CHAPTER - III.

"Rule of Raja Tejchand in Burdwan (1783-1800)"

(First Phase).
In July 1779, Raja Tejchand, a boy of hardly fifteen years of age, was put in charge, by the Company, of the administration of his ancestral Zemindary of Burdwan. But it was observed in November 1780 that the Raja had incurred revenue balances and a heavy amount of debt (approximately of Rs.900,000-0-0) from Nobkissen Bahadur (who was the 'Sezawul' of Burdwan between 1780-82). The Raja having failed in liquidating his revenue balances and loan as well to Nobkissen, the latter was put in charge of the revenue collection of the zemindary of Burdwan in November 1780. Nobkissen was dismissed from the office of the 'Sezawul' by the Company, when in 1782 he failed in paying the full revenue demand of zemindary of Burdwan.

Consequently, in 1783, a settlement for the Zemindary of Burdwan was concluded with Raja Tejchand on a lease for three years. The Raja being young (nineteen years old) and inexperienced, the entire charge of the collections was vested in the 'Carcoon' (i.e. the manager) Juggut Narayan Mitra. But Juggut Narayan Mitra was not very sincere and honest in the discharge of revenue payments and in April 1784 there accumulated a heavy revenue balance amounting to Rs.341,947-10-10 against the Zemindar of Burdwan.
The 'Carcoon' prayed to the Council for a remission of the rents on the plea of drought. The Council had information that the revenues of the Zemindary of Burdwan had been collected in full, from the 'mofussil' by the 'Carcoon' and they passed an order for the arrest of Juggut Narayan Mitra if the balance was not discharged immediately. On May 24, 1784 it was reported to the Council that Raja Tejchand had paid up nearly the whole of the aforesaid revenue balance.

The relationship of the mother and the son i.e. between Rani Bishnukumari and Raja Tej Chand during these years was not very cordial. It has been mentioned earlier that in 1779 Rani Bishnukumari was relieved of her charge of the administration of the zemindary of Burdwan and the same was entrusted to her son Raja Tejchand.

The Rani with her assistant Kissen Ram Mitra (who had charge of 'Dewry' (Private) Mahals) were creating troubles in the adjustment and collection of the revenues of Burdwan. Moreover, there had been a revenue balance of Rs.40,000-0-0 from the 'dewry' (i.e. private) lands, outstanding against Kissen Ram Mitra. When troops were sent to bring Rani Bishnukumari and Kissen Ram Mitra to Burdwan, both of them took refuge under the Dutch Flag at Serampore.
Raja Tejchand requested the Council that his mother, Rani Bishnukumari, should immediately be served with a 'perwannah' to return to Amboah, the habitual residence of the widow Ranis of Burdwan Raj family. The Raja was also willing to pay all the allowances that might be necessary for the expenses of his mother at Amboah.

Subsequently, in September 1785, Raja Tejchand settled amicably all his accounts against Kissen Mitra and appointed him again in the charge of the 'dewry mehals'. Thus after a peaceful settlement with his mother, the Raja could discharge in full the revenues of the year of 1784-85.

Statement of the receipts of revenue from Burdwan during 1778-84.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cash received</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>Cash received</td>
<td>₹4,080,958-1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1779</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹3,823,560-15-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹3,958,252-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1781</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹4,174,524-8-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹4,292,790-15-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹4,289,172-3-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>' '</td>
<td>₹4,087,420-10-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Vide: Proceedings of the Committee of Revenue dated June 11, 1785).
Though Burdwan was ceded to the Company on September 27, 1760, the district Collectorate was established in 1786 and the earliest records in the Collectorate were found to be of June, 1786. This Collectorate records supply valuable information so far as the relationship between the Rajas of Burdwan and the Company is concerned. In 1786, the district of Burdwan included the whole of Hooghly, parts of the districts of Bankura, Howrah and Midnapore. It should be remembered that the greater portion of the Asansol Sub-division was then exclusive of the district at that time.

The revenue payments from this district were very irregular. Raja Tejohand often disqualified himself in the payment of the revenues of his district. John Kinloch, the Collector of Burdwan, wrote to the Board (i.e. the Board of Revenue) in June 1786 that a balance amounting to £176,462-0-0 was due from the Raja.

Raja Tejohand prayed to the Board for a suspension of the payment, but the Board considered the pleas urged by the Raja as 'totally inadmissible'. The Board ordered the Collector that if the balance was not liquidated by the Raja within three days from June 23, 1786, he (i.e. the Collector)
should *then* attach such quantity of his private property (beginning with House and Furniture) as may suffice to discharge the amount. 8 Ultimately this revenue balance was recovered when the Raja's house was surrounded by troops.

