Responsibility of ensuring the security of the subjects and maintaining law and order within the country always rested upon the ruling authority. Proper discharge of these twin responsibilities ensured their authority within the land under control. The Muslim rulers in India were conscious about it. In order to discharge these responsibilities, the rulers were required to make certain police arrangements within the country so that internal peace was maintained in normal times. Besides making elaborate arrangements for the maintenance of peace and order within the country, the provincial rulers were required to resist external aggression for ensuring the security of the subjects which will be discussed later.

We have already stated that during the early days of Islam, Abu Bakr, the first Caliph of Islam appointed Hazrat Umar I as the Police Chief of the capital city of Medina. The latter assumed the same duty when he was elected Caliph of Islam. 'Police Chief was called 'Asas' in the earlier period. Later it seems to be called
Shurtah. It was subordinate to Qazi as its main object was to bring criminals and law breaking before Qazi for trial and to execute decrees of the latter. We have already seen also that during the Sultanate period and also during the Mughal period in India, the duties of the Police Chief were discharged by Kotwal who was responsible for law and order within a city. Under Akbar, he guarded the streets of the city during nights to apprehend criminals. For this purpose, he had to keep a number of spies who kept him informed about all illegal and criminal activities. In case of his failure in apprehending the criminals, he was required to make good the loss suffered by people. To ensure security of the subjects, Kotwal patrolled the city at night and this arrangement continued down to the period under review. We have also seen earlier that additional force was sometimes provided to strengthen the hands of Kotwal in apprehending and resisting criminal activities.

1. Administration of the Mughal Empire, Quraeshi - p-205
2. Infra, p. 60.
3. Infra, p. 61.
5. Infra, p. 61.
Out of the cities, the Foujdars undertook the responsibility of apprehending criminals. He was to be assisted by the amlas of the Zamindars within the areas lying under their jurisdiction. Reza Khan explains this arrangement in clear terms:

"In former times the Foujdars had no great number of men with them but there was a standing order that the amlas of the Zamindars should accompany them when they go out to round up a gang of robbers that they should help him in tracking out the plunder articles."

For the purpose of strengthening police arrangements, Nawab Jafar Khan set up a number of new thanas in addition to the existing thanas. We have earlier stated that he appointed Muhammad Jan 'his chellah' as Superintendent to suppress decoits. Muhammad Jan soon earned the reputation as 'Muhammad Jan Kulheri' for executing decoits with his Kulher (axe). The local Zamindars were bound to assist the thanedars also in all circumstances. Thanedars were under Foujdars. Within a thana, there were the schedule

6. Cl. Persian Correspondance Vol.V, p.422, referred by Shirin Akhter, Zamindars of Bengal, p.120.
7. Ibid p.422
9. Ibid, p.120
10. Ibid, p.120
of Chowkies. The Chowkidars interrogated strangers entering into the villages. They reported the incidents of crimes to the nearby thanas, guarded highways and rivers. They also notified recovery of public properties in their chowkies and also by beat of drums.

Besides the above arrangements, we find that the Zamindars were also required to undertake the responsibilities of ensuring security to the subjects from the hands of criminals. To quote from sanad granted by Nawab Sarfaraz, we see that a Zamindar was required to exert his utmost endeavours so that no trace of thieves, robbers and disorderly persons may remain within his boundaries. To take special care of the high roads, so that the travellers and passengers may pass and repass with perfect confidence and if at anytime the property of any person shall be stolen and plundered, that he produce the thieves and the robbers together with the property and delivering the latter to the owner, consign the former to punishment, that in case he does not produce them, he himself become responsible for the

12. Ibid, p.125
With elements of fiscal and political power at their disposal, the Zamindars exercised enormous local influence which made them most suitable guardians of law and order in their locality. The Zamindars kept their personal guards known as Paik, Barkandaz, etc., and revenue cum police staff known as Village headman, Village watchmen, Gram-saranjami-paik and Hal-i-Sahana.

Espies disguised as boatmen, mendicants, tax collectors collected information about crimes. Contemporary literature gives a vivid description about the prevalent espionage system which is also corroborated by the historical evidence for capturing the famous dacoits Ghani and his brother.

13. Sanad granted to Ramkunt on 27th of Ramzan in the luth year of the reign of His Majesty Muhammad Shah Quoted in Harrington's Analysis.
14. Zamindar of Bengal, Shirin p-120
16. A watch-lock man, but commonly applied to a native armed with swords and acts as doorkeeper, watchman or escort.
17. Known as mondal, leader of five or six villages (Risala - fol. 5c)
18. Foot soldier to guard the mouja
With the help of the aforesaid arrangements, the security of the subjects was ensured and law and order within the country was maintained by the provincial rulers of Bengal. The standard of law and order situation was satisfactory at least to the State and also for the people, to some extent, in Bengal, during the period under review, though occasional outburst of revolts against high officials were not rare. The mutiny of the Naqdi troops against Diwan Ja'far Khan at Dacca, murder of another Diwan in 1711 by the Naqdi troops could not throw much impact upon the general law and order situation of the province. Stern measures of Ja'far Khan against the Zamindars who looted people and neighbouring Zamindars ensured confidence in the hearts of his subjects. The change of rulers of Delhi certainly created chaos and

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20. Vharatchandra pp.94-97
Vidyasunder of Ramprasad, pp. 78-115
Jaynarayan Harilila, pp. 81-95


23. Hist. of Bengal Vol. II Sarkar, p. 475

24. Infra, p. 46.
confusion for uncertainty in the whole country specially among the merchants and nobles but the life of common people in Bengal was hardly affected by the change of Rulers, "as they were free from the troubles incidental to revolutions in the kingly office as Nawab Ja'far Khan ruled over the province with great vigour." When news of Aurangzeb's death reached Bengal, the European merchants, with large stakes in the country, became apprehensive of their security. They stopped all payments and investment temporarily and recruited additional guards for the security of the town of Calcutta. In 1712 when Bahadur Shah died, the merchants stopped giving dadni loans. The Foujdar of Hughli sought protection for his family at Calcutta. But Nawab Ja'far Khan kept this part of the country calm and quiet.

