In the foregoing chapters we have tried to make a comprehensive and indepth study of the agrarian relations of Kamrup under colonial rule. In the official records Kamrup has been described as a rayotary district. But in practice it was not so. We thus deal with the land system of the district. Side by side, we have studied various problems associated with this system with reference to the reforms initiated by the British government and followed by the post independence government of the state. We have also tried to make an assessment of the grievances of the peasants, which was the outcome of the drawbacks of the land system. Formulation of different legislations both before and after independence was the outcome of the peasant reactions. We have tried to point out various drawbacks and loopholes of the agrarian legislations. Now we
have come to the conclusion of our study. It is, therefore, necessary to state the major conclusions.

Landlordism or *Zamindary* system which originated in feudalism in the middle ages, developed in Kamrup before the rise of the Koch power. The frequent change of political master of Kamrup gave somewhat peculiarity in her land system. The existence of the Mughal regime made landlordism part and parcel of the land system in the district. The advent of the Ahom administration in Kamrup did not change the Mughal system. It is found that during the Ahom period, the land relation in Kamrup was basically an admixture of the Mughal and Ahom systems. The whole society was divided into two main classes viz., upper and lower. The upper class consisting of nobles, officials, priests and Brahmins enjoyed heritable and transferable rights over land. On the otherhand, the lower class, i.e., the peasants, *bhakats, paiks* etc. had no heritable and transferable rights to land. The Ahom officials may be termed as nobles since they were gifted with big or small estates according to their status.

British government took some measures to improve the land revenue administration. Thus it passed the Settlement Rules of 1870, the Assam Land and Revenue Regulations, 1886, and the Tenancy Acts. But
behind all such reform measures as well as other administrative arrangements, there was the motive for the enhancement of economic and political benefit. As a result, the condition of the common mass went from bad to worse which in turn benefited the government and the petty Zamindars. It is worthmentioning that the landlords, referred to, may be rightly called the petty Zamindars while compared with the Zamindars under permanent settlement of 1792.

There is no doubt that the agrarian economy of Kamrup as well as Assam was basically dependent on the well settled landlordism during the British period. Though permanent settlement system did not cover the whole state and rayotary system prevailed in most part of the state, there was every possibility to exploit the peasantry under the later system. In fact the provision of subletting proved very advantageous to the landlords. The history and origin of the lakhiraj and nisfkhiraj tenures show as to how the tenancies were beneficial to the landlords at the cost of the rayots. It is found that in 1893 lakhiraj and nisfkhiraj estates of Kamrup covered an area of 57.67 sq. miles and 239.70 sq. miles respectively. As a matter of fact the whole of lakhiraj and nisfkhiraj land was under the authority of different religious institutions and individuals who represented the non-cultivating class. A large number of rayots had to act under the guidance
and supervision of this class. It is true that as time passed off, the areas of lakhiraj and nisfkhiraj tenures were reduced, which resulted in the enhancement of khiraj areas. But this does not signify that the rayots got relief from the stress of landlordism. Because, non-cultivating landowners were not uncommon in the khiraj sector. It appears that huge amount of land was kept under sub-tenancy. Subletting was almost equally available in the three sectors viz., lakhiraj, nisfkhiraj and khiraj. The result was that the number of tenants who incourse of time turned to be tenants-at-will was considerably increased. And the whole social structure was found to have engrossed in complicated unequal economic differentiation. As stated earlier, the land system of Kamrup as well as other rayotary districts of Assam has been standing as a long rope. In its one end there were the owner cultivators and in the other the landless labourers. Between these two extremes there were the rayots, under-rayots, share croppers, etc. The land owners formed a class by themselves. They got the favourable treatment from the government. The lakhirajdars, nisfkhirajdars and most of the khirajdars like mauzadars, chamuadars, khatdars and doubledars were the constituents of this class. They consumed the cream of the so-called social-justice under the alien government. And in the agrarian economy where land forms the base of the super structure of the society this landed gentry held a superior position and status.
In the study it is found that the land tenure system, which was prevalent in the district, was unfavourable to the positions of the rayots and under-rayots. We mentioned it earlier that paik system was not widely prevalent in Kamrup, as in other parts of the state. It is found that during Ahom rule the paiks preferred for services in the temples and satras. However during the British rule, paik system came to an end consequent to the abolition of slavery and the introduction of cash rent.