One of the main causes contributing to untimely payment of revenues of the district of Burdwan was the very uncertain nature of the river Damodar. Damodar, one of the main rivers of Bengal, passes through the heart of Burdwan and over-flooded its banks almost every alternate year. This river for its severity of loss, caused to the inhabitants (who were residing by the side of the river Damodar) was known as the 'Sorrow of Bengal'. In 1787, Burdwan witnessed a severe flood in Damodar. Raja Tejohand, as usual, prayed for a remission of the rent. The Board was not willing to grant such a remission and observed, '... it being under such circumstances incumbent on the Zemindars and not on the Government to grant such relief as may be wanted by the ryots'.

It appears, therefore, that the Company was not in a position to sustain any loss in its revenue demands arising out of the natural calamities. (Mention can be made to the revenue collection of the famine year of 1770 when the Company collected from Burdwan the highest amount of revenue since this
district was ceded to them in September 1760). When the Raja declared his inability to collect the revenues, Kinloch, the Collector, was ordered to collect the same on behalf of the Company without paying any attention to the miseries of the people of Burdwan.9

The inundation caused heavy damage to the embankments. The Raja was advised to keep the embankments in proper state of repair with the annual 'poolbundy' (i.e. sum granted by the Company to the Raja for the maintenance of the embankments) allowance of Rs. 60,000. He was further warned not to cause any damage to the new military road, constructed by Rankin (which passed through his district) and to prevent the ryots from cutting the same road for irrigation purposes.10

In the matter of realisation of rents which told heavily on the ryots, Shore in June, 1788, pointed out that the 'pottahs' (i.e. leases) in Burdwan were chiefly of the nature of 'teoka' which imposed a consideration upon the ryots to be answerable for all losses and they, perhaps, never obtain remission of the demands, which they were not in a position to satisfy. So they had no recourse to flight on the occasion of the loss of rents. If the Government
suspended any demand, the farmers seldom obtain any remissions.

The correspondence between the Board of Revenue and the Collector seem to show that Kinloch had a sympathetic attitude towards the Raj Family and he often hesitated to adopt the ultimate course of sending troops for the realisation of revenue balances. Kinloch died at the 'Rumnah' at Burdwan on September 2, 1788 and was succeeded by Thomas Brooks, Head Assistant and Registrar of Burdwan. This was only a temporary arrangement and finally in December 1788, Lawrence Mercer took over the charge of the Collectorship of that place. Mercer did not show the same friendly attitude to the Raja. He complained to the Board that Raja Tejchand had developed a tendency of ignoring the Collector and was practising the method of settling his revenue business directly with the Presidency at Calcutta.

During this period, Bani Bishmukumari, mother of Raja Tejchand, was living at Amboah with her monthly allowance of Rs.4000–0–0. From there she was keeping a close watch over the activities of her son Tejchand at Burdwan. In January 1789, she requested the Board for the dismissal of Dyah Chand, Manager
and Comptroller of the Country and Revenue, as his policies had ruinous effects upon the Raja. The Board could understand the gravity of her complaint and her request was complied with when the Board ordered Dyah Chand to quit the district. The Board of Revenue also wanted that Raja Tejchand should maintain an efficient administration of the district.

The monthly establishment of the Company in Burdwan in 1788-89 amounted to Rs.4985-0-0. The only building in the Company's possession was the Factory House and it was also the residence of the Collector.

*The detailed expenditure of the establishment at Burdwan:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.Kinloch - Collector - monthly pay</td>
<td>Rs.1500-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus House Rent</td>
<td>Rs.150-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T.Brooke - Head Assistant and Registrar</td>
<td>Rs. 500-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.A.Brooke - Second Assistant</td>
<td>Rs. 30-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munshi Allowance</td>
<td>Rs. 200-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.Collie - Surgeon - Pay</td>
<td>Rs.580-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plus House Rent</td>
<td>Rs. 556-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowance to the Diwan and Officers of the Collectorate</td>
<td>Rs. 719-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowance to the Darogah and Officers of Adalat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To J.Kinloch - Magistrate for Foujdari</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Sepoy Guard plus Jail and Cutcherry Rent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth mentioning here that during this period the Raja of Burdwan was responsible for peace and tranquility of his zamindary. He had in his possession 'pykes' or armed peons who were entrusted with the duties of peace-making of the zamindary. They were often granted 'chakeran lands'. These lands were granted 'free-of-rent' to those persons whose services were reserved by the Zemindar.

In accordance with this policy, Raja Tejchand of Burdwan was made responsible when the treasures of the Zeminder of Beerbhook amounting to Rs.33,000-0-0 were snatched away by robbers within the territorial jurisdiction of the zamindary of Burdwan. J. Sherburne, the Collector of Beerbhook, wrote to Thomas Brooke, the Acting Collector of Burdwan, on October 15, 1788 that if the Raja of Burdwan failed to recover the amount robbed the loss would ultimately fall upon his treasury.14

In 1788-89, Raja Tejchand prayed for an alternative settlement of the country owing to its deplorable condition due to drought and inundations. The Board was reluctant to grant such an alternative assessment and the Raja declined to renew his engagements on the terms of 1788. The order was then issued by the Council 'to farm out the district of Burdwan in small dimensions.' The allowance of the Raja was fixed at 5% on the net collections including the allowance of Rs.4000-0-0 per month settled upon his mother Bishnukumari.15
The Company, it appears, was making series of experiments with the revenues of Burdwan. But this plan also was not successful and on August 10, 1789 a new agreement was concluded between Raja Tejchand and the Company for the year of 1789-90. The revenue of the district of Burdwan was assessed at Rs.3804,360-1-3-3. The Board of Revenue was a hard task-master in the field of revenue collection and the agreement that was signed by the Raja bore a clear testimony to this. Raja Tejchand had to state in this agreement, '......I...... engage that I will prefer no complaints to Government for any deductions of revenue on account of drought, inundation or under any pretence what so ever.'