Even as late as 1736, much after Nawab Ja'far Khan, we have the evidence of peace and order in the province when the Patna Council of the English E.I. Company advised the Calcutta Council not to send a larger fleet

25. Riyaz, p. 276
than thirty men to accompany the supplies and treasure from Calcutta to Patna from there was no danger on the way.

To upheld the rule of law Ja'far Khan as already stated, punished Imam-u'd-Din, the Kotwal of Hugli for molesting a daughter of a Sayyad. We also learn from Salimullah that no Zamindar or Amil could with impunity oppress any one. Their Wakils were continually in search of complaints and whenever they met with any person who had reason to be dissatisfied they used every endeavour to pacify him but if it happened that a well founded complaint reached the ears of Nawab Ja'far Khan, the offender was sure to suffer severely.

Even as late as 1727 we hear that a sloop belonging to Thomas Cooke of the Dacca Factory was plundered by robbers, the Zamindars in

whose districts the incident took place were compelled to give satisfaction for the loss incurred. We have also seen in earlier chapter that Nawab Sarfaraz intervened in favour of the subjects against the oppression and high handedness committed by the Vaidya Zamindars of Noapara. Nawab Murshid Quli II also suppressed Ghani, a captain of the robbers in the environs of Dacca. But the internal security in the province broke into pieces and law and order situation went to the lowest ebb under the rule of Nawab Alivardi. Karam Ali, the official chronicler could not be relied when he says, names of thieves and robbers were not heard during the rule of Nawab Alivardi. Thus, we hear that the Afghans and Bhaliahs did not care for the Nawab Alivardi and did not show any etiquette to the chair of Nazim; they looted and slaughtered people irrespective of sex and age. Law and order situation so much deteriorated during the rule of Nawab that the materials sent for sacchq ceremony of Shukurullah's marriage was looted

33. Naubahar-i-Murshid Quli (Bengal Nawabs), p.9
34. Muzaffarhamah, p.60
35. Riyaz, p.324. Nawab Alivardi's son-in-law Zain-u'd-Din Ahmed was also killed by mutinous Afghan mercenaries in 1747 A.D., and they also tortured Hoji Ahmed to death on 30th January, 1748, A.D.

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near the city of Murshidabad in broad day-light with the news of groom’s death. In 1743, a body of Sanyasis is said to have looted the temple of Bhowanipur in the district of Bogra. This sordid state of affairs was at least once remedied by the Maratha invaders under Bhaskar Rao when he forced the Sanyasis to disgorge their plunder which was restored to the temple.

In fact, in those days, religious mendicants known as Sanyasis often looted the properties of common people in the name of their own religious belief. We hear, it appears that high officials had

36. A Turkish word means 'trousseau'. It is a ceremony of sending 'mehndi' i.e., hena with sweetmeats, dresses, etc. and of bridal toilet to bride's home one day prior to marriage.

37. better known as Aqa Baba, son of Nawab Sarfaraz


39. A place of pilgrimage on river Kartoa. A temple was rebuilt here by Rani Bhawani.

40. Sanyasis and Fakir raiders: M. Ghosh p-36

41. Maharaj Krishna chandra, Rajiblochan...

(tr. The mendicants demolish the houses which they find to be well off and none resist them.)
had scant respect for the security of the common people. Even ladies of respectable families could not sometimes escape the passionate eyes of high officials. It is said that Siraj-u'd-Daula tried to seize Tara, the beautiful widow and daughter of Rani Bhabani. In fact, common people had hardly any remedy against highhandedness committed by the high officials which was also reflected in the contemporary literature already pointed in an earlier chapter.

42. Siraj-u'd-Daula, Maitra, p-33

43. Infra, p.91.
Security of the people of Bengal was often endangered by the raids of Magh pirates. These pirates raided Eastern and South Eastern Bengal and remained a menace to the peace and order throughout the 17th Century. Shaista Khan was the first Governor of Bengal, to teach the Magh-Arracanese a tough lesson for creating disturbance in this province. The vicinity of Chittagong was the seat of the Maghs which fell in their hands during the early years of the Mughal rule. "They did not leave a bird in the air or a beast on the land from Chatagaon to Jagdia, the frontier of Bengal, increased the desolation, thickened the jungles, destroyed the 'Ali' and closed the road so well that even the snake and wind could not pass through." The Mughal navy was no match for them, Nawab Shaista had rightly realised that the cause of the ravages of the pirates was the

44 • The people of the country of Arracan were called Maghs -- which is an abbreviation of the words Muhamil-i-sag (despicable dog), according to proverb the name descends from "heathen".

45 • In Bengal, it means slightly raised barrier to demarcate different plots in the paddy field to prevent drainage of water within the plots.

46 • "Conquest of Chatagaon by Nawab Shaista Khan" an account of Shibbub D. Torish, Dr. Sarkar S.N., J.A. S. B. 1907.
power and equipment of their fleet and delapidation of Bengal fleet." So he sent urgent orders to Mahmud Beg, the daroga of Nawara to restore the flotilla. The Nawab ordered Mohammad Sharif, ex-foujdar of Houghli, to go to Sangramgarah as thanedar, with many men and officers and guns and built a fort there.

Nawab Shaista tried to tackle the pirates not only with his force but he tried to win them by diplomacy also. Shaikh Zia-u'd-Din, dargoa at the port of Ladhikol, was ordered to manage the Feringi merchants of Dacca, engaged in salt trade, to write to their brethren, the pirates of Chittagong including them to enter into Mughal service and assuring them of royal favours and reward. Zia-u'd-Din was also instructed to send his own conciliatory letter to the pirates. Soon after, a large number of Harmads with their families came in forty-two 'Jalbas' to take refuge with Farhad Khan, thanedar of Noakhali, partly because of tempting offers of the Nawab and partly because of the fear of Aracanese treachery.

