CONCLUSION

We have discussed about the administration of Bengal from 1700 A.D. to 1757 A.D., i.e. from a period when this province was under the Mughal rule in its heydays to a period when the Mughal rule was on its last leg. We have seen so long Emperor Aurangzeb was alive this province along with other Mughal provinces was kept under strict imperial control yet total control of this province from the distant capital at Delhi was not possible even when the Mughal rule was in its zenith. The Mughal rulers were well aware of this fact and they granted extra-ordinary importance to the provincial officers of Bengal or Deccan unlike their counter parts in other Mughal provinces in India¹. Imperial Government also often consulted the provincial officer². With the opening of the Eighteenth Century, we see, the Emperor's favourite Diwan Ja'far Khan³ was allowed to exercise extensive freedom in the provincial administration of Bengal and the role of Nazim since then became a matter of secondary importance until offices of both the

1. Infra, p.129.
aforesaid two officers were united into a single hand. After the demise of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D., Ja'far Khan was transferred from Bengal for a short period but he was soon brought back and made himself indispensable in the administration of this province. Farrukhshïjar's attempt to dislodge Nawab Ja'far Khan failed which surely added the power and prestige of the latter.

The period after the demise of the last Great Mughal witnessed political turmoil and uncertainty in the Country. But Bengal was kept free from political uncertainty and turmoil under the strong hand of Nawab Ja'far Khan. It was a period when the Country witnessed frequent changes of rulers, wars of successions and the Maratha challenge for the supremacy in Northern India. Naturally, Imperial control over Mughal provinces declined. But all these factors could not encourage the provincial officers in Bengal to shake off Mughal authority even when the Mughal glory almost totally eclipsed after Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 unlike the provincial rulers of 13th and 14th Centuries.

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4 Infra, pp. 269-70
5 Infra, pp. 1, 2, 3
Thus we see Ja'far Khan and his successors despatched the revenues of Bengal to Delhi. The later Mughal rulers, we have also noticed, never missed any opportunity to get the revenue of this province. We have also discussed how eagerly they waited for the revenue of this province.

It is striking to note that the provincial rulers, for assuming office during the period under review, always sought for the confirmation of Mughal Emperors, who was still then considered as dispenser of legitimacy. Interestingly enough, Nawab 'Alivardi intrigued for the royal patent to dislodge Nawab Sarfaraz from the masnud of Bengal when his sword was enough to decide his fate. Similarly, Nawab Siraj-u'd-Daula though sought for Imperial confirmation to his assumption to the masnud of Bengal yet he was determined to resist any attempt of the imbecile Mughal Emperor to dislodge him from his office.

6. Infra, pp. 115-117

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But the Nawab could not dare to defy the Mughal Authority formally as we see, he calls himself "the servant of King Alamgir, the Invincible", in his treaty, dated 7.2.57 with The English Company at such a juncture when Ahmad Shah Abdali had already reached upper India and the Mughal Emperor and the Capital City of Delhi were trembling in fear of Afghan menace. It was also seen that the provincial officials in Bengal always expressed their humility and submission to the Mughal throne in all their correspondence and orders. Thus we may conclude that the provincial Government in Bengal during the period under review, was not independent in the true sense of the term as it is generally believed. Nor was it totally free from external control. But, we must remember that behind the veils of submissiveness and obedience to the Mughal rulers, the officers at the different

10. translation of the treaty is published in Appendix - XI, Hist. of Bengal. Stewart

11. The term independent means "not depending on authority or control" or "unwilling to be under an obligation to others" etc. The concise Oxford Dictionary, Oxford University Press, 1990.

12. Sir J.N. Sarkar writes, "Since the viceroyalty of Murshid Quli Khan the province of Bengal, Behar and Orissa had become practically become independent under his family. Though the surplus revenue was regularly sent by the Subahdar to the Imperial Court yet he was his own master in the matter of
levels of provincial Administration often tried to neutralize the policies and instructions of their superiors so that they could protect their own interest. We have discussed how toll collectors, rakhars extorted money from the merchants despite the prohibitory orders passed by the Emperor Aurangzeb to this effect. During the period after the demise of the Last Great Mughal, the Imperial control over the provincial Administration weakened for the reasons we have already pointed out, but decline of the Imperial control was not the only feature of the Administration of our province, we notice, decay in the administrative control was manifested at all levels. Thus when Nawab Jafar Khan had impressed upon the local land owners around the villages of Calcutta to abstain from selling their villages to the British East India Company despite appointment control of officers and expenses of public money". Fall of the Mughals, Vol. I, Sarkar J.N., P. 33.