Amount of revenue payable in each month was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bysack</td>
<td>Rs.169,956-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyte</td>
<td>Rs.168,453-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assar</td>
<td>Rs.169,598-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawn</td>
<td>Rs.168,823-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadwan</td>
<td>Rs.237,931-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assin</td>
<td>Rs.368,005-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caurtick</td>
<td>Rs.233,802-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augum</td>
<td>Rs.826,939-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poose</td>
<td>Rs.797,615-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maugh</td>
<td>Rs.336,020-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phagun</td>
<td>Rs.170,178-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chyte</td>
<td>Rs.157,240-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Vide - 'Burdwan Letters Received - 1788-1802' - pp.202, ed. by A. Mitra).
He was further asked to keep the embankments in a proper state of repair and was made responsible for any theft or robbery committed within his seminary. It was also stated in the agreement that for any balance of revenue, adequate portion of his land would be sold to the liquidation of the same. The agreement was agreed upon for one year only. The Board was desirous of continuing the same agreement with the Raja if he was able to pay the revenue in full, due to Government without committing oppression to the ryots.  

But the commitment could not be honoured. In June 1789, the pergunnah of Mundulghat, the property of the Raja of Burdwan, was sold by the Company, at the 'Khalsa' for the sum of Rs.165,971-2-0 due from Raja Tejchand on account of the revenue balance. Pergunnah Mundulghat was purchased by Gurudas Sen, Jugmohan Mitra Radhakanta Ghose, Radhachurn Roy, Petambar Ghose, and Thakurdas jointly for the sum of Rs.66200-0-0 'subject to the annual payment of Rs.210,749-15-2 being the proportion of the land-tax due from this pergunnah. ...' 

The Board again ordered on March 16,1791, for the sale of the Raja's lands for the sum of Rs.33274-10-8-2 outstanding against him and on May 20, 1791, the pergunnah of Chittooah was sold for the realisation of the revenue balance. 

* The office in which revenue work of the Muhammadan and early British Government was done.
In July 1791, Baja Tejchand purchased a part of the Bissenpore Zemindary. But in September the Board of Revenue ordered C.A. Bruce, the Acting Collector of Burdwan, to resell 'such portions of the Raja's late purchase in Bissenpore' as would be necessary to liquidate his revenue balances. 19

But Grant entered a caveat against these high handed proceedings. He observed that till the time of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal in 1793 'it had not been usual to resort to the sale of lands for the recovery of the arrears of revenue... 20 Grant, perhaps, was mistaken in supplying the real state of affairs.

There are clear references in the letters, that passed between the Collectors of Burdwan and the Board of Revenue, of lands being sold, of the property of the Raja of Burdwan, for the recovery of revenue arrears. These letters are dated prior to the implementation of the Permanent Settlement and some of the instances (e.g. the sale of the pargunnahs of Mundulghat and Chittooah, sale of parts of Bissenpore Zemindary) have already been mentioned.

We can now turn to the mode of payment of rent adopted in Burdwan. Rent could be paid either in cash or by the produce of the soil. When paid in cash it was known as 'nagad', but the
produce rent fell into two categories - 'Sanja' and 'Khamar'. Again 'Khamar' rent was of two kinds - 'Kut Khamar' and 'Khal Khamar'. The assessment of each pargannah depended on these three kinds.

Hesilrige, the officer, when deputed in Bissenpore in Company's service wrote on March 16, 1790 that the 'Sanja' lands 'pay at all times the same, be the season less or more favourable or lands altogether unproductive'. According to the quality of the lands they pay from one and a half to five maunds of grain per annum.21

It can be assumed that this mode of payment was also prevailing in the neighbouring district of Burdwan. Robert Ireland, the Collector of Burdwan, observed in subsequent years that the 'Sanja' was 'payable in kind with the quantity of grain specified.22 But the 'Khamar' lands, '...having no native tenants' were cultivated by 'vagrant husbandmen who wander from place to place in quest of labour...'.23

John Kinloch, the Collector, informed the Board on May 20, 1788, of the existence of these 'Khamar' lands in Burdwan. In his opinion 'the Comar(i.e. Khamar) lands have no settled tenants but are cultivated by contract the terms being various in various parts of the district.' In some cases the cultivator retains the
whole produce and 'pays a certain amount in money calculated upon the price with the same article may bear in the adjacent market.'