48. Ibid p. 406
49. Ibid, p. 406
50. Ibid p. 406
But Magh—Harmad menace could not be totally warded off from the eastern and south eastern regions of this province even after the conquest of Chittagong by Nawab Shaista Khan⁵¹. We hear, in 1717 A.D., that Maghs had carried off 1800 men, women and children from the southern part of Bengal and sold them off at Rs.20 to Rs.70 each, for work on land in Arracan. Again, in 1725, we hear of Magh plunders at Chittagong⁵². The very next year, Maghs in large number swept into Chittagong region again. Reynold Edward, English factor at Jugdea was compelled to take shelter at Dacca in 1725 A.D., while the English Company suffered a loss of 50% of their goods at Jugdea⁵³. Again in 1735 A.D., we hear that the Maghs carried inhabitants of some islands near Chittagong⁵⁴ and in 1740, they burnt and plundered some places between Chittagong and Jugdea⁵⁵. Thus, we see that the Magh raids were common in the eastern and south eastern districts of Bengal usually during the

⁵¹ Apprehension of Mugh raids were felt as late as 1760 A.D., and as the Maghs extended their piracy as far as Garden Reach near Calcutta when the Authorities of the town put up a chain across the river at Garden Reach to prevent the coming of Magh vessels. F.N. of p.39 ... Unpublished Records Long J.

⁵² E.E.I. Company & Economy of Bengal, Bhattacharya, p.177

⁵³ Ibid, p.178

⁵⁴ BPC 15/12/1735 referred by Bhattacharya S. in E.E.I. Company and Economy of Bengal, p-127.

⁵⁵ E.E.I. Company and Economy of Bengal, Bhattacharya S. 177.

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seasons of floods\textsuperscript{56} and the Government took certain steps against the pirates\textsuperscript{57}, but the measures taken by the Government could not restore much confidence in the minds of the people when we hear that the Magh raids scared away many washerman and weavers from Jugdea in 1735 A.D.\textsuperscript{58}. Earlier, in 1725 A.D., the English merchants instead of depending upon the native Government, made their own security arrangements. The Council at Dacca sent a sergeant and five soldiers—twenty matchlockmen for the protection of English factors at Jugdea. The Council at Calcutta also on request, deputed a sergeant and fifteen soldiers to protect and secure the property of the English Company there though the Naib Nawab at Dacca himself was proceeding and the Foujdar of Chittagong was deputed to resist the intruders\textsuperscript{59}. Contemporary literature reveals that local people had not always surrendered meekly to the Maghs; in fact, local people sometimes resisted them;

\textsuperscript{56} Naubahar-i-Murshid Quli - Azad Husaini tr. Sarkar J.N., in Bengal Nawabs. Page No. 4.

\textsuperscript{57} For instance, we hear, Murshid Quli II restored the thanah of Islamabad (Chittagong) which had been broken up an earlier on account of Magh raids. Two trusted officers were also sent to guard this thana during the seasons of floods. Naubahar-i-Murshid Quli - p. 4.

\textsuperscript{58} BPC 15.12.1735 referred by Bhattacharyya in E.E.I. Company & Economy of Bengal, p. 177 – 178

\textsuperscript{59} E.E.I. Company and Economy of Bengal, Bhattacharya, p. 177.
Thus we read,

Some taking bamboos from the sails while others took oars, rushed to the spot with choppers in hands.

Pandemonium broke out on the open sand bed, some received fractures on their head while others died.

As already stated, The Western part of this province was comparatively peaceful at least till the Nizamat of Sarafaraz but with the accession of Nawab 'Alivardi, peace and order of the province was broken into pieces not only by internal disturbances but also by external attacks.

Weakness of the Mughal authority at Delhi emboldened the Maratha Chiefs to invade Bengal. Luke Scarfton, a contemporary English merchant and others pointed to the encouragements of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah who "proposed to them among other expedients to send a force against Allyvardy Cawn to receive the revenue and send his and his brother's heads to the Court and reinstate the family of Shuja". But it is very difficult to rely fully upon

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60. Nurunneha O Kabarer Katha, Ma'man Singher Gitika, p.117.

the statements of the contemporary English merchants of the Company as they are known for their hostile attitude to the family of Siraj-u'd-Daula, to justify their roles against the latter. Yusuf Ali, author of Ahwal Muhabbat Jung and son in law of Nawab Sarfaraz says, "Raghuji Bhonsle ....... out wardly on seeing the weakness of the Sultani Government but inwardly at the instigation of Nizamul-muk Asaf Jah, with the object of conquering the Kingdom of Bengal, if possible, or else for exacting the Cauth which was customary in all the (other) Provinces of Hind, but from which Bengal had been free, sent Bhaskar Pandit". This is corroborated by the evidence of Siyarul-Mutakhkhirin: the Prince either instigated by Nizamul-Mulk or prompted by what he knew of the weakness of the Empire, under-took to make an irruption into the kingdom of Bengal. Karam Ali refers to the instigation by the Nizamul-Mulk.

It can not be denied that the Maratha Chiefs were aspiring for the revenue of the three eastern provinces and taking advantage of weakness of the Emperor Muhammad

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64. Muzaffarnamah, Karam Ali, tr. Sarkar in Bengal Nawabs p.28.
The Marathas first swept into this province in the year 1742. Since then, they became a menace to the people and Govt. of this province. Contemporary Bengali literature gave a graphic picture of the miseries caused by the Maratha raids. Vanesvara Vidyalankar, Court poet of Burdwan Raj, writes in 1744.

"The Marathas travel a hundred yojnas in one day killing the unarmed and submissive women and children stealing waterer they find abducting virtuous women.

Bharat Chandra, Court poet of the Raja of Nadia, corroborates the earlier account when he writes, "the Marathas robbed the people of Bengal and made them beggars."

Later historian, the author of Riyaz-us-Salatin also confirms that the Marathas came for engaging on massacre, captures and plunders, tortured many of his captives.

The war with Marathas adversely affected not only the peace and order of the country but repeated in-roads of the Marathas, interrupted coming of grains to Murshidabad.

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The price of Silk goods and raw silk rose, owing to the constant Maratha in-roads as the Marathas were plundering and burning peoples' houses and destroying the Chief Aurangs from whence the workmen fled to distant parts. The port of Hughly went out of the control of the Nawab for a considerable time. The Nawab was compelled to reduce the jama of certain parts of the country. The Marathas had not spared foreign merchants. They looted the goods of the English Company to the tune of Rs.3,95,031 and private treasure amounting to Rs.35000/- with out any opposition from the escort of the goods.

