's Proclamation, This was a general policy towards India. The title of "Maharaja" was the traditional and hereditary title of the rulers of Cooch Behar. But in the year 1862, the granting of Sunnad conferring on the Raja of Cooch Behar the title of "Maharaja Bahadur" wiped away that traditional rights. The grip over Cooch Behar was thus tightened by the British Government. The result was that the lord of the land was converted to landlord.

IT

The other aspect of our present study is the effects of British contact on Cooch Behar. It may be said that Historical periods, in spite of some distinct features of each, are but one continuous process. To understand and evaluate the impact of British relationship with Cooch Behar it will be worthwhile to devote some pages about the state of Cooch Behar after the demise of Harendra Narayan, as these shows how British connection brought Cooch Behar to the threshold of modern age. The period of transition...

As regard to the history of Cooch Behar after the death of Harendra Narayan (1839) and the beginning of modern period (1863), it may be said that the end of medieval period always does not corroborate the beginnings of modern period. Historians very much likes to describe this gap period as a period of transition. If we critically survey the politico-socio-economic atmosphere of Cooch Behar, we can appropriately called this period as transition period. This is the impression which I wanted to convey.

The rule of Maharaja Shivendra Narayan (1839-47)

marked a departure from that of his father. He devoted his attention to the internal administration of the state which was ignored for several years. A perceptible changes could be noticed in every sphere of administration. ^{process of modernisation started which reached its culmination} * The Maharaja established a ^{(5) time of} Dharma Sava for the discussion of the affairs of the state. ^{Maharaja Nripendra Narayan} Before him this type of practice was totally absent in the history of the state. Some of the oppressive taxes, such as Ban Kar etc. were abolished. Some changes were made in the court of justice. Kalibharan Lahiri was made the session Judge and other criminal works were made over to Kumar Mahendra Narayan.

Shivendra Narayan died at Beneras on 23rd August, 1847. As he had no male issue, he adopted, with the sanction of the Governor General, Kumar Chandra Narayan who was named Narendra Narayan.

Shivendra Narayan, before his death, had expressed a wish that the British Government should undertake the supervision of his son's education. This was unusual in the history of the state. No ruler of Cooch Behar before Narendra Narayan, obtained English education. So it must be said that from the death of Narendra Narayan a new era started in the history of Cooch Behar with full modern outlook. The age-old traditional pattern was about to change and a modern outlook was visible according to

5. Chaudhury, H. N., op.cit., p. 279.

Majumdar, Durgadas - W.B. Dist. Gazetteers - p. 39.

British model. During the minority period of Narendra Narayan the affairs of the state were managed by the Regents,⁽⁶⁾ but all political affairs came within the jurisdiction of Bengal Government.⁽⁷⁾ "All questions of an important political bearing were referred to the supreme Government."⁽⁸⁾

The British Government got an opportunity to introduce some reforms in the administration of the state. The judiciary was reformed and through it the subjects of the state associated largely with the administration. The officers were specially appointed to conduct the cases of criminal, civil and land-revenue. The Raj Sabha was there which was nominally presided over by the Maharaja. He was assisted by the Diwan. The post of Nazir Dev and Dewan Dev were abolished. The Raj Sabha⁽⁹⁾ was considered as the Supreme Court in all criminal matters. The practice of Suttee or the Custom of Sahamara was prohibited in 1849.⁽¹⁰⁾ The character of the administration began to change under the guidance of the British Commissioners. "The feudal character of the administration gradually changed into constitutional character."⁽¹¹⁾

6. During his minority first his natural father Bajrendra Narayan, and after his death 1857, his adoptive mothers Maharani Kameswari and Bindeswari managed the affairs of the state as regents.

