CHAPTER VII

OTHER ZAMINDARIES; PARBOTJOAR AND SIDLI
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Parbotjoar Estate :

Due to paucity of information nothing can be said definitely about the origin of the Parbotjoar estate. It is believed that the estate was created out of the Badshahi grant sometimes after the Ahom-Moghul conflict of the seventeenth century. It is likely that the originator rendered valuable services to the Muhammedans in their campaign against the Ahoms, and as a token of reward the estate was granted to him. B.C. Allen, in the beginning of the current century, noticed that one Hatibar Choudhury received the grant of the estate twelve generations ago. According to Khan Choudhury, the tract was taken away from Bijnar Raj estate to form a separate estate, and it covered an area of 276 square miles. Originally, the estate was covered with jungles, only a small part being cultivable.

The estate went under the British when the East India Company acquired the Diwani of Bengal. Together with the other zamindaries in the district of Goalpara, the estate was included in the permanent settlement. The land revenue demand of the estate was Rs.547 annas 13 gandas 93; the local rate assessed was Rs.8,597 annas 7, and the income from the estate, including the profits derived from the fisheries and timber, was said to amount Rs.1,50,000/-. 4

The zamindar family of parbotjoar descended from Hatibar Choudhury. But the history of the family down to the beginning of the current century was obscure. The estate was partitioned off into three shares with different katcharies for management, viz., -/8/- annas, -/5/- annas and -/3/- annas. The headquarters of -/8/- annas share was at Bagribari, -/5/- annas share at Rupsi, and that of -/3/- annas share was located somewhere near the Mahamayadham, which is situated few miles west of Bagribari. In the beginning of this century, Surendra Narayan Singh Choudhury whose residence was at Bagribari, held the -/8/- annas share, -/5/- annas share was held by Bimala Sundari Choudhurani, and

4. Allen, B.C., Ibid.
who resided at Rupsi, and -/3/- annas share was in possession of Sushila Sundari Choudhurani, who used to live in Calcutta.

It is worth noting that the division of the estate into three parts was the result of the dissensions between the rival groups in the zamindar family. At one time the quarrel between the co-sharers was so acute that the Deputy Commissioner was obliged to imprison one of them in jail. After the death of Bhupendra Narayan, a descendant of Kalap sand and holder of the -/5/- annas share, the estate was engrossed in litigations again. In 1925, Birendra, the Second son of late Bhupendra Narayan, was given in adoption to the widow of Jitendra Narayan Choudhury, zamindar of Mechpara estate. The wife of Bhupendra Narayan also died in the next year. In 1927, Barindra Narayan, the eldest son of Bhupendra Narayan, died unmarried. These successive events of deaths left -/5/- annas zamindary of Rupsi opened to claimants.

The litigation started when the sons of Taralabala and Urmila, daughters of late Upendra Narayan, the adoptive father of said Bhupendra Narayan claimed the share of the

estate. Other claimants who put forward their claims were Sourendra Narayan Singha Choudhury and Surendra Narayan Choudhury respectively. After different stages passed off, a compromise was effected, by virtue of which Barindra's share (¼ of ¾ annas) passed on to the sons of Taralabala and Urmila, who claimed the property as grandsons of late Upendra Narayan. Taralabala was married to zamindar Rabindra Narayan Choudhury of Mechpara, and Urmila was married to Phagendra Narayan of Darrang Raj family. Another share of Rupsi was held by said Birendra Narayan, who was adopted by the widow of Jitendra Narayan, and was renamed as Jagadindra Narayan. 6.

Towards the second quarter of the current century, the estate witnessed more divided interests as seen in the records of the Dhubri Collectorate. The following statement showing the names of different share holders with their share in the whole estate:

Proprietors

 Shares


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<th>Proprietors</th>
<th>Shares</th>
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<td>6. Durgeswari Choudhurani of Interest ceased.</td>
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<td>7. Urmila Bala, mother and guardian right over 9 gandak share of (-/5/-) annas estate VI.</td>
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<td>of minor Jitendra Narayan Deb in place of Sukumari Choudhurani and T.D. Moran on behalf of minor Barindra Narayan Choudhury.</td>
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**Sidli:**

Sidli was a small principality under the Moghuls. The entire tract, to which Sidli formed a part, lay at the foot of the Bhutan mountain was occupied by the Bhutan Government sometimes during the later Moghul administration. As referred to earlier, this tract passed over to the British administration in 1865, when the Bhutan Government
ceded it to the British at the close of the Bhutan war.

