CHAPTER TWO

LAND SYSTEM IN PRE-PARTITION PERIOD
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II.1 ANCIENT PERIOD

The history of land system is the economic history of India. From time immemorial its socio-economic, political and cultural heritages and the process of class contradictions and nature of class-conflicts have been deeply embedded in the features of agrarian structure. Broadly speaking man's relation to land has determined the course of its history in general and economy in particular. The 'landed property' has determined respective position of each social class in social formations.

The 'landed property' has brought about three-dimensional rights on land as: (a) owners, (b) cultivators, and (c) workers. The surplus generated by the interactions of these three claimants were not distributed according to work norms but rather by dint of rights inherited and appropriated through political and ideological supports taking advantages of the heterogeneity of the socio-institutional structure of the then society and lower level of social awareness.

The land system was one of pastro-agricultural type in Ancient India as well as in Bengal. Due to lack of a centripetal administration and cohesive ideological instance, any uniform pattern of land system encompassing the whole aspects of agrarian structure could not develop.
Land system in India before pre-partition period could be divided into four broad time-periods, viz.,

(i) Indus Valley Civilization period (third millenium, BC)
(ii) 'Aryan' Period (approx. 1750 BC)
(iii) Sultanate and Mughal Period (1206 AD), and
(iv) British Colonial Period (1783 AD)

(i) Indus Valley Civilisation: The history of land system in ancient India presumed to have began with the Indus civilization of the third millenium, B.C. But since archaeological and epigraphic evidence are yet to be properly deciphered and scrutinised, it is not possible to say accurately what were the main characteristics of the pattern of ownership of landed property, the process of production and distribution and nature of agrarian class formation.

During this period the nature of landed property in Bengal is hardly known. It may, however, be presumed that whatever the socio-economic set up, there possibly existed owners and workers in relation to landed property. The 'communal ownership' of land was true in the case of dominant communities while the subjugated people formed the working masses. The extant relations of man to man during the Aryan domination reflected in the caste system (sacrosant) amply substantiates this proposition.

(ii) Aryan Period: After the destruction of the Indus civilization the Aryan became the dominant ruling class and "they

combined pastoralism with agriculture, and knew the use of the plough”. In the beginning the Aryan social organisation was not complex. However, “The ‘equalitarian’ structure of the agrarian society of the Aryans must surely have been affected, in course of time, by their struggles with their indigenous enemies”. The ‘internal’ territorial conflicts, therefore, was important contributory factor in evolving land relations and payment of revenue to the dominant ruling class. This process in its wake brought about differentiated social formations of caste/class system of production process which, in course of time, became sacrosant for the members of the socio-economic organisation which developed on the basis of mythification of the then existing socio-economic and political realities by the dominant ruling classes.

Since social formation was not a monolithic entity (there was ideological support for the heterogeneity of social structure which was rather sacramental in the Aryan pattern of social ideology, for the Aryans formed the dominant state class) and agriculture being the prime source of survival and influence, the then socially, economically and politically dominant classes brought about a concerted and subtly conspired, hierarchically net-worked social formation, in which the peasantry and working people, dependant on agriculture, were exploited by the hierarchically established social orders. The extraction of

2. Irfan Habib, op. cit.
3. Ibid.
surplus by the established orders and vested interests was so high that peasantry was left in 'perpetual poverty'.

The functional classes of the agrarian society was divided into numerous subgroups. Each group had its own identity in the form of an economic entity, and economic pursuit it undertook to survive. In course of time the economic pursuit become a communal pursuit of the same functional group and from generation to generation the pursuit continued in lineal way. It took this nature to keep the pursuit within the members of the group that undertook the pursuit.

Any change in agrarian pursuit meant also a change in the social relations. The change might occur on account of different reasons -- ecological disturbance, demographic pressure coupled with stagnant production method or pressure from the dominant ruling class. Sometimes all these factors worked together and the agrarian structure changed accordingly, mainly towards a complicated form. But the process of change towards exploitation always could not go smoothly, as sometimes the peasantry got them united, and began to question the usufructuary rights of the dominant state classes. The dominant state classes in order to save its very existence threatened by the organised powers of the exploited, indulged in all possible concessional operations. This is what we exactly see today.

The following were the main features of Aryan land-system:

i) Land was not communally owned.

ii) Individual was the owner of land.
iii) Ownership pattern of land caused economic differentiation among people in general and caste/class groups in particular.

iv) The so called 'Sudras' were the rural sub-proletariat.

v) The Vedic institutions made caste/class differentiation sacramental.

vi) The rights of the Kings on land were not absolute.

vii) The "Government demand of land-revenue amounted usually to a sixth share of the product".4

The specific features of land-system prevalent in Bengal during the beginning of Aryan period is not yet known. Some evidence have, however, relating to past Mauriyan period, been found. "It was only the Sena Kings of Bengal who introduced cash payment. Besides Revenue, Agriculture had to pay various other imposts. There was a comprehensive system of rural taxation. All income earned in the village in any way, by agriculture, handicrafts, trade, or transport, was taxed. The standard and efficiency of cultivation were secured by the legal remedy provided in eviction and ejectment". During this period, "A good deal of agriculture of the country thus passed under the control of the advanced classes of the community".

It may be safely assumed that agriculture in general and land ownership, distribution of products and status of working people in particular were great deal dominated and influenced by ---------------------


5. Ibid., p. 31.

6. Ibid., p. 31.
the Vedic varna system of the Aryans. "The differentiation of the Varna scheme into four broad categories was a reflection of the socio-economic formation of that period, namely, small peasant predominating village which use pre-iron agricultural equipment and gave up the surplus to the Brahman-Kshatriya combine. The latter directly collected the surplus from the peasantry and took advantage of the artisans' rudimentary skill. Exploitation, in other words, was general.... Likewise, the principal aim of the later Vedas is to sanction this exploitation."

