CHAPTER II

PLEA FOR A WELFARE GOVERNMENT

Present-day social scientists are touched by the appalling reality of the nineteenth century eastern India with its rice economy in the grip of a crisis, its proverbial poverty. But the question arises: why this economic decline? Is it something inherent in the value system and lifestyle of the people? Or is it due to her socio-economic institutions or is it a legacy of foreign domination of the south-west Bengal, Bankura and Midnapore in particular, from the past generations? The answer to this probing could be found in two models: one makes the British rule responsible for her colonial exploitation and the other tends to define her economic backwardness in terms of a continuous process of degeneration starting from the decline of the Imperial Ganga rule in Orissa and that of the Senas in Bengal since the thirteenth century as parts of the region belonged to both the regimes.

This historical probing started since the last century and some made Pax Britannica responsible for the economic misery of India. South-west Bengal, as an integral part of India, came under the same line of research. While British rule shouldered the main burden of the blame, exploitation by the industrial capital which wanted to make India her satellite, cannot escape the scrutinising eyes of thinkers like Karl Marx. The constant drain of wealth and surplus produce from the south-west Bengal beyond its frontier and further outside India ate the purchasing power of the people, creating a climate of inhibition to produce more commodity
for the market. Thus land and minerals remained unexplored, the vast man-power was left idle while capital formation had a stunted growth. Moreover, the phenomenon of forced emphasis on monoculture in land with the decline of diversified agriculture, concentration of population in rural areas leading to crisis in her agrarian economy, subdivision of units of holdings, withering away of village-level crafts and salt manufacture, denudation of forest for paddy cultivation without any innovative enterprise for replacing age-old tools of production, emanated from the British rule. This limitation of demand for finished goods and agrarian products leading to constraints in supply position of the commodities in the distribution network is the direct contribution of the Raj and indirect curse of the foreign rule.

Karl Marx in the mid-nineteenth century studied the economic life of India from the available literature of Parliamentary Papers, British press correspondence and the writings of Adam Smith and James Mill. He imbibed the prevalent idea of India as a nation with a rich heritage but with a stagnant economy. The mode of production remained unchanged, her social relations hindered her economic growth, her military machine and war tactics remained unchanged and India became prone to successive invasions from foreign powers. He had no idea about the golden past of India and had a firm belief in the perpetuation of the economic misery of the primary producers by her exploitative 'Varna' (caste based) hierarchy which ensured the Brahmin domination as the basis of oriental despotism leading to collapse of the defensive
mechanism of the society.

He imbibed the idea of Adam Smith who anticipated the era of industrial capitalism. Smith was averse not only to the private trade of the Company's officials, but also denounced the trade monopoly of the East India Company enjoyed in Asia, as injurious to both England and her colonies. The *laissez faire* theory inspired a new school of statesmen represented by Bright, Burke and Sheridan, who denounced with equal ferocity the Company's misrule in India. Following their arguments Karl Marx found in the Indian exploitation by the Company a phase of primitive accumulation of capital through brute force and plunder which led to the industrialisation of England. The Company's early revenue experiments and trade monopoly not only drained India of her resources but accelerated the process of pauperisation of the primary producers.

But he was more than a *laissez faire* economist. He not only denounced the exploitative tendencies of merchant capitalism but also exposed the ruthless aspect of colonialism that made possible the transition of industrial capitalism into the stage of finance capitalism. To Marx the British aristocracy wanted to enslave India, while the moneyocracy wished to plunder it and the milocracy wanted to under-sell it. To him through generations, the foreign rulers have exploited India by three departments of the government: that of finance or the plunder of the interior, that of war or the plunder of the exterior, and finally the department of public works. While the previous rulers neglected to invest money in undertakings of public utility, the Raj quickened her pace of exploitation by stepping up input in agriculture and public works.
As an indefatigable critic of British colonialism Marx clearly brought out the correlation between the agrarian crisis in India and her colonial exploitation. It is this phenomenon that imparted to this crisis an intensity which was never visualised by the 'laissez faire' economists. Marx judged the effects of British rule in India by the pauperisation of the Indian peasantry and collapse of the balance between agriculture and village-based crafts. It is this model which prompted the present author to assess the agrarian crisis in south-west Bengal, namely the two districts of Bankura and Midnapore bordering Orissa and Bihar as a case study.

But Marx was conscious of the regenerative role of the British rule in India. Fulfilling the mission of the 'white man's burden', England realised double mission in India: one destructive and the other regenerative; annihilation of the old, static Asiatic society and germination of the roots of western society in India. The purpose of the present study is to assess this destructive as well as regenerative aspects of the British rule in the south-west Bengal in the light of the Marxian model supported by the empirical data collected from the grass roots level only to ascertain to what extent the Marxian model is applicable to this case study.

The thirties of the nineteenth century formed a watershed in the history of British administration in Bankura and Midnapore. Since the consolidation of British rule in Midnapore and Burdwan in 1760, the Company's government endeavoured to work out the
paying capacity of these districts. As has been shown in the preceding chapter, while land revenue constituted two-thirds of the total receipts to the exchequer, the net collection of revenue in Midnapore and the Jungle Mahals in 1767-68 had increased by 12% compared to the last sixty years of the Muslim rule and it was further increased by 25% between 1770 and 1805. In 1799 the maximisation of revenue was temporarily stalled but it reached a new height of 50% increase after 1830 leading to enhancement of land rent of the settled peasantry. In order to ensure stability, a condition precedent to good government, they restored law and order and organised the faujdari administration by restructuring the police system and the judiciary. They devised new regulations for imposing customs and excise duties for import of consumer goods and export of salt, rice, opium and forest products of the Jungle Mahals.

One result was the introduction of the pattani system which created a hierarchy of intermediary land rent collectors and the heavy incidence of taxation led to rack-renting over the soil. This led to dispossession of the destitute peasantry and ultimately to pauperisation. Of course, they did not thereby become landless due to the tendency of desertion of forest and acculturation of vast virgin soil in the salt tracts and the adjacent jalpai lands. But the government came forward to protect the interest of the emergent middle peasantry. They introduced the Rent Act of 1859 to save them from forcible eviction by the revenue paying landed proprietors in case of default in payment of land rent so that they could take the opportunity for an agricultural expansion by
bringing the uncultivable land under the plough through the labour of the small land holder, ryots which might increase the yielding capacity of the soil. Thus the availability of virgin soil in north Bankura's mining areas and in south and south-west Midnapore's salt tracts, the migratory movement of temporary lease hold tenure-holders in expanding cultivation process being pushed out by a chain of intermediary tenure-holders from their small holdings made the process of pauperisation complete. But the tendency of depeasantisation in the sense of complete alienation from the possessory rights over land and from all cultivation processes, which was prevalent in eastern Bengal, was totally absent in the south-west Bengal in the nineteenth century. This is the hypothesis which demands a detailed study of the prevailing change in the land relationship in the south-west Bengal and has been discussed in the fourth chapter.

Naturally, the Company's emphasis was laid on rearranging the land revenue system as the main source of income for the government. But the successive land revenue settlements to find out the exact yielding capacity of land proved disastrous to the economy. Many traditional landed proprietors were thrown to the winds when their estates were parcelled out to the new entrants and speculative revenue farmers. This chaotic condition reached its climax when popular discontent manifested itself in massive protest movements already discussed in the first chapter. In this second chapter a discussion on the reform
measures of the Raj will be undertaken. The Permanent Settlement in Bengal, for that matter in the two districts of south-west Bengal, divided the agrarian population into a two-tier system: (1) Revenue paying rent receiving section and the (2) other, rent paying land holders. From 1793 to 1859 both these sectors in the society underwent mobility. One, the traditional landed proprietors gave way to subdivision of estates into numerous taluks each held by talukdars, pattanidars and rich peasantry of the middle stratum purchasing revenue paying estates through auction sales. This necessitated legislation for sales, pattani settlements. The other, the vast mass of peasantry also had its dynamics of change in agrarian relationship. Through the mechanics of property making there was the upward mobility of the segment of relatively affluent middle peasantry, below them the temporary lease-hold tenure-holders and occupancy holders who constantly endeavoured to obtain prescriptive rights over holdings and below them the non-occupancy ryots. Since 1859 legislation aimed to protect the interest of the second tier of the agrarian society. In this section an attempt will be made to exercise the extent the British Raj wanted to defend the position of the two-tier population in the agrarian economy through legislative enactments.

The Permanent Settlement ended the process of maximisation of revenue, but opened doors for the zamindars to maximise rent through pattani system and created a chain of intermediaries to ensure rent collection. This tendency of maximising rent exaction from the ryots had a crucial impact on the traditional
society, in terms of shyness of agricultural capital to take entrepreneurship for a societal change and scarcity of labour in the midst of an obvious labour surplus position. The Government pinpointed the real factor for underdevelopment as the traditional poverty which in turn emanates from the population growth. In the south-west Bengal districts, the measures adopted in the nineteenth century for amelioration of malaria mortality meant from the beginning of the twentieth century that the population graph began to move upwards. Consequently, between the two World Wars, the agricultural base of the region was finding the strain of an enormous agricultural population difficult to bear both in the decaying waste and in the fertile lands of the riverian delta round the Damodar, the Kasai and the Ganga.

According to Caird, an exhausted agriculture and an increasing population must come to a deadlock. The religious value systems, lifestyle and climatic conditions were only thought to be strengthening the constraints for an economic change in the countryside in the colonial context. Recurrent famines and drought conditions strengthened the paternalistic views of the government that the 'laissez faire' attitude of the government was to be discarded and a dominant segment of the peasantry would have to be protected from the greed of the parasitic chain of intermediary revenue farmer, landed proprietors who had physically no footing on the agrarian economy. The process of reinvestment of the agricultural revenue in works of public utility, in irrigation, road construction, opening up of educational facilities, they envisaged, would immediately create conditions in the villages for the khudkasht permanent ryots to expand cultivation machinery
to enhance the yielding capacity of the soil. In a condition of perfect competition in the agrarian environment, production increase would lead to price rise of the holdings as well as of the output and thus push out the temporary lease-hold tenure-holder pahí-kasht ryots and peasantry with inferior title in their small holdings at the periphery of the village and would force them to open up avenues for new cultivation by denuding forest in the Jungle Mahals of north Midnapore and Bankura and compelling them to bring marshy lands in the abandoned salt mahals of south, south-east Midnapore for permanent cultivation. In this process also the big ryots, termed as middle peasantry, with alternative means of income from towns and protected by the British legislation, would invest their input through the process of consolidation of their holdings by displacing the small landholders from ownership and thereby compelling the vast mass of agricultural workers to open up new avenues of cultivation process and maximised yielding capacity of the soil through seasonal migratory movements. This premise would again be examined in the fourth chapter in connexion with a detailed discussion on the problem of land alienation in the south-west Bengal in the nineteenth century with a view to discuss the change in the land relationship of the twentieth century.

In the eighteenth century in the Permanent Settlement era the Government's emphasis was on the revenue-paying and rent-receiving zamindars whom they regarded as the land captains and entrepreneurs to accomplish agrarian revolution, an idea which was evident in the contemporary England. But in the nineteenth century the
British Raj obviously put emphasis on the middle peasantry who had the tendency of upward mobility in the society as dominant caste groups in the agrarian society, like the mahisyas of south Midnapore, mahatos of north Midnapore and Bankura who took the entrepreneurial risk for developing yielding capacity of the soil. It was, in fact, for them that the Government undertook works of public utility. Moreover, orthodox economists envisaged public works as part of the necessary infrastructure of a free exchange economy to be built up to give full scope to the natural forces of economic development. Of public works the Raj considered irrigation as vital for agricultural improvement when neither the zamindars nor the small tenure-holders could undertake giant capital investment projects and hence the state intervention in irrigation was an imperative necessity. The feeling was widespread in the official circle that the indigenous agricultural methods were out dated and the modernisation of agricultural machinery would improve the skill of the peasantry and injection of scientific farming would ultimately parcolate to the lowest strata. The ideas of Hume, Campbell and Temple who after Mayo took a keen interest in scientific farming primarily stressed the local needs and tended to argue in favour of a closer and more effective participation of the government in opening up model farms for the education of that segment of the peasantry who could take the entrepreneurship to open its prospects in developed cultivation, enhance yielding capacity of the soil and prepare agriculture for enhancement of market-oriented production, necessary for the interest of the free traders of England.
The Charter Act of 1833 brought two important decisions for the Company's government in the south-west Bengal. First, the Permanent Settlement of land revenue system was to be made for ensuring a fixed income after the abolition of trade monopoly in the districts of Bankura and Midnapore. Second, to enhance the revenue paying capacity of the region, improvement in agricultural production was a necessity. To ensure the maximisation of revenue by augmenting agricultural resources, the Company's government undertook works of public utility which alone could sustain the industrial output of the imperial metropolis in England. Historians may, however, debate on whether the works of irrigation, embankments, developing means of transport and communication, educational developments and measures of health and sanitation were undertaken in response to the Benthamite principle of utilitarianism alone or were the manifestations of exploitative measures of the Raj. But there is no denying the fact that the shrewd imperial motive of calculating the debit and credit sides of an investment helped to prompt the Company's Government to undertake works of public utility since the thirties of the nineteenth century. As there was no infrastructure for an industrial development of the province, land alone could ensure a stable income. Hence the modernisation measures. These measures and their impact on the economy would be discussed to explain why no perceptible economic growth in the economy could take place.

The measures in the shape of modernising agriculture can be discussed under the following sections to show how they made
no dent on the creeping decline of the economy:

i) Law and order administration.

ii) Introduction of pattani system and emergence of a chain of intermediary revenue-farmer taluk-holders,

iii) Protection of ryots' interest from ejectment by the talukdars in Rent Act of 1859 ensuring emergence of a section of relatively affluent middle peasantry. This rent legislation paved the way for the B.T. Act of 1885 which was subsequently amended in 1928 and 1938.

iv) Development of (a) irrigation facilities which helped the middle peasantry to fill up the vacuum in village power structure, and (b) construction of embankments facilitating a developed communication network following a paternalistic policy,

v) Improvement in internal communication system through roads, water routes and railways,

vi) Encouragement to scientific farming and attempts to introduce commercial agriculture, and

vii) Conservation of forest resources.

1. Administrative measures for law and order system:

South-west Midnapore including Orissa was annexed to the British territories by the Treaty of Deoghar on December 15, 1803. Within thirty years the Chhotanagar region also came under the sway of the Company's Government. The financial gap between total receipts and war expenditure could be bridged by enhancing
revenue through direct collection by the government tahasildars. They also wanted to have direct access to the primary producers. New conquests leading to the expansion of south-west, no doubt, increased state revenue but the experiment had a disastrous consequence on the cultivators causing sporadic revolts. In 1829 by regulation I a bigger unit, i.e., division (totalizing 20 in number), was created consisting of some districts. Each division was under a Commissioner in order to facilitate criminal justice and revenue collection. Thus the divisional heads were to supervise the work of the district authorities. G. Stockwell was the first Divisional Commissioner of the 19th division in Cuttack which included Midnapore, while the Jungle Mahals including the adjoining districts of Bankura, Burdwan and Birbhum came under the Burdwan division.

At the initial stage the Collectors acted as postmasters and Residents of the Company. In the nineteenth century they became the district resource managers as they were responsible for revenue collection and assessment. By 1790 it was found that the Collector had become the bottleneck in the administrative machinery. Naturally the need was felt to exercise control over his work. By Regulation IX of 1833 the post of deputy collector was created but no provision for deputy magistrate was made.

The salt agents of Tamlook, Hijli, Balasore and Puri also usurped the powers and functions of the Collectors. The salt agency of Hijli formed a separate collectorate up to 1836 and
was then annexed to Midnapore. Later in 1852 H.V. Bayley, Collector of Midnapore, recommended its separation and proposed that the salt agent of Hijli should be appointed Collector and Magistrate. But for investment and expenditure the salt agents of Hijli and Tamlook were dependent on the district Collectors of Midnapore and indirectly on the Commissioner of the 19th Division. As a possible check to magisterial oppression, by Regulation II of 1793 the Board of Revenue and Collectors were deprived of all judicial powers, where as the judges were appointed to sit in the district diwani adalats. They were named as judge magistrates, appointed mostly from ex-Collectors. In many cases, clash of opinion arising out of differences of interest between the collectors and judges prevented concerted action to check lawless elements in the countryside. Since 1793 the judges were to safeguard new property relations and also to try sessions cases. They were even empowered to arrest criminals. The judges, to the dismay of the higher authorities in the Presidency, simply could not cope with the enormous number of suits.