68. Hist. of Bengal, Stewart C, pp. 284-5.
69. Bengal Dist. Gazette, Bankura, p-21
First, he fought with them tooth and nail so that the inroads might be repulsed. He also sought assistance from the Imperial Government in resisting the enemies and Safdar Jang in pursuance of the Emperor's instruction, proceeded up to Azimabad to assist Nawab 'Alivardi. Balaji Baji Rao with 60,000 Maratha Cavalry came under the order of Emperor Mohammad Shah to reinforce the Bengal army against Raghuji Bhonsle, a leader of the Maratha intruders who had come to avenge the killings of Bhaskar Pandit.

Secondly, Nawab 'Alivardi tried to create differences among the Maratha Generals by his cunning methods. For instance, the Nawab had hatched a plot against Mir Habib to show him a treacherous person among the Marathas who killed him.

Thirdly, Nawab himself adopted treachery as another means to get rid of his enemies. He invited Bhaskar Pandit with false oaths and got him killed in his tent.

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71 Then Subahdar of Oudh.
72 Tarikh-i-Bangala-i-Mohabatjangi; ..........p.39
73 Balaji was son of Baji Rao, generalissimo of Raja Sahu another faction Marathas.
74 Riyaz, p.351
75 Ghulam Hussain Salim gives a vivid picture of this plot:
"He (Alivardi) sent to his name a letter, purporting
Lastly, in 1751 A.D. he bought peace by concluding a humiliating treaty with the Marathas and ceded Orissa to them.

In this connection, we must note that a section of people considered the miseries caused by Maratha inroads as a curse of God yet local Zamindars assisted the provincial Government considerably. For instance, the Raja of Bardwan responded to the call of the Nawab with men and money. The Raja of Bansberia also took due measures to save his people against the Maratha invasion. The merchants of Calcutta as well as the

falsely to be a reply to his message, to the following effect, the letter sent by you has been received; what you have written to extirpate the Maratha free booters, has met with my approval. It is a very good idea, you are from that side and I am from this side, will be on alert and wait ...... Mohabat Jang sent this message through a courier, instructing the latter to proceed by such a route that he might be interrupted by the Marathas and the letter might fall into their hands. This plot proved a complete success and the Marathas suspecting Mir Habib slew him. (Riyaz. p. 360).


77 In contemporary literature, we see "I shall send an agent to strike sinful people; Maharashtra Puran, p-5. This is corroborated by Bharat Chandra in another way; he ascribes to the looting of Bhubaneswar, the Hindu deity as the cause of anger of God, for which the three provinces have been punished by the Marathas. Anandamanga, Bharatchandra p. 22). But it should not be construed as wars of
English Company instead of depending totally upon the Government, took necessary steps for the defence of Calcutta against the possible Maratha inroads. We are informed " ........... Lending the Black merchants a sum of money to dig a ditch round the town at their own expense and other steps were taken ........... on the approach" were fully approved by the Court of Directors of the English East India Company.  

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78. *Infra, P.105*

79. *Bansberia Raj, S.C. Dey, p. 22*

80. *Extract, from General Letter from the Court to Bengal, February 7, 1745, para 36, Letter Book No. 26 (Published in Old Fort William, vo. II).*

Sometimes common people bravely faced the Maratha inroads which is reflected in the contemporary literature.
CONDITION OF THE SUBJECTS UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NAWABS.

The province of Bengal was called Jannat-ul-Bilad during the period under review. She was gifted with fertile lands and productive districts where everything was cheap and abundant. Fertility of the soil enabled her cultivators to reap three crops a year and they used to pay rents by instalments and were submissive to landlords and of course to Government officials. Both the Imperial Government

1. Paradise among cities.

2. Earlier this province was regarded as a penal province and no other province, except Bengal was referred as 'Wilayat' in contemporary literature. Emperor Aurangzeb called Bengal in one of his letters as a hell stocked with bread (Referred by Y.H. Khan in his article 'The Status of Subahdars and Dewans of the Deccan in the time of Shah Jehan, p. 275 I.H.C, 1945'). Author of Riyaz also informs us that high officers, earlier, had not cared to seek services in Bengal due to the badness of her climate, Riyaz, p-248.

3. Ruqa'at-xc, tr. Bilimoria. In fact, Bengal had prosperous and productive lands even in the preceding century. Bernier visited in 1658-68, observed that Bengal was more productive than Egypt. (Travels in Mughal Empire A. Contable, p. 437-43).


5. ibid, p. 40

6. ibid, p. 49.
as well as the Government of this province used to declare the well being of the subjects as their motto of administration and made pious declarations, to this effect, in their various sanads and farmanas, instructing government officials accordingly so that the officials from the level of Nazims down to Qanungos might keep themselves abstained from tyranny and oppression.

But on examination of the available evidence, it will be revealed that the pious declarations were hardly put into practice in keeping the people happy and free from oppressions on account of the desires of the government officials, for earning wealth by any means.

However, most chronicles of the Eighteenth Century depicted the pictures of happy and contended subjects during the period under review. The author of Tarikh-i-Bangla, Munshi Salimullah, informs us that Nawab Ja'far Khan made up retrenchments in any royal grants or in those of former Subahdars, for charitable purposes; but on the contrary, increased them.

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7. Tarikh-i-Bangla, Salimullah, tr. Gladwin, p-67
No Zamindar or Amil could, with impunity oppress anyone. In 'Alivardi's reign, every helpless person and every widow and her son was supported by his charity, writes Karam Ali. Yusuf Ali informs us: "All the inhabitants of his (Sarfaraz) dominion, being secured against the cruelty and oppression of time, enjoyed repose on the bed of comforts. Every group remained contended by earning their livelihood without any care."