Regarding the distinction between 'Kut Khamar' and 'Khal Khamar' a portion of Hesilriga's letter can be quoted to illustrate the point. 'The Coot (i.e. kut) is an estimate of the quantity of grain a field will produce.' This estimate was generally made by five or more of the principal men of the village with the help of the 'gomostah', i.e. the officer appointed by the Zemindar to collect the rent.

Half the produce of the soil was to be paid to the Government. When the harvest was gathered, the 'gomostah' and the ryot would make a division of it, 'the former taking from each heap as much as he can draw at once with both hands as the further advantage to Government ... and a somewhat less quantity for himself.' These 'Khamar' ryots as historian Dow observed, had neither the implements of agriculture nor stock, depended solely on the farmer for advance in cash.

At the time of introduction of the decennial settlement in Bengal in 1790, Burdwan was let in farm for ten years and the settlement was made with the farmers. Raja Tejchand had a heavy balance outstanding against him and was debarred from the settlement. Lawrence Mercer, the Collector of Burdwan, ascertained
that if the Raja of Burdwan was allowed to exercise any authority whatever over the farmers it would be attended with the most fatal consequences to the revenues of Burdwan. He was afraid that

're of the principal people who now wish to take farms will immediately withdraw their proposals when they find they are in any manner to be placed under the power of the Raja'.

The farmers advanced their terms for the fertile lands of Burdwan, no proposals for the places were received by the Board which were innundated. * This lands bore a 'jumma' of Rs.623,330-3-14.

But no experiment was found effective; the same story of revenue balances was repeated. Mercer, the Collector of Burdwan, informed the Board on March 9, 1791, that the revenue balance

* No adequate proposals had been made for the following lands:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Jumma Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boyrah</td>
<td>Rs.166,566-9-16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chittooh</td>
<td>Rs.107,164-10-12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balgur</td>
<td>Rs.838, 22-1-7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renhetty</td>
<td>Rs.705, 24-4-19.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahabad</td>
<td>Rs.389, 36-12-8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdah</td>
<td>Rs.667, 83-12-18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joypore</td>
<td>Rs.642, 54-0-3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poolparah</td>
<td>Rs.172, 61-3-16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haut Bansborah</td>
<td>Rs.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fash Coash Soochey</td>
<td>Rs.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total = Rs.623,330-3-14.

due from the farmed mehals amounted to Rs. 431,942-10-5. He was of opinion that the farmers should be given time to liquidate the balance rather than dispossessed. Regarding the cause of the balance he wrote to the Board that the people of the Raja of Burdwan had caused obstructions in the realisation of the revenues and the abundance of crops had adversely affected the position of the farmers. Due to this abundance no market could be found and the crops were sold at one-third of the price of the previous month of February 1791.

The farmers having failed, there was no other alternative than to the settling of the lands with Raja Tej Chand for the remaining portion of the decennial system. In June 1791, a difficulty was felt in obtaining responsible persons, because all were afraid of the over-rated assessment of Burdwan during the decennial settlement.

The Collector informed the Board of the impossibility of letting the farms anew without a very considerable reduction in the jumma. A 'perwannah' was issued to Raja Tej Chand for attending the Board for the settlement of Burdwan on June 22, 1791. But the Raja also declined to attend the Board for signing the ensuing settlement for its over-rated assessment.
The Raja was willing to take back the zemindary on the terms of paying the revenues conformable to the collection of 1789-90. 29

Total amount of annual Jumma of the District of Burdwan agreeable to the proposed Decennial System, commencing with the Bengal Year 1197, and ending with 1206, both inclusive:

Amount annual jumma of the mehals for farming which proposals have been received agreeable to the engagements entered into by the farmers for ten years ... Rs.309,622- 4 - 1.

Amount jumma of the mehals for which no adequate proposals have been received ... Rs.623,330 - 3 - 4.

Amount jumma of the mehals now under order of sale at the Khalsa agreeably to the Zemindary of Bengal Year 1196 ... Rs.437,985-13- 1.

Annual amount of the Tuncaws granted by the Zeminder to be resumed for the benefit of Government ... Rs. 10,394- 0 - 6.

Amount fixed annual jumma of the Talooks separate from the Pergunnahs ... Rs. 74,938-15-16.

Amount annual jumma of the aymah lands paying revenue to Government agreeably to the Zemindary accounts for Bengal Year 1196 ... Rs. 64,532- 6-19.

Amount annual jumma of the subkarry mehals or tax on the sale of spirituous liquor agreeably to the Zemindary account for B.Y.1196 ...Rs. 4,300- 0- 0.

Total = Rs.431170- 2- 6

Finding no other way to compel the Raja to a settlement, the Board ordered the Collector of Burdwan, 'You will immediately advertise for farming the mehals the leases of which have been cancelled, for the current and ensuing eight years....', and directed the Raja, who was then at Calcutta to leave the place immediately. At last on June 27, 1791, Raja Tejchand requested the Board to allow him to confirm his agreement for the ensuing settlement and his request was complied with.