7. Majumdar, Durgadas, op.cit., p. 39

8. Choudhury, H.N. - op.cit. p. 283.

9. Majumdar, Durgadas, op.cit., p. 135.

10. Choudhury, H. N. - op.cit.

11. Das, Kamalesh & Ghosh, Ananda Gopal - The Historical Review - Vol. II, July - December, 1987.

Maharaja Narendra Narayan died in 1863. He was succeeded by his minor son Nripendra Narayan, who was the next ruler of Cooch Behar. ⁽¹²⁾ As he was a minor, the three Maharanis were appointed as joint Regent of the state. But this was set aside by the Government. The government assumed charge of the administration of Cooch Behar and placed it under the management of the British Commissioners. Colonel J. C. Houghton, Governor General's Agent, ⁽¹³⁾ North East Frontier, was deputed to Cooch Behar as Commissioner-in-Charge of the administration. The Government took such a step "as the only means of effectually providing for the care and education of the young Maharaja, for the security of the tribute, and for the defence of the Bhutan frontier, for which the Government was responsible." ⁽¹⁴⁾ Thus, the direct supervision in the administration by the British Commissioner was established. [The dream of Narendra Narayan of protecting the royal 'dignity and honour' was at an end and modern period started in the history of Cooch Behar.] *Omit*

Col. Houghton brought to the state's development and prosperity. The modernisation of administration began in spite of the stiff opposition from the local elites. In his attempt, the Commissioner was assisted by Rai Calica Das Dutta, who was a

12. Choudhury, H. N. - op.cit. p. 287.

13. Ibid.

14. C.B.S.R. - Vol. 1, p. 275.

prominent figure in administration. There was a remarkable change in respect of land Revenue (15) and Judicial administration.

The reign of Nripendra Narayan can be regarded as the period of modernisation in the history of Cooch Behar. (16) He devoted personal attention in every branches of administration. (17) For administrative convenience the whole of the administration was re-organised. A Council was established to assist the Maharaja in governing the state.. It was a nominated body consisted of three members with the Maharaja as the President. The other members were the Superintendent of the state, the Dewan and a judicial officer. The three members were inter-dependent in any matter and they had the responsibility to watch over the smooth working of the Council. (18) In 1891 the Maharaja introduced certain reforms in administration and modified the memorandum of the Council of 1833. (19) The function of the Council was three fold : - **Legislative, Executive and Judiciary.** On the legislative side the Council passed laws. The Executive regulated the management of the different departments. In judicial matters the Council was the highest court of appeal, having final jurisdiction in civil, criminal and Revenue suits and proceedings. The Council was authorised to frame rules and regulations for the management of the judicial side. (20)

15. Campbel, Ibid., p. 299.

16. Meredith, Borthwick - Kesab Chandra Sen, p. 138.

17. Times, Sept. 19th, 1911.

18. Choudhury, H. N. - op. cit., p. 290.

19. Ibid., p. 291.

20. Ibid., pp. 301-302.

The establishment of state legislative Council in 1909 following the Morley Minto Reforms was a further step towards the modernisation of Cooch Behar state. It was a rare move and only two other Indian states, namely Mysore and Cochin had similar arrangements. (21) It was a nominated body but it represents the different sections of the society. Thus the western impact over the state was more and more visible. There was a qualitative difference between the state of Cooch Behar before and after the accession of Nripendra Narayan. (22)

The annual Revenue of the state increased to 300,000 rupees. The Maharaja regularised the administration, established the first railway link with Bengal. (23) There was a remarkable improvement in communication system with the construction of innumerable roads and bridges. (24) Planned sanitation and drainage system was introduced in the state for the first time. (25) For modern justice and administration in the country, new buildings were constructed. A large fully equipped hospital in the capital and a public dispensary were established in the state. (26)

21. From the letter of His Highness, Cooch Behar to the Chancellor Chamber of Princes, Maharaja Digbijoy Singh of Jamnagar, Council House, New Delhi, July, 28, 1893.

22. Kopf, David - The Brahma Samaj and the shaping of the modern mind - p. 328.

The marriage of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan with Sunity Debi, the eldest daughter of Brahma reformer Keshab Chandra Sen, had a great impact upon the State. Cooch Behar accepted Brahmanism to its own conditions. It was an experiment under the guidance of British officials "Ostensibly attempted to introduce modern reforms".

23.

24. Proceedings of the Cooch Behar state Council, 1892-94.

25. Kopf, David, op. cit., p. 329.

26. Ibid.

Cooch Behar's first public library was founded. (27) Public parks
and gardens, (28) a girl's school (29) college (30) and a public
market place was erected (31) Nripendra Narayan abolished polygamy
in the royal family (32) and capital punishment throughout the
kingdom (33). All these were definitely the results of the British
impact over the state.