Khwajah Abdul Karim, in his memoirs, also informs us that the people of Purnia, then, under this Province, lived happily (under the Government of Saif Khan). We hear that the people under Nawab Jafar Khan were capable of spending Rupee one per month per head which enabled a person to have pulao and qurma for him every day. The statement might be true in respect of the urban people, consisting of money-lenders, dadni baniks, corrupt officials and izaradars who had been making fortunes under the protection of the Government. Umichand, one of the dadni baniks, used to make contracts with the foreign traders for the supply of particular commodities at fixed price and fixed quality. They

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7. Salimullah, p-67
10. Riyaz, p-281
11. Umichand, other dadni, merchants used to make contracts with the foreign traders for the supply of particular commodities at fixed price and fixed quality. They
alone had once supplied export commodities to the tune of Rupees ten lakhs without taking any advance from the English Company. In Calcutta at his palace, three hundred persons were working as paik, barkandaz and servants. He used to live like kings. All these point to the wealth amassed by him. He was once expelled from the guild of the dadni merchants for his malpractice. Haji Ahmed sent his request to Calcutta for Umichand’s rehabilitation in the guild. The Seths and Basak families at Calcutta, had flourished since the beginning of the Eighteenth Century. On the other hand, Jagat Seth, Chief Sheroff of the Government, had been amassing huge wealth and when the Marathas under Mir Habib looted Rupees two crores (Arcot coin) from the palace of Jagat Seth at Murshidabad, his business was not much affected.

used to get 50% to 75% advance payment but towards the forties of the Eighteenth century they were getting 80% to 85% as advance payment.

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12. Shyam Sundar Seth, Janardan Seth (d.1712), Gokul Behari Seth, Baranasi Seth (d. 1724) and Dabaki Basak, Gangacharan Basak, Jugal Basak were prominent dadni merchants of these two families.

13. Jagat Seth was not the name of a man, it was a title, given to Fath-chand by the Emperor Farrukh-Siyar. Later in 1744, Mahatap Chand received the
The author of Siyarul Mutakhkhirin, Ghulam Husain Tabatabai, unequivocally calls him, the greatest banker in India. In fact, these classes extorted money from the people directly or indirectly not at parallel levels but higher than the high officers of the Government. We have already discussed about the business conducted by high officials. From Nawab Shaista Khan, down to Haji Ahmed, brother of Nawab'Alivardi Khan, with certain exceptions, a number of high officials, had earned money from their own business. Similarly, the officers in lower strata were making their fortunes not always by fair means. Accumulation of huge wealth, in the hands of a number of persons, was not unknown to the high officials. This is proved by the fact

Fathchand had got control over the mint. He alone had the privilege of coming money which gave him an opportunity to control the price of bullion imported by the European Companies, Murshid Quli and his times, Karim p-95.

16. Infra, p.120
that Nawab Siraj-u'd-Daula even before his accession to the masnud, had once proposed before his grandfather Nawab 'Alivardi, to collect Rupees one crore from the moneyed people of Murshidabad in one night to relieve the latter from financial distress. The money lenders had spreaded their tentacles not only upon the raiyats but also upon some Zamindars. The official rate of interest was 5% presumably per month. Sanyasis and some local officials were also engaged in this business of usury and they charged from one and half anna to two annas per rupee per month and the Government of the day, was usually in favour of the money lending system. The defaulters were at the mercy of the money lenders. The English Company could detain any person who had failed to repay its loan.


18. Raiyats included Saudagar, Mahajan & peasants who paid revenue and had some land. p-29
Of the copy of the manuscript of Risala-i-Zira'at kept at the Center for the studies of Social Science, Calcutta, Roy Royan also gave the same definition of raiyats. Answer to Question No.42. Harrington's Analysis.

19. It is not clear whether the rate mentioned at folio of Risala speaks of it as a rate charged per month or per annum.
It appears that the lot of urban skilled labourers was better than the agricultural labourers who constituted the bulk of the population.

Evidence on wages earned by them will illustrate the purchasing capacity of the people working for the European Traders in the urban areas.

In the year 1714, the following monthly wages were paid to the following categories of labourers at Murshidabad.

1. Kahar (Palanquin bearer) Rs. 2
2. Masalchi (torch bearer) Rs. 2
3. Peon - Rs. 2½/-

20. a class of Hindu mendicants.

21. This is in sharp contrast to the condition prescribed by the Codes of Sukracharya in ancient India that interest would never be more than the principal amount. Kings in those days ensured that their subjects remained free from the oppressions of money lenders.

22. Farman of Emperor Farrukhsiyar in 1717 conferred this right upon the Company and the English Company continued to use this right in later period.
In the year 1737, the wages of one peon was Rs.2\frac{1}{2} per month. In the year 1739 we have the evidence of the following monthly wages for the same type of unskilled labourers:\textsuperscript{23}:

- Coolies - Rs.2/-
- Darwan - Rs.2\frac{1}{2}/-
- Masalchis - Rs.2/-

Even labourers who had some sorts of skills for their performances received the following wages in the year 1939\textsuperscript{24}.

- Majhis (boatmen) - Rs.3/-
- Barber - Rs.3/-
- Bricklayers - Rs.3/-
- Carpenters - Rs.2 - 15 as.

We may now review the price situation of essential commodities of which rice was surely considered most important in this province. The following table will illustrate its price movement during the period under review:

\textsuperscript{23} E.E.I. Company and Economy of Bengal - Bhattacharya S., p. 202

\textsuperscript{24} Factory Records, Kasim Bazar Volume - V charges general for December 1739, referred ibid-204.
Under Nawab Shaista Khan

8 maunds per rupee\(^{25}\) at Dacca (absolute normal condition).

Under Nawab Ja'far Khan

5-6 maunds per rupee (in normal times)\(^{26}\)

In 1710 A.D.

50 seer per rupee at the time of scarcity\(^{27}\)

Under Nawab Shuja'-u'd-Daula

50 seer for per rupee (for fine rice like bansfooli)

4 maunds 25 seer per rupee for coarse rice like purabi

7 maunds 20 seer per rupee for coarse rice like Kukrasali) in normal times

Under Nawab Sarfaraz

8 maunds per rupee at Dacca\(^{29}\) (in absolute normal condition).