It was stated in the agreement that the amount of the 'jumma' as far as practicable, was to be determined by the Governor-General in Council. On subject of refusal by the Zemindar, his zamindary would be made 'Khas' (i.e. collection of revenues by the Officers of the Government) and not to be handed over to him without special sanction of the Governor-General in Council. The Zemindar was forbidden from exacting any amount from the ryots over and above their usual payments.

A ryot was to be given a 'pottah' (or lease) after a proper determination of the 'jumma' from him and the receipts of every collection was to be handed over. Grants of 'Basee-Zeemen' or waste lands by the Zemindar was stopped and the zamindar was made responsible for the preservation of peace of
his district. The Zemindar was to act agreeably to the Regulations which were to be transmitted to Collectors.\footnote{31}

W.A. Brooke, the Collector of Burdwan, reported to the Board on August, 21, 1792, that Raja Tejchand had requested to appoint a person on behalf of the Collector to keep an account of the receipts of the revenues. But the Collector had his reservations on this point. He held that if a person on behalf of the Collector was appointed, the Raja would have used every means to prevent his coming to the knowledge of the actual receipts.

The Raja, according to the Collector, had always maintained an attitude that he had suffered a loss in consequence of his engagements with the Government in consequence he was entitled to a deduction. The Collector also informed the Board that during the last year when the Raja prayed for a deduction owing to the losses due to drought and inundation he (i.e. the Raja) however made considerable gains through this settlement.

The Collector had also information to the effect that the Raja had realised above Rs.300,000-0-0 over his demands from the ryots and had obtained collusive and fictitious
documents from his 'Sudder Mustagers' (Chief Farmers) who were either his relations or dependants. Considering these observations of the Collector, the Board informed the Raja, 'We can consider his application (for deduction) in no other light than as betraying a disposition to future evasion in the due performance of his engagements.' And Raja Tejchand's subsequent petitions for a remission in rents were treated by the Board as unworthy of attention.

Before the leases of the decennial system was over, the famous Permanent Settlement came to be introduced in Bengal in 1793. The revenue demands from the Zemindars were made permanent and Tejchand, the Raja of Burdwan, under Regulation I of 1793 agreed to pay to the Company annually the land revenue amounting to Rs.4015,109-2-0 and Rs.193,721-0-0 for 'poolbundi' or repair of embankments.

But the Permanent Settlement began inauspiciously in Burdwan. Early in 1793, Tejchand prayed for a suspension of Six lacks of rupees. Showing the cause of the suspension, the Raja wrote in his petition, '... that upto the present time there is a balance of two lacks due from Netoo Loll, Busunt Loll, Roguram Mitra, Benarassy Ghose & ca.... I, therefore, request that I may be allowed a suspension....'
The Raja agreed to pay back the amount at the rate of one lack and twenty thousand rupees on each of the five years of the term of the engagements from 1202 to 1206 Bengal Year (i.e. 1795 to 1799) inclusive. In the case of refusal of his proposal by the Board, Raja Tejchand was willing to relinquish his zemindary for an yearly allowance of Rs.186,000-0-0 for himself and family. 34

W.A. Brookes, the Collector, was in favour of this settlement and reported to the Board, 'I, therefore recommend that the Raja's request of a suspension... be complied with.' He reduced the sum by rupees one lack, and forwarded to the Board of Revenue a comparative statement of the annual 'jumma:* to be paid by Raja Tejchand, with the mode proposed by him. 35

* Comparative Statement of the annual 'Jumma':

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(B.S.)</th>
<th>Jumma</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
<th>Remainder</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1199</td>
<td>3343,892-10-12</td>
<td>200,000-0-0</td>
<td>3143,893-10-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200</td>
<td>3393,892-10-12</td>
<td>150,000-0-0</td>
<td>3243,892-10-12</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1201</td>
<td>3443,892-10-12</td>
<td>150,000-0-0</td>
<td>3293,892-10-12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1202</td>
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</table>

The Board was not satisfied with the Collector and despatched a stern refusal to his statement. An order of censure on the Collector's conduct, was passed by the Board, for not having confined Raja Tejchand to jail and on April 22, 1793, the Raja was put into close confinement in prison. In spite of his punishment and a further deterioration of his health the Raja showed no sign of payment.