Therefore, another set of officers was requisitioned to set the ball of justice rolling. Besides the judge magistrate, registrars, then all Englishmen, could decide cases upto Rs.200/-. The Government also thought out the principle of filling up the civil posts with Indian Civil servants. In 1831 sadr amins were appointed from amongst Indians for reasons of economy and to satisfy the rising ambitions of the middle-class intelligentsia.
In 1831 provincial courts of appeal were abolished. Indian judicial officers were entrusted to try suits up to Rs. 3000/-. Sadr amins to try suits up to Rs. 1000/-, while Indian registrars were also appointed. To ensure obedience and honesty it was decided to appoint qualified sons of the government's Indian Civil Servants after their demise.²⁶

But the thirties of the nineteenth century witnessed increased magisterial responsibility of the district collectors. In 1794 the judges could refer revenue accounts for the collector's enquiry. In 1812 the judges could ask the Collectors for report on cases of distraint of property. In 1821 the Governor-General in Council empowered some of the Collectors with the functions of magistrates. In 1822 the collectors' judicial authority increased in cases of land revenue and rents payable by both talukdars and ryots. Under Regulation VIII of 1794 and V of 1812 the revenue paying landlord, before ejecting the rent paying tenant, was to issue notification against a défaulter ryot. The collectors, on enquiry, naturally favoured the landlords' claims and the judiciary invariably accepted the Collector's findings. The increase in civil suits arising out of agrarian disturbances from demands for occupancy rights, prescriptive rights over holdings and fair rents ultimately prepared the ground for safeguarding the tenants' interests through legislative enactments in 1859 and 1885.

By 1833 the Collectors were responsible for law, order and administration of criminal justice. As the Chief Executive Officer
the construction works within the districts as well as arrangements for marching military contingents were made by the Collectors.

With the growth of the magisterial power of the district collector the period witnessed the break down of time-honoured village organs to maintain local peace. Of course, excessive clannishness and tribal leanings of the cultivators were well on the way to dissolution under the impact of the new rule of law. The Santali organisation as depicted by F.W. Robertson, Settlement Officer during 1917-24 in the district of Bankura, afforded a complete picture of the village community in decline. At the head of the community stood the headmen, the mandal, manjhi or prachan as he was variously called. When a Santal community settled on the land, the mandal or the headman used to negotiate with the landed proprietors the terms of land settlements, for clearance and cultivation of waste lands and forest tracts. The mandal then distributed the land among his co-villagers, making them responsible for the rent according to the area settled. The mandal and his khan or official used to held rent-free land as the leader of the community. So in origin the mandal, though responsible for the joint rent of the village, was a co-ryot with the community but not a tenure-holder over them. The dikus or foreigners, who were mostly Bengalee middle class people or Utkal Brahmins and had migrated from the west, originally came since the sixteenth century as priests, teachers, astrologers and traders of religious commodities, then turned into money-lenders and ultimately got a hold over the lands made cultivable by the aboriginal Santal community.
The original producers then lost their ownership over land and turned into share-croppers of the dikus. The large-scale but slow immigration of these foreigners through generations was one factor behind the gradual decay of the mandali system and the recorded instances bear ample proof that the village community was very often in open clash with the diku and his armed retainers. Village Panchyats were proposed to be revived with the nominated five members to assess from the local people the rates to be realised for payment to the chowkidars who were to be appointed by the collector for preserving village peace. Gradually the rugged lawless tribes and 'ryots' under their caste leaders or mandals, who were often land holders, became habituated to seek 'English justice' instead of lawless fighting. They were often guided by the newly emerged middlemen or touts in the courts to seek solution of their property disputes.

But the increased magisterial power of the Collectors did not, at any rate, ensure continuity of peace in the countryside. The principle of 'local police, local responsibility' was abandoned and the convention for making zamindars responsible for keeping law and order remained in cold storage. Even the zamindari chowkidars stationed on the river banks were ordered to be abandoned.

Half-hearted measures of the Calcutta authorities since 1785 to ensure order by maintaining some inadequate police stations
under thanadars proved ineffective. The landlords were ordered to disband their paik militia and urged to cooperate with the darogahas. The psychological complex, arising out of superior position of the alien thanadars coming from outside, made the zamindars hostile towards them. Moreover, corruption in the thanadar system due to poor pay and other prevailing sources of illegal gratifications rendered the project ineffective. 32

The maxim that 'there cannot be robbery without receivers of robbed property' was true, as gang robbery was linked with the higher class people like the money-lenders and landlords' officials. The Permanent Settlement, however, recognised the zamindar's ownership over cultivable lands, they were negated usufructuary rights. As such with the fixation of land revenue in the Permanent Settlement for ever all avenues for imposing extra imposts were closed. But the incidence of numerous kinds of taxation in kind and service fell on the particular type of primary producers with prescriptive rights over lands.

Moreover, the immigration of agricultural communities to the peripheral areas, the breakdown of the joint family system, drought, flood and other unforeseen calamities, together with the gradual pauperisation of the lowest rungs of the agricultural community, prepared the ground for the fertilisation of crime in villages. Lastly, with the gradual organisation of the social set-up,
a new middle class closely related to the relatively affluent middle peasantry was emerging from the rural background. The pleaders, zamindar's amlas, village crop-dealers, who were often money-lenders originally thrown out of the agricultural sector but subsisting mainly on it, ushered in a new combined urban-rural money economy unnoticed before. They often gave incentive to gang-robbery and were responsible for the spread of corruption. 33

Many steps taken to quell the countryside disturbances could not improve the picture of law and order system as half-hearted measures to adopt the thanadary system proved ineffective. Attempts made to revive the village panchayats could not last long. The fighting between two rival zamindars along with their amlas under the constant vigilance of the darogahs completely vitiated the situation. 34

Secondly, the agrarian disturbances even, in the shape of gang robbery could not be checked by sending army to the lawless areas as late as 1812. Even then, that the military detachments deputed to protect the settled ryots did commit excesses, was illustrated by contemporary records. 35

Under the circumstances, corruption, combined with excessive temptations, was the necessary fruit of a totally inadequate salary. The solution was thought to be the payment of fair remuneration and dismissal of dishonest officers. The collectors, salt agents and other civil servants were paid a monthly commission to keep them honest. Checks were imposed
to maintain official integrity and they were asked not to take any bribe or illegal gratification from the Indians even on the occasion of any religious ceremony. By Regulation X of 1819 the officers employed in the salt department were prohibited to carry on private trade in salt, except in special circumstances and with prior permission of the government. But corruption in the Indian official rank remained a constant headache to the early British rulers and nothing was done to strengthen their moral integrity. The different types of darogahs were paid Rs. 25/- to 30/-, sezawal Rs. 10/-, zelladar Rs. 5/-, kothi-mohras Rs. 3/-, peon with sezawal Rs. 2.50. The unwillingness of rulers to learn the vernacular and to attempt to stamp out corruption had its repercussions in the spread of countrywide offences. The system of selling stamp papers by authorised vendors gave rise to abuses and elaborate steps taken to prevent misappropriation of public money also proved useless.

The post of superintendent of Police for Bengal districts was created under Bengal Police Act, 1861 and the first incumbent joined at Bankura the same year. In 1872, the population of Bankura was 5,26,772 with conviction figure of that particular year being 1,210, that in 1868 there were only 210 convictions against 779 prosecutions with percentage of convictions to prosecution standing at 1:27. Thus restoration of law and order system in the villages for a period of one hundred years in the south-west Bengal accelerated the process of property making by the segment of the indigenous middle peasantry and this explains
the leadership formation in the changing agrarian society during the freedom movement of the twentieth century.

In the rural areas village resistance groups acted as self-help organisations and provided supplementary assistance to the regular police force, particularly in inaccessible parts. A regular rural police force existed in the form of chowkidars and dafadars maintained by the village panchayats. Chowkidars, numbering 987, were first appointed in Bankura in 1893 and the number subsequently increased to 1584 within a century.\(^3^9\) The activities of this ring of the rural police and town police under municipality were performed side by side. In Bankura and Midnapore districts superintendents of police were given the title of ex-officio additional superintendents of railway police and command of G.R.P. force, employed for enforcement of the provisions of the Indian Railways Act, 1890.\(^4^0\)

From the Administration Report of 1890-91 it is found that a special constabulary was raised in these two districts in 1890 to meet the anti-Missionary riots\(^4^1\) under section 17 of Act V of 1861.

2. Introduction of Pattani system and maximisation of revenue:

The year 1793 marks a significant landmark since the Permanent Land Settlement was introduced in Bengal. Consequently, ownership of zamindars over the soil was indirectly recognised
although this settlement was marked by over-assessment and the civil expenditure continued to be enhanced in the period following the Permanent Settlement as shown in the table below.

Table No. 7
Estimate of the increasing income and expenditure of revenue of different years in the nineteenth century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Civil Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1835-36</td>
<td>40,670</td>
<td>8,006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-51</td>
<td>50,736</td>
<td>17,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860-61</td>
<td>60,072</td>
<td>19,426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-71</td>
<td>69,130</td>
<td>25,441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Remission of revenue on the plea of loss by any natural calamity was not allowed. In case of default of payment the zamindari estate was sold in liquidation of the balance. Thus the landed proprietors got a free hand to evict a tenure-holder in case of his failure to remit the land rent on the plea of natural calamity. 42

By Regulation VII of 1799, the zamindar's authority over the ryots for the purpose of regular collection of rent was enhanced but the rigidity of the Sale Law was liberalised. In 1802, proposals were made for the resumption of the whole
of the land revenue by the payment of a lump capital sum. The modification of the sale law under Regulation XV of 1814 empowered the collector to advertise the sale of the defaulters' land with the previous sanction of the Board of Revenue. By 1822, the enforcement of sale law became less frequent. The growth of population led to competition among the ryots for land-holdings, resulting in enhancement of rent by the zamindars. The modifications of the sale laws in 1822, 1824 and 1830 were marked by increased power conferred on the collector to sell land subject to the approval of the Commissioners (appointed under Regulation I of 1829). Regulation XII of 1841 abolished levy of interest and penalty upon the zamindars' arrears and allowed appeal to the Commissioner against sale (under the Charter Act of 1833).

The net result of the legislative enactments of sale laws was that the zamindar could not legally exercise any right to impose extra imposts on the ryots but still oppression and exploitation by the amlas and sardar tahasildars of zamindars reached its peak in this period. In order to counterbalance the increasing pressure of rent the permanent ryots took to the leadership of the vast mass of occupancy peasantry and landless peasantry, initiating cultivation expansion towards the forest lands and jalpai marshy lands, as pahikasht temporary lease-hold tenure-holders. Thus while revenue pressure remained
unchanged, the rent pressure simultaneously led to more and more expansion and sub-division of land-holdings. The marginal profit out of such cultivation expansion could not return to cultivation process as input for enhancement of production. Out of the Permanent Settlement a new lease-hold tenure of land, i.e., pattani system, came into operation in order to ensure security of rent collection from the marginal farmers despite the process of cultivation expansion on the periphery of villages. It did not lead to rise in produce since the pattanidar could raise rent, resume land tax of unauthorised rent-free lands and distress and attach lands for balances of payment. The creation of a long chain of intermediaries might have ensured collection of maximum rent as its pressure was felt heavily over the khud-kasht ryots. Rack-renting thus became a feature of this land system.44

The unpopular sale laws, a sequence to the Permanent Settlement, caused the emergence of a new zamindar class in the two districts of south-west Bengal who were also named as talukdars and pattanidars. A critical analysis already made in the previous chapter shows that the traditional zamindars in these two districts were the leaders of rural society and were considered as natural guardians of the ryots. But new zamindars, created out of Permanent Settlement, tried in vain to have a foothold in the rural south-west Bengal throughout the period of peasant unrest in the first half of the nineteenth
century. Consequently, the lure of urban luxury and ridicule poured by the ryots on the new land-holder talukdars, probably prevented most of them from staying in rural surroundings in their estates so long as these were managed by their agents. 45 It was essential for this class to keep in close touch with the Board of Revenue for further purchase of land on the one hand and to avail themselves of the meagre opportunities of trade and commerce in the urban Bengal to counterbalance any loss due to natural calamity on the other, since financial loss led to failure to remit revenue in time causing sale of their estates to the highest bidders. Thus, absentee landlordism could not become a regular feature of the agrarian life of the region up to the first half of the nineteenth century, because most of these adventurers disappeared in the fire of peasant unrest continuing till 1833. This story has already been narrated in the first chapter.

But zamindari absenteeism became a regular feature by the time of passing of the Rent Act X of 1859, when the peasant society of the mid-nineteenth century had developed a three-tier system, revenue-paying zamindars, talukdars and permanent tenure-holding middle peasantry and the peasantry with occupancy rights over land coupled with landless agricultural work force. The peasant unrest and permanent settlement with the Sale Laws led to the upward mobility of the middle peasantry, since this
class became educated and relatively affluent for their privilege of holding stock and implements of agriculture like cattle and ploughs, sometimes with alternative income in towns, and pre-eminent position in the village society. Moreover, this middle peasantry, agreeing to the new rent structure after 1793, became settled ryots after the smouldering heat of the paik chuar unrest died down. Being equipped with stock and implements of cultivation, and taking advantage of public works and educational developments, they took the lead in opening avenues of cultivation expansion hiring occupancy ryots. Their upward mobility was typified in purchasing and expanding revenue-paying estates from the traditional proprietors and in competitive social demonstration of their affluence in splendid and unproductive socio-religious rites. 46

Moreover, fixation of revenue could not stop enhancement of land rent, since the process of land improvements by irrigation, road construction and manuring system led to rise in demand and prices of improved land holdings and in many cases produce rents remained unaltered while cash rents increased over permanent khudkasht ryots. Naturally, the middle peasantry took opportunity of land improvement in consolidating holdings in developed areas, allured the pahikasht marginal peasantry to sell their small holdings at enhanced prices and encouraged them to migrate to the periphery of villages to open up new
lands for cultivation in order to counterbalance the increasing pressure of land rent over their permanent tenure-holdings.

Thus the opening up of cultivation particularly in the jalpaj and salt tracts in south Midnapore accelerated the process of expansion towards the Sundarbans but did not increase the net quantum of produce, since the marginal profit was appropriated by the middle peasantry who invested the input for cultivation expansion through the dependent pahikasht ryots to reimburse his loss from enhanced rent. Socially speaking, these two agrarian strata of middle peasantry and lease-hold occupancy ryots, together with the agricultural labour force with or without land, were consequently brought together in a necessary though unequal collaboration in order to sustain the agricultural production process.

It was not unusual for caste peasants to lease land from the permanent tenure-holders on the basis of share of produce and employ labour with supplied plough, cattle and seeds. In the Contai and Tamluk subdivisions as far as the Sundarbans, the vision of self-cultivation by peasant small-holders was modified to take account of the fairly widespread use of hired labour not only on the considerable khas lands of landlords and rich peasants but also on the small holdings of the poor peasantry. This explains the sense of collaboration of the middle peasantry of the mahisya caste group with the lower caste group occupancy ryots in their resistance to
enhancement of volume of taxation in the twentieth century in the shape of choukidari and salt taxes imposed by the government. The process of resistance to taxation, which started in the nineteenth century, had its culmination in the phase of freedom movement in the present century. The following table will show the picture of higher proportion of tenancy holders and agricultural labour force in the Census Report of 1921 to explain the germination of a process of simultaneous collaboration and conflict in the nineteenth century agrarian society which had its culmination on the vast ocean of the freedom movement in the twentieth century:

Table No. 8
Proportion of agricultural population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Landlords</th>
<th>Tenants</th>
<th>Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>68.39</td>
<td>27.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdwan</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>68.42</td>
<td>27.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnapore</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>80.45</td>
<td>17.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Bengal</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>71.45</td>
<td>23.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This survey would hint at a fluctuation in the proportion of agricultural population continuing from the nineteenth to the twentieth century which made inevitable the upward mobility of the middle peasantry and increase in the number of revenue-
paying talukdars. This upward mobility and expansion of the size of holding of the middle peasantry made regular rent collection insecure to the new revenue farmers who lost control over relatively affluent tenure-holders and also any incentive to improve the yielding capacity of the soil. The lure of urban life without relative scope for an industrial regeneration in south-west Bengal's towns, deteriorating climatic condition, increasing health hazards and spread of tropical diseases, particularly in the rainy season, also led to social absenteeism of the new revenue farmers. Thus the post-1859 period saw zamindary absenteeism of the new rich when the Pattani system became full-fledged, but in the south-west Bengal the elimination of the new rich strengthened the position of the traditional proprietors. By this time complexities in the administration led to short-term migratory movement of a section of middle peasantry to the towns and back, i.e., specially the rural Brahmins and Kayasthas who joined the lowest gungs of the administrative hierarchy, took advantage of sale laws and remitted their alternative urban income in purchasing new estates in their own villages from the absentee revenue farmers. 48

In 1871, in Bankura district which was reconstituted out of the Jungle Mahals, there were three European holders registered as proprietors on the Rent Roll of the district, the amount of land revenue payable by them being £14-11s-6d. Muslim proprietor numbered 193, paying the Government land
revenue of only £128-4s-10d. In that year, the total number of proprietors entered into the Rent Roll was 1513 and the total land revenue collected was £ 45110. From the available names of this increased number of landed proprietors, it is evident that a class of middle peasantry, taking advantage of land improvement, western education and job opportunities in towns and many of the successors of the old guards of jungle zamindars purchased revenue-paying estates in auction sales and had a upward mobility to the class of talukdars.

In this 'environment in motion' the economic condition of the old guards was far from being improved. It has been contended that owing to the impact of British rule their economic condition deteriorated. In case of default in payment, his land was liable to be sold in liquidation of the balance. As discussed earlier, he could not even impose any extra impost on the ryots as abwabs or mahots, because fixity of revenue led to fixity of money rent. But, in fact, numerous produce-rents and extra imposts of a social character were around. The landholders were also brought under full grip of the Company, which granted them mushaira pensionary allowances, particularly in the nimki mahals of south Midnapore, in order to get rid of turbulent zamindary officials.