In 1738

30 seer per rupee for coarse rice at the time of scarcity\(^{30}\)

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25. Riyaz, p.228
26. Riyaz,- p.280. Capt. Hamilton informs that 7 mds.10 ser. (580lb) at E.1/- at Sandivm island durin... the period of his visit.
29. Salimullah, p p.84-85.
In 1746 30 seer per rupee
In 1952 56 seer for one rupee
In 1754 40 seer per rupee for coarse rice (normal times)

It is interesting to note that political uncertainty which followed the death of Emperor Aurangzeb had not affected much in the price situation of rice, the principal food crop of this province. We hear that around the year 1708 A.D., price of rice (Sukhda) rose to 10 seer per rupee at Delhi where it was not principal crop. Thus, it reveals that price of this chief foodgrains depended primarily on climate and it went up when-ever harvest failed due to the vagaries of nature. This is an age old phenomenon of Indian economy and our province also witnessed it during the period under review. However, towards the close of Nawab 'Alivardi's reign, price of

32 Despatch to Court of Directors, para 61, dt. 2.1.1752 Unpublished Record, Long.
33 Consultation dt. 10th June 1754, extract published in Selection from the Unpublished Records. Long James.
34 Tarikh-i-Bahadur Shah, Anony. Hist. of India as told by its own historians, Vol. VIII p.566.
rice went up to 40 seer for coarse rice and 30 seer for fine rice, in a situation when there was a prospect of good crop and 200,000 munds of rice had remained unsold at Calcutta.

The Provincial Government and some Zamindars, it cannot be denied, took certain steps during the times of scarcities to check price hike but such steps could not totally eliminate the miseries of common people.

We are informed that the terrible famines at Jugdea in 1738 "filled the area with robbers". During the early years of the second half of the 18th Century, we hear of flood and subsequent famine within the Zamindari of Susang when some people took up robbery to avoid starvation. Raja Kishore Singh took some steps to mitigate the miseries of his people.

The Provincial Government was not always silent spectators of famines or scarcities. We are informed both by Salimullah and Ghulam Husain Salim that Nawab Jafar Khan made public enquiries regarding market price.


of grains and inflicted severe punishments to the offenders when-ever he discovered any imposition. He also made certain attempts for dehording of grains and prohibited export of grains. Later, we find that the Provincial Government threw the responsibility for scarcity of grains upon the Foreign Traders who had sometimes exported grains. In 1737-38, the Nawab ordered stoppage of export of grains. The English Company at Calcutta also rose to the occasion, to secure relief for the people and obliged the merchants to sell rice at a reasonable rate. The Company also appointed two inspectors to hold strict enquiry and bring hoarded rice into open market from the houses of the merchants who were concealing rice in their own houses instead of selling the same into open market at the rate fixed by the Company.

37. Riyaz –R280, Salimullah–65. Orders for prohibition of grains was made towards the close of Nawab Jafar Khan’s life.

38. English East India Company, Economy of Bengal, Bhattacharya P. 224.
The Zamindar of Birbhum on the other hand, fought with the British merchants to protect his peasants and poor merchants. We have also discussed earlier about the oppressions and exploitation of the subjects under the Zamindars and the role of the State in this regard.

The bulk of the population lived in rural areas, depended solely on agriculture and satisfied major demand of the State as mal which was traditionally ¼ to 1/5 during the Hindu period; but it rose upto ½ or ¾ of the gross produce of the land. The original share of the State as one third of the produce refers to areas which crop rates, converted into cash rates applied. Dr. P. Saran refers that the incidence of revenue which was under Sher Shah, was continued unchanged. We are informed by Abul Fazl that the land revenue demand in Kashmir where crop sharing obtained, was fixed at ⅔ of the produce in Ajmer.

40. Subrah, p. 265
41. 34, p. 109
42. Under the head 'mal' comes the land revenue and included duty on salt manufacture, income from orchards and few other minor sources of revenue. But land revenue constituted such a major portion of the mal that the term come to signify almost exclusively rents from the land. Wilson's Glossary p. 322.
it was at 1/7 or 1/8th of the produce. Since Aurangzeb the Imperial Farmans enumerated a rate on the produce. We come to know from Ma'asir-ul-Umara that the following three different rates of land revenue demand were prescribed by Nawab Jafar Khan for batai or crop sharing. People had to pay of the produce where little labours required and rainfall assisted the ripening of the crop. State demand was 1/3 of the produce from the land where canal irrigation was available. Land revenue was demanded at the rate of 1/9th to 1/4th of the produce where some capital and maximum labour were needed for production.

The State Authorities in Bengal, levied demand not upon the individual peasants but upon Zamindars who in their turn collected revenue from the raiyats.

47. However, since the jama of Bengal was wholly nagdi, the State collected it from the Zamindars who in turn collected the revenue from the raiyats.
48. The State, however, excused the raiyats from paying Z企图, which was substituted by an agricultural tax.
49. Prov. govt. under the Mughals - Saran P. n-297
44. Ain-i-Akbari, Vol.II, pp.175-6
45. Ibid, p. 128
46. Ibid, p. 128
47. Ibid.
cultivators in rural areas of Bengal paid their rent in cash. In Bengal, instead of division of crop or of the estimated value of it, in the current coin, the whole consolidated into one sum, called the asl or original rent. "The asl appears to have been fixed at \( \frac{1}{4} \) or \( \frac{1}{6} \) on the assessment of the actual produce of individual peasants. Additional levies which could cause hardship to peasants and ruination to agriculture was forbidden. The raiyats toiling lands for generations in their own village, known as Khudkhast raiyats, paid their rent on the basis of 'Nirk'. The non-resident raiyats on the other hand, unlike the former class, received patta from Zamindar for a specific sum for a given tract whether cultivated or not. On Prakash has shown that the land producing rice and pulses was assessed at Rs.0.75 and 0.37 per bigha, whereas mulberry land was assessed

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50. The author Risala-i-Zirat informs us:


52. Nirk was a rate per bigha fixed, taking into consideration the produce, type of article and custom and practices of a locality (Royroyan's answer, Harrington's Analysis p.155.)
at Rs. 3 per bigha. Shirin Akhtar has also shown that "the standard rate of settlement computed by Karim as during Nawab Ja'far Khan's tenure, was augmented in the subsequent period. The rate of ten annas per bigha or kani during the time of Nawab Ja'far Khan appears to have been raised to Rs. 2/-, if not higher during the year 1755-61. Contemporary evidence from the writings of Holwell, we learn that "the established ground rent is three sicca rupees per bigha throughout the Empire but 'Allivardi made it four annas sicca or Rs. one fourth upon each bigha on pretence of chauth paid to Marathas and raised the rents of Rajas and Zamindars in that proportions." Again, from the time of Nawab Ja'far Khan started the imposition of perennial abwabs, obviously the Zamindars passed all the increased demands on the raiyats and in all likelihood at a higher rate. Thus, the author