At the earlier stage of the British rule, the relations between the landlords and the tenants were perhaps satisfactory. Poverty and ignorance compelled the tenantry to be satisfied under the stress of landlordism. However, it is also equally true that the longstanding disturbances during the last years of Ahom rule as well as the fear of compulsory military service made most of the peasants of the district enthusiastic to live under the umbrella of protection of the so-called landlordism on different pretexts. As a result, peasants' discontentment against the landlords was rare throughout the nineteenth century. But towards the second quarter of the twentieth century the position had undergone a change. In the last decade of 19th century the peasants in the rayotary sector were subjected to payment of enhanced rent which caused peasant revolt against the alien government. Of course such rebellion was
quelled by the administration. Afterwards, in the changed circumstance the tenants being inspired by the leftist ideologists became aware of the corruption and mismanagement of the landed aristocrats who misused the privilege of government sympathy. It is true that National Congress party at least literarily, followed a policy of land reform. But it did not satisfy the tenants who were seriously attracted by the revolutionary activities of the left parties, particularly the Revolutionary Communist Party. As a result some parts of Assam inclusive of the district of Kamrup were involved in the revolutionary atmosphere during the period from 1940 to 1960. Thus agrarian trouble of greater dimension was seen in different parts of the district. It is no denying the fact that the tenants of different areas of the district were not organised in a body. However, the tenants of different areas could bring forth the organised resistance against the landlords. As for example, the peasants organised under red flag resistance movement against inexorbittant Adhis, demanded land reforms etc. In North Kamrup area, there was an organised movement under the red flag for encroachment on government reserve land. The poor landless peasants under the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party encroached the reserves of Tapa, Bamunbari, Phularguri, Matikhowa, Theka, Tulsibury etc. Likewise in South Kamrup, peasants discontentment found expression in various revolutionary forms.
It seems that in the face of the incessant pressures of the revolutionaries the British government made several Regulations and Acts. It even passed tenancy legislations. But what is important for qualitative development of the society is that there should be a proper political enthusiasm. Such enthusiasm could not be expected from a foreign government. Because Acts and Regulations remain dead letter unless they are effectively enforced. As has been referred to, the immediate object of the alien government was to acquire more and more wealth from the economy of the state. In its process of squeezing wealth, it never bothered about social justice. That is the reason as to why the British government offered favourable treatment to the well-settled landlordism. Such step fulfilled its double objects. In fact, with the landlords, the British created a supporting base of the alien rule and were apathetic to the grievances of the peasants. It is to note here that land reform measures were adopted even after independence. It seems that the nationalist government in spite of its socialist rhetoric rarely went against the interests of the landlords. The secret behind this was that the Congress Party which formed the government after independence was increasingly becoming a party of vested interests i.e., the landlord capitalists. As a result, in spite of various ideal legislations the real objectives were not achieved. Because, the real
test of success of any legislation depends upon its actual implementation. The Congress Government of post independence period lacked this will power.

Outwardly it seems that following the tune of the National Congress Party the Assam Pradesh Congress Party also stood for establishment of socialism, the first step of which was the land reform. But the land reform measures of the government can be judged by the following two points-

(i) Firstly, the extent to which the land reform measure works in promoting economic development;

(ii) Secondly, the extent to which it serves the objects of social justice by offering permanent rights of the cultivators to the land.

But it is an irony that the government of post independence period failed to carryout meaningful measures in this direction. The debate in the Assam Assembly bears testimony to it. For instance, Sri Gauri Shankar Bhattacharyya pointed out on the floor of the Assam Assembly on 23rd February, 1974 that in spite of the land reform measures initiated by the government, every year the number of landless peasants was increasing and according to governments own estimate, over 30% of the people were landless by that time. He further argued that in spite of the various Acts,
poverty was on the increase; about one fourth of the population were below the poverty line before 1972. In its field report, the Law Research Institute, (Gauhati) observes that the present agrarian system lacked proper agricultural efficiency, because the tenant has little interests to increase his output since the larger share goes to the landlords. The Land Reform Commission of 1981 expressed identical views. All these tend to believe that even after the country achieved her independence, land reforms measures failed to yield expected result. It is found that almost in every scheme achievement was far below the target and implementation was slow and ineffective.

In fine, it may be noted that landlordism was prevalent in the district of Kamrup in various forms as much as it was under the colonial rule. It is justified to call the landlords of Kamrup as petty Zamindars. It is an irony that landlordism has not yet been wiped out from our country, while it ceased to exist even in Ireland where it originated. Thus, further land reform on wider scale, viz., lowering of ceiling limits, formulation of land committees in Panchayat levels, proper enforcement of laws and adequate agricultural assistance to the poor farmers are of vital importance for the stability of the agrarian relations in the district.

*******