II.2 SULTANATE AND MUGHAL PERIOD (MEDIEVAL)

In twelfth century with the Ghorian conquest the Delhi Sultanate was established and its appointed representatives ruled Bengal. During this period the basic structure of the land system was, however, left virtually intact but the process and mechanism of exploitation were enhanced and streamlined as the desire for more revenue went on increasing with the rising luxurious living of the sultans, emperors and their administrative supports. "Their principal achievements lay in great systematisation of agrarian exploitation, and an immense concentration of the resources so obtained. This ensured that the land-revenue (kharaj/mal) demanded on their behalf should comprehend the bulk, if not the

whole, of the peasants' surplus produce; and the king's bureaucracy thereby became the principal exploiting class in society."

The system of revenue collection and distribution of territorial units for the purpose termed as "iqta's", while the territory whose revenue were directly collected for the Sultan's own treasury was designated "Kalisa".

The iqta system was subsequently converted into jagirdari system during the Mughal period. During medieval period Bengal was sometimes "a dependency of Delhi or an independent Kingdom". Indigenous kings or chieftains were the real rulers of the land. The so-called Bara-Bhuyiyas in the later period are such examples. And formerly the State of Vishnupur and Dinajpur were two important principalities.

With regard to revenue system, "The principle of assessment remained the same. It was sharing of the produce. The share in the Hindu system varied between 1/6 and 1/4 of the produce, 1/4 being exceptional. In Moslem India, the usual rate was raised and varied from 1/3 to 1/2. In Aurangjeb's time 1/2 became the standard. There was also reform in other directions. Hitherto sharing was by estimate. The estimate varied with seasons and crops, and the land-revenue due to the State varied with it."

8. Irfan Habib, op. cit.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 40
12. Ibid., p. 22
13. Ibid., p. 32
The system of collection of revenue was perpetuated through the chieftains of Bengal who really owned the land as Zamindars. The status of the Zamindars was, however, different than the status given after the Permanent Settlement by the British colonial authority. The early Zamindars enjoyed administrative authority unlike the later day Zamindars. There were, however, different kind of Zamindars. All of them were not same in terms of possessing various kinds of rights on land.

II.3 COLONIAL PERIOD

Here we will examine the process of disintegration of peasantry, specially in the case of East India in general and Bengal in particular.

Being one of the most fertile areas of the world, East India particularly deltaic area of Bengal has witnessed intense exploitation. In the beginning of the 17th century, however, we see East India, particularly, Bengal and its peripheral areas in peculiar situation. The master-mind behind the turn up of this situation was the alien trading communities, and their piratical feuds among themselves and with the native dominant state classes. Previously through political invasions the invaders came to control over the agrarian community, but they kept the then system intact in order to exact the surplus from the peasantry. (That is why we do not find any historically remarkable change in the agrarian system in this part during this period).

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Now we see the occupation of political hegemony by the trading community through economic dominance. During this period the successful trading community was the East India Company, the mercantile overseas trade association of the English trading classes.

In 1765 Robert Clive secured the sanad of Bengal which plunged Bengal in the grip of an unprecedented famine. Thousands of people died, thousands lost their homes and hearths. And lakhs of poor peasants were alienated from land and eventually the process of peasant alienation started and has been continuing unabated ever since. The individual and transferable rights on land property became one of the most important factors of mass-peasants' alienation from land. As a result the growth of landless agricultural labourers has remained an alarming phenomenon since the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793.

II.4 DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS TENURIAL PATTERN

The Permanent Settlement changed the hitherto pattern of land-man relations. The once all powerful Zamindars were shorn of all their political and judicial rights. They were turned into mere rent-collecting agents of the alien authority. "Under the Permanent Settlement (1793) the Zamindars became proprietors of their estates, subject to a permanent fixed payment to the Government. The revenue of the Government was fixed at about ten-elevenths of what the Zamindars received as rent from the

ryots; the remaining one-eleventh was left as the share of the Zamindars". The Permanent Settlement made the Zamindars now completely dependents on the whims of the alien authority.

Section 66 of Bengal Regulation vii of 1793 states:

"Zamindars .... are prohibited from taking cognisance of, or interfering in matters, or causes coming within the jurisdiction of the court of civil judicature ... or the magistrates under penalty of being liable to the payment of such fines to Government ..."

The above regulation makes it clear that the hitherto feudal chieftains of Bengal who were de facto rulers of the areas to which they belonged became mere proprietors of large estates -- the estate heritable and transferable. "While depriving the Zamindars of the political and military powers of a ruling class it (the alien authority) stabilised their economic position, extended to them the freedom of getting rich provided they satisfied the minimum demands of the company. The company fixed a sum for each estate to be paid in money in perpetuity, any additional amount over this sum that could be extorted by the zamindars was left to them. This was done with several aims in view. The state of the country and the social basis of the Government was not sufficient to develop an efficient rent

18. Quoted in A. Ghosh and K. Dutt's, Development of Capitalist Relations in Agriculture, New Delhi, 1977, p. 2.
collecting organisation which would command the allegiance of the peasantry. The company was in acute need of cash. So long as the feudal land owners were not placated the whole country remained its enemy. It was necessary, therefore, to use as much of the existing set up as possible to keep going. But in fixing a regular money rent to be paid annually the company unconsciously introduced the money system into the world of feudal economy. It demanded of the zamindar an efficient organisation that will with mechanical regularity extort the minimum amount required by the company from the peasantry without bringing the British power into direct clash with the peasantry. The introduction of and insistence of a mechanical regularity of collection in terms of money was however not suitable to the loose organisation of the old zamindars which were functioning on a more relaxed basis."