Thus by introducing democratic pattern in the states
administration and giving his subjects the opportunity to share
in the administration, Maharaja Nripendra Narayan set an example
to other Indian Princely States to modernise their administra-
tion. (34)

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27. Debi, S., Swargiya Kumar Gajendra Narayan, p. 26.
 28. Proceedings of the Cooch Behar state Council, 1892-94.
 29. "Sunity College Building Constructed" - Annual Administrative Report, Cooch Behar, 1889-1890, pp. 21-29.
 30. "Victoria College Opened," Ibid. 1888-1890, pp. 43-44.
 31. Hunter, W.W. - Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1886, p. 324.
 32. Debi, Sunity, Autobiography of an Indian princess, p. 78.
 33. Koch Bihar Darpan, Magh, 1935 B.S. pp. 163-64.

A P P E N D I X - I

Articles of a treaty between the Honourable East India Company and the Deva Raja or Raja of Bhutan.

1. That, the Honourable Company, wholly from the consideration for district to which the Bhutias represent themselves to be reduced, and from the desire of living in peace with their neighbours, will relinquish the lands which belonged to Deva Raja before the commencement of the war with the Raja of Cooch Behar, namely, to the eastward of the lands of Chichakhata and Paglahat, and to the westward of the lands of Kyranti, Maragnat and Luckeepore.

2. That, for the possession of the Chichakhata province, the Deva Raja shall pay an annual tribute of five Tangan horses to the Honourable Company, which was the acknowledgement paid to the Cooch Behar Raja.

3. That, the Deva Raja shall deliver up Dhairjendra Narayan, Raja of Cooch Behar, together with his brother, the Dewan Deo, who is confined with him.

4. That the Bhutias, being merchants, shall have the same privileges of trade as formerly, without the payment of duties, and their caravan shall be allowed to go to Rangpore annually.

5. That, the Deva Raja shall never cause incursions to be made into the country, nor in any respect whatever, molest the ryots, that have come under the Honourable company's subjection.

6. That, if any ryot or inhabitant whatever, shall desert from the Honourable company's territories, the Deb Raja shall cause them to be delivered up immediately upon application being made to him.

7. That, in case the Bhutias, or any one under the government of Deva Raja, shall have any demands upon, or disputes with any of the inhabitants of these or any part of the company's territories, they shall prosecute them by an application to the Magistrate who shall reside here for the administration of justice.

8. That, whatever Sannyasis are considered by the English as an enemy, the Deva Raja will not allow to take shelter in any part of the districts now given up, nor permit them to enter into the Honourable company's territories, or through any part of his; and if the Bhutias shall not of themselves be able to drive them out, they shall give information to the Resident on the part of the English in Cooch Behar and they shall not consider the English troops pursuing the Sannyasis into these districts as any breach of this treaty.

9. That, in case the Honourable company shall have occasion for cutting timbers from any part of the woods under the Hills, they shall do it duty free, and the people they send shall be protected.

10. That, there shall be a mutual release of prisoners.

This treaty to be signed by the Honourable President, and council of Bengal, and the Honourable company's seal to be affixed on the one part, and to be signed and sealed by the Deva Raja on the other part."

Signed and ratified at the Fort William, the 25th of April, 1774.

(Signed) Warren Hastings,
William Andersey,
P. M. Daires,
J. Lawrel
Henry Goodwin,
H. Graham
George Vansitart

(A true copy)

(Signed) J. Auriol,
Assistant Secretary.

A P P E N D I X - II

Subjects on which the Commissioners Mercer and Chauvet were ordered to enquire and Report.

Article - I

That they enquire into the nature of the Behar Government previous to its being connected with the Company in 1773, distinguishing between the real and nominal powers of the Rajahs, the Nazir and the Dewan Deo.

Article - 2

That they ascertain by what laws the succession to the Raj is regulated and whether the offices of Nazir Deo and Dewan Deo, are hereditary or in the immediate gift of the Rajah.

Article - 3

That they enquire whether the Tripartite Division of the Revenues between the Rajah, the Nazir Deo and the Dewan Deo, was real or nominal, and whether the two latter had the power of collecting and appropriating the proportions allotted to them without the control of the Rajah.