53 Dutch East India Company and Economy of Bengal Omprakash, p. 25
54 Zamindars of Bengal, Shirin Akhtar - p. 61.
55 Interesting Historical events, Holwell J.Z. & others, p-221-3.
56 Abwabs imposed during 1722 to 1756 was Rs. 42,23,467. Ascoli, in Early Rev. hist. p28
of Risala-i-Ziyarat, a contemporary writer, informs us the naked truth that the quantum of revenue demand depended upon the whims of a particular zamindar. Thus Jhon Shore, shortly after the period under observes that... nothing can be more evident than the mode of impositions was fundamentally ruinous both to the raiyats and zamindars and that the direct tendency of it was to force the latter into extortions and all into concealment and distress. The fact remained that whether the settlement made with the zamindars or ijaradars for realisation of state demand, the condition created by artificial competition under Ijaradari System, since the days of Emperor Shajahan, tended to increase the land revenue and ultimately the burden fell on raiyats and peasantry. Moreover, the raiyats had to pay the perquisites of 'tappadar' and 'Shahnagi'.

57. Risala-i-Ziyarat. p.117 of the copy kept at C.S.S.S. corroborated by G.Hussain when he answers a question, shortly after that the Amils made the collection by settled rules. Some conducted them by open violence and oppression some by raad and cunning. Though all of them collected sufficient to answer the demands of the government, to defray a fund against future exigencies, so that in fact, each person exacted whatever he chose. (Answer of Ghulam Husain to the Question No.20, Harrington's Analysis.

58. Minutes of Shore, Vol. II, pp.11-12

Thus, in reality, Zamindars, Quanungos, Choudhurys and others, all claimed their shares on the produce of land under different rights and pleas. The raiyats after meeting the obligatory State demands as 'asl' from \( \frac{1}{2} \) to \( \frac{1}{4} \) of their produce along with the demands of the various levels, had to meet the cost of production. Thereafter, they naturally had to subsist on the remaining portion of the produce which could not be by all reasons sufficient or surplus for their subsistence.

The result was obvious which may be summed up in the words of Salimullah, "the land revenue was forced up so high, only by the heartless squeezing of the peasantry and inhuman torture of the contractor collectors. The pressure applied by the Nawab at the top naturally passed through the intermediate grades, finally on to

50. Shahnagi: a fee or tax collected to pay the wages of Shahana employed to watch the crop

51. Tappadar: who holds the charge of a tappa which is small than a pargana and comprising of one or more villages for the revenue of which only one engagement is entered into with the Government.
the actual cultivators, who were left with the bare means of existence, but every portion of the annual increase of the fields and looms above that minimum, was taken away by the State. Thus while the luxury of Delhi and Murshidabad was pampered and Murshid Quli every year buried a new hoard in his treasure-vaults, the mass of the people died like human sheep. The unbearable burden of revenue and taxes often compelled many cultivators to flee from their land. Contemporary literature confirms such flights of agricultural labourers. During the reign of Akbar, in the Sixteenth Century, we learn, the family of the famous poet Mukundaram had to flee from their native village to escape the oppression of local dihidar.

In Dharmangala we see,

कै जाना शोधते राजा होते सोईर भुसन नाइडे ताके पर भवि पर बाहु जानन भाद्दर नेहरे जे संमिल नमन राजा सरक जाना है नदे मंडराता

62. Salimullah, p. 48
63. Chandimangal, Mukundaram Chakraborty, p
64. Dharma mangal, Ghanaram Chakraborty, p-351
Contemporary Persian accounts also describe the severity which continued for revenue collection by Mustajirs (Ijaradars), compelled the raiyats to flee from the parganas and made the parganas ultimately destroyed.

People were not spared only after payment of land revenue as the state also imposed taxes on cloth, skin oil etc., and collected at the marketplace or kotwali chabutara which were termed as Sair-i-Jihat.

The zamindars also imposed taxes on various trades and professions.

Imposition of so many vexatious taxes, including collection of Zakat, for some time, suspension of collection by Governments, often for internal insecurity, the grasping habit of chowkidars and rahdars surely told upon the price situation and the cost of all articles went much higher than the cost of their production. The author

65. Risala - fol. 7a.
66. A tax on foot, inland toll.
67. India: Tracts, Holwell J.Z. etc., pp. 235-6
Of Muntkhab-ul-Lubab ascribes the reason for it to the extraction of the toll collectors.

We have some interesting evidence to show how people were taxed for various incidence of life. Every tenant who kept oxen within the Zamindari of Calcutta, to convey merchandise in and out of the town of Calcutta, had to pay 8 as. 6 per ox per annum. Even for licences of marriages in Calcutta people had to pay Rs. three siccas (This was later withdrawn). We are further informed every artificer shall take out a license from the Zamindar for the free use of his trade within the Company's limit, who shall pay one quarter of a month's wages for his license, which shall continue in for one whole year and no longer and in case any person shall be found exercising his trade or employment without license, he shall be fined with a months' pay.

68. Munt Khab-ul-Lubab, vol-I, Khafi Khan, tr....p.38
69. India Tracts, Holwell J. Z., + others, p. 213.
70. ibid. PP.235-6
On the other hand the raiyats could only possess land for building and other purposes but did not have the right to sale or donate the land they possess. A confusing system was prevalent. We are informed, if the sale is affected without the consent of the Hakim i.e., the revenue official) the latter could not declare it void. In Calcutta, Zamindar had imposed 5% duty on the sale of houses which created universal clamour and was esteemed very burdensome, hence it was withdrawn having tender regards for the inhabitants of Calcutta.