The Permanent Settlement, therefore, brought into existence in Bengal an agricultural economy of intermediaries. This economy of intermediaries were headed by "a class supported by foreign rule with no function in the economic life of the community", who brought about disaster in the countryside of Bengal which spanned over a century and half.

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The layers of intermediary phenomenon were so vast and complex that even after the attainment of Independence, the features of the Permanent Settlement still seem to have remained alive in West Bengal. The following passages on tenurial arrangements in district 24 Parganas which was in the Presidency Division, gives us a vivid description of the extent to which intermediary phenomenon was in existence in agrarian system of Bengal during the late nineteenth century.

"Everywhere throughout Bengal a longer or shorter chain of intermediate holders is to be found. At one end of this chain stands the zamindar, who holds the estate from the Government under the Permanent Settlement, and pays his land tax direct to the Government Treasury. At the other end of it is the actual cultivator. The following are the different tenures which exist between zamindar, or superior landlord, and the actual cultivator in the 24 Parganas:- (1) Dependent taluk, originally formed a portion of an estate or zamindari, but subsequently transferred to a second party upon the condition of the proportionate share of the Government revenue being paid through the zamindar or holder of the parent estate. (2) Pathi taluk is a permanent tenure granted by the zamindar at a fixed rent in consideration of bonus, the holder being entitled to exercise all powers of the grantor, but paying his land tax through the zamindar. (3) Darpatni taluk is a similar tenure granted by a patnidar. (4) Se-pathi taluk is a similar tenure granted by a patnidar. (5) Maurase and Mukarrari, hereditary tenures granted to the holder by the proprietor of an estate or a patnidar, and held by
the grantee at a fixed rent. (6) Dar Mausari, an hereditary tenure at a fixed rent, similar to the above, and created by a maursidar. (7) Granthi, an hereditary tenure at a fixed rate of rent held under the zamindar. (8) Dar-granthi, a holding created by sub-letting a granthi. (9) Thika, an hereditary tenure held under the zamindar. It is also a tenure terminable at will by either the occupant or the landholder; that is to say, the landholder can dispossess the tenant if he choses, and the latter, on his side, can throw the land if he does not wish to retain it. (10) Jana, a general term for tenures, particularly leaseholds. (11) Korfa tenures are sub-leases created by granthidars or zamindars. (12) Ijara, a lease of a village or an estate for a term of years. (13) Dar-ijara, the sub-letting of the above. (14) Katkina, a lease of a small estate for a term of years. (15) Guta-jama, a tenure in which the rent of the land is agreed to be paid in kind. (16) Bhagra, a tenure in which the holder pays a half of the produce as rent. This tenure is chiefly granted by Brshmans, Kayasths, and others of the upper castes who, in the 24 Parganas, do not generally cultivate their lands by means of hired labour (as they do in Burdwan, Birbhum and other districts), but either rent it out or make it over to some one in bhag, a tenure under which the cultivator finds all expenses of tillage, etc., and gives the owner of the land one-half of the crop, retaining the other mostly as a return for his labour and outlay. The collector states that a considerable portion of the land passed from the hands of the superior
landlords into those of intermediate holders." Several other 
informations also explain the situation. "As a consequence, in 
Bengal the hierarchy of sub-zamindars had upto twenty rungs. By 
the 1930s, there were about 8 million rent collectors, while in 
1794 the land was given over to 46,000 zamindar tax-farmers".

This spatial distribution of tenurial arrangements came into 
existence on account of interaction of many factors. However, 
the major influencing factor was economic. The alien authority 
created this vertical pattern of land-man relations. The above 
mentioned tenurial pattern/arrangement represented a plural 
class existence conflicting to each other.

The account of the above mentioned district (24 Parganas) 
throws sufficient light on the tenurial condition and pattern 
prevalent in Bengal during the period between 1793 and 1873. The 
most important factor in these quagmire of tenurial arrangement 
was that land now became a property. It responded to market 
mechanism of a capitalist set up. The growth of urban 
agglomeration in and around Calcutta, growth of industries, and 
growing demand for Indian raw materials in the burgeoning 
manufacturing industries of England made land the only source of 
living and a gateway to prosperity and a hallmark of bourgeois 
pattern of life. The economic and social status of the people 
revolved round the pattern of tenure they held. Each type of 

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Parganas and Sundarbans, (Delhi - 1973), Turner & Co., 

22. Rostislav Ulyanovsky, Agrarian India : Between the World 
tenure was represented by same type of people, though they could not be definitely classified as an economic class-entity. The economic condition of the intermediaries was, however, better than the cultivators, who constituted the bulk of the population in rural areas. The intermediaries were represented by money-lenders cum usurers, landlord-cum-money lenders, petty officials, and people who with slight improvement of their lots left cultivation and took to the role of an intermediary in any form. This transfer of drudgery to others socially 'inferior' people increased the number of intermediaries. Because of the commercialisation and greater profit expectation, many people even cultivators took to money lending business.

Before going for the details of productive efficiency and activities of various agrarian classes a brief account of the measures after the Permanent Settlement is given here for the proper understanding of the pattern of land relations that were existing or developing in West Bengal before the Independence in 1947.