Recorded instances show that the turbulent paik sardars and tahasildars, who were in the habit of misappropriation of public revenue, were sometimes discharged from office. They, in turn, wreaked vengeance on the poor inhabitants of the soil by
creating terror in the countryside. Social parasitism thus became a normal feature of this underdeveloped agrarian economy.54

Moreover, zamindary paternalism receded into the background, as the zamindars were reluctant to shoulder full obligations over local irrigation works. The embankments and canals remained unrepaired after being broken by heavy flood. This led to feuds between the zamindars and embankment authorities in the collectorate and each wanted to transfer the blame on the other.55

In other ways also the zamindar's paternalism came to an end. The village economy, producing salt, forest products and textiles with its home industry, drew sustenance from the zamindar's patronage. This industry had prospered under the direct control of local investors. In an agrarian economy these middlemen in the trade sector not only ameliorated the tendency of increased disguised unemployment, but they also took the risk of entrepreneurship by searching for markets outside the village units. But the old system of investment in the anticipated produce of handicrafts by the local zamindars and investors came to an end as the Company discouraged direct investment by outside merchants through the land-holders.

The appearance of the pattani-tenure was another unforeseen result of the new settlement in the Jungle Mahals and specially in the land holdings of the Raja of Burdwan in modern Bankura and Midnapore. The historical background may be traced from
the previous century. The estates of the Raja of Bishnupur were subjected to enhanced demands for revenue which he could not pay. The following table collected from local collectorate records would illustrate the increase in the amount of revenue payable to the Raja of Bishnupur:

Table No. 9

Increase of revenue of Bishnupur estate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1686</td>
<td>107,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1715</td>
<td>129,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>250,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>280,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>479,666-15-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>522,817-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Collectorate records of the respective years.

To avoid the estates from being sold out for failure to pay enhanced revenue, Raja Chaitanya Singh granted rent-free lakheraj grants to many Vaishnavas and Brahmans in order to create a condition of diminishing revenue pressure over his estates to prove his case of diminishing revenue from the Raj. In 1789 Hesilrige was deputed to take charge of rent collection of the estate. He was directed to resume all chakran lands and invalid lakheraj grants. Under his khas management, the total collection from the estate amounted to Rs.419,539/- only. After deduction of one-eleventh of this sum on account of malikana, the balance left was Rs.381,399/-.
This falsified the justification for enhancement of revenue assessment at Rs. 400,000/- at the time of Decennial Settlement. Chaitanya Singh also failed to clear his dues at the end of the first year of the settlement. In 1791 the mahals of Barabazari and Karisunda were sold under the order of the Board of Revenue and were purchased by Raja Tej Chand of Burdwan. Chaitanya Singh was left with a jumma of Rs. 185,853/-, but this amount appeared to have been overassessed because the portion sold was underassessed. The wrong done to Chaitanya Singh was, however, corrected in 1795 and the Board of Revenue commuted the outstanding balance. The revenue payable by him was reduced to Rs. 150,271-4-13. Even then he failed to collect rents and to pay the commuted revenue as the quarrel with his younger brother Damodar Singh dragged on until the Governor-General-in-Council decided them to be the joint share-holders of the inheritance.  

In 1801 Sir Charles Blunt, the Commissioner of Burdwan, estimated the annual value of the resumable lakheraj grants at Rs. 40,000/-. Thus, the stratagem of the Bishnupur Raja to conceal some of the lands under cover of non-revenue paying lands leaked out. The major part of the resumption, however, took place in 1833 when the government appointed Taylor to resume the whole resumable lakheraj holdings of Bishnupur. Chaitanya Singh thus became the victim of two adverse circumstances; first, an increased assessment of land revenue and, second, some vexatious and costly litigations with his brother. The result was that in 1805, the entire estate was purchased by the Raja of Burdwan for Rs. 215,000/-.  

56 In 1801 Sir Charles Blunt, the Commissioner of Burdwan, estimated the annual value of the resumable lakheraj grants at Rs. 40,000/-. Thus, the stratagem of the Bishnupur Raja to conceal some of the lands under cover of non-revenue paying lands leaked out. The major part of the resumption, however, took place in 1833 when the government appointed Taylor to resume the whole resumable lakheraj holdings of Bishnupur. Chaitanya Singh thus became the victim of two adverse circumstances; first, an increased assessment of land revenue and, second, some vexatious and costly litigations with his brother. The result was that in 1805, the entire estate was purchased by the Raja of Burdwan for Rs. 215,000/-.  

57 In 1801 Sir Charles Blunt, the Commissioner of Burdwan, estimated the annual value of the resumable lakheraj grants at Rs. 40,000/-. Thus, the stratagem of the Bishnupur Raja to conceal some of the lands under cover of non-revenue paying lands leaked out. The major part of the resumption, however, took place in 1833 when the government appointed Taylor to resume the whole resumable lakheraj holdings of Bishnupur. Chaitanya Singh thus became the victim of two adverse circumstances; first, an increased assessment of land revenue and, second, some vexatious and costly litigations with his brother. The result was that in 1805, the entire estate was purchased by the Raja of Burdwan for Rs. 215,000/-.
The resumption of non-revenue paying ghatwali, Chakran and lakheraj grants complicated the system of collection of revenue. Even the Company's tax collectors were confronted with the difficulty in collecting revenue. According to Section VII of Regulation VIII of 1793 the zamindars were empowered to conclude fresh settlements with the cultivators for realizing land rent punctually. The proprietary right was not ceded to the lease holders by this temporary arrangement. By Regulation XLIV of 1793, the proprietor of an estate was allowed to grant lease for a period of ten years but this provision was rescinded by Section 2 of Regulation V of 1812. As the Bishnupur estate was sold out to the Burdwan Raja at an enhanced jumma, it resulted in the paik upsurge under the Raja of Bishnupur and the collection of rent was totally suspended.

After the Permanent Settlement the Pattani system came into existence in the estate of Burdwan Raj, particularly in Bishnupur and north Midnapore as already discussed. The difficulty which the Raja of Burdwan had to face to meet the pressure of Government revenue compelled him to bind his tenants with the same punctuality of rent payment and the result was the introduction of pattani tenure. This system was introduced in 1802 in the region of the present study. It was stipulated that the pattani tenures should be inseparable from the hereditary revenue-paying estates. The petition of the Raja of Burdwan makes it evident that, without any reference to the court of justice, Government revenue was punctually remitted.
Raja Tej Chand then created under-tenures and began to lease out the holdings to the pattanidars of Bishnupur for proper realisation of revenue. The pattani-tenure was in effect a lease which bound its holder by the same terms and conditions as those by which the superior landlord was bound to the state. By Regulation VIII of 1819 all pattani tenures were given a legal garb outside the territories of the Burdwan Raj along with the right of sub-letting of lease. In pursuance of these Regulations pattani taluks came into existence also in the zamindaries other than that of Burdwan in the whole of Midnapore and modern Bankura.

A pattani taluk may be described as a tenure created by the zamindar to be held by the leaser and his heirs for ever at a rent fixed in perpetuity. The pattani sale law was a great boon to the zamindars who had leased out their estates in pattani taluks. A summary process was provided in that Regulation for the punctual realisation of rent due from the pattanidars, the Collectors being directed, twice in every year, at the instance of the zamindars, to sell pattani-tenures in arrears. The purchaser of a pattani taluk sold at such a sale obtained it free of all encumbrances which might have been created by the defaulting estate holders in violation of the terms of the pattani taluk. By the same Regulation pattani taluks were declared to be hereditary, transferable and valid in perpetuity and the pattanidars were entitled to create under-tenures in any manner they might deem conducive to their interests. The tenure known
as dar-pattani came into existence as a consequence of this permission granted to the holders of pattani taluks to create under-tenures. Dar-pattani was subordinate to pattani tenures and was created by the pattanidar. It was also a tenure in perpetuity, transferable, hereditary and conferred on its holders rights and privileges similar to those of a pattanidar holding land direct from a zamindar. In case a pattani taluk was put to sale by the intentional withholding of rent payment, the under tenure-holders were allowed to save their tenures by paying into the collector’s office the arrear of rent due to the zamindar. Sa-pattani or a pattani of the third degree was also created with the same rights and privileges of subinfeudation of the pattanidars above him in the hierarchical ladder.

The system ensured perpetuation of interests of the zamindars. The pattanidars could raise rents, resume unauthorised rent-free lands, and distraint and attach lands for balances. Sometimes the zamindars were themselves lease-holders of other’s estates. This right made the Board of Revenue suspicious of the motive of the Raja of Burdwan as he was willing to purchase taluks in fictitious names to make fresh settlements with the cultivators to enhance rent. Thus an Enquiry Committee was set up by the Governor-General-in-Council on May 21, 1819 under the leadership of H.R. Prinsep, Superintendent Remembrancer of Legal Affairs.61 In his report to W.B. Bayley, Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, on July 14, 1819, H.R. Prinsep admitted that about fifteen years ago the Raja of Burdwan adopted the policy
of letting out the greater part of his hereditary zamindary in lease to the willing talukdars. The plots then disposed of were known as the pattani taluks and consisted of very different sizes but with an average jumma of Rs. 2000/- each. The Raja was also authorised to offer sale and resettlement of the pattani taluks according to his own discretion.

In 1818-19, Pertaup Chand complained to the civil court at Burdwan against pattanidars for non-payment of revenue. But the pattanidars refuted the allegation and demanded payment of revenue directly to the exchequer to prevent the enhancement of revenue of the estates. While the total number of applications made by him against the pattanidars was four hundred and sixty, the cases of pattanidars against the darpattanidars were only 160.62

Table No. 10
Abstract of pattani tenures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Made by</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>Amount balance</th>
<th>Decided</th>
<th>Pending</th>
<th>Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raja Pertaup Chand</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>206,151-10-0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>12,218-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rani Kamal Kumari</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>183,374-12-0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anand Kumari</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>413-14-0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other zamindars</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15,475-13-0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudder</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>96,068-14-0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>7,515-3-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattanidars</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darpattanidars</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7,875-7-0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Collection of papers regarding pattani sale law - published by the Government of Bengal, Board of Revenue, 1927, p. 110.
It was agreed that the pattanidars could alienate their rights wholly or partly to dar-pattanidars. Thus, the creation of a long chain of intermediaries might have ensured a collection of maximum rent but rack-renting and social parasitism became a feature of this land system. That the sub-infeudation was oppressive to the ryots in all the districts of Midnapore, modern Bankura and Burdwan where his estates were lying, was also admitted by the Raja of Burdwan as it was only productive of losses, fraud and inconvenience. 63

The Collector of Burdwan also reported that the primary producers were heavily assessed as a consequence of sub-infeudation and, as such, criminal prosecutions were made. The Board of Directors, in their letter of February 2, 1819, advised Fleming, Collector of Burdwan, which then included parts of modern Bankura, that the rights of ryots should be clearly defended. In their eagerness to protect the interests of primary producers, the government, from the time of Cornwallis, wanted the zamindars to grant pattas to the ryots. Moreover, the pattani was legalised by Regulation VIII of September, 1819 and in consequence the holdings of the ryots could not be attached and cancelled for arrears. 64 But it is not clear how far these pattani regulations actually succeeded in protecting the interests of primary producers. The increasing pressure of population, withering away of domestic industries owing to lack of seed money and market facilities and extinction of all tillage rights whether of free-hold tenures or of occupancy rights, ultimately
led to the pauperisation of primary producers and ejection of
the land holders from their property, only accelerating the process
of migratory movements to the periphery of villages.

As already noticed, the pattani system gave a plea to
increasing land rent without increasing the quantum of revenue
and became an institution of fraud. The Bishnupur Pargana, as
already mentioned, the property of Raja Madho (Madhav) Singh,
was auctioned in 1806 and Raja Tej Chand of Burdwan purchased the
pargana for Rs. 215,000-0-0-0, as shown in Table No. 11.

Table No. 11
Number of estates sold for arrears of revenue in the district
of Bankura

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the estates</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Area in acres</th>
<th>Revenue Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bishnupur</td>
<td>Purchased by Raja Tej Chand</td>
<td>1806</td>
<td>2,06,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Barabazar</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>1,31,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jungle Mahal</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>1,22,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Kuchiakol</td>
<td>Purchased on behalf of Namai Singh (son of Chaitanya Singh) by Krishnamonah Aich</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>8,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Panchal</td>
<td>Purchased in</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jamtara</td>
<td>Purchased by Haris Prasad Patnaik in</td>
<td>1798</td>
<td>9,375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Maliara</td>
<td>Separated as an independent taluk in</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>32,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kismat Shahjora</td>
<td>-do-</td>
<td>1791</td>
<td>4,645</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: F.W. Robertson, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement
Operation in the district of Bankura, Calcutta 1926, p. 28.
But Tej Chand requested the Board of Revenue that the collection in 1806 be made by the Government collectors. The Board rejected the plea of the Burdwan Raj. From the complaint of the Raja it was evident that the collection of rent became difficult for Madho (=Madhav) Singh and his retinue of non-revenue paying land-holders. The Bishnupur estate was divided into plots and sold at a public sale by the Burdwan Raj in his own (court) cutchery to the highest bidders. The plots, also known as pattani taluks, were given to the highest bidders, known as pattani talukdars. In March 1813, the Burdwan Raja made a private transfer of the estate of Bishnupur to Ram Mallick, his servant, for Rs. 150,000-0-0-0. This sale was evidently fraudulent. The nominal proprietor, Ram Mallick, became a defaulter and the property was again put to public sale and the Burdwan Raja purchased the property in the name of Pertap Chand, Tej Chand's only son, and a new settlement of the whole pargana was made. The pattanidars of Bishnupur, who detected the fraud of the Burdwan Raj, were more willing to pay revenue directly to the Government or any attaching officer who might be deputed to the Moffussil. Finally, the Board ordered the attachment of the Bishnupur estate.

This type of fraudulent transfers was numerous in the estate of the Burdwan Raja. Such transfers were committed with an eye to enhancing rent pressure on improved land-holdings but not for remittance of the increased revenue to the Government exchequer.
It was desired by the Directors of the Company to re-establish the office of Kanungoes to safeguard the interest of ryots. The Council also pointed out that proper time had arrived to take necessary measures for the restoration of the office of Kanungoes. The Kanungoes were asked to obtain accurate lists of villages in their divisions with the names of possessors and persons engaged in collecting the revenue. Here two tables numbering 12 and 13 may be presented to show to what extent the rent from the land-holders and revenue from the pattani estates were realised within a period of twenty five years to prepare the ground for the Rent Act of 1859 and B.T. Act of 1885.

Table No. 12

Balance sheet of Bankura district where the pattani system emerged in 1850-51 and 1870-71

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1850-51</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,736-1-10</td>
<td>17,511-7-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69,130-10-8</td>
<td>25,441-13-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: W.W. Hunter, SAB, IV, pp. 282-83
Table No. 13

Proportionate number of suits brought by tenants of each class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suits by</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Decided</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raja and his Rani's</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>92741-0-0</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>91684-0-0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudder Pattanidars</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>69926-0-0</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>62525-0-0</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darpattanidars</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8561-0-0</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5818-0-0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Se-pattanidars</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>260-0-0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>227-0-0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hujoora talukdars</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>15181-0-0</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14351-0-0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3385-0-0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>2509-0-0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>749</td>
<td>190164-0-0</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>177114-0-0</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite these limitations in the pattani system, in a report relative to the operation of Regulation VIII of 1819, J. Armstrong, the Collector of Burdwan, praised highly the Regulation VIII contrary to the observations already made. He was of opinion that this tenure produced beneficial result by enhancing public revenue. It enhanced the income of all segments of land-holders from the rank of zamindars and pattanidars down to the position of ryots. Since enhanced land revenue, leading to rise in land price, removed apprehension for distraint and dispossession from holdings, it encouraged input of capital for more culturable produce and improvement of land. It gave security to the land holders to
open up new cultivable land. But Armstrong and his class of revenue officials refused to understand that rise in revenue, land rent and land price, although encouraging capital investment for land improvement, gave tremendous incentive for land alienation of the occupancy and other categories of ryots with inferior titles, increased their fear of dispossession from holdings and turned them to the position of tenants-at-will.

Hunter had shown that while Government's revenue demand of the district had increased by 38% within the twenty years between 1850-51 and 1870-71, the zamindars' land rent had increased only 3% within the same period from £43,766 in 1850-51 to £45,110 in 1870-71. Subinfeudation of estates, leading to subdivided taluks under new talukdars, had rapidly gone up. In 1835-36, the district contained altogether 56 estates, owned by 71 registered proprietors. The average land revenue paid by each estate amounted to £690-10s-6d and by each individual proprietor or co-parcener to £550-19s-0d. By 1850, the number of estates had increased to 454 and that of registered proprietor or co-parceners to 850. The total net Government land revenue amounted to £42,534-2s-0d, equal to an average payment of £93-13s-9d each estate or £50-0s-4d from each proprietor or co-parcener. In 1870-71 the number of estates had reached 905; and the number of individual proprietors and co-parceners 1351 and the total Government land revenue amounted to £45,110 equal to an average payment of £49-16s-10d from each estate or £33-6s-6d from each individual proprietor or co-parcener. In this way, from 1793 to 1859, the Raj definitely strengthened the
position of zamindars, numerous talukdars and even permanent tenure-holders purchasing revenue-paying estates but overlooked the interest of peasantry with rent-paying permanent holdings and those enjoying occupancy rights and other inferior titles to land. This is a premise which would be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs to understand the socio-legal climate of the passing of the Rent Act of 1859, the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and its subsequent amendments in 1928 and 1938.