In March 1793, a Dewany Adalat* and an Office of Magistrate of the district of Burdwan was created and was to commence

* Establishment of the Dewany Adalat of Burdwan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judge and Magistrate</td>
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<td>Registrar</td>
<td>Rs. 500-0-0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>Rs. 300-0-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent of a Court</td>
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<td>Rs. 80-0-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Native Writer</td>
<td>Rs. 40-0-0</td>
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<td>1. Native Writer</td>
<td>Rs. 30-0-0</td>
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Dewany Department:

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<tr>
<td>1. Molavy</td>
<td>Rs. 110-0-0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pundit</td>
<td>Rs. 70-0-0</td>
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<td>1. Sheristadar</td>
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<td>1. Persian Mohurers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

(Vide Burdwan Letters Received 1788-1802; pp. 277, ed. by A. Mitra).
from May 1, 1793. The Governor-General in Council appointed J. Lumsden, Judge of the Dewany Adalat and Magistrate of the district of Burdwan and Sir A. Seton as the Registrar. 37

After introduction of the Permanent Settlement in Burdwan, in June 1793, Raja Tejohand, in order for the better security of the payment of revenues to the Company, divided his entire zemindary in lots and settled these lots with his Chief Farmers. These farmers or their agents used to collect the rents from the ryots and deposited the same to the Raja of Burdwan. The Raja thought that by these means he would be able to discharge his revenues in full.

Sammel Davis, after taking over the charge of Burdwan Collectorship from W.A. Brooke, informed the Board on June 8, 1793, that Raja Tejohand's whole zemindary was let in farm. He observed 'the Raja's whole zemindary is let in farm to persons called Sudder Mustager,' 4 or farmers holding their leases immediately from the zemindar.

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* Nund Comar Roy - Dewan, Gangaram Mitra, - Karoon, Debnath Sing - Keeper of Records, Buddun Mitra - Manager of different departments (all in the Raja's pay) - were many of the Sudder Mustagers.

The 'Sudder Mustagers' again parcelled out the greatest part, but not the whole, of their farms to under renters called "Kutkenadars." These 'Kutkenadars', subdivided the lands they hold to smaller farmers. In some instances there was a gradation of four persons between the Government and the ryots. In some cases the Sudder Mustagers collect the part of the rents from the ryots themselves. And such was the manner of the settlement of the zemindary of the Raja of Burdwan that the collector was of opinion that it was, 'at the same time impossible to discover what was the actual produce or any part....'39

But the Raja was very much troubled by the Sudder Mustagers on the business of revenue payment. Benarassy Ghose, the Sudder Mustager of the pergunnah of Ballea, owed to Raja Mejchand the amount of Rs.47643-0-0 in arrears of rent for 1792-93. He paid no heed to the demands of the Raja for the payment of the sum but stayed safe in Calcutta, a place away from the jurisdictional reach of the Diwani Adalat of Burdwan.

The Collector was afraid that if Benarassy Ghose was not brought to book, it would ultimately encourage other defaulters. He was in favour of adopting some measures which would enable the Zemindars to realise the revenue arrears from their under renters. But there had been no such laws with which these
defaulting farmers could be compelled to pay up the Raja their revenue arrears. As a natural consequence of this, Raja Tejchand, day by day, accumulated a heavy amount of revenue balance to the Company.

Finding no other way of coming out from this revenue balance, Raja Tejchand proposed to sell a portion of his zemindary (at a 'jumma' payable to Government of Rs.1478,612-15-11) to his mother Rani Bishnukumari in October 1793.* The balance of revenue due to the Raja in January 1794 had piled up to the huge total of Rs.699,602-0-0.

Ultimately, the Raja on January 12, 1794, wished to transfer by sale all his landed property to his mother Rani Bishnukumari, 'who feels an interest in the preservation of the old family property'. The Raja was hopeful of paying the revenue balances with the money which he would receive from the sale of his zemindary.41 The request of the Raja for the transfer of his zemindary was not complied with and the Board ordered the Collector to put the Raja under confinement.

But it was found that on January 28, 1794, the Raja had executed a deed of sale of his entire zemindary in favour of his mother Rani Bishnukumari.42 Subsequently, the Council on

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* By 1793, Raja Tejchand's personal debt to Nimu Mallik, a merchant of Calcutta, and to other merchants amounted to Rs.675,000-0-0.
January 31, 1794, decided to accept Rani Bishnukumari as the Zemindar of Burdwan. They directed the Collector, 'we desire you will consider the Rani of Burdwan as a qualified land holder.' The Collector was also asked to take from her the usual engagements for the payment of the fixed revenue which had been assessed upon the zemindary of Burdwan that has been transferred to her by the Raja. And Raja Tej Chand, who had been confined already, by the orders of the Board for the revenue balances was released after a week.

The Collector of Burdwan was not satisfied with this transaction. He suspected that Raja Tejchand had devised a foul play in the transfer of his zemindary to his mother Rani Bishnukumari. He remarked, 'it appears to have been embezzled as much as he (i.e. the Raja) could of the rents and leave Government to look after the Rani for the balance which would happen in consequence.'

It is not unlikely that the Raja adopted that device to avoid all punitive measures directed against him as the Rani, because of her sex, could not be subjected to coercion. It also appeared to the Collector from the report of the 'aumeen' that during the month of the transfer of the zemindary the Raja had collected a sum of Rs.682,500-0-0 from the ryots of which only - Rs.200,000-0-0 had been remitted to the treasury by Rani Bishnukumari.
The Collector was sure that the Raja had as much interest in the property, as he had before the transfer took place and the 'Rani is no more than an instrument which he (i.e. the Raja) uses to cover and promote his designs.'