Bengal was also very famous for her cotton and silk industry. Robert Orme who had visited the land or Subah during this period, described the cotton manufacture of Bengal almost as a national industry. It was difficult

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72. P-32, (Question No. 47) of the copy of Risala, kept at the Centre for the studies of Social Science, Calcutta.
73. P-8, of the copy of Risala kept at Centre for the Studies of Social Science, Calcutta.
75. Court's letter dated 25.3.1757. ibid.
in his days to find a village in the province, in which every man, woman or child was not employed in making a piece of cloth. But though Bengal produced fine muslin, malmal, ab-e-rayan and other varieties of fine cloths, common people wore coarse cotton clothes. We are further told about the miserable state of affairs; the workmen, at Dacca, who used to undertake the manufacture of fine clothes were almost ruined. The reason is not far away to seek, we hear, the dread of his (Nawab) extortions made several of their weavers and washermen run away.

76. Historical Fragments, R. Qrme - p- 409

77. Mughaljuge Krisi-arthanity Krishak Vidraha, Bhadra G.

78. B.P.C. 16.3.1737 referred by Bhattacharyya in E.E.I. Camp. and Econ. of Bengal, p. 185

79. Despatch of Court 18.9.1752, para - p. 80
Since the early days of Islam, Muslim rulers were generally very tolerant to their non-Muslim subjects. The best testimony of an early Muslim Government was furnished by the Christian themselves. Under the Third Caliph Osman (644-656 A.D.), the Christian Patriarch of Merv addressed the Bishop of Fars, named Simeon, in the following terms; The Arabs who have been given by God the kingdom (of the earth) do not attack the Christian faith; on the contrary they help us in our religion. The Holy Quran prescribes Jiziah tax upon the non-Muslim subjects of an Islamic State in return for the amenities and security provided to them. The laws of Islam ensure equal status between a Muslim and a non-Muslim subject so that if a Zimmi was killed by a Muslim, the latter was liable to pay the same penalty as in the reverse case. The Islamic laws also protected the properties of non-Muslim subjects in an Islamic State (dar-ul-Islam) and no Muslim was allowed to acquire the

2. The basis of Jizia is revealed in the Holy Quran, Surah-IX, 29.
3. non-Muslim subjects living in Islamic State under contract and paying jizia or poll tax for the protection of their lives and property by the State.
land of a Zimmi by purchase.

In their anxiety for the welfare of non-Muslims, Coliphs of Bagdad created an office known as 'Katibul-Jihbazez' charged for the protection and welfare of their non-Muslim subjects. Similarly, the rulers of Andalusia (Spain) created a post which was called 'Katib-uz-Ziman' for the similar purpose.

But it must be remembered that theoretically the Zimmis in an Islamic State were not at all with the Muslims.

In India, under Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khalji (1296 A.D. to 1316 A.D.), we hear, no Hindu could hold up his head; and in the houses no sign of gold or silver tankas or jitals was to be seen; and Chowdhuries and Tchuts had not means enough to ride on horse back, to find weapons, to get fine clothes or to indulge in betels. But this appears to be an exaggeration as the Hindus referred above, comprised of the Hindu well-to-do people and not the commoners. Soon after the reign of

6. Ibid, p. 275
7. Ibid, pp. 274-5
8. Tarikh-i-Firuz Shani, Barmi, pp.187-8, Hist. of India as told by its own historians, Vol. III.
9. The Agrarian System of Moslem India, Moreland, p.32.
Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khalji, during the rule of Khasru (d. 1320 A.D.) we hear, "Hindus again found pleasure and happiness". Jizia was imposed upon the Hindus but 'Brahmins' were exempted from Jizia until the reign of Firuz Tughluq (1351 A.D. - 1388 A.D.)

Mughal Emperor Akbar later abolished Jizia but Emperor Aurangzeb reimposed it in 1660 A.D. However Jizia and bar on bathing in the Ganges were abolished by Emperor Muhammad Shah on 1143 - 44 A.H. i.e. 17.

There is no record that Hindus were denied to use public hospitals or sarais. Hindus could preach Bhakti cult. Hindu cultivators had no fear from the Muslim officers so long they remained loyal to them. Even orthodox Aurangzeb extended grants and benefits to his Hindu subjects.

During the period under review we see that conditions of the Hindus were not different from that of their brethren lived in other parts of India.

10. Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Barni, p.224. Hist. of India as told by its own historians Vol.-III.
11. Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi, Afif (Hist. of India as told Vol.-III) p.336.
14. upon the influence of Sufi ideas, Bhakti cult preached the relationship of man and God on the basis of love and worshipping God with devotion was better than rituals and ceremonies. Kabir & Nanak were famous exponents of this cult.
15. Supra, P. 251.
They not only held high positions in the administration but they also wielded considerable influence upon it and also upon the public finance.

The Hindu subjects merely declared formal allegiance to Islam and were allowed to perform their rites and rituals without any hinderance created by the State. Interestingly enough, some Muslim officials participated in the Hindu festivals. The Hindus—Christians erected temples and churches in this province. The Revenue Department of this province, was predominantly held by the Hindus; Jagat Seth was the greatest Banker. Among the sixteen principal Zamindars, fifteen were Hindus. Most of the prominent merchants of Calcutta, were Hindus. All these point to the conclusion that the Hindus were not second class citizens in the eyes of the Government.

16. Supra, P-259. Nawab Alivardi used to promote Gentees and other dissenters according to their merits and just on a footing with the Musalman themselves, Siyar, Vel. III, P-180.
17. Infra pp. 179, 184, 188.
Fixed revenue demand of the State as we hear from a contemporary source that the "Gentiles are better contended than under Pagan Princes for the Mughal taxes them gently and every one knows what he must pay, but the Pagan Princes tax at Discretion, making their own Avarice the Standard of Equity, besides there were formerly many small Rajahs, that used upon frivolous Occasions, to pitch Quarrels with one another and before they could be made Friends again, their subjects were forced to open both their Veins and Purfes to gratify ambitious or Folly."

\[20\] For instance, Prince Azimush-Shan took part in Holi festival, Salimullah, p.17; again Shahmat-jang and Saulatjang and Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula enjoyed Holi, Muzaffarnamah, pp. 49, 72.

\[21\] As early as the reign of Emperor Shahjahan, we hear 777 bigha of land was given to the Christians at Bandel for their church. The English merchants could rebuilt their church at Calcutta. Extract from Despatch to Court dt. 13.1.1749.


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