It may be argued that the Rent Act X of 1859 protected the interest of permanent tenure-holders who had means to invest capital in land improvement and opened uncultivable land to cultivation, but that it paid no heed to occupancy ryots already migrating to the periphery of villages by the pressure of land improvement. Thus Act X of 1859 and Act VIII of 1869 might have brought little relief to the vast mass of the peasantry in Bankura and the then north Midnapore districts. The number of rent cases and miscellaneous applications instituted under the provision of this Act in different years would make the point clear in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Original suits</th>
<th>Miscellaneous applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1861-62</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862-63</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866-67</td>
<td>1697</td>
<td>1437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hunter, SAB, Bankura, 1876, IV, p. 282.
By the pattani sale it has been shown that a new landholding class of revenue-paying talukdars appeared in the rural economy whose impact on the agrarian society increased. The surplus agricultural income from peripheral land and the opening of cultivation in uncultivable lands at the periphery of villages was invested only in land speculation, whereas no appreciable method of agricultural improvement was undertaken either by the new land holders or the new class of rural rent receivers. This was because they had no right to exact any extra cess for irrigation and public works. They had no greater incentive to know the process of intensive cultivation and ultimately owing to lack of capital input productivity of the increased size of the holdings declined. So it is clear that, despite Permanent Settlement followed by pattani tenure, the continuity of poverty of the peasantry in the agricultural sector did not arise from the paucity of fertile land. It was because the land owners had no incentive for more intensified cultivation with the then limitation of market and the peasants with inferior title to land lacked sufficient capital input and knowledge of improved cultivation to answer the increased demand of the superior title-holders.

The seeds of the Rent Legislation may thus be found in the agrarian history of south-west Bengal between 1793 and 1853, when the Government was vacillating between two policy decisions. One was to prop up the chain of landed proprietors like zamindars, talukdars, pattanidars and their retinues as well as the hereditary Rajas like those of Birdwan (who had estates in Bishnupur Supur, Ambikanagar in Bankura) and those of Jhargram, Mahisadal
and Narajole in Midnapore, as a sure source of revenue collection. Simultaneously they did not want to interfere in their endeavour to squeeze the actual yielding capacity of the soil by rent enhancement which would indirectly allure the cultivators to reimburse their marginal profit by cultivation expansion. The other decision was to follow a paternalistic benevolent attitude to undertake measures of public utility. By increasing the price of land-holdings these would indirectly consolidate the position of the middle peasantry. In turn, they would undertake capital input to enhance production of market-oriented cash crops and, by a natural process of competition, push out the occupancy ryots at the periphery of the village to open up new prospects for cultivation. This enterprising middle peasantry comprised the Mabatos in Jhargram and south Bankura, Mahisyas in Contai, Rajus and Khandaits in Egra of Midnapore, had the ability, knowledge and means from their other incomes from urban centres and invested money for cultivation expansion in their own rural environment.

Harrington on 28 November, 1826, proposed to secure the rights of khudkasht ryots. But the Government rejected the proposal on the plea of its impracticability and owing to its policy of non-interference in the zamindars' role of paternalism in the cultivation process. Increasing rent was considered to be the product of the developing resources of the country, and the Government assumed that the ryots in Bengal had no right
to participate in the profit arising out of the limitation of
government demand. The Government believed that any law for
controlling the rent system would, in fact, be superfluous. 73

An influential school of thought, best formulated during
the debates preceding the revision of the 1833 Charter Act, also
argued, presumably under the influence of the theory of wages
fund, that the peasants were not similar to labourers, and that
the remuneration of labour primarily depended upon the size
of the existing wage fund. Increasing this remuneration pre-
supposed an increase in the wages fund which, it was argued,
was possible only when agricultural resources improved. Unless
this was done, it was concluded, no improvement in the law
regulating relation between zamindars and peasants would better
the peasants' lot since, in the context of a fixed wages fund,
an increase in the number of peasants and labourers would
inevitably depress the level of profitability from the ryots'
produce from the cultivation. 74

A. Ross, Fifth Judge of Sadr Diwani Adalat, also aired this
utilitarian view in his Minute of 6 March, 1827 - "in endeavouring
to promote the welfare of the cultivating classes, it seems to
me necessary to keep in mind that the majority of those classes
are, and must continue to be, only agricultural labourers". 75
And as such any capitalist, whether zamindar, ijaradar or a
village corn-dealer and money-lender, had the right to get
the profit adequate to his input in the ryots' holdings for
expansion and improvement of cultivation. Thus Rent Act X of 1859 may not be considered as a beginning of social revolution by the Government to protect the interest of ryots from the zamindar's greed to enhance rent pressure on the ryots. 76

3. Rent Act of 1859 and Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885:

The origin of the Rent Act X of 1859 was misunderstood even by the Government in later years. For instance, Rivers Thompson (Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, 1882-87) explained it in 1883. "It was only when.........the oppression of the landlord threatened an agrarian revolution that the Government stepped in by legislative enactments to arrest the natural increase of rent in Bengal and the result was the land law of 1859". 77 But no proof can be cited to argue that the Rent Act of 1859 was designed to avert an 'agrarian revolution'.

It was merely a liberal measure to remove some of the obvious abuses of the existing laws, particularly the one relating to distraint of crops and properties of the peasants for the realisation of arrears of rent. 78

The plea for such reform was not confined to the official circle. The Protestant Missionary Societies in Bengal had a significant role in making the whole peasant question an urgent public issue. The condition of the Bengal peasantry as the most important of the social questions was discussed in the Conference of the Protestant Missionaries in Calcutta
(September 4-7, 1855). In their petition to the Lt. Governor of Bengal, they argued in favour of a Royal Commission to enquire into the condition of the people of Bengal comparable to the Devon Commission on Ireland during Peel's administration.  

But the early suggestions for the modification of the distraint laws by reducing the powers of zamindars in this respect were invariably rejected on the ground that this would eventually affect the security of government revenue. The government feared that without these powers the zamindars would have been unable to punctually collect their rent.

Sections of Bengali intelligentsia warmly supported the move for this reform since an alignment of class interest between urban intelligentsia and the relatively affluent rural middle peasantry was evident. The Hindoo Patriot hailed the Rent Bill and believed that its enactment would mark an era in the social history of Bengal. The government merely intended, as its preamble stated, "to re-enact, with certain modification, the provisions of the existing law". However, extortion upon the ryots by the zamindar, it was held, led to the formation of the Act.

Two major reforms were introduced. Revenue-paying and rent-receiving zamindars could not compel the rent-paying ryots to attend to their courts for adjustment or otherwise of their rent. Distraint from holding was illegal for arrears
of more than one year's standing and where the ryot provided security for payment. Ryots were classified into three segments: permanent tenure holders, occupancy and non-occupancy ryots. The permanent tenure holders, previously called khudkasht ryots belonging to the category of relatively affluent middle peasantry, were protected from rent enhancement. Enhancement was possible where land improvement had taken place, while occupancy and non-occupancy ryots were left to the mercy of the talukdars where the temporary leasehold tenure holders had agreed to pay enhanced rent for any land improvement.82

The new features in the Act were the introduction of the concept of occupancy right of ryots on land opened up by them for cultivation and the permissibility of enhancement of rent on the ground of the increased value of the produce and land improvement. The prescriptive right of twelve years' continuous cultivation turned out, in fact, to have been a local practice of allowing an ousted ryot a summary process for recovering his holding on proving his continuous occupation of it for twelve years.83 It is surprising that the second novelty in the Act, i.e., enhancement of rent on the ground of the increased value of the produce, was called the genesis of all future peasant unrest in both east and west Bengal, sometimes with communal flare up and sometimes with nationalist overtones, paving the way for the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 and further amendments in 1928 and 1938.
The Act of 1859 was substantially modified after twenty-six years by the Bengal Tenancy Act VIII of 1885. The circumstances, leading to the Act of 1885, were far more complex than those responsible for the Act of 1859. This was because the zamindars were apprehensive that this piece of legislation would largely destroy the zamindar's incentive to invest capital in agriculture and that, because of the inability of the majority of peasants to invest at all, the flourishing and prosperous estates of Bengal would soon be reduced to a state of wretchedness. But the talukdars and traditional landholders did not produce any organised move to secure the revision of the Act. Some zamindars, of course, through the landholders' association, tried to pressurise the government to revoke these changes by saying that the consequent diminution of their moral influence would seriously impede the collection of rent and eventually depreciate the market value of their estates. The Government dismissed these arguments of the Association as entirely speculative. Nowhere did the collection of rent suffer. The exercise of old kind of coercion had been abolished by Act X of 1859. The alarm of the zamindars about loss of their status gradually diminished, because in some places, they continued to exercise their old powers.

But the purpose of the Rent Act was more of less fulfilled in consolidating the emerging position of the middle
peasantry in the rural cultivation process. They acquired the knowledge and the means because of their alternative avenue of income both in the village as mahajans or money-lenders and in the towns as teachers, professionals and government service holders, to invest capital input in cultivation improvement and market-oriented cash crop production. The mechanics of property-making process now rolled in favour of the segment of new rent-paying property owners, the enterprising middle peasantry. Thus by 1885 the clear-cut division between revenue-paying landed proprietors and rent-paying ryots was oblitered, since this mechanics of property-making made possible the combination of some rent paying holdings with some revenue paying taluks at the same time. The British legal, educational and service systems prepared the ground for upward mobility of the peasantry and tenure-holders. In the twentieth century freedom movement, the seeds of cooperation and conflict were hidden in this socio-economic environment.

The need for a revision of the Rent Act was ultimately felt by 1880. By the judgement of 1864 the size of the enhanced rent was determined, particularly by transfer of rent suits from Revenue officers to the civil courts in 1869. The zamindars, failing thus to enhance rent by legal means, sought to make up for the loss by illegal exaction enforced in several cases. This tended further to emblitter the relation between the zamindars and ryots. The revolt of the Pabna peasants and
its quick spread to other districts in east Bengal was the first clear evidence before the Government. In the south-west Bengal, particularly in Midnapore and Bankura, on the other hand, favourable land-man ratio led to vigorous expansion of cultivation in the jelpai and abandoned nimki mahals and denuded forest lands of north Midnapore and Bankura, a process already discussed. This prevented the inevitable conflict between the zamindars and the permanent tenure-holders. Yet Lt. Governor Campbell argued that revision was both unnecessary and inexpedient. However, the question of revision of the Rent Act of 1859 was not ignored by the early eighties of the century.

The limitations of the Rent Act of 1859 gave way to Rent bill drafted by the Rent Commission (1880) with a strong emphasis on the need to protect the rights of the peasants with inferior titles but mainly the middle peasant groups. It thus reversed the administrative attitude of Richard Temple and Eden, a tendency which persisted till the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. The Famines of Orissa (1866) and Bihar (1873-74) and the Irish Agrarian problems of 1879 definitely shaped the government's thought process. It laid down the rule of acquiring occupancy rights by cultivating the landlords' plots for twelve years. The zamindars lost the power of ejectment from holdings only for arrears of rent. Rent could be enhanced only once in a period of fifteen years but the quantum of enhancement would not be more than 12.5% of the existing rent. All these provisions,
aiming to protect the interest mainly of the occupancy ryots, left entirely unprotected the class of non-occupancy ryots and under-tenants of the occupancy ryots. This shows the bias of the government to protect the interest of the new land captains, the relatively affluent middle peasantry, from the possible oppression of the revenue-paying landed proprietors.

It would be relevant here to examine two recent views with regard to the object of this legislation. Ravinder Kumar viewed that landed legislation was intended by the government as an instrument of social change, though in the sphere of agricultural production, execution was negligible. "A distinguishing feature of British rule in India was the promotion of social change by the state, as distinct from spontaneous transformation in society, through a rational agrarian policy, through the creation of new institution of administration and through the dissemination of new principles of economic organisation. The promotion of social change through deliberate acts of policy was a new departure in the guiding principles of administration in India. For the native government possessed a limited view of their responsibilities towards the community, while inadequate instrument of social control at their disposal, and their restricted grasp of the principles of economic organisation, prevented them from embarking upon rational programmes of progress". Ravinder Kumar does add that this broad social policy was also motivated by consideration of
Another view held by Chittabrata Palit on the origin and nature of the agrarian legislation of 1859 in Bengal also proceeds from an identical premise. The policy embodied in the Act amounted to a rejection of the old tradition of laissez faire. He remarked, "Expansion of free trade demanded firmer and closer linkage with the empire. Development of trade with India depended on increasing purchasing power of the agriculturists and capital formation at the grass roots level was a necessity to help small rural capitalists to develop resources for export on a national scale and restore purchasing power to the countryside." The dominant motive was to create conditions in which peasants could produce for the world market. The peasants were chosen as instrument for the contemplated agrarian revolution. Adoption of certain measures aimed at protecting peasants from an increasing rent or promotion of certain social groups whose interests were closely tied to the government. It is, however, undeniable that they were now more earnest about the need to restore some of the lost rights of peasants. Similarly, the assumption that a stable and prosperous peasantry constituted the foundation of a stable agriculture was hardly a new one.

The government did believe that the middle peasantry, with permanent footing on their holdings and having means to expand cultivation process and take the entrepreneurial risk for
modernisation of agriculture, if effectively protected against pressurisation from the zamindars, could enhance their saving capacity to answer more effectively the expanding market opportunities to develop cash crop cultivation necessary for an industrialised England. But it is difficult to foresee that the Rent Act aimed to regulate Bengal's international trade. It is difficult to say that the Government's old attitude of laissez faire for the agrarian revolution had been given a go-by to arrest the process of polarisation of agricultural profits in favour of the rent-receivers, including the zamindars, talukdars and even permanent tenure-holder middle peasantry to whom the occupancy ryots were answerable for temporary lease-hold tenure-holdings. Binay Chaudhuri, on the other hand, views that evidently the concept of 'social change' is applicable in this case in a very restricted sense. Adoption of some measures, aiming at protecting the peasantry from maximisation of rent or promotion of interest of a segment of social groups whose interests linked with the Government's industrial capitalist interest, could only marginally affect the complicated process of social change.

Nothing was done towards confining the influence of money-lenders, either by legal measures or by providing alternative sources of credit, despite the common knowledge of their role in the ruin of small peasants. In fact, the government feared that any interference with the village money-lenders'
activities could result in the freezing of the prevailing rural grain trade. However, in the context of chronic rural indebtedness, and of the increasing market value of the opened-up cultivable land, formalisation of such transfers immensely strengthened the rural money lenders and the affluent section of the middle peasantry. But the Rent Act of 1859 did precious little to protect the interest of the large numbers of pahikasht and occupancy ryots with temporary lease-hold tenures, who were instrumental in opening up new lands for cultivation at the initiative of the permanent khudkasht ryots. However, the Rent Bill of 1881 and Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 did protect the interest of the occupancy ryots, the arbitrary ejectment by both the zamindars, talukdars and permanent tenure-holders for arrears of rent.

Even assuming, as did Ravinder Kumar, that the British government, unlike the previous government had better insight into social and economic problems, there is hardly any evidence that this insight led anywhere to the dissemination of new principles of economic organisation, particularly in the south-west Bengal, the locale of the present studies. In the two districts of Bengal there was scarcely any new theory to experiment with and the usual intellectual influence on the government of the time only strengthened the view that the best means of stabilising the agriculture of south-west Bengal was to stabilise and strengthen the permanent peasant community at the middle stratum of the agrarian society, who had the
entrepreneurial potentiality to open up new avenues for expanding agricultural yield for the British capitalist interest. This marks the mental climate behind the passing of Tenancy Act, 1885 and its subsequent amendments in 1928 and 1938. In England also at that time some of the orthodox classical economists were revising some of their traditional doctrines under the impact of the Irish agrarian question. 95

4. Irrigation projects:

(a) Construction of coastal canals for irrigation and transport:

The significant feature of British rule in the second half of the nineteenth century was the expansion of irrigation system in south-west Bengal, a catalytic factor for improving the yielding capacity of the land leading to its rise in price. The Raj thought it necessary to formulate a framework within which private economic activities could flourish as a fusion between Indian agrarian interest and the mercantile interest of the British free traders. 96

While canal water facilities were provided to Orissa and parts of Midnapore district, north Midnapore and Bankura, where facility of river and sea irrigation was limited, deserve special mention. Artificial irrigation had always been important in north Midnapore and modern Bankura, the sparsely populated forest and high lands. The natural configuration of the terrain, except in the eastern parts, being undulating, it was easy
and economic to arrange conservation of water by throwing embankments across the drainage line or through the small nullahs. These storage pools, set up at a level higher than the fields to the irrigated land, were called bandhas, and their main purpose was to prevent monsoon rain draining off too quickly and supply water from the resultant reservoirs. Most of the bandhas or tanks were of considerable antiquity, though some were constructed during the famine relief operations in the last half of the nineteenth century by the Bishnupur and Jhargram Rajas.