Rani Bishnukumari's management of the zamindary of Burdwan began inauspiciously with a mortgage. She applied to the Collector in March 1794, for the permission of mortgaging her zamindary to one Joseph Barretto, an indigo merchant of Sooksagar, for a loan of Rs. 600,000-0-0. Her intention was to clear up the outstanding revenue balances of Rs. 202,000-0-0 with that amount. Barretto wrote to the Board on March 11, 1794: 'I am inclined to lend to her provided the whole of the district is mortgaged to me and I have the collection of the revenue in conjunction with her people as security.'

But the Board considered this arrangement as solely a private affair and informed Barretto in September, 1794, that 'he must consider it as a private transaction between himself and the Rani, with which the Government had no concern.' Finally, the district was mortgaged and Barretto took up the charge of revenue collection. The charge of the internal management of the zamindary was left with Davis, the Collector of the District. After an year, on May 5, 1795, when the loan to Barretto was liquidated, Rani Bishnukumari was reinstated.
Taking over the charge of the zamindary, Rani Bishnukumari complained to the Board against her son Raja Tejchand for creating troubles and confusion in the affairs of her zamindary. Ireland, the Collector (who took over the charge of the district from Davis), also reported to the Board that the ryots in collusion with the servants of the former zamindar i.e. Raja Tejchand, had received 'pottahs' (i.e. leases), at reduced rates, by unfair means and this measures had 'injured' the zamindary to a very considerable degree.

As a result of this, the revenue balance outstanding against the Rani in 1796 amounted to Rs. 684,217-0-0. The 'mustagers' or principal farmers of the Rani were also withholding payment of rent exceeding rupees three lacks and one of these, Badan Chandra Mitra, owed to her the sum of Rs. 71,000-0-0. Regarding this heavy balance in revenue payment the Collector remarked that it was due to some persons who wish 'to bring her into disrepute with Government by causing her to fall in balance and thereby have her lands sold for arrears of revenue.'

But the Council was not pleased with these reasons put forward by the Collector, for the heavy balance. In their opinion, the heavy arrears had accumulated due to the Collector's
negligence for not collecting the revenues in time. It observed that the Collector should have already adopted the measure of attachment of lands and sale of such portions of the zemindary as might be required for the recovery of the dues of Government. The Collector lost no time in adopting the above measures for the relation of revenue arrears. Ten pergunnahs with a total 'jumma' of about nine lacks of rupees were attached and the lands, paying a revenue of three lacks of rupees, were ordered for sale.

In the years following the Rani again disqualified herself in paying up the full revenue demand of her zemindary. As a consequence of this, some parts of the zemindary of Rani Bishnukumari were sold in lots for the realisation of the amount. Each lots consisted of several villages. But Raja Tajchand succeeded in preventing the total dissolution of the zemindary because of his purchasing these lots in 'benami', (i.e. purchasing in other's name) concealing the name of the real owner.

It is to be mentioned here that as early as June 1794, the Board directed the Raja of Burdwan that he was not permitted to purchase directly or indirectly, in his own name or in the names of others, any part of his lands which might be put to sale. Inspite of this warning a very considerable part of the 'benami' purchases took place in the zemindary of
Burdwan, in August, 1798. The lands that were sold for revenue arrears yielded a very low price.\textsuperscript{55}

Commenting on the low price of the lands, the Board of Revenue observed, '.... the practice so prevalent among the principal zemindars of purchasing in their lands at whatever price under fictitious names' and naturally the public consider it only a waste of time to enter into any competition for the purchase of those lands, and consequently allow the defaulters to a secure and uncontested acquisition, at a very low rate.\textsuperscript{56}

It is worth mentioning here that the Burdwan zemindary lands were sold during 1797-98 at a 'jumma' of Rs.644,225-2-5 of which only lands to the amount of Rs.29,914-8-2 had been actually purchased by individuals on their own account. The remainder lands, at a 'jumma' of Rs.614,410-10-3, had been wholly brought in by the original proprietor Rani Bishnukumari, purchased in the name of Surroop Chand Roy, the 'khazanohee' (i.e. treasurer) of the zemindary. The amount of the revenue of the lands had been regularly paid into the treasury by Ramtonu Roy, the Vaqueel of Surroop Chand.\textsuperscript{57}

* See Appendix VI for a detailed report on the 'benami' purchases of Rani Bishnukumari, the zemindar of Burdwan, during this period.
But the episode of non-payment of revenues by the farmers to the Rani continued. Rani Bishnukumari complained to Board, in January, 1798, that Raghunath Singh, one of her principal farmers, owed to her the sum of Rs.60,000-0-0 as the revenue balance. She stated it was the intention of Raghunath Singh to get the villages separated, paying a revenue of Rs.60,000-0-0 as 'aymah' lands at a low rent.