Under the Permanent Settlement land became property, involvement and role of money gradually became paramount, and profit in agriculture was lucrative. As a result investment in land became worthwhile. Consequently, the economic class i.e. money lender-class came into existence. The money-lending class was mostly composed of outside elements, trying hard to obtain maximum return for its investments, caring nothing for local customs and armed with governmental protection tried to drive for
harder bargains with the peasantry than ever before. This led to acute discontent among the peasantry. Before the Permanent Settlement, rent was generally paid in kind. But now, after the introduction of the Permanent Settlement rent was payable in cash. The cash-rent was in no way fixed. The amount of rent to be paid was fluctuated with the rise and fall in price. The Zamindars who were all in their capacity to extract the tenant decided the rent as per his market-experience. After the Permanent Settlement the extraction of the tenant became so worse and complex that the tenant rose into revolt, and to pacify the tenant the alien authority passed the Rent Act passed in 1859. The Rent Act was the first definite legislation after the Permanent Settlement which was designed as a reform, in favour of the tenants to check the extreme form of despotism going on under fully legalised processes some of which like the *naptam* and *panjam* have become notorious in the history of tenancy legislation.

By the Rent Act the ruling authority tried to bring mild reforms in favour of the tenantry. The Rent Act tried to check landlords' excessive power to exploit the tenant, and to protect the tenant the patta was given. However, every tenant was not entitled for patta. It depended upon the duration of his tenancy. Only settled ryots' those who were holding at fixed rate since the Permanent Settlement, were entitled to patta at


24. Ibid. p.19.
that rate. Occupancy ryots were also entitled pattas at the on
going rates which were thought fair and equitable.

The impact of the Rent Act, however, was not at all impressive. Rather "it did ... attempt to destroy the homogeneity of the peasantry as a social and economic group." This was done by giving widely varying status to different classes, giving special status to occupancy ryots put them in much more strong position than they were ever. But the position of the non-occupancy ryots remained vulnerable. Therefore, economically their condition was unsafe and uncertain. Occupancy ryots were mostly wel-to-do members of the rural society. While non-occupancy ryots were mostly poor section of the society who were the majority.

The pilliatiative measures ensured by the Rent Act brought into existence a new phenomenon - colossal litigation. When an occupancy ryot failed to get justice otherwise from his landlord he resorted to legal action against his adversary. The litigation phenomenon brought about a new kind of tension in agrarian structure. The following official overview confirms the points raised above:

"The Rent Act gave increased attention to the enlargement of the police and other centralised administration which along with the repeal of the haptam and panjam checked the open oppression that was going on in a legalised form. But it led to the ryots into costly litigations against the zamindars for any redress.

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"The zamindars complained as the ryot grew more conscious of their rights and began to resist in many cases. The legal expenses of the ryot were as a result only more enhanced by including fee for the agent as part of the cost of the suit and damages also in case of refusal to pay.

"Zamindar was empowered also to harass the peasantry by constant rent suits as rent could now be collected in monthly instalments causing the ryot to get mixed up in expensive suits.

"Under Act X of 1859 revenue courts granted enhancements easily and zamindars allowed occupancy to grow. Civil courts have reversed the situation under Act VIII of 1869 but occupancy rights have already grown ... The struggle to acquire or defeat occupancy right is going on."

In conclusion, we can say that the Rent Act paved a way for many new situations to crop up. It brought into existence legal professional class, it compelled a section of the people to be intermediators between landlords and occupancy ryots. The Rent Act was a factor that restructurised the agrarian set up. "A complete revolution and resettlement is being enacted under cover of the rent act (1861-62)."

Table 2.1 is an account in itself about the disputes that arose between landlords and occupancy ryots. In these disputes it was the landlord's side that involved itself to harass ryots.

26. Land Revenue Administration Reports 1860-70.
27. Land Revenue Administration Reports 1860-70.
After analysing the data in the Table it becomes clear that it was first time in the agrarian history a new kind of tension with socio-political dimension was developing with wider ramifications, though slowly but steadily. No doubt, the Rent Act put the ball rolling though at snail speed but with resultant effect. However, it should be kept in mind that the Act was no

### TABLE 2.1

**Disputes Between Landlords and Occupancy Ryots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue of Conflict</th>
<th>Party evoking law as a Prosecutor</th>
<th>No. of Cases entertained in the court during 1860-70</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recovery of Documents (Pattas and Kabuliyats)</td>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>46,464</td>
<td>52.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal exaction of rent</td>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>8,417</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive demand of rent</td>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>2,968</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relinquishments</td>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>30,745</td>
<td>34.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total Number of Cases evoked by tenants         | --                               | 88,594                                        | 100.0      |

| For arrear on rent                              | Landlords                        | 3,47,429                                      | 70.32      |
| Rejection of ryots or cancelling lease          | Landlords                        | 27,060                                        | 5.47       |
| To recover occupancy premises                   | Landlords                        | 10,066                                        | 2.03       |
| Aid to eject                                    | Landlords                        | 9,116                                         | 1.84       |
| Enhancement                                    | Landlords                        | 1,00,369                                      | 20.31      |

| Total number of cases evoked by landlords       | --                               | 4,84,040                                      | 100.0      |
against peasant uprising which was looming large in the horizon of the exploited peasant economy of Bengal. The Act had two dubious intentions: (1) to contain any possible peasant uprising; and (2) to check landlords' excessive feudal exploitation. The alien ruling clique here too used divide and rule policy, which it handed down its 'golden misrule for the miserable' to its predecessors the present comprador - bureaucratic ruling clique.