Canal irrigation was unknown to the people of Jungle Mahals in the past. Only in certain areas under the Indas and Katulpur Thanas and in the north of Sonamukhi Thana of Bankura was such irrigation considered feasible. In most other parts of Bankura, the land surface was broken up by low ridges, valleys and hills which rendered canal irrigation impracticable. Mention may be made, in this connection, of the canal network, known as 'Suvankar Danra', which was excavated as early as the first half of the eighteenth century in the northern part of the Sonamukhi Thana to counteract the natural susceptibility of that area to drought. The system consisted of several main and branch canals, fed by the monsoon, which irrigated about 80 sq. miles. The high lands, lying between the rivers Damodar and Silai, did not get any advantage from the flood spills of either river and the whole area between Asuria and Rampur in Bankura was once a vast waste before the implementation of this irrigation scheme.
The digging of the 'Subhankar Danra' was an immediate success and the barren track became fit for cultivation and at one stage a revenue of Rs. 12000 was derived from the area irrigated by it. But with the passing of years, the canals gradually silted up and the embankments were broken. In some places, the courses of the canals become obliterated and the cultivators were soon found to encroach upon their beds. In 1897, under the initiative of the Collector Manisty, the canal was partially re-excavated as an anti-famine measure. A scheme for the maintenance of the canal was also formulated but it could not be implemented for want of funds. The law provided no means for enforcing payment of enhanced rents and it was found impossible to realise the subscriptions from the cultivators whose lands were irrigated. Local land-holders also stood in the way of fair distribution of canal water.  

O'Malley gives a brief account of the efforts made in other parts of the district of Bankura in the past to obtain irrigation water. Several important tanks and bandhs were also constructed in the Gangajalgati thana, as a dam was built across the Jeologor at the ninth mile of the Gangajalghati-Saltar Road; the Kusthal bandh, charuri tanks, and Vaishnab bandh were excavated in Saltora; and much was done to improve the Sacred Siva Ganga Tank at the foot of the Biharinath hill and also the Krishnapur and Uddhalpur bandh. Other minor sources of irrigation are the Jamuna and Krishna bandh - two artificial lakes of Bishnupur, which supply water over a fairly large area in the vicinity of the town.
Before 1850, in south west Bengal the Public Works Department undertook only to repair some old canals built by the rulers to glorify their reigns rather than for an overall agricultural development. But after 1850, the public works undertakings of the Government underwent a change with a view to increase agricultural productivity to extend irrigated areas, to save the peasantry from pauperisation and to increase their tax-paying capacity. This was the period when the Company's Agents were gradually abandoning salt manufacture in the nimki mahals of south Midnapore, and increasingly the mining areas and cultivable areas in the forest lands of north Midnapore and Bankura were opened up for cultivation. The Company's government conceived that an elaborate irrigation system would act as a safeguard against famine and drought and would encourage the commercialisation of agriculture by developing cash crop cultivation and stimulating internal navigation and thus it would raise the level of underground water resources. The political aim of these policies was to engage the emerging relatively affluent middle peasantry and segment of landed gentry to settle in agricultural pursuits throughout the year and divert their attention away from any future resistance to the tendency of maximisation of rent.  

There was a controversy between two schools of administration over the irrigation policy of the Raj. Sir Arthur Cotton, the Engineer of the Cauveri, the Godavari and the Krishna irrigation projects, maintained that the limited
resources available to India should be concentrated on the
collection of irrigation projects. He proposed that the
government should suspend the construction of Railways and
devote Rs. 10,000,000 per annum for ten to twenty years to
build 10,000 miles of canals. The leading critic of this
school, Patrick Smollett, vehemently criticised the estimate
of Cotton and viewed that the cost of canal construction would
be too high and that all rivers were not perennial to be dammed
for irrigation purposes. India, he argued, needed development
of communication system for cheap transport to eliminate
famine conditions.

In 1858 the Government of India agreed to undertake
irrigation projects and to harness British capital and
enterprise in India. In July 1858, the East India Irrigation
and Canal Company, an offshoot of the Madras Irrigation Company,
gave a proposal to the government to construct canals for
irrigation purposes in this region. But due to political
uncertainty, the proposal did not get favourable response.
After the transfer of power, the Irrigation Company wrote
to the Secretary of State for India on 6 February, 1860
proposing to raise a sum of £2 600,000 for construction of
irrigation works in this region and asking the Government of
India to guarantee a return of 5% on the capital.

The Government of India fixed the capital for investment
at £2 000,000 with power to increase the same and it allowed
investment of an initial capital of £1000,000 immediately for constructing a high level canal to connect Cuttack with Calcutta via Midnapore. The Company was also allowed to occupy the land required for the construction of the project and instructed to fix the water rate during the progress of the work. The work finally started in November 1863 and the water was available for irrigation at the beginning of 1866. The Company bequeathed to the government the two important tasks of fixing a just water rate and of completing the project works within a time-frame. Prior to construction of the project works, there had been discussion between the Commissioner of the 19th Division, which included parts of Midnapore and Orissa, and the Company about the fixation of water rate. On 23 February, 1864, it was agreed that water rate would be fixed by volume at the rate of 8 annas per 100 cubic yards from 15 June to 15 November and one rupee from 16 November to 14 June of every year. The Board of Revenue of the lower provinces accepted this rate as just but provisional. Later on, due to the mounting expenses of construction, the Company proposed to raise the rate to Rupee one per 1,000 cubic yard from 15 June to 30 October and to Rs. 1-8 from November to 14 June. On the other hand, Chief Engineer Rundell suggested sale of water by both volume and area at the fixed rate of rupees four, five and six per acre for autumn rice, double cropped land, for sugar cane plots respectively.
The agent of the Company, G.W. Boothby, accepted the rate fixed by Rundell as fair. He gave the following accounts:

Table No. 15

Return of corn from an acre of rice land under irrigation and that of corn from an acre of rice land not under irrigation

Return of corn per acre of irrigated land:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yield per acre</th>
<th>Charge per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1200 lbs of rice value (at the rate of Rs. 2/- per maund)</td>
<td>Charge per acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of straw</td>
<td>Rs. 24-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 378-0</td>
<td>Cost of cultivation Rs. 4-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water rate say Rs. 4/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 4-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rs. 10-8-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income per acre of irrigated land:

Rs. 27-8-0

Rs. 10-8-0 (deduct)

Rs. 17-0-0

Return of corn per acre of unirrigated land:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yield per acre</th>
<th>Charge per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>522 lbs of rice</td>
<td>Rs. 9-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of straw</td>
<td>Rs. 378-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs. 12-8-0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Income per acre of unirrigated land:

Rs. 12-8-0

Rs. 6-8-0

Rs. 6-0-0

Sources: Home Dept. (Revenue Branch) Prog. No. 44, G.W. Boothby to Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, PWD, September 17, 1864, Prog. of June 1867.
When in March 1866 water was available for irrigation in the Kendrapara canal, many zamindars and landholders bordering Midnapore refused to use the water because of the impending settlement of 1867. Due to the famine of 1866, the government decided to extend the settlement of 1837 for another thirty years in Orissa. In August 1866 the government made it clear that in future settlement, revenue of the land receiving water from canal would not be enhanced as water rate was different from revenue. After getting the approval of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, the water rate was fixed as follows:

Table No. 16
Water rate by volume and area

Supply rate by volume:
Rs. 1 per 1000 cubic yard from 15 June to 31 October
Rs. 1-8 per 1000 cubic yards from 1 November to 4 June
Rs. 2-8 per 1000 cubic yards for all purposes other than irrigation.

Supply rate by area:
Rs. 3-0 per acre for irrigation of a single crop
Rs. 5-0 per acre per annum if a lease for the whole area were taken
Rs. 6-0 per acre for the irrigation of two crops
Rs. 1-8 per acre for single crop for single watering

The Kendrapara canal, with its thirteen distribution canals, was completed when the transfer was effected. After the take-over of the project works, the Raj endeavoured to complete the works earlier to help the agriculturist to make a recovery from the famine of 1866. Rundell estimated the total cost to complete the project works including construction of canal in Puri district and extension of high level canal as far as the river Subarnarekha at Rs. 277,13,878 in November 1869. It was hoped that the project would irrigate 1600,000 acres of land and provide 530 miles of irrigation canal up to the Midnapore district.

The total revenue was estimated at Rs. 54,00,000 per annum, inclusive of water rate at Rs. 2.8 per acre of irrigable land, navigation and custom duties. Deducting the working expenses of Rs. 9,54,500 per annum on the project, it was clear that the Government would get a net revenue from both Orissa and Midnapore in Lower Bengal of Rs. 44,45,00 or about 16% on capital per annum. 197

Table No. 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area leased in acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1869-70</td>
<td>1729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870-71</td>
<td>22128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871-72</td>
<td>11653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872-73</td>
<td>4753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873-74</td>
<td>12571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874-75</td>
<td>22409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875-76</td>
<td>18409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876-77</td>
<td>30383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>48495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the management of irrigation works in Madras, Orissa, and Midnapore, Calcutta, 1879, pp. 3435.
The fixation of water rate became a Gordian Knot before the government. By passing an act in August, 1866, the Raj declared that land brought under irrigation would not be liable for enhancement of revenue in future settlements. And to ensure the recovery of water rate, Act VII of 1867 was passed by the Council of Bengal. This act was replaced by Act VI of 1869. It was decided to entrust the management of irrigation and collection of water rate to a revenue Superintendent of the rank of Collector.108

In 1871 T. Kirkwood, the first Revenue Superintendent, suggested grant of five years' lease at the gradual increased rate, reaching the limit of Rs. 2-8 for irrigation from Cuttack and Midnapore canals.109

The Governor-General-in-Council accepted this proposal as expedient.110 But to Ravenshaw, the Commissioner of the Nineteenth Division which included Midnapore, it appeared that the imposition of light water rate at Rs. 2/- per acre would prove beneficial to the peasants and profitable to the state.111 So in early 1872, on the recommendation of a committee, the water rate was fixed at rupees one for every block of lease executed after May while the rate was fixed at Rs. 1-8 per acre on demand. The direct consequences of this was the rise of lease for irrigation from 12571 acres in 1873-74 to 98495 acres in 1877-78.112
To avoid confusion, an Act was passed in March 1876 by which the machinery for collection of revenue and supply of water was kept separate under a Deputy Revenue Superintendent and Superintending Engineer respectively. Encouraged at the rising number of leases, the government of Bengal, for enhancement of land revenue of irrigated land, issued a proclamation on 31 March 1877, nullifying the act of 1866, which had debarred the government from raising land revenue assessment of the irrigated land. This change of policy resulted in decrease of lease for irrigation which was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area under irrigation in acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1877-78</td>
<td>98,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878-79</td>
<td>111,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879-80</td>
<td>109,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-81</td>
<td>117,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881-82</td>
<td>132,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882-83</td>
<td>133,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883-84</td>
<td>48,760</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Administration Report of the concerned years.

The peasants were highly exasperated at the oppressive conduct of revenue officials. They felt that the drainage system was damaging to their land and leases were injurious.
To redress these grievances the government appointed a Committee on 4 November 1884, headed by J.M. Macneil with R.H. Wilson and C.W.I. Harrison as members.\textsuperscript{116} It submitted its report on 21 March 1885 recommending transfer of assessment to the Public Works Department and providing a new rate for central revenue certificate.\textsuperscript{117}

The Secretary of State for India on 4 June 1885 welcomed the measures suggested by the Macneil Committee.\textsuperscript{118} But Commissioner C.F. Metcalf revealed that the zamindars of Orissa and Midnapore were unwilling to irrigate their land lest there be over-assessment of their land and accordingly suggested the reduction of water rate.\textsuperscript{119} The Board of revenue accepted the recommendations of the Macneil Committee but not the proposal of Metcalf to reduce water rate. It, at the same time, directed the newly-created department of Land Revenue and Agriculture to take up the survey of canal irrigated land for the coming settlement of 1897 in Orissa and the bordering territories of Midnapore and Jelamore.\textsuperscript{120}

The coast canal, which was opened for traffic in the last part of 1885, was impeded by the storm of September of the same year. But due to incessant repair works undertaken by the Government, it was possible to open it for traffic on 15 July, 1886. The rate of traffic was fixed at one anna per 100 maund of grain carried by boats in the canals.\textsuperscript{121}
In 1887 the estimate of canal was revised and fixed at Rs. 35,86,607 for the work and Rs. 447,498 for all other charges. The annual loss for the canal establishment and repair was estimated at Rs. 58,853.122

Like the irrigation project, the coastal canal proved to be a dismal failure. There was no brisk commercial intercourse between Calcutta and Orissa through Midnapore after the discontinuance of salt and rice trade. Though water was available for irrigation from the coastal canal and from the canals of the main project, the leased area declined from 172981 acre in 1890 to 115182 acres in 1895. The water rate, together with the revenue from navigation, could not meet the annual working expenses of canals. The opening of Railway line in 1896 in the coastal tracts gave the final death blow to the coast canal.123 The Government of Bengal made every effort to improve collection and to encourage irrigation from the canal, which had no effect on the peasants.124 In 1891, R.B. Buckley, a Superintending Engineer with considerable experience, recommended a special rate of 8 annas per acre. In spite of this, the Raj failed to get water cess even to meet the total annual expenses of the canal.

In ordinary years the average cost of maintenance and repairs of Midnapore canal had been about Rs. 1,10,000. The expenditure on this head in 1900-1901 was only Rs. 70,000. The savings of Rs. 40,000 had been effected by the Executive
Engineer. According to him, this was partly by economy of expenditure on distributors and repairs of the bank of the main canal.

Table No. 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Expenses: Direct charges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnapore canal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijli canal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table No. 20

The Revenue receipts and working expenses (direct and indirect charges) of the Major irrigation works for the years 1900-1901 compared with those of the previous years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1899-1900</th>
<th>1900-1901</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receipt</td>
<td>Working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rs.</td>
<td>Rs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Major irrigation works Midnapore canal</td>
<td>237840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Hijli tidal canal</td>
<td>53137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bengal Administrative Report for 1900-1901, p. 131.
The irrigation policy of the Raj otherwise proved injurious, creating unhealthy swamps which became the breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other diseases. It converted thousands of acres of land into arid desert due to increased salinity of the canal area. The government's demand of high water rate and maximisation of rent by landlords in anticipation of higher yield made the sub-tenants more dependent on the money-lenders. The land-holders also made use of best land near the canal for cultivation of commercial crops, while the distant lands devoted to kharif food crop witnessed total disaster during flood or drought. Economic historians, like Amiya Bagchi, consider the investment on irrigation projects as wastage of capital resources which could have been utilised for improving transport and infrastructure for an industrial breakthrough. But it needs a separate study to assess whether this contention is applicable to south-west Bengal.

4. b) **Embarkment**:

The council of Bengal was advised by the Court of Directors as early as on May 18, 1766 to make a settlement with the zamindars on the best terms possible for protecting the embankments. In May 1772, Charles Stewart, the Resident of Burdwan, informed the Comptrolling Committee of Revenue at Calcutta that an examination of embankments was one of the principal purposes of Government and was also in favour of making advance to the interested ryots for the repair of
embankments, subject to the inspection of works by officer of the Company. The amount advanced was to be recoverable from the ryots with an interest of 12 p.c. per annum.\textsuperscript{126} 

As the ryots were mostly engaged in the cultivation of land and the coolies were not available, the Company issued parwana to the farmers and zamindars directing them to furnish a number of coolies for the poolbandi work. The proceedings of the Governor-General-in-Council in February, 1772 reveal that in each pargana, a darogah was appointed, who was to enter into contract with the Company for execution of the work. The darogahs were selected from the best persons recommended by the principal officer and chief farmers.

Before entering into service they were to advance proper security for the office. Under the darogahs there were 'Mohrers' and overseers. These persons were to supervise the capital breaches of the embankments. The darogahs were required to transmit the account, regularly adjusted, at the expiration of every month, to the chief darogahs at the 'Poolbundi Dufter'. Finally, the 'Poolbundi' accounts were supervised by the collectors in conjunction with the Diwan and the Karkoons.

The Council saw the utility of such expenses as being of great interest to the ryots. Hence, a sum of rupees 150,000-0-0 for the purpose of Poolbundi administration was advanced.\textsuperscript{127}

Fraser and John Bayns (who acted as sole agent to Fraser), in their affidavits, claimed that the Poolbundi contract was
faithfully carried out by them and they had to incur more expense than was stipulated in the agreement. 128

The company allowed Fraser to make contract for three successive years: at the annual grant of Rs. 80,000-0-0. But soon afterwards, he lost the favour of the Company when Raja Nibhussen, the seazawal of Burdwan reported to the Board in July 1782, of the wretched condition of embankments. 129 In March, the poolbundi administration of Burdwan, which included Bishnupur and other parts of modern Bankura district, was committed to Raja Tejchand at the yearly sanctioned of Rs. 60,000-0-0. 130

Allegation of negligence of repair works of poolbundi against Raja Tejchand led the Company to appoint Thomas Marriot as Superintendent of poolbundi administration in May, 1788. Bankura and parts of Midnapore witnessed severe flood in October 1787 and 1791. C.A. Bruce, Second Assistant of Burdwan, informed the Board that "the towns were totally destroyed, not a vestige of a mud house remained". 131

In February, 1791, James Parlby was appointed an engineer officer by the Company to examine the state of pools or embankments. Parlby found that cutting of the natural banks by the ryots for agricultural purposes constituted a cause of inundation in 1791, it was stopped by order of the collector of Burdwan. 132
Thus agriculture suffered not only from inadequate capital investment. There were also hindrances to communications and floods and the resultant breakdown of embankments very necessary for irrigation in the coastal and midland plains. In the absence of adequate drainage system, indiscriminate cutting of embankments by villagers very often resulted in the flooding of a very wide area of cultivable lands and consequently washing away of immature seedlings and crops, often creating famine conditions. Without providing adequate plans and investments for proper drainage of surplus water, accumulated out of rains, the government declared by Clause 6, Section XII, Reg. VI of 1806 that cutting of embankments would be punishable by criminal courts. The village-level watchmen were put to strict vigilance over indiscriminate cutting of poolbundi embankments, which unfortunately proved futile.