13. Infra, p. 135
the clearance of the Emperor Farrukhsiyar to this effect; the Company purchased the same villages in the be-nam of its servants to frustrate the policy of the provincial Diawn. They bribed wakianavis to suppress reports of their fortification. Like wise The Zamindar of Faltah defied Foujdar of Hughly's order to release the goods of English Company detained by the Zamindar. Towards the close of the period under review, we see, fear for the ruling authority had departed from the hearts of the English merchants who could dare to expel the Nawab's emissary unceremoniously from Calcutta. Similarly, we are informed that Krishnaballav and Khawja Nazar took shelter at Calcutta under the English Company's protection and the Company defied Nawab's order to handover. The decay in the administrative control and absence of the rule of law became evident when we hear that the landed autocracy could extort any amount of land revenue from the raiyats.

15. Infra, p. 182
16. Infra, p. 182
17. Extract from the Bengal Public Consultation dt. . . . . April, 1748, Unpublished Records, Long
18. Infra, p. 197
and often resorted to draconian measures for such extortions despite the high sounding declarations of the Governments to protect the subjects from oppressions and tyranny. In fact, extortions of money were often made by tyranny and oppression by the officials at all levels. There was none in the provincial level to impose any check upon the activities of the officials. We hear, "Everyone's house is become a judge and every one's house a cutcheree, they even pass sentence on the Zamindars themselves and draw money from them by pretended injuries" 19. Thus not only the Farmans issued by the imbecile Emperor of Delhi became in effective we hear that the parwanas issued from the Provincial court was in effective unless officers at the lower levels were satisfied. 20.

In such a state of affairs neither the high officials nor the officials at the lower levels nor the influential business communities and the foreign trading companies were keen to follow the principles of their religions. The administrative transactions were, in

fact, marked by bribery, cheating and fraud. The business communities as well the Government suffered for rampant corruptions\textsuperscript{21}. Some times, influential high officials stood for the rehabilitation of the corrupt merchants in the in the guilds of the merchant communities\textsuperscript{22}. Administrative favours became purchasable commodities to the persons who could pay the required sum or some times in the forms of nazr and presentations to the officers in charge of administrative machineries\textsuperscript{23}. Taking advantage of this state of affairs, the neo-richer class and foreign Trading Companies of which we have already discussed, utilized the administrative machineries in their interests. Surprisingly enough, the administrative decisions, under the ruling autocracy also came to protect the interests of this class\textsuperscript{24} and which emboldened this class to such an extent that they later shifted their allegiance at their sweet will which was not always favourable to ruling house of the province. Jagat Seth's wrath against

\begin{itemize}
  \item Interesting Historical Events, Holwell, pp.-221-3. Extract from the proceedings dt. 20.12.57 and Consultations dt. 9,10,1752, Unpublished Records, Long J.
  \item Umichand was once expelled from the guilds of the merchants for his malpractices. He was rehabilited at the request of Nawab Alivardi's brother Haji Ahmed.
  \item infra, pp.174-175 We hear, Wakian vis, Sawarnavis, naibs of Qazi and Muffis were some times given handsome presents so that their administrative reports could be influenced in favour of the donor's interests. Extract from the Despatch to Court, November, 1717, Early Annals of the English East India Company, Vol.-II, y. Wilson C.R.
\end{itemize}
the rule of Nawab Sarfaraz and Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, Umichand or Krishnaballav's apathy to the rule of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, Clive's conspiracy against the Nawab of Bengal, all are the manifestation of the strength of this class which was the products of the prevalent administration.

In such a state of affairs, the weal and woe of the subjects, in reality, became a matter of secondary importance to the administration of the country. It is interesting to note when we see that the English Trading Company had been encroaching upon the sovereignty of our country by forbidding the local banias and mahajans to keep business relation with the French and Portuguese marchants. ...and the Nawab of Bengal almost remained mute spectators.

24. For instance, Nawab Murshid Quli's refusal to allow the English Company to use the Murshidabad mint, benifitted Jagat Seth.

25. Extract from the Despatch to Court, dt. 4.2.1751, Unpublished Records. Long J., English East India Company and economy of Bengal, Bhattacharya, p.64.
The failure of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula was not only a political failure as it is construed. It was actually the culmination of a crisis which the administration of the Country had been facing. It revealed the failure of the system where no check was imposed upon the officers in charge of the administration for taking bribes, for committing treacheries nor for disobedience nor for whimsically oppressing the people of the province.

26. Shri M.K. Gupta in his "Siraj-ud-Daula and East India Company" explained that Siraj-ud-Daula's failure was a political failure. p.122.