Article - 4

ceremonies

That upon the accession of a Rajah, what are the ceremonies which the Dewan Deo and Nazir Deo, are entitled to perform in virtue of their offices, and how far they are considered as requisite to the regular investiture of the Rajah.

Article - 5

That they report upon the nature of the treaty concluded between the company and the Behar family in 1772, and whether the amount of the tribute is equal to the proportion stipulated.

Article - 6 & 7.

That they ascertain whether the company's tribute was in Arrears at the death of the late Raja Derjinder Narain to the Ranny, appointing her guardian to the infant Rajah, and inventing her with the management of the country during his minority.

That they enquire (whether any and what court exist in Cooch Behar) how far the Ranny had the management of affairs during the life of the late Rajah and whether Sarbananda was the minister of

his own choice or not.

Article - 8

That they ascertain whether the company's tribute was in Arrears at the death of the late Rajah Derjinder Narain, and whether there were any grounds for apprehending that it would not have been regularly paid if the Ranny had been continued in the management, and whether the appointment of the Nazir, Deo, did not tend to increase the divisions among the family by enabling him to prosecute his own views in prejudice to the rights of the Rajah and Ranny.

Article - 9

That they enquire whether any and what courts exist in Cooch Behar for the administration of Civil and Criminal justice, and to whom the charge of these jurisdictions is committed, and point out to the Board such alterations in their constitution as they may deem best calculated to protect the lives and poverty of the inhabitants.

Article - 10

That they enquire by what mode the tribute has been collected from the district since the year 1772

whether it has been paid by the Rajah's Agents into the Treasury at Rungpore or whether collected from the country by a Suzawul or other person deputed by the collector. Whether the Tribute has ever been increased or diminished, and the causes of any variation that may have taken place.

Article - 11

That they ascertain the relation in which the Chucklas of Bodah, Patgong and Poorb Bhag stand to the Behar family and the Company, and what are the nature of the Nazir Deo's claims upon the same alluded in his petitions to the Board.

Article - 12

That they enquire who are the most proper persons to be entrusted with the guardianship of the Rajah and the management of the country during his minority.

Article - 13

That as the Behar family has sometimes been represented as labouring under extreme poverty and at others enjoying a considerable degree of Opulence they particularly enquire into the state of that family, their property and connections, and endeavour to ascertain

the amount of the Money and effects carried off from the Raja's house by the party under Dhangar Deo, in order that the same may be resorted to them, or the amount levied on the properly of the isurgents should it be deemed expedient to cause such retribution to be made.

Article - 14

That they enquire into such Unions as the Deb Rajah may have made on the Bèhar family either for money or effects or for supposed encroachments upon his Territories provided the same have not been already adjusted.

Article - 15

That they adjust the Rajahs Accounts with the Nazir Deo and Sham Chunder, should they be yet unsettled, and enquire into any claims the Rajah may have on Ramkisson. That they likewise ascertain whether any of the Bèhar family have taken upon sums of money on loan from the Company's Civil or Military Servants, and whether such loans have been settled or are unadjusted.

Article - 16 & 17

That they ascertain whether the charges made by the Ranny and the Nazir Deo, against each other had any foundation, and whether the Rajah and Ranny were influenced by Surbanand to make those complaints or by their aversion to Nazir Deo's being entrusted with the management of the district; that they enquire whether the letters written by them, from Berhampur declaring that the family disputes had been amicably settled, and that they were desirous of committing the management of the country to the son of the Nazir Deo, were written by their own consent, or in consequence of any compulsion exercised by the adherents of the Nazir Deo.

Article - 18 & 19

That they enquired into the nature of the Military Establishment kept up by the Rajah under the Command of Lieutenant, Duncanson, the mode in which it was paid and the services in which it was employed.

Article - 20

That they report upon the state of the Mint and the coinage in the District of Cooch Behar.

Article - 21

That they enquire into the State of the commerce and Manufactures of the country.