Very often the embankments covered estates of numerous landed proprietors and the paucity of their surplus fund for investment in major irrigation and drainage works led the government to undertake major works, leaving the minor construction works to the responsibility of the proprietors. There were frequent disputes between the landlords and collectors regarding the responsibility of repair works of the inundated embankments and the situation became worse with
the commencement of rainy season when surplus labour could not be procured at the old money rate. Even the day and seasonal labourers, coming from the hilly regions, refused to engage in work due to poor money wages instead of high real wages as they demanded. In the opinion of Thomas Marriott, formerly Superintendent of poolbundi repairs for 1788, procurement of labour for embankment construction was a difficult task in January after the harvesting season was over. The labourers, 'corahs' as they were called, registered their names in several villages of each pargana with the labour procurers. Some people entered the work in times of scarcity but the conditions imposed upon the labourers made the works unattractive in an emergency situation after the summer. According to Marriott, one labourer could earn 1½ annas per day. But the system became unremunerative due to the rise in prices of wage goods during the rainy season and exploitation of intermediaries attached to the work.

There were varieties of works attached to the poolbundi administration and the amount, assigned to the embankments, was often eaten up by those intermediaries not directly attached to the work. The poolbundi darogahs demanded a share of the daily wages of labourers. The labour-procurers of the poolbundi contractors, who were responsible for hiring corahs from the hilly regions and forest tracts in times of scarcity in those areas, also had a share in the total expenditure. The daily wages of the watchmen, to be kept at the pools each,
amounted to one anna and 12 gondas. Naturally they also tried to exploit the poor labourers to compensate for their poor money wages. Very often the contractors were in collusion with their fellow intermediaries to defraud the landed proprietor and the government to increase the amount of the estimated expenditure of the work.

The construction of embankments was entrusted to the private European contractors out of the grant made available to the zamindars by the government. For an instance, in the Jungle Mahals belonging to the estates of the Burdwan Raja, for the repair of the existing embankments a sum of Rs. 117,000/- was collected from the ryots as the pool bundi cess. Out of that amount the Company sanctioned a sum of Rs. 60,000/- to the Burdwan Raja for the repair works to be undertaken from the month of January. Raja Tej Chand entered into contract with Foxcroft in 1794 to keep the embankments repaired through the grant of Rs. 44,839.00. The entire money was embezzled by the contractor and his men with the result that, after a heavy flood, all the cultivable lands were inundated. Rani Bishnukumari of Burdwan wanted the removal of Foxcroft and wanted to take over the responsibility of the repair of embankments.
Table No. 21
Amount of the total amount of 'Poolbundi' for the Province of Burdwan for four years - showing the sum advanced and actually expended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Advanced by the Govt.</th>
<th>Amount expended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1772-73</td>
<td>Rs. 75,749-0-0</td>
<td>Rs. 38,547-0-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773-74</td>
<td>Rs. 157,072-0-0</td>
<td>Rs. 65,504-13-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774-75</td>
<td>Rs. 150,172-0-0</td>
<td>Rs. 97,284-4-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775-76</td>
<td>Rs. 62,689-0-0</td>
<td>Rs. 54,364-11-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultation - August 5, 1776, Appendix No. 19, Proceedings of the Provincial Council of Revenue at Burdwan.

Table No. 22
Collection on account of Poolbundi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1773-74</td>
<td>Rs. 83,622-8-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1774-75</td>
<td>Rs. 98,234-8-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775-76</td>
<td>Rs. 97,452-9-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ibid.

In January 1797, it appeared that the Rani was not paying full attention to the repair of embankments. As a result, Thomas Marriott was again appointed the Superintendent of
poolbundi repair of the zamindary of Burdwan. But the 'Poolbundi' administration again fell into disrepute.

Since 1800 the Company could not take any firm stand on policy decisions in matters of poolbundi administration. Without taking the responsibility in their own hands, the government washed its hands off by making funds available to the landed proprietors out of the poolbundi cess realised from the ryots. The landed proprietors shifted the burden of keeping the embankments repaired in the hands of private contractors. In May 1799, Thomas Marriott was again appointed the Superintendent of Poolbundi repairs and told to disburse the allocated money for construction works. An inspection into the working and disbursement of the sum horrified him. But his plan could not work well owing to opposition from the contractors as well as from the Commercial Resident at Sonamukhi in March 1802. The Government had to ultimately give advance to the contractors for repair works but the revenue department decided to keep a strict vigilance over their work. 135

In 1802, a Superintendent of Embankments was appointed and repairs were carried out by the poolbundy damgahs. After a prolonged correspondence with the Board of Revenue following the promulgation of Embankment Regulations of 1806, committees were formed with power to call upon zamindars to carry out repair works of the embankments within their jurisdiction. Lastly, in 1814 the Council decided to abolish
the plan of giving the embankments in contract to any individual or party.\textsuperscript{136} Charles Trower, Collector of Burdwan, proposed in October 1814 that the corrupted darogahs should be removed from the pool boundi, be offered to the talukdars.

In 1829 the inefficiency and corruption in the department led to the replacement of the Embankments Committees by the Military Board. But that could not provide security to the ryots from drought and floods and these embankments obstructed the drainage of the coastal region leading to the spread of tropical diseases.\textsuperscript{137} Even though the Military Board stepped into the field to undertake different works of public utility, the hierarchy of intermediaries from above the darogahs down to the labour-procusers and labour-sardars of 'connies', who were responsible for getting the seasonal labourers to work, remained intact, making the work unremerative to the labourers. In the rainy season, sometimes the work had to be abandoned half-way as the funds got exhausted and the expenditure exceeded the amount of the estimated allocation, giving rise to complaints from landed proprietors.

In 1831, after a disastrous gale in the coastal area of Midnapore, there was a proposal to the Government to construct a dyke on the coastal bank to save the region from inundation. Hence, the Company's Government transferred the responsibilities of coastal embankment to the public works department. In 1850, it was found that a large number of embankments were either damaged or abandoned due to continuous flooding and lack of maintenance.
However, in 1855 the Government of Bengal passed Act XXXII to protect embankments both under the management of the Company and the zamindars. This Act empowered the Government to take charge of the zamindari embankments and maintain their efficiency at the cost of the zamindars. It was also declared that if the Government would construct sluices at the request of the revenue department, the land holders would not be required to reimburse. 138 In the Burdwan division the country lying between Panchkoora and Midnapore was inundated by the overflow of the Kasai, but there was no serious damage, except in the sugarcane crop in the parganah to Bogri.

The Company's Government, which sanctioned Rs. 66273/- in May, 1855 for construction of 223 sluices by December, 1860 could not complete 96 sluices. The Lt. Governor accordingly sanctioned on 5 July, 1861 Rs. 49,425 for the construction of another 123 sluices. 139

In 1860, the scheme for relieving the Damodar river of floor water by removal of embankments on its right bank, aggregating a length of twenty miles, had been carried out, and measures had proved to be sufficient for the relief of the river and the safety of the left bank. 140

The general condition of the embankment in Midnapore was satisfactory, as narrated by the chief engineer in 1860. According to him the new works required for the improved
protection of the inundation were few. The works carried out were mostly of the nature of repair. The most important of the new works, mentioned by the chief engineer in his report, was the completion of the Hijli dyke between the mouth of the Subarnarekha and Rasulpore rivers. This great work, which was forty four miles in length, was suspended in 1857 and resumed by 1860. The project for completing it at an expense of Rs. 603120, was ready for submission to the Government. 141

The high flood in 1862 in the coastal region caused breaches in the embankment. This flood also effected considerable damage to many embankments which required a huge sum of money for repair with two-fold intention to check inundation and to sell water. The drought of 1865 and inundation of 1866 caused considerable hardship and threw the marginal peasants and wage earners into starvation. This tragedy was so severe that the Bengal Government in 1867 appointed an embankment Committee under the charismanship of Ravenshaw, which recommended spending more money on the embankment administration. 142

In 1865, the Company proposed to extend the scope of the scheme by building embankments and requested the Government for a further grant to build a reservoir. 143 Chief Engineer Randall supported the proposal on the ground that the irrigated land would yield increased cash and food crops and enable the Government to enhance revenue. 144 T.S. Ravenshaw, the Commissioner of Orissa which included Midnapore, supported the proposal
and went further by suggesting that the Government should grant special subsidy to enable the Company to carry on canal with embankment scheme. 145 Due to shortage of fund its works suffered. The Government of India informed the Secretary of State on 16 July, 1867 about its inability to complete the work. The Company's assets and liabilities were purchased by the Government despite the India Government's reluctance. 146

In 1873, the Government of India found it necessary to introduce a bill in the local legislature to provide for the better construction, maintenance and management of the embankment and water course. 147 In 1876 a bill was passed to regulate the administration of irrigation through canal water by appointing a superintendent and a superintending engineer. The government measures for embankment maintenance and canal constructions had salutary effects on the agrarian relationship. To what extent this development of irrigation canal, embankment maintenance and improvement in internal communication had their effects would be discussed in the fourth chapter to analyse the dimensions of agrarian crisis.

5. Development of internal communication

Throughout the nineteenth century the British government in south-west Bengal emphasised the task of improving the communication system for the expansion of its capitalist
market economy by stimulating internal and external trade. The administrative measures of the Raj to improve land and water routes may be studied to examine whether this premise is acceptable.

(a) Land routes:

At the beginning of the Company's rule, ill-maintained roads and sometimes their total non-existence in some parts of the region made south-west Bengal inaccessible to both Indian and British merchants who might exploit its forest resources and agrarian products. On the eve of the famine of 1866 this region was shut up between pathless jungles and the sea. The Famine Commission of 1867 found little difference between the south-west Bengal of the ancient period and that of 1866 and recommended immediate completion of metalling of the Jagannath Road and completion of the road between Cuttack and Madras traversing Midnapore.

Gastrell mentioned in 1863 the necessity of developing, besides the 'New Road', four other roads. One to the north-west would connect Bankura with Ranigunge which was fast developing as a mining area. A second would run through the northern portion of Bankura between the river Damodar and Dalkisor via Sonamukhi and Kissennagar to Burdwan. The third would be the part of the Old Trunk Road. The fourth would open up the communication between Bankura and Midnapore, and thence extend
to Cuttack and Puri. A large number of pilgrims annually travelled this road (the section from Bankura to Bishnupur) on their way to the 'Jagannath' Puri. Two important roads branch off from this road, one running from Dalpur to Mohesna (9 miles) on the south-west and thence to Purulia, while another strikes north from Chhatna to Susunia and thence on Kusthelia to Majhia (21 miles). On the South of Bankura there are two main roads, one Bankura-Khatra, 21½ miles from Bankura, while the other, Bankura-Raipore Road, goes south east to Taldangra (15½ miles) and thence via Simlapal (8½ miles) to Raipore, which is situated (36½ miles) from Bankura. To the north-east, a long road, known as the Bankura-Burdwan road, leads through Baliatore (12½ miles) to Sonamukhi (25 miles) and thence through Krishnanagar to Burdwan; its length within the district is 14½ miles. This used to form part of the direct route between Bankura and Calcutta, a total distance of 85½ miles. From Bishnupur two important District Board Roads branch off. The first, known as the Bishnupur Pargana Road, runs due north through Sonamukhi to Rangamati on the Damodar River and thence to Panagarh, its length in the district being 25 miles. The second, known as the Bishnupur-Howrah road, runs 23 miles within the district; from Katulpore a road branches off to Indas and thence to Rol, ultimately joining the Bankura-Burdwan road a little distance beyond the north-eastern boundary. The only other roads, calling for separate notice, are those in the north-west of the district, viz. a road
from Gangajalghati to Saltora, 13½ miles long, which passes through Kustholia, where it crosses the Chhatna-Majia road and a road from Majia via Saltora to Murul (14½ miles) which is a part of Raniganj-Purulia Road. 150

Many unbridged rivers, flowing through the Jungle Mahals, posed a serious problem to internal communication since early times. "All the main roads", wrote Gestrel in 1863, "were once well metallled and bridged but were not in a good repair at the time the survey operations were going on. The timber traffic of Purulia fell off considerably since the bridges and roads were neglected". 151

The Bengal Government in 1856 tried to repair thoroughly the Cuttack Trunk Road. But the financial constraints impeded its plan. 152 The floods in subsequent years caused considerable breaches and prompted, in December 1861, the sanction for repair work and construction of small bridges. Again, in 1863, a revised estimate was made to complete the Cuttack Road, when G. Armstrong was the Superintending Engineer. 153

The exact position of the work at the beginning of February 1866 was as follows:

Table No. 23

Exact position of Cuttack Trunk Road in February 1866

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Road</th>
<th>Exact position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta to Midnapore</td>
<td>The total distance was 73 miles, which was already metallled and bridged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From south of Midnapore</td>
<td>About 12 miles of road had been metallled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PWD/Civil Works Commission, Prog. No. 27, Memo by Superintending Engineer, Cuttack Circle, 10 January 1866, Prog. of January, 1866.
If the works of Cuttack Trunk Road had been completed before 1866, the severity of the famine of 1866 would have been lessened. Soon after the famine, emphasis was laid on completing this road early and it was divided into the following sections:

Table No. 24

Blue print of metalling of Cuttack Trunk Road
By Phases in 1866

Calcutta to Ulberia - 20 miles
Ulberia to Midnapore - 58 miles
Midnapore to Jaleswar - 45 miles


After the famine of 1866, the Raj strove hard to build new roads and to repair the existing ones to connect villages with the towns and markets in Midnapore. It collected public works and road cess from the peasants and placed the entire collected money with matching grants under the road cess committee, entrusted with the sole responsibility of building village and town roads. When the road cess committee proved inefficient, the entire power of collection and construction was entrusted to the District Boards. The burden of the Road cess was most severely felt by the peasants. They were helpless before the fraudulent zamindar, who collected it more than
once from them. Many a time peasants petitioned against it but
the Government remained apathetic.

The opening of the road facilitated the coming of
merchants from Calcutta and Madras to trade in forest produce
and the only agrarian produce of rice. At the turn of the
century, south-west Bengal was no longer an isolated region.
The opening of roads facilitated importation of cotton
piece-goods, kerosene, cotton yarns, betel nut, flour, refined
sugar and potato from Calcutta to this region in lieu of only
salt, rice and forest products as export commodities.
Therefore, the
construction
of roads was of immense value
to the rising demand of the middle peasantry, who had an
upward mobility from the subsistence level in the mechanics
of property-making.