In the successive analysis of the foundation and evolution of the present day pattern of land relation which has been one of the most important factors of development and distribution of agro-industrial outputs to the people who work and involved in the pattern, it has been proved what way and manner the alien authority and thereafter the indigenous ruling clique have manipulated the land the most important productive factor for their own interest.

II.5 THE BENGAL TENANCY ACT

"The necessity for legislation had indeed been apparent ever since the occurrence in 1873 of the serious agricultural disturbances in Pabna."

In the case and conception of the Rent Act of 1859, the Blue Mutiny was the major compelling factor. (The Indigo
Commission of 1860 also came in the wake of Blue Mutiny.)

Contemporary historical evidence and socio-political writings are full of gory tales of tortures and terrors unleashed by the indigo planters and their agents in rural areas of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. The Rent Act had many loopholes. It tried to protect the ryots half-heartedly. The Zamindars and landlords carried on their spree of exploitation. On account of rapacious exploitation the Pabna-peasant resistance occurred. It has remained one of the most important peasant revolts in the history of peasant movements in Bengal. "The agrarian disturbance in Pabna in 1873, a great event in the history of Bengal in the 19th century, had spectacular impact on both official and non-official thinking in Bengal. The event shook contemporary Bengali society out of any complacency it might have developed about agrarian matters." The Pabna peasant uprising put many parts of East Bengal in ferment. With gradual urbanisation that took place among the landlord class of Bengal, the intensity of exploitation also increased, as the cult of conspicuous consumerism was beginning to take root, which produced the Calcutta-sub-culture. The landlord-class during 60s and 70s in 19th century harassed ryots and tried to exact rent as much as possible. The plight of the peasantry has been aptly described by J.P. Grant. He writes: "As I steamed along the

30. Dinabandhu Mitra's 'Neel Darpan' (in Bengali) is a novel with vivid details of the doings of the indigo planters.

rivers, for some sixty or seventy miles, both banks were literally lined with crowds of villagers claiming justice in the matter. Even the women of the villages on the bank were collected in groups by themselves; the males, who stood at and between the riverside villages in little crowds, must have collected from all the villages at a great distance on either side. I do not know that it ever fell to the lot of any Indian Officer to steam for 14 hours through a continued double street of suppliants for justice; all were most respectful and orderly, but also were plainly in earnest. It would be folly to suppose that such a display on the part of tens and thousands of people, men, women and children has deep meaning."

Several factors, therefore, were responsible for the enactment of Bengal Tenancy Act in 1885. They were: (1) Zamindars and landlords bid to increase rent after 1860; (2) loopholes of the Rent Act; (3) possibility of legal justice which encouraged ryots to uphold their rights now boldly; (4) commercialisation of crops; (5) price rise; (6) growth of population, and (7) growing consciousness among some section of peasants especially well-off ryots.

Main Provisions of Bengal Tenancy Act: The Bengal Tenancy Act was passed with a view to quell the tense situation in agrarian society and to improve upon the rent act. The noteworthy feature of this act was that under it tenants were in independent

position to sale and purchase their properties. This is no doubt a significant development. The act introduced several institutional changes into the rural economy of Bengal:

1. The act gave greater right to the occupancy ryots.
2. The occupancy ryots were independent in respect of selling and purchasing.
3. Large section of occupancy ryots were not benefitted by the act.
4. The position of the non-occupancy ryots was not improved by the act. As a result class-cleavage became sharper, though under the banner of religious-communal coherances.

The effects of the Bengal Tenancy Act (1885): Prof. A. Ghosh and K. Dutt very aptly enumerated the changes brought about by the Bengal Tenancy Act. They describe "Occupancy Ryots:

(1) May sell or bequeath or mortgage his holding like any immovable property. The sale was to be registered and a landlord's fee paid out of the sale proceeds to the court to be transmitted to the landlord.

(2) Has right to make improvements, to fell timber and utilise it.

(3) May commute rent paid in kind, or in cash and kind.

(4) Cannot be rejected, except for a specific breach of contract.

(5) Existing rents to be taken by the court as equitable and enhancible only as guaranteed in the act under adequate grounds; increase not to exceed one anna in the rupee and not to take place within fifteen years.

(6) If the court fixes a rent as equitable it will be fixed for five years for that ryots.

These above mentioned rights were given to the ryots, while non-occupancy ryots were left in the lurch. Besides, zamindar's khas lands remained untouched. Even a large section of occupancy ryots were not benefitted by the Bengal Tenancy Act. They were mainly small ryots. Being pressed by the landlord's illegal demands they were turned into landless peasants in no time. Only a section of big ryots reaped the benefit of the Tenancy Act. And that section was in a position to swim in the sea of market favourably.

Therefore, "by 1885 such a group was prosperous enough to rent out holdings to under ryots and the Bengal Tenancy Act had to include a section defining the under ryots on lines similar to the non-occupancy ryots ... This group of rich tenants later emerged with the new ruling strata in the village while large bulk of the occupancy ryots had to merge with the non-occupancy ryots and share croppers." 

Since the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 and till 1885, we see marked changes had taken place in the agrarian structure of Bengal especially in the case of land relations. Among the marked changes, the most notable was that the land now became property, and, therefore, could be owned and disposed at any time. It could be noted that a section of the peasantry started producing for market, and it was the first time

that the section started profiting enormously from the market oriented economy which was slowly taking place in the largely feudal type economy of Bengal.