The earliest authority in the subject of Sidli was Dr. Buchanan, according to whom:

"The possession of the rank of Raja of Sidli in the year 1809 was the tenth or eleventh person of the same family who had held these lands, which they are conjectured to have received as an apanage in virtue of their descent from Vesu (Biswa) Singha, the Koch Prince. The name of the Sidlie Chief in that year was Surjya Narayan, and the same family appears to have held Sanads of appointment from the Bhutan Government from that period to this." 

In the Sanads granted by the Bhutan Government to the descendants of Surjya Narayan, the title Raja was given to them.

According to the local accounts, the founder of the Sidli dynasty was Bhim Singh, who established the principality in the days of the decline of the Kamata Kingdom. He was succeeded by Chikna Narayan Deb. Next in the line of succession to Sidli Raj were Shyam Narayan Deb, Bhujya Narayan Deb, Lakshmi Narayan Deb, and Surjya Narayan Deb.

7. Supra, Chapter I.
8. Memorandum by Mr. Metcalf on the newly acquired territory north of Goalpara district, Goalpara Papers, File No. 7, 1866-70, Assam Secretariat Record Room, Dispur.
9. Sanad No. 1 dated 27th Agrahan, 324 Bhutan Era, Goalpara Papers, Ibid.
10. Bundle of Papers collected from S. Sarmah, Bilashipara.
On the death of Surjya Narayan, his Rani named Sudreswaree governed the territory for a short term. Owing to inability to manage the affairs of the Raj she approached the Bhutan Government for appointment of her late husband's brother, Indra Narayan, in her stead as the Raja of Sidli. In the meantime a scoundrel named Dhur Narayan Kumar made himself the Raja. His case was tried by a committee of zinkaffs at Bishnu Singh Thana, and, it being proved that he was not the son of the late Raja, he was dismissed from the Rajaship which he had forcibly taken. Indra Narayan was, thus, appointed the Raja of Sidli after Rani Sudreswaree. A sanad was granted to that effect on 27th Agrahan, 324 Bhutan Era. After the death of Indra Narayan, his son Gauri Narayan was appointed the Raja of Sidli by the Deb Raja of Bhutan, and a sanad was granted in 1244 B.S. (1117 A.D.) to that effect.

During the lifetime of Raja Gauri Narayan, Bhutan war broke out. It has already been stated that the tract north to the district of Goalpara was ceded to the British by the Bhutan Government in 1865. Sidli Raja Gauri Narayan claimed Sidli tract, and it was settled with him in 1870

12. Ibid.
for a period of seven years commencing from the 1st of April, 1870 and terminating on 1st of March, 1877, and an allowance of 30 per cent (20 per cent as profit and 10 per cent as cost of collection) was allowed to the Raja vide paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Backett's report No.741, dated the 29th April, 1872. After the first year of settlement, the management was taken out of the hands of the Raja owing to his neglect and incapacity. The charge was assumed by the district authorities, i.e., Court of Wards, on 30th April, 187713.

Soon after Gauri Narayan died, his minor son Bishnu Narayan, who was born in 1859 A.D., was sent for education at Ajmir College14. He was offered the settlement of the Gidli tract for a term of ten years from the year 1886 at a fixed jama of 70 per cent of the assessment, but he declined to accept it. The estate was thus under the management of the Government, and malikana at 20 per cent of the total jama was being paid to the Raja zamindar Bishnu Narayan. Subsequently, he prayed for settlement in accordance with the terms offered by the Government vide his petition dated 18th March, 1896, and the settlement was offered to

him by the Government of India as a zamindar. Tenant Act, Act VIII (B.C.) of 1869 was extended to it, and as such placing him on a footing with regard to collection of rents similar to that occupied by the other zamindars of Goalpara in the permanently settled tract.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Raja} Gauri Narayan died in 1901. He had two wives, one Rani Durgeswari and the other Rani Padmeswari. Raja Abhoy Narayan was the son of Rani Durgeswari. He married one Banalata Debi of Lakshipur. Abhoy Narayan Deb died in 1948, and was succeeded by\textbf{Raja} Ajit Narayan Deb (born in 1910 A.D.) who was the last zamindar of the Cidli Raj.

\textsuperscript{15} Goalpara Papers, File No. 45, 1893, Assam Secretariat Record Room, Dispur.