(b) Water routes

The simplest and cheapest traditional form of transport
had always been through the water route. The river system of
Midnapore and Jungle Mahals provided, in the eighteenth
century, an easy means of communication and internal trade
as well as great incentive to agricultural production.
The river Hooghly flows along the eastern boundary of
Midnapore. Its tributary, the Supnarayan, receives water
from the Silai and the Darkeswar rivers. The principal
tributary of Haldi is the Kasai which enters Midnapore
in the north-west. Two other tributaries of Haldi are the
Kangsabati and the Kapaleswari. The Subarnarekha is also another important river of this region. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries these rivers had been used as means of communication of trade and commerce and different commodities were exported and imported through this riverine route. The following tables in the next pages show different articles of trade.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chief Article Traffic</th>
<th>Registered in Midnapore Canal</th>
<th>Registered in Hijli Canal</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th>Total Value</th>
<th>Proportion of Calcutta Trade to the Total Traffic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coal &amp; Coke Muds</td>
<td>1,38,842</td>
<td>16,431</td>
<td>1,51,793</td>
<td>94,672</td>
<td>1,47,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Raw</td>
<td>5,408</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>5,678</td>
<td>90,848</td>
<td>5,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton twist (Ind)</td>
<td>7,132</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>7,839</td>
<td>546,739</td>
<td>7,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton yarn (Ind)</td>
<td>44,531</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44,617</td>
<td>15,61,526</td>
<td>44,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton prize (Eng)</td>
<td>14,46,000</td>
<td>27,030</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>14,72,330</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goods (Ind)</td>
<td>8,06,820</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,06,320</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>912</td>
<td></td>
<td>912</td>
<td>1,02,400</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jute Raw</td>
<td>28,895</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>29,049</td>
<td>11,6,995</td>
<td>29,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other fibres Raw</td>
<td>2,939</td>
<td>6,208</td>
<td>9,133</td>
<td>55,128</td>
<td>2,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All kinds of fruits and nuts</td>
<td>29,396</td>
<td>3,335</td>
<td>33,731</td>
<td>67,512</td>
<td>30,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>3,036</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,036</td>
<td>28,126</td>
<td>9,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gram &amp; Pulses</td>
<td>73,063</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73,063</td>
<td>2,55,720</td>
<td>73,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (husked)</td>
<td>3,60,865</td>
<td>3,77,740</td>
<td>9,38,605</td>
<td>35,19,768</td>
<td>5,59,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (unhusked)</td>
<td>1,95,470</td>
<td>9,67,400</td>
<td>11,52,950</td>
<td>26,16,637</td>
<td>5,73,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hides of cattle (No)</td>
<td>45,690</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45,690</td>
<td>97,991</td>
<td>45,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hogs (Mds)</td>
<td>3,357</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,357</td>
<td>40,294</td>
<td>3,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquors Rs.</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>73,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>72,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass &amp; Copper</td>
<td>64,925</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>64,954</td>
<td>26,98,160</td>
<td>64,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mats</td>
<td>1,123</td>
<td>33,839</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34,964</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ican and its Manufactures</td>
<td>2,723</td>
<td>1,320</td>
<td>4,043</td>
<td>32,344</td>
<td>3,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opium</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>63,380</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables etc</td>
<td>21,634</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>22,231</td>
<td>2,22,310</td>
<td>30,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sails</td>
<td>2,71,352</td>
<td>1,96,311</td>
<td>3,77,039</td>
<td>16,29,484</td>
<td>3,70,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linseed</td>
<td>7,330</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,330</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>6,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustard seed</td>
<td>1,92,942</td>
<td>14,244</td>
<td>1,24,483</td>
<td>5,60,132</td>
<td>1,17,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Til seed</td>
<td>7,475</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,475</td>
<td>35,506</td>
<td>7,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other oil seed</td>
<td>7,460</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7,460</td>
<td>25,177</td>
<td>7,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigo</td>
<td>5,442</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5,442</td>
<td>31,536</td>
<td>5,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk raw</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,330</td>
<td>6,65,020</td>
<td>1,290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>7,150</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>7,958</td>
<td>55,006</td>
<td>7,696</td>
<td>53,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betel Nut</td>
<td>1,817</td>
<td>1,683</td>
<td>3,423</td>
<td>41,720</td>
<td>3,339</td>
<td>42,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (refined)</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>1,043</td>
<td>15,763</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>12,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (unrefined)</td>
<td>63,240</td>
<td>4,730</td>
<td>69,970</td>
<td>48,9290</td>
<td>65,037</td>
<td>45,55,259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>40,607</td>
<td>9,505</td>
<td>50,192</td>
<td>3,21,152</td>
<td>45,446</td>
<td>2,72,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber</td>
<td>17,306</td>
<td>18,132</td>
<td>1,35,938</td>
<td>5,43,732</td>
<td>40,072</td>
<td>1,60,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other articles</td>
<td>2,82,705</td>
<td>1,19,367</td>
<td>4,02,072</td>
<td>6,96,429</td>
<td>3,10,734</td>
<td>5,90,834</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bengal administration Report, 1878-79, pp. 246-47.
No doubt, south-west Bengal possessed a long coast line yet much importance had not been given to the development of waterways. In the first half of this century, for extensive salt trade with Balasore, waterways started from Calcutta to Balasore via Midnapore. But after the famine of 1866 the importance of developing ports was felt and the Government spent a huge sum of money. The False point post was opened for trade in 1868, inviting the traders of Calcutta to establish trade in cotton piece and other consumer goods. They, in return, sent forest products, rice and handicrafts to the Jungle Mahals and Orissa.

The British Raj gave much importance to false point post for its advantageous location and constructed building for office and godown to make it a modern port where goods got easy carriage to Cuttack through the Kandrapara Canal. In 1885 the false point sustained considerable damage by cyclone. The bad harvest between 1889-90 sharply reduced the total value of import.

The serious change that came over the districts after 1870 had been the deterioration of the river channel regarding communication. The river Damodar used to be navigable upto Majhia and until the railway line for the East Indian Railway (Company) was constructed after 1895, coal was carried away from the Ranigunge Collieries by
boats, but no boats are now to be seen in any part of Bankura. Even Dalkisor (Darkeswar) was navigable up to Bankura for a part of the year until about 1880. The deterioration of the river has been partly due to the denudation of forest lands, while the navigability of Damodar was destroyed by the construction of the embankment in Burdwan as well as in Bankura and Midnapore lower down.

So long as the Darkeswar in Bankura was navigable, the export of goods to Garbeta and up to Tamluk in Midnapore continued. In the nineteenth century Rajagram was the centre of trade of Bankura district situated on the bank of the Darkeswar. Different types of goods were exported from Bankura.156 Navigability of the Kasai (the Kangsabati) in Bankura and Midnapore, like that of the Darkeswar and Damodar, was evident only in the rainy season. During this time a considerable quantity of timber was floated down it from Raipore to Midnapore district but, with the wholesale destruction of forest trees in the western jungle tracts, the traffic had greatly been reduced.157

The opening of the Railway line by the 1890s accelerated the process of decline of ports, as railway journey was found safer and freight charges were also low. But railway journey was made possible only in the twentieth century, a discussion on this topic is to follow in the next section. Attempts had also been made to make principal
rivers of this region navigable. The riverine trade, carried on through the coastal belt and rivers, faced much difficulty due to silt and denudation of forest lands. In July 1875, Vertainaes, executive engineer of Balasore division, submitted a report of two schemes to connect Balasore by a canal with Calcutta via the Hooghly river. For both the schemes, he submitted that the proposed range IV of Orissa high level canal, which was to be constructed, would pass through Badruck and Balasore. He suggested two routes from Balasore, the first route by joining range IV with Midnapore canal at Panskura and the second route by linking the Burabalong and the Subarnarekha rivers with a canal and finally the Hooghly canal with the Rupnara yan river. This scheme got favourable response from the Bengal Government and was called coastal canal scheme as it was to run near the sea coast. It was hoped that, after completion of the construction, the canal would be a busy passage between Calcutta and Orissa via Midnapore. 158

(c) **Railway Communication**

After the famine of 1866, the elite section of the rising middle class in south-west Bengal exercised, through newspapers and speeches, a mounting pressure on the authority to extend the railway facility in this region. The Famine Commission of 1867 had also found the need of the efficient means of communication as the best way for prevention of famines. The agitation and exigencies of the situation led the Government to rise to the occasion and,
on 5 August 1881, the Government of India allowed Hoare, Miller and Company to construct the railway line to connect the Central Provinces with the East Indian Railways system together with a branch through south-west Bengal and Orissa. The Company was permitted to occupy land required by railway lines.

The Bengal-Nagpur Railway through south-west Bengal was completed in 1889 and it was extended up to Sambalpur. The work of the East Coast Railways had been carried day and night to connect Calcutta with Madras through south-west Bengal and Cuttack. It was finally completed and opened for traffic in 1889. The opening of railways greatly facilitated the trade in rice and salt between Bengal, Orissa and Madras.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, owing to famine and scarcity, the Government had to take up the project, normally classed as unproductive but required on larger ground of famine protection. However, the administrators thought that too much expenditure on public works would have an unfavourable effect on the economy. Thus the public works always formed a rather weak aspect of the Anglo-Indian administration. The investment in the public works department was made only with an eye to quick return and thus when the people of south-west Bengal failed to utilise the opportunities offered by the Raj, the Raj
was criticised for stepping up investments in public works. In the fourth chapter a detailed study would be undertaken to explain how the capital input of the Raj in the agrarian economy through irrigation and road constructions facilitated property-making by the segment of the relatively affluent middle peasantry and led to the maximisation of rent and other tax collections from land holdings and how this in the ultimate analysis led to the pauperisation of the primary producers.

6. Administration of Forest resources:

It has been contended that the nineteenth century agrarian economy suffered from under-development. The concept of development, based on the Latin American experience, may be extended to the study of constraints to development of the agrarian economy in the south-west Bengal under the British Raj. It has been suggested by Andre Gunder Frank that the class interest of the capitalist imperialist power of Great Britain demanded under-development of colonial markets in the Asiatic, African and the Latin American bases for England's capitalistic development. Thus argued, it may be contended that the economic under-development of south-west Bengal was the result of its ruthless economic exploitation by the British Raj for nearly two hundred years. Economic growth in a country was
thought to be a picture of prosperity and measured by rise in income. In the absence of adequate statistical data to measure per capita income in this region, economic studies demand analysis of structural as well as the functional changes that might have had occurred as a direct impact of the British rule.

The vast area did not suffer from paucity of man power or surplus capital needed for investment in agriculture and village industry. While more than 80% of the population was rural yet not more than 48% of the national income was thought to be produced in the rural sector. This high proportion of population naturally occasioned disguised unemployment in the countryside and, with shortage of capital available to the primary producers, the economy resulted in under-development. It led to low levels of income and consequently over-population in agriculture when the population growth continued and little or no industrialization could be undertaken. Untapped resources in this region demanded technical knowledge as well as entrepreneurship not to be found at that stage.

Moreover, forestry and cattle breeding were continuing in a narrow marginal cycle. Luxuriant vegetation in the coastal and midland plain should have been an indication of rich soil. On the contrary, this soil was poorer and more fragile than that of the temperate region. The virgin jungles in the Rhum-ending tracts demanded scarcely anything from the soil because organic substance falling from the trees provided
its own humus. 167 But clearing of the marshy lands caused unpleasant surprise and sand was often found after the clearance of the Jalpai lands (i.e., lands for fuel consumption) in the barren salt tracts of the coastal region. Several causes may be mentioned for their low productivity. The monoculture common to this region was prone to disease and pests. The use of fertilizer was complicated in the temperate zones, specially in the hilly region, and livestock was less productive.

The political changes led to new developments in the administration of forest, a great source of wealth for this south-west region, for her economic development. Little attention was paid to the conservation of forest resources in the pre-British and early British period. The upland area was still covered in many parts with wide stretches of low scrub-jungle or young sal (Shorea Robusta) saplings, with occasionally a dense thorny undergrowth. In the west and south of this region, the trees of larger growth are found but in the central portion nothing but stunted jungle remains, all else having been cleared away by the woodmen or charcoal burners. The consequence is that, where no restriction is imposed, indiscriminate clearance of the wood caused the soil to rapidly become barren. Inspite of this, the Sal forest growth, which has been left or is springing up, is of some economic value and there are several jungle estates, which cropped either yearly for firewood or at larger intervals, for the same saplings.
In 1855, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General, promulgated for the first time an outline for forest conservancy for the whole country. Due to railway construction there was tremendous demand for timber to be used as sleepers. So Brandis was appointed as Inspector-General of forests in India for scientific exploitation of forest resources and also to promote forest conservation in India.  

The forest of this region is tropical rain forest. It looked potentially the chief natural resources for timber fuel, cellulose, resin, gum and camphor. It also provided cultivation of fodder for livestock, and prevented erosion of soil. Before 1861, in this region very little attention was paid to conservation of forest. In the first half of the nineteenth century, due to increase of population and pressure on land, there was large clearing of forest for shifting 'toila' and 'jhum' cultivation. This led to deforestation of this region. In addition, the peasantised tribals, pushed to the periphery of jungles by the more affluent middle peasantry, resorted to reckless cleaning and burning of extensive timber-producing tracts to practise shifting cultivation which is variously called jhum, podu, kunri and bewar. These ignorant people used to chop off many valuable sal trees for getting a few grams of dammer. They also shifted to other sites for cultivation leading to the relapse into thickets and jungles.
Widespread forest destruction in the nineteenth century south-west Bengal had far-reaching consequences. So the Government established a forest division in the year 1863-84 for the administration of forest resources on a scientific basis. Special directives were issued to appoint competent practical forest rangers to manage the forests.

After the Government's declaration of revenue forest in 1886-87, reserve forests were demarcated. The villagers, who were enjoying forests from time immemorial free of duty, were now subjected to commutation fees for the right to enjoy the produce of 'Khasra' forest. The peasants were allowed to cut a certain quantity of timber for agricultural implements on payment of licence fee at a reduced rate. For forest regulation, some rules were framed. To reclaim forest waste land, prior permission from the authority was considered compulsory. By the turn of the century, the scheme for conservation of forest was fully implemented to protect the growth of forests.

The Royal Commission of Agriculture in India had advocated the necessity of fostering a closer relation between the forest and agriculture departments since 1828. Serious soil erosion resulted from denudation of forest before 1861. The Raj helped to maintain forest wealth in this region. These forests now serve as chief supplier of raw materials to the growing industrial needs of India. The policy of conservation forced some of the peasantised tribals to settle down on plains but the rest are still left to shifting cultivation.
7. Attempts to introduce commercial agriculture

From the above analysis it is found that the ever-increasing problems of embankment administration of the nineteenth century in this region were not solved by the Company's government. The company's Raj, however, took bold steps to mitigate the ever-increasing problem of ryots but these proved inadequate to the needs of the situation. The cultivators of south-west Bengal in the nineteenth century, a relatively backward region in terms of exposure to the outside world, were generally conservative in their cultivation process. They had no incentive to learn and experiment with new methods of cultivation of cash crops for fear of enhanced land rent which could be found in parts of east Bengal. The peasants of this region, a part of underdeveloped Asiatic colonial country, were illiterate and tradition-bound.

Both in England and Europe a great change in agriculture had occurred by the early 1850's. The Industrial Revolution not only revolutionised the process of industrial output but also developed new farm machinery and fertilisers for mechanised cultivation. The Company's government strove to influence the peasants of south-west Bengal to accept the new mode of scientific cultivation by distributing new seeds and demonstrating rotation of crops on model farms. The contemporary British thinkers, like James Mill, thought that the promotion of private property and stimulation of agriculture by modern methods could alone save India from the imbalance in land-man ratio.
The Government of Bengal made futile attempts to popularise Carolina paddy after the famine of 1866. The cultivation of drought resistant aus paddy, brought from the Central Provinces, was also encouraged. To teach the peasant about the value of canal irrigation, twenty ryotwari farms were started in 1873 under the irrigation department. In these farms new crops were experimented with in order to demonstrate a comparison between irrigated and non-irrigated land. For these farms the Government granted money for five years.

Despite all these attempts, the cultivators remained firmly attached to their old traditional mode of cultivation, considering it perfect and sound in the face of unchanged infrastructure and lack of rapid capital formation in the countryside. Throughout the nineteenth century one may not find any improvement in the simple agricultural implements in this region. The peasant went on tilling his land exactly as his forefathers did, refusing to pay attention to the new capitalist mode of production when the agrarian economy of south-west Bengal had been tagged to the world capitalist market system. To the vast mass of peasantry, who suffered from uncertainty of tenure and feared distraint from occupancy rights, adoption of improved methods of cultivation was an object of apprehension, since improved cultivation might invite enhancement of rent and eventually distraint from holdings. Indigo and jute could not develop rapidly in
south-west Bengal mainly for climatic reason and partly for paucity of capital in the hands of the enterprising middle peasantry. Thus, subsistence agriculture, with possibility of marginal profit in one crop cultivation throughout the year, killed any incentive to introduce cash crop cultivation either by the chain of intermediary tenure-holders who were fast disappearing from the agrarian scene or by the emergent middle peasantry who acquired alternative avenues of income.

Of course, it is difficult to distinguish clearly between subsistence and cash crop farming due to the fact that poor subsistence agriculture in which no crop is produced for cash exchange at all is a rare phenomenon in south-west Bengal. 180

According to Binay Chaudhuri, the cultivation of cash crop was due to the development of internal and external communication system, opening up of the Suez Canal and liberalisation of tariff policy of the government. The Railways, which were opened in the second half of the nineteenth century, turned out to be a new economic force and significantly contributed to the growth of commercial agriculture in Bengal. 181 The demand of more bales of cotton for the growing industrial needs of England after the American Civil War in 1860 led to rise of cotton cultivation in the black soil belt of the Bombay Presidency.182 But the south-west Bengal remained neglected for centuries for development of sugarcane, cotton or jute cultivation mainly due to paucity of water and capital resources. This is the premise which would be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.
When commercial agriculture and plantation economy developed in parts of Bihar and Bengal, the condition in south-west Bengal was not favourable to its development. The variation of climate leading to inundation, flood and drought caused insecurity in commercial agriculture in the first half of the nineteenth century. Attempts were made to check the inundations and floods in the second half of the nineteenth century with protective embankments and canal system, though the arrangements proved to be inadequate. The roads, railways and canal for traffic were all constructed in the latter half of this century. Moreover, despite favourable conditions for developing transport system, the process of rent structure and tendency of subdivision and fragmentation of holdings, persistence of a hierarchy of parasitic intermediaries and the mounting expenditure in unproductive socio-religious rites sapped the saving capacity of the peasantry. Except rice, no other cash crop could develop on a large scale. The Government's decision to introduce irrigation system to increase agricultural production and material well-being of the peasants by encouraging them for cash crop cultivation, as already discussed in the previous sections, led to the opening of the Orissa-Midnapore canal in 1866. The shameless extortion and fraud practised by the zamindars upon the ryots impeded the use of canal water for cash crop production.
Besides, the cultivation of cash crop required finance. But the peasantry of this region, overburdened with debt, were reluctant to execute fresh loan for the cash and commercial crop cultivation, which had uncertain demand in the market. In this region there was no capitalist or financial house to give the peasantry adequate loan on easy terms and the seeds required for cash crop cultivation. Thus, the peasantry in this region concentrated more upon monoculture of paddy cultivation which required seasonal rainfall for a fair harvest. The crisis in the agrarian economy may be studied in terms of the decline of village handicrafts following the withdrawal of the Company’s trade monopoly and investments by 1856. The decline of village crafts led to loss of demand for agrarian products and heavy concentration of population in subsistence agriculture. In the next chapter the history of decline in production and trade of village crafts would be discussed.

a) Indigo

The Company’s Government emphasised upon commercial agriculture in this area but their efforts did not succeed. Here indigo produce was valued at Rs. 4½ lakhs only per annum. There were still a few small factories in this region but the indigo could not be made of sufficient quantity and quality in southwest Bengal. One feature of the nineteenth century agrarian economy in Bankura was the attempts by some Europeans at
commercialisation of agriculture. In Bankura and Midnapore, as in some other parts of Bengal and eastern Bihar, some Indian landlords and European planters bought farms with thousands of acres of land at a cheap rate and replaced paddy with indigo cultivation, which converted the free cultivators to a class of serfs. Most of the planters, organising big concerns for producing indigo to acquire monopoly in the European market, came from the West Indies where slavery had been lately abolished. They were encouraged by the laissez-faire policy of the British government formulated in 1833. This was even supported by Dwarakanath Tagore, Raja Rammohan Roy and other Bengali elites of the period, as they thought that the overall profits would be distributed among the cultivators themselves and the means of communication in the countryside would improve with the improving lot of the peasantry.