After the Bengal Tenancy Act nothing important was done with respect to agriculture and tenurial arrangement of Bengal. The peasant could not raise their head again against their exploiter till 1946. Between 1885 and 1946 the authority appointed several commissions to know the exact situation of the agrarian economy of Bengal. The authority appointed the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India. The Commission took extensive evidence all over Bengal Presidency, and came out with quite worthy observations. Successive legislative measures since the Bengal Tenancy Act 1885 gradually strengthened the rights of ryots. The World Agricultural Census observes that: "the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Acts of 1928 and 1938 the rights and privileges of the tenants were greatly enlarged while the position of the landlords was reduced to that of a mere rent collector."

The Permanent Settlement had incredible capacity to breed intermediaries. The zamindar created subordinate landlords, the subordinate created his own/another subordinate. And each in his turn earned his margin of profit free of risk from the next below and shifted his responsibility of protecting agriculture. This process continued unabated for two

35. World Agricultural Census, 1960-70, West Bengal, Board of Revenue and Directorate of Agriculture, Govt. of West Bengal, p. 46.
36. Ibid. p. 47.
centuries together. In that process of procreation of parasite intermediaries there arose some 42 grades and even more of sub-rent collectors who were all sucking the cultivators by all possible ways, devices and disguises. "The dominant motive of this intermediary hierarchy was profit-making; the interest in agriculture which really sustained the whole system was nobody's concern." The following Table 2.2 gives an impression of the process of creation of hierarchically established intermediaries and systematic proletarianisation of the unprotected cultivators of land.

Table 2.2
Hierarchy of Intermediaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Cultivating land lords or rent receivers</td>
<td>3,90,560</td>
<td>6,33,834</td>
<td>+61 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivating owners &amp; tenants</td>
<td>92,74,924</td>
<td>60,79,717</td>
<td>-50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>18,05,502</td>
<td>27,18,939</td>
<td>+34 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table shows the massive scale proletarianisation of the cultivators within a span of 10 years on the one hand and alarming proliferation of non-cultivators on the other. And no

37. H.D. Malviya, Land Reforms in India, AICC, N.Delhi, 1955, p.46
38. World Agricultural Census, op. cit., p. 47
consensus was called for to check this economically ruinous development till 1938. The Bengal Tenancy Amendment Acts of 1938, however, could not give even a little relief to the suffering peasantry.

The evils of the Permanent Settlement had been revealed now. The demand for the abolition of the Permanent Settlement and landlordism, therefore, became widespread and mounting. Taking note of the grave situation the alien authority of Bengal appointed a Commission of Enquiry in November 1938, under the Chairmanship of Sir Francis Floud "and some experts in revenue matters and economics, leading lawyers and representative of landlords and tenants as members, to examine the existing land system in Bengal and its various aspects and to advise what modifications, if any, should be made, and in what manner and what stages they should be effected."

The following are the major recommendations of the Floud Commission:

The Floud Commission recognised the fact that the present system of land tenure was defective and a great "obstacle to the maximum utilisation of land and water resources of the country". The Commission, therefore, recommended that (i) the Permanent Settlement should be abolished, (ii) intermediary rent receiving interests should be abolished with compensation, and (iii) share-croppers should be protected and their existing relations with

land should be improved. The far reaching recommendations of the Commission, however, raised controversy. It was for the first time in India that such recommendations were made in favour of the tenantry. But in spite of its 'far reaching' historical pronouncements, the recommendations could not be accepted on account of outbreak of 'World War II,' a severe famine in Bengal (1943), widespread communal riots, mass exodus of Hindus from East Bengal and Muslims from India" which severely shattered the great dream of independent and prosperous golden Bengal once again.

The distinct economic policies pursued by the alien authority helped ruining the economic backbone of Bengal proletarising two third of its rural people. In the history of class struggle the situation took ugly turn. The struggle was misplaced and misrepresented, and on its tract the struggle left millions of people homeless and heartless, and a disrupted economy. "The pre-reformed agrarian structure of Bengal was characterised by: (a) rack renting (kind rent, "Abwab" - illegal exactions - frequent enhancement of "legal" rent, etc.) and inflexible demand of rents; (b) highly skewed distribution in land ownership; (c) absentee landlordism, divorced from the risk and responsibility of production and investment; (d) a long chain of middlemen ("rent receivers") between the zamindar (land owners) and the actual tillers; (e) the insecure tenancy (non-occupancy ryots,

under ryots (tenants) and Bargadars (share croppers); (f) extra-economic pressures on the working peasantry; and (g) the land relations also provided avenues for exploitation of the peasantry by the money lender and the trader.

The possible deleterious effects of the above on agriculture were serious. The yield of rice per acre dropped from 1014 pounds in 1929-30 to 707 pounds in 1945-46. In 1946, there were only a little over 4 million ploughs 30 million acres of cultivated land i.e., one plough for about 8 acres. Most of these were wooden ploughs, the number of iron ploughs being only 6000. There were only 52 tractors in the whole of Bengal and the use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides and irrigation pumps was limited to a few government demonstration farms. (Sen, B., 1948 : p.289-92).

However in addition to the internal drainage, such land relations were responsible also for the "external" drainage of the economy. In lieu of the concessions obtained, the new landed aristocracy helped the consolidation of the British "Law and Order" throughout the country, and this in turn, provided the real basis for the systematic plunder of the country through (a) unequal trade; (b) repatriation of super profits by foreign capital invested in India; (c) "home charges" i.e., expenditure incurred in England by the Secretary of State for India on behalf of the Indian Government; and (d) remittance to England of a part of the salaries, income and savings of the British employed in India (Chandra, 1966 : 649-53).