J. Spottishwood, the Judge of Burdwan, passed his judgement in favour of the Rani and directed Raghunath Singh to pay up the revenue demanded by the Rani. But Ireland, the Collector of the district, was not inclined to adhere to the decree passed by the Judge of Burdwan and the Judge then referred the case on September, 7, 1798, to the Governor-General in Council.

The Council expressed their displeasure at the conduct of the Collector for not obeying the orders of the Judge of Burdwan and remarked that, '... the Collector could not refuse to receive the balances from the party.....' under a decree of a Court of Justice. 58

Thus the chronic case of non-payment of revenues by the farmers, at last, was decided by the Court in favour of Rani Bishnukumari. But the Rani did not live long to bear the fruits of this decree passed by the Judge of Burdwan.
She breathed her last, on November 9, 1798, at Amboa. She performed a commendable service so far as this zemindary was concerned and it can said that it was Rani Bishnukumari who could have saved the zemindary of Burdwan from its total dissolution.

She steered the affairs of the zemindary through its most crucial days to a safe side. That she was an able and successful administrator, is evident from the contemporary British records. Rani Bishnukumari can well be compared, in her abilities and qualities, with Rani Bhabani of Nattore. Like Rani Bhabani she showed skill and resourcefulness in tackling the problems and demands of the feudal age.

The zemindary of Burdwan reverted to Raja Tejchand after the death of his mother Rani Bishnukumari. The 'jumma' of the district of Burdwan in 1799-1800 was settled with Raja Tejchand and was assessed at Rs. 4698,749-5-12. But Raja Tejchand often disqualified himself in the payment of the revenue demands in time. The Collector forwarded to the Board, in May 1800, a statement of several estates of the Zemindar of Burdwan and remarked that though these were in the names of his family members, Raja Tejchand, the Zemindar, would be considered responsible for any revenue balance arising out of these estates.
The sale of lands, of the property of the Raja of Burdwan, was more or less a regular feature after the enactment of the Permanent Settlement. This might be due to the fact that the demands from the zemindars were perhaps, unrealistic and the lands were sold to make good the loss in revenue payments.

The noteworthy purchasers of the lands of the Burdwan zemindary, during this period were Dwarkanath Sinha of Singur, the Mukherji's of Janai and the Banerjee's of Telenipara, in the district of Hooghly. There would be little exaggeration of the fact that the dissolution, though partial, of the Zemindary of Burdwan, laid the foundations of the landed aristocracy of the districts of Burdwan and Hooghly in the late Eighteenth Century.61
The abbreviations used below:

GGC - For Proceedings of the Governor-General in Council;
BOR - For Proceedings of the Board of Revenue;
BLR - For Bengal District Records: Burdwan Letters Received - 1788-1802; Ed. by A. Mitra; Published by the Government of West Bengal;
BLI - For Bengal District Records: Burdwan Letters Issued - 1788-1800; Ed. By R. Ouha and A. Mitra; Published by the Government of West Bengal.

.......

1. Proceedings of the Committee of Revenue -
   dt. April 12, 1784.
2. Ibid.
3. Proceedings of the Committee of Revenue -
   dt. May 24, 1784.
5. A petition of Raja Tejchand of Burdwan -
15. Extract of a letter from the GGC to the BOR - dt. July 1, 1789.
17. BLR - pp. 76.
22. BLI - pp. 264.
24. BOR - June 24, 1788.
25. BOR - March 29, 1790.
27. GGC - Miscellaneous - dt. September 29 and October 8, 1790.
   (Vide: GGC (Misc.) - dt. March 18, 1791).
29. Petition of Raja Tejchand to the Council -
   (Vide: GGC (Misc.) - dt. June 3, 1791).
30. BLR - pp. 159.
31. Extracts from the resolution of the GGC -
33. Imperial Gazetteer of India - (Oxford) -
34. Petition of Raja Tejchand - Vide: BLI - pp. 37, 38.
35. BLI - pp. 38.
37. BLR - pp. 277.
39. BLI - pp. 50.
40. BLI - pp. 69, 71 - 72 and 92-93.
42. Vide: BLI - pp. 96.
Extract of a letter from the GG in Council -

Letter to the Board - dt. February 27, 1794,


GGC - dt. September 18, 1795.
BLI - pp. 204-05.

GGC - dt. December 19, 1795.

BLI - pp. 229-30, 243, 269, 278.

GGC, dt. September 30, 1796.

BLI - pp. 255, 257, 269.

BLI - pp. 362, 391.

GGC - dt. June 6, 1794.

GGC - dt. August 17, 1798.

Letter of the Board of Revenue - dt. August 10, 1798.

GGC(Misc.) dt. October 5, 1798.

BLR - pp. 730-36.

GGC(Misc.) - dt. November 30, 1798.

BLR - pp. 928.

Burdwan District Gazetteer - pp. 98.