The European indigo planters turned themselves into zamindars according to Reg. VIII of 1819 but only in the Nadia district the Company invested a capital of 18 lakhs of rupees. They as money-lenders used to pay usurious advance to the cultivators which could never be returned owing to their ignorance about fictitious book keeping of the concerned accountants. The cultivators were subjected to forced labour and even physical torture by the 'amlas', accountants
and planters. Some of the big concerns, belonging to the Bengal Indigo Company, used to run not less than six factories composed of not less than fifty villages. As economic and physical torture over the primary producers reached its climax, the producers preferred to flee from the villages. Moreover, water-logging embankments and indifference of planters to improve village sanitation and public health led to rapid spread of malaria and other tropical diseases.¹⁹⁰ Lord Macaulay, in his minute of October 17, 1833, had unequivocally stated that the leases for indigo cultivators were illegal and objectionable as they had converted the peasants into serfs.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century a new chapter was opened to resist the oppression of the indigo planters by mass upsurge. So long as the militant resistance movements were organised by the landlords to safeguard the interests of their own peasantry, the revolts could not be termed as feudal anarchy. In the 1850's the revolts became sporadic and shook the conscience of the radical middle class intellectuals like Sisir Ghosh and Harish Mukherjee who organised public opinion against the planters through press. Messrs Gisborne and Company opened a number of indigo factories in the district of Bankura in the latter part of the nineteenth century. On April 9, 1884 the Bengali weekly Somprakash commented against the Company's managers in the indigo kuthis.

b) Sugarcane:

Sugarcane could not grow extensively in this region. Indigenous methods were generally followed for the manufacture
of cane juice and molasses. The East India Company decided to make investment on sugar as an important exportable article. In 1790 attempts to introduce West Indian methods of sugarcane cultivation in Bengal were undertaken by the Company. But the demand for Bengal sugar in Great Britain declined after a few years and, in 1801 the commercial company withdrew their new establishment at Satipore. Thus sugarcane production only remained as a commodity of the home market.

c) **Opium**

According to Buchanan, the East India Company's opium business and plantation in this region was not satisfactory. Cultivation of opium was, to some extent, extensive in Bihar. The planters were sometimes not properly paid on the plea that it was not of standard quality. Even the cultivators were oppressed by the inferior servants of the opium factories. Smuggling of opium was considerable. The Company's inferior servants amassed larger fortune through illegal gratification throughout the nineteenth century and the opium wars in China were the direct result of poppy cultivation mainly in Bihar but partly in Bankura.

d) **Cotton**

The early decades of the nineteenth century showed that this south-west region i.e., Midnapore and Bankura, was prosperous in cotton industry. The quality of raw cotton was not, however, attractive. The Company's Government, to some extent, tried to alleviate the quality and quantity of the
cotton plantation. But grade one cotton was not grown here and with the decline of the cotton industry the emphasis on cotton plantation lessened.

e) Conclusion:

A study of the crisis in agriculture which would be undertaken in the fourth chapter would reveal that the traditional economy of India, and as such of south-west Bengal, was at a very low level of development before 1800, with a very low per capita income and without any of the preconditions for industrialisation.

It has been advocated that the benefits conferred by the British Raj, leading to peace and stability by irrigation, rail road construction, mining and industrial development must have induced a substantial increase in national as well as per capita income. But even then India, particularly these two districts in south-west Bengal, persistently failed to industrialise, owing mainly to "the brevity of the gestation period in relation to the backwardness of traditional economy and inadequacy of the government's laissez-faire policies". But this school failed to notice the exploitative nature of the British Raj and blamed natural hindrances like flood and low productivity of the soil as endemic to industrial development. 192
Despite this line of argument, an impartial review reveals that the process of decline had started much earlier. During the Mughal period, despite heavy prosperity on the surface, the general economic condition of south-west Bengal, was far from good. Establishment of Mughal rule led to the introduction of two elements in the population structure: 

1. first, the money-lending class of Gujrat and Rajputana belonging to the Hindu community and second, a warrior caste of Punjab and Central India mainly of the Lala Punjabi and Muslim communities. It introduced zabti system in the conquered territories and continued payment of land tax in cash to the royal exchequer at Delhi via Bengal. But in the latter half of the seventeenth century, with the stability of far-flung empire, the feudal lords could enlarge their money income by intensifying exploitation of the original producers through extra imposts or abwabs or by changing the mode and ratio of appropriation of land-rent between the feudal state and individual feudal landowners.

A case study of these two districts of south-west Bengal would reveal that crisis in the agrarian economy, which engulfed the whole region, was accelerated due to the British Raj, but the process had started much earlier. There was no denying that the British Raj tried to retrieve the situation by ensuring order out of chaos in property
rights and undertaking works of public utility, but they
failed to stem the tide of this decline. Nonetheless, the British Raj became the catalytic agent to accelerate the process of the crisis. In the subsequent chapters, the present study would aim at analysing the depth and nature of this crisis and assessing the government's measures to retrieve the economic misery by restoring order out of chaos in property interests.
References:


6. Computed from the revenue records by the author.


8. One historian has described the Permanent Settlement with the zamindar as 'a case of mistaken identity'. Ratna Lekha Ray, *Change in Bengal Agrarian Society 1760-1850* (Delhi, 1980), p. 73. An excellent monograph on these aspects of Bengal's rural history is Sirajul Islam, *The Permanent Settlement in Bengal: A Study of its operation 1790-1819* (Dacca, 1979).

10. LSS O'Malley, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Sikkim (Provincial Geographies of India, Cambridge, 1917), pp. 3-16.


14. SSR Midnapore, p. 41.


27. Originally adopted from the Orissa land settlements during the Gajapati rule which was ordinarily 12 to 16 rekha or straight lines.


31. *RAB*, 1893, pp. 53-103.


34. SSR, Bankura, pp. 49-56.
36. From B. Mason, TSA dated 21 February, 1803 to the Secretary, Fort St. George, PBR, Vol.XXVII, Part I, MC.
37. G. Ward, Asst. Sect. Board of Rev. 15 April, 1814 to R. Vansittart, Collector of Midnapore, MC.
38. RAB, 1872, p. 103.
43. Ascoli, op. cit., pp. 76-78.
44. Governor-General's Minute, February 3, 1790, Progs. of Board of Revenue, July 23, 1792.
45. Probodh Chandra Sarkar, Shalful (historical novel), 1897, Chapt. 3 & 8; J.C. Price, Notes on the History of Midnapore, Calcutta 1876, pp. 78-90.
47. Robertson, SSR, Bankura, p. 67.
48. RAB, 1874-75, Calcutta, 1875, p. 15.


SSR, Bankura, p. 67.

51. Petition of Mundoolal Rai, Tallokdar of Narain Pookarea, 12 Mauzas of Kismat Kassejoorah, from Charles Dawes, Registrar, Revenue Board, 27 September, 1812 MC.

52. To D.R. Mangle, Acting Secretary to the Sudder Board of Revenue in the Lower Provinces from C. Macsween, Secretary to government, Council Chamber, 29 March, 1833 MC.

53. To J.J. Doyly, Collector of Midnapore from G.A. Bund, Secretary, Court of Wards, Lower Provinces, 31 January, 1829 MC.

54. W.W. Williamson, Joint Commissioner, Nurshingharn Camp, 4 April, 1833 to J.J. Doyly, Collector of Midnapore MC.

55. From Crommelin, Hidgallee, April 27, 1814 to R. Vansittart, Collector of Midnapore, To H.J. Travers, Collector of Midnapore from Secretary Revenue Board, June 16, 1812 MC.


57. PBR, December 16, 1806 (Misc.).
58. S. Davis, Collector of Burdwan, January 9, 1794 to the Board of Revenue, R. Guha and A. Mitra (ed), Vide Burdwan Letters Issued, 1788-1800, p. 93.


60. Petition of the Raja of Burdwan vide Rev. Dept. Consultation, No. 19, May 7, 1819.

61. EORJ, (OC) No. 37, October 8, 1819.

62. EORJ (Civil), Original Consultation, No. 37, October 8, 1819, abstract of the application made in the Civil Court of Burdwan for leave to sell tenures on account of arrears of revenue for 1818-19 AD.

63. Collection of papers regarding pattani sale law, EOR, 1827, pp. 19-110.

64. EORJ, (C) OC No. 39, October 8, 1819.

65. PBR, November 23, 1823.

66. PBR, December 14, 1823 (Misc.).

67. Letters to court - dt. July 30, 1819, Para 48; Vide general letters to the Court of Directors in the Territorial Dept. (Rev.), 1816-34.

68. Collector of Burdwan to EOR, January 28, 1826, PEOR, June 20, 1826.


71. Despatch (Home, Revenue and Agriculture Department) to the Secretary of State, No. 38 of 1880, Para 25-28.
72. Bengal Revenue Department Progs. 29 January, 1833, No. 3, Secretary to the Governor General to Government of Bengal, 29 September, 1832, Para 10.
74. Bengal Revenue Department Progs. 29 January, 1833, No. 3, Secretary to Governor General to Government of Bengal, 29 September 1832, Para 10.
75. Bengal Judicial (Civil) Progs, 22 March 1827, Paras 13-14.
76. Selection from papers relating to the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, Calcutta, 1920; Speech in the Viceroy's Council, 13 March, 1833, p. 120.
77. ibid, pp. 120-122.
81. The Hindoo Patriot, 15 October, 1857.
82. Papers relating to the passing of the Rent Act X of 1859, pp. 78-82.
83. ibid, p. 87, letter of 1 December 1858.


87. Bengal Board of Rev. Progs, 3 May 1861, No. 128 and ibid, No. 139, Board of Revenue to the Govt. of Bengal, 3 May 1861, Para 22.


92. C. Palit, op. cit., p. 4, 139, 176-78, 199-200.


94. Papers relating to the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885.

95. ibid, Extracts Proceeding of the Viceroy's Council, 2 March, 1885, Ilbert's speech, pp. 501-502.


98. LSS O'Malley, *EDC*, Cuttack, pp. 87-88.


104. *Reports of the Committee appointed under the famine commission to enquire into the management of Irrigation Works in Madras, Orissa and Midnapore*, Calcutta, 1879, p. 33.

105. PLB (PWD) Prog. No. 26, 'Secretary to Board of Revenue of Lower province of Bengal to Secretary Government of Bengal', PWD, 27 February, 1866 Prog. of June, 1866 (WBA).

106. Home Dept. (Revenue Branch) Prog. No. 48, Proclamation issued to zamindars and ryots by Commissioner of Cuttack by order of government of India, letter No. 2252, 23 June, 1866, Prog. of June 1867.


110. PWD (Civil) Works Irrigation, Prog. No. 51, 'Government of India, PWD to the Joint Secretary to the Government of Bengal', 8 March 1871, p. 175.

111. RAB, 1871-72, p. 263.

112. Revenue and Agriculture Dept. Prog. No. 51, 'C.P. Metcalf to the Secretary of Board of Revenue of lower province of the Bengal Presidency', 11 July, 2885, Prog. of November 1867.

113. W.A. Inglish, Narrative of the Principal events connected with the flood embankments of the Orissa and of the origin and development of Orissa canal, Calcutta, 1877, p. 37.

114. RAB, 1877-78, Calcutta, 1878, p. 273.

115. Revenue and Agriculture Dept (Revenue Branch), Prog. No. 52, 'J.M. Macneil to the Secretary to the Government of India', 30 June, 1886, Prog. of November, 1887.

116. Revenue and agriculture Dept. (Revenue Branch), Prog. No. 29, 'Extracts from the Proceedings of the government of Bengal', PWD, Irrigation Branch, 4 November, 1884, Progs. of November, 1884.

118. PWD (Civil Works Irrigation) Prog. No. 19A, 'Secretary of the government of India', PWD, 4 June, 1885, Prog. of August, 1885.

119. Revenue and Agriculture Dept/Revenue Branch, Prog. No. 52, 'From Secretary to the government of Bengal', PWD to Sec'y to Government of India', in PWD, September 1, 1886, Prog. of November, 1887; Revenue and Agriculture Dept (Revenue Branch), Prog. No. 54, 'C.F. Metcalf to the Secretary of Board of Revenue lower province of Bengal', 11 July 1885, Prog. of November, 1887.

120. Revenue and Agriculture Dept (Revenue Branch), 'Secretary to Government of India PWD to Secretary of Government of Bengal in PWD', 27 September, 1887, Progs. of November, 1887.


128. Fort William, India House Correspondence, Vol. IX, encloser IC and V, pp. 343, 346-49.
129. Progs. of the committee of Revenue, dt. July 29, 1782.
130. Progs. of the Committee of Revenue, dt. March 27, 1783.
133. Progs. of the GG in C, July 29, 1791.
135. PBR (Misc.), June 22, 1804.
138. PWD/Civil Works Irrigation, Progs. No. 8, Note by F.H. Rundel Joining Secretary to the Government of Bengal, November 5, Progs. of 31 July, 1868 (W.B.A.).
139. W.A. Inglish, op. cit, p. 216.
140. RAB, 1860-61, p. 67.
141. RAB, 1860-61, p. 67
142. PWD/Civil Works Irrigation, Prog. No. 204, T.E. Ravenshaw to offg. Superintending Engineer, Cuttack Circle, 29 August, 1866, Prog. of May 1867 (NAI).
143. PWD (Civil Works General), Prog. No. 10479, Joint Secretary to the Government of Bengal in PWD Irrigation Branch to Secretary to the Govt. of India, PWD, 17 December, 1867, Prog. of March, 1867 (NAI).

144. PWD/Civil Works Irrigation, Prog. No. 4A, F.H. Rundell to the Agent East India Company, 16 February, 1865, Prog. of May, 1865.

145. PWD/Civil Works Irrigation, Prog. No. 2A, T.E. Ravanshaw to offg. Superintending Engineer, Cuttack Circle, 29 August, 1866, Prog. of May 1867.

146. W.A. Inglish, op. cit, pp. 15-16.

147. W.W. Hunter, op. cit, pp. 135-38; Hunter, Bengal Ms Records, No. 694, 6038, 6122, 6180, 6183, 6340, 6384-85, 7150, 7217 and 7309.


151. J.E. Gestrell, op. cit, pp. 120-24.

152. PWD/Civil Works Communication Prog. No. 1, Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, 11 December, 1865, Progs. of February, 1866.

154. RAB, for the year 1877-78, Calcutta 1878, p. 104.


156. Census Handbook Bankura, 1951, p. XX.


159. PWD/Railway Department, Prog. No. 150, T.C. Hope to offg. Secretary, Government of India, Dept. of Finance and Commerce to Mr. Hoarce Miller and Company, 5 August, 1881, Prog. of November, 1881.


161. PLB/Separate Revenue, Prog. No. 125, Commissioner of Excise of the Bengal Presidency to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces, 11 November 1897, Prog. of February 1898.


163. Amiya Kumar Bagchi, Foreign Capital and economic growth in India, A Schematic View, paper read at the seminar of IIA study Simla, October 1969.

164. Andre Gundar Frank, On Capitalist under development, Bombay, 1975, pp. 4-10.


174. PWD/Revenue Forest, Prog. No. 63, D. Brandon to the agent of Governor General for Central India, PWD, 25 September, 1867, Progs. of the month September, 1867.


178. *RAB*, for the year 1874-75, Calcutta, 1875, p. 150.

179. Revenue and Agricultural Dept/Agriculture and Horticulture branch, Prog. No. 21, A.B. Hume to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in Revenue Dept, 27 June 1873, Progs. of July 1873 (NAI).


184. PWD/Irrigation Selection, No. 4, Note by Lt. Colonel Faig, The C.E. of Bengal, Irrigation Branch, 29 May, 1873.

185. Revenue and Agriculture Dept/Revenue Branch, Progs. No. 52, from the Secretary to the Government of India in PWD, 1st September, 1886, Progs. of November 1887.

186. *RAB*, 1873, Divisional and district annual report, from C.T. Buckland Esq, Commissioner of Burdwan division, to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal (General Dept.), p. 9394.

188. Dinabandhu Mitra, *Mildarnan* (Kar, Majumdar & Co. ed.)


191. BT (C), p. 14, February 1801.