42. Kamal Siddique, op. cit., p. 93-94.
II.6 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF AGRICULTURAL BACKWARDNESS

The agricultural backwardness of Bengal was accompanied by six important features:

i) land monopolisation by big landowners;
ii) growth of cash crops, especially jute;
iii) alarming growth of intermediaries;
iv) destruction of rural industries and handicrafts;

43. R. Ulyanovsky quotes Baden-Powell to state that almost all land in Bengal was monopolised by big landlords. op. cit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area in acres</th>
<th>Number of Estates</th>
<th>Average Area in acres</th>
<th>Total Area million acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 500</td>
<td>85,500</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 to 20000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20,000</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

96,000 41.0

44. Source: R. Ulyanovsky, op. cit., p. 54. (Quoted from B.H. Baden-Powell, op. cit.)

Table 2.4
Production of Jute

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production size (Mlns)</th>
<th>Growth of population%</th>
<th>Employed in Agri.</th>
<th>Employed in Indus.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1828-1833</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833-1838</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838-1843</td>
<td>11,700</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843-1848</td>
<td>23,800</td>
<td>+7.7</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853-1858</td>
<td>71,000</td>
<td>+8.0</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-1868</td>
<td>185,800</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2.5
Population Movement in Bengal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population size (Mlns)</th>
<th>Growth of population%</th>
<th>Employed in Agri.</th>
<th>Employed in Indus.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>+6.7</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>+7.5</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>+7.7</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>+8.0</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>+2.9</td>
<td>77.3</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

v) growth of sharecropping tenants; and
vi) growth of landless agricultural labourers.

Many efforts were made by the alien authority to estimate acreage under cultivation and yield rate per acre. However, "the officially published data on acreage under cultivation are mostly underestimates and those yield per acre over estimates". In order to remedy the situation various steps were taken by the provincial authority. It became very urgent after the devastating famine in 1943. Among steps taken, "the most important of these was the plot to plot enumeration of 1944-45 conducted under the supervision of the then Development Commissioner, A.H.M. Ishaque." The enumeration was conducted for the success of "the grow more food campaign", to get a clear picture about the pattern of land use in Bengal. Statistics available from this Report are the most reliable and detailed of their kind in the whole of the subcontinent." Now the Report is known as the famous Ishaque Report. The Report gave a shock to the then ruling and dominant landlords of Bengal. After the publication of the Report two important changes occurred in the agrarian scene of Bengal: First, the famous Tebhaga Movement; second, the introduction of the Bengal Bargadars Temporary

48. Ibid., p. 23.
49. Ibid., p. 23.
Regulation Bill. The Bill "was published in the Calcutta Gazette on 22 January 1947". After the Floud Commission Report in 1940, the Ishaque Report is the important one in Bengal agricultural history. Both the Reports brought out the important trends in agriculture and clearly delineated the detrimental factors that ruining the peasantry of Bengal by low or stagnated productivity almost two decades, precisely from 1930-31 to 1944-45.

Analysing the data in Table 2.6 of Index of per capita all crop output in the quinquennia (1920-21 to 1922-23 = 100) we can see the emerging trends in productivity in various regions of undivided Bengal.

Table 2.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1920-24</th>
<th>1925-29</th>
<th>1930-34</th>
<th>1935-39</th>
<th>1940-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Bengal</td>
<td>98(98)</td>
<td>100(96)</td>
<td>100(96)</td>
<td>100(96)</td>
<td>101(85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>99(99)</td>
<td>100(97)</td>
<td>103(101)</td>
<td>98(97)</td>
<td>121(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>91(91)</td>
<td>77(74)</td>
<td>81(78)</td>
<td>79(77)</td>
<td>72(59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>100(100)</td>
<td>112(105)</td>
<td>119(112)</td>
<td>119(112)</td>
<td>126(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>100(100)</td>
<td>108(107)</td>
<td>106(102)</td>
<td>110(107)</td>
<td>102(91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>97(97)</td>
<td>89(86)</td>
<td>79(77)</td>
<td>75(74)</td>
<td>74(64)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Estimates based on the revised series are shown within brackets.


Here the emerging picture clearly spells out the fact that except certain regions the level of per capita crop production and its trend in the quinquennial periods remained more or less stagnant. Even the revised series do not make the trend much noticeable. In the quinquennial periods of 1925-29, 1930-34 and 1935-39 the level of per capita crop production and quinquennial trend were the same. During the last quinquennial period of 1940-44 (in this Table) there was little change in all Bengal case. However, the differences between per capita crop production in the same quinquennial period was quite marked.

As a region Presidency Division did not show significant change in the level of per capita crop production and its trend in the quinquennial periods between 1920-1939. But in the quinquennial periods of 1940-44 there was a sudden rise in the level of per capita crop production. In spite of regional change the all Bengal phenomenon was stagnated one. The disparity in regional level might be on account of several causes, like: improvement in productive techniques, price effect, favourable or unfavourable agro-climatic conditions, etc. However, agro-climatic conditions had been by far the most important factor in regional disparity. Another picture emerges from the Table is that during the great depression years level of per capita crop production did not fall or rise in All Bengal context, which clearly points out that production had been stagnant since 1920-21 to 1944-45. It rather declined during the last years.
Therefore, "the trends of crop output per capita in the quinquennial periods reveal an important aspects of the agricultural economy of the province. The volume of per capita crop production seems to have remained more or less constant, at the level of the base period, in all the successive quinquennia. Evidently, this implies that the rate of growth in crop production and population was the same for all the periods. The same balance, though at a lightly lower level than in the lease period, is noticed in the revised figures for the year 1939-40. Then, as expected, the balance is lost during the last five years when per capita all crop output shows a decline of 15 per cent from the level of the base period."