Article - 22

That copies of all the proceedings respecting the disturbances in Cooch Behar since the death of the Late Rajah Derjinder Narain, be transmitted to them by the Secretary together with a copy of the Treaty entered into between the Company and the Bhootaneers in 1744, and an order issue to the collector of Rangpur to furnish them with whatever Records they may require from his office, and to afford them every assistance and information in his power to enable them to effect the objects of their deputation.

A P P E N D I X - III

Treaty of Commerce with Nepal, 1st March, 1972.

Treaty authenticated under the seal of Maha Raja Run Bahauder Shah Behauder Shemshere Jung', being according to the Treaty transmitted by Mr. Yonathon Duncan, the President at Beneras, on the part of Right Honourable Charles, Earl Cornwallis K. G. Governor General in Council, and empowered by the said authority to conclude a Treaty of Commerce with the said Maha Rajah, and to settle and fix the duties payable by the subjects of the respective states of the Honourable English Company and those of Nepali, the said gentleman charging himself with whatever relates to the duties thus to be payable by the subjects of the Nepaul Government to that of the Company; in like manner as hath the aforesaid Maha Rajah, with whatever regards the duties thus to be payable by the subjects of the company's government to that of Nepaul; and the said Treaty having been delivered to me (the said Maha Rajah) by Mowlavy Abdul Kadir Khan, the aforesaid gentleman's Vakeel, or agent; this counter-part thereof having been written by the Nepaul Government, hath been committed to the said Khan, as hereunder detailed:-

Article - I

In as much as an attention to the general welfare, and to the ease and satisfaction of the merchants and

traders, tends equally to the reputation of the administrators of both governments of the Company and of Nepal; it is therefore agreed and stipulated, that 2½ percent shall reciprocally be taken, as duty, on the imports from both the countries; such duties to be levied on the amount of the invoices of the goods which the merchants shall have along with them; and to deter the said traders from exhibiting false invoices, the seal of the custom houses of both countries shall be impressed on the back of the said invoices, and copy thereof being kept, the original shall be restored to the merchants; and in case where the merchants shall not have along with him his original invoice, the custom house officers shall, in such instance, lay down the duty of 2½ percent, on a valuation according to the market price.

Article - 2

The opposite stations hereunder specified within the frontiers of each country, are fixed for the duties to be levied, at which place the traders are to pay the same; and after having once paid duties and receiving a rowannah thereon, no other or further duty shall be payable throughout each country or dominion respectively.

Article - 3

Whoever among the officers on either side shall exceed in his demand for, or exaction of duty, the rate here specified shall be exemplarily punished by the government to which he belongs, so as effectually to deter others from like offences.

Article - 4

In the case of theft or robberies happening on the goods of the merchants, the Foujdar, or officer of the place, shall advising his superiors or government thereof speedily cause the Zamindars and proprietors of the spot to make good the value, which is in all cases, without fail, to be so made good to the merchants.

Article - 5

In cases where in either country any oppression or violence be committed on any merchant, the officers of country wherein this may happen shall, without delay hear and enquire into the complaints of the persons thus aggrieved, and doing them justice, bring the offenders to punishment.

Article - 6

When the merchants of either country, having paid the established duty, shall have transported their goods into the dominions of one or the other state if such goods be sold within such state, it is well, but if such goods not meeting with sale, and that the said merchants be decisions to transport their said goods to any other country beyond the limits of their of the respective states included in the Treaty, the subjects and officers of these latter shall not take thereon any other or further duty than the fixed one levied at the first entry, and are not to exact double duties but are to allow such goods to depart in all safety without opposition.

Article - 7

This Treaty shall be of full force and validity in respect to the present and future rulers of both governments, and, being considered on both sides as a commercial Treaty and a basis of concord between the two states, is to be, at all times, observed and acted upon in times to come for the public advantage and the increase of friendship.

On the 5th of Rajeb, 1206 of the Hegira, and 1199 of the Fusselle style, agreeing with the 1st of March 1792 of the Christian, and with the 22nd of Phagun 1848 of the Sunbut Area, Two Treaties, to one Tenor, were written for both the contracting parties, who have mutually engaged that from the 3rd Bysak 1849 of Sunbut Area, the officer of both states shall, in pursuance of the strictest orders of both Governments, immediately carry into effect and observe the stipulations afforesaid, and not wait for any further or new directions.

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