The declining productivity during the last five years brought about havoc on the economy of Bengal; and the devastating famine of 1943 was one of the disastrous consequences. The famine, however, was not only on account of declining productivity, but other factors were also greatly responsible such as the exploitative pattern of land relations existing during that period. Therefore, a slight distraction from the subsistence production would led to a terrible crisis accentuated by the land and its product controlling agencies. With the increase in population though total production increased on account of extensive cultivation, but per capita crop production did not increase. The reasons behind this has been dealt later in this study.

52. M. Mufakhural Islam, op.cit., p. 52.
Increasing population and declining per capita food availability has been amply evidenced by Table 2.7 given below:

During this period food production remained stagnant as against the annual growth of 0.8 per cent in population. Index of food crop output and index of per capita food production in the quinquennia (revised series) give more clear picture of the situation.

Table 2.7
Trends in Food Crop Output: 1820-46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Unrevised Series</th>
<th>Revised Series</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage Distribution of output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Bengal</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-1.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

54. Ibid.
Table 2.8

Index of Food Crop Output in the Quinquennia

(1920-21 to 1822-23 = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>1920-24</th>
<th>1925-29</th>
<th>1930-34</th>
<th>1935-39</th>
<th>1840-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Bengal</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>106(91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>139(116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83(68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>111(82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>110(103)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85(78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Revised Estimates are shown in brackets.

Table 2.9

Index of Per Capita Food Production in the Quinquennia

(1920-21 to 1822-23 = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>1920-24</th>
<th>1925-29</th>
<th>1930-34</th>
<th>1935-39</th>
<th>1840-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Bengal</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>89(76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>110(92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>71(58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>102(81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>82(86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65(58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in Brackets refer to the revised series.

During this period production of food stagnated and population went on growing at an alarming rate. Extensive cultivation could not be undertaken any more as land that could be cultivated had greatly dwindled.

56. Ibid.
Two points clearly emerge from such a situation: "Firstly, Bengal became a net importer of rice at least from the beginning of the 1930s. Secondly, the quantity of net imports did not, however, constitute a significant proportion of the total available food crops. Rice was the most important food crop. Therefore, on the basis of the available data it may be safely concluded that net external supply did not significantly contribute towards narrowing the gap between the supply of foodgrains and the growth of population."

Before looking into the demand side of the economy of Bengal it is necessary to see the trends of cash crop in the quinquennia.

Table 2.10
Index of Cash Crop Output in the Quinquennia
(1920-21 TO 1922-23 = 100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>1920-24</th>
<th>1925-29</th>
<th>1930-34</th>
<th>1935-39</th>
<th>1940-44</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Bengal</td>
<td>116(120)</td>
<td>168(166)</td>
<td>158(151)</td>
<td>167(164)</td>
<td>176(155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidency</td>
<td>120(122)</td>
<td>209(198)</td>
<td>169(159)</td>
<td>192(188)</td>
<td>273(230)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>82(81)</td>
<td>105(103)</td>
<td>116(113)</td>
<td>104(102)</td>
<td>111(105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajshahi</td>
<td>112(115)</td>
<td>157(154)</td>
<td>155(147)</td>
<td>163(156)</td>
<td>184(173)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacca</td>
<td>121(125)</td>
<td>173(169)</td>
<td>163(153)</td>
<td>178(169)</td>
<td>158(125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittagong</td>
<td>126(127)</td>
<td>205(180)</td>
<td>160(151)</td>
<td>173(171)</td>
<td>172(142)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in Brackets refer to the revised series.

58. Ibid.
The quinquennial periods show two distinct trends: during the first 10 years the rate of expansion was accelerating and slowing down during the last ten. "This drop in the rate of expansion was due to the end of substitution between food and cash crops. Secondly, ... changes in market conditions seem to have been the most important factor in determining the trends in the different quinquennia. Thus, it is clear that while there was a marked acceleration in production during the second period when prices were at their highest level before 1940, the depression years witnessed a considerable drop. Expansion started once again in the fourth period with the beginning of the post depression recovery in prices. It may, however, be pointed out here that these shifts were mainly due to shifts in the production of jute, which was the most important crop in this category.

During this period, in sharp contrast to the change in per capita food crop output, per capita cash crop production increased considerably ...". "As to the rate of change, the quinquennial periods fall into three unequal parts. During the first 10 years per capita output was improving at an increasing rate. This followed by a marked drop during the third quinquennium. The fourth period witnessed some improvement but the trend reversed again during the last five years." 58

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59. M. Mufakhural Islam, op.cit., P.83-64
II.7 SUMMARY

It could be concluded from the discussion of the preceding chapter that:

i) Before the partition the land system of Bengal evolved through different historical periods distinguished by varying degrees of land revenue and system of collection in four phases, namely, (1) Indus civilisation, (2) Aryan civilisation, (both could be included in ancient period), (3) Sultanate and Mughal Periods (medieval period), and (4) British Colonial period.

ii) Collection of revenue was the prime objective of the land policy of the ruling classes;

iii) Historically, the process of collection of revenue was systematised in course of time and the share due to state went on increasing;

iv) Differentiation among peasantry became sharper in the course of time.

v) Far reaching changes took place with the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793. The change could "be set out in the following points:

- Replacement of the old feudal aristocracy by new landlords from among the merchant bourgeoisie, tax farmers".60

vi) Rural industries were destroyed and dependency on land grew enormously.

vii) Commercialisation set the process of alienation of land from the landowners.

viii) Exploitation of the peasantry by the parasitic intermediary interests went on increasing.

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60. Rostislav Ulyanovsky, op. cit., p. 27.