CHAPTER XI

ZAMINDAR-TENANT RELATIONS
CHAPTER-XI

ZAMINDAR-TENANT RELATIONS

On the relations between the Zamindar and tenant in Goalpara W.W. Hunter made a reference to the reports of the Deputy Commissioner as follows;

"On the whole, where no unusual cupidity is displayed on the part of the Zamindars or their underlings, and no extraordinary recusancy is exhibited by the occupants, the present relations of landlord and tenant are satisfactory. Very few rent suits are instituted, and cases of oppression in connection with the exaction of rent are seldom reported, although, I believe, they occur occasionally. When an arrear of rent is due, or alleged to be due, the landlord sometimes, in order to avoid the complicated proceedings of a regular suit in a court of law, prefers to arrest on his own account and detain in custody either the defaulting tenant or some member of his family, until an arrangement can be arrived at. If the tenant cannot raise money to satisfy the landlord's demand, a sum equal to the amount claimed as rent is nominally borrowed from a subordinate or relation of the landlord, and a stamped bond is duly executed by the alleged defaulter, as if for an ordinary debt. The money borrowed is at once paid over to the landlord; and if the tenant omits to repay it with interest to the nominal lender, a decree is obtained in the Civil Court, without the harassing details of
proving rates of rent, execution of Kabuliyat, area under cultivation, and other minutiae. In one instance in which the executor of the bond denied liability, and complained of the manner in which the bond had been obtained, it appeared that considerable pressure had been used, and that the tenant's brother had been detained in custody or surveillance at the house of the landlord for nine days, and the tenant himself for four days, before an arrangement could be arrived at and the bond executed. The Magistrate considered the landlord guilty of illegal confinement, and sentenced him to a year's imprisonment. But, on appeal, it was held that the detention complained of did not come within the legal definition of wrongful confinement; the subject was deemed to be merely a dispute between landlord and tenant, and the accused was released. The tenant was subsequently sued on the bond by the lender (a brother of the landlord), who obtained a decree. I do not think that expedients of this nature are very frequently resorted to, but they are not by any means singular. In the majority of cases, the tenant accepts his liability after executing the bond, and sets about endeavouring to pay it, in order to avoid incurring the additional liability of heavy interest.¹

This gives the history of the zamindar-tenants relations that existed in Goalpara during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. It may be noted that the zamindars, who were the sole owners of the land, were at liberty in respect of survey, settlement, assessment and collection of rent subject to enhancement. The tenants in general and the under-tenants in particular had no permanent, heritable, and transferable rights in lands under their possession and therefore they were treated as tenants-at-will. In matters of collection of rent falling in arrears repressions and coercive measures like arrest and detention were resorted to, though such cases were stated to be few in number. It should be mentioned that enhancement of rent was the inherent characteristic of the zamindary administration. And whenever there was an attempt on the part of the zamindars to impose new imposts or old ones were increased, the tenants combined together to stop the payment, which led to agrarian troubles in Goalpara.

Rebellion in Ghurla, Habraghat and Khuntaghat:

In 1851 A.D. an agrarian trouble of greater dimension took place in Ghurla Pargana of Gauripur Raj estate, when the tenants offered their stiff opposition to the survey for the fixation of rent. Ananda Ram Dhekdal Phukan, who
was then appointed temporarily the Sub-Assistant in Goalpara, was commissioned by Rai Pratap Chandra Barua, the zamindar of Rangamati, to enquire into the affairs that were going in Ghurla. Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan went to Kaltara, the central place of occurrence of the rebellion, and instituted the enquiry. It should be mentioned that the event was merely referred to in the autobiography of Late Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan by the author, Gunabhiram Barua, without giving full account of it. No more can be ascertained due to paucity of information. Perhaps, the rebellion was easily suppressed by the zamindar.

In his report on the district of Goalpara (dated 18th May, 1853), Moffat Mills referred to the quarrel that had been going on between the zamindar and the tenants since 1823 in Habraghat Pargana under Bijni Raj. Imposition of new rents on the lands other than sali lands was the main cause of the quarrel. In 1822, the Government authorised a re-settlement of the Goalpara zamindaries as a special measure, the object being connected with the policy to be pursued towards the Garos and the neighbouring tribes, it being thought desirable to get rid of all illegal

cesses. Mr. Scott took up the matter and concluded settlement in some villages. In this estate, he had proceeded no further than the abolition of all irregular cesses & C, and mere temporary assessment of some rice land, when he was called away to take charge as commissioner of Assam proper. The ryots took advantage of this state of things and set up a claim to hold their lands, but rice lands, rent-free.

The trouble raised its heads in Khuntaghat Pargana, too. According to Gunabhiram Barua, there were other causes for the outbreak of the rebellion in Habraghat and Khuntaghat i.e., land settlement with the ryots was half-hearted, consequent of which most of the ryots occupied lands in excess to that for which they paid their rents. Secondly, a sizable section of the ryots kept pending the payment of rent for years together. No sooner did the zamindar attempt to start fresh settlement, then they raised their protest. In 1849, Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan was appointed Dewan to Bijni Raj estate. During his tenure of office (from the last part of December, 1849 to November, 1850) Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan framed a set of regulations "Phukan Dewanar Kaidabandi" as these were called, for

the administrative expediency of the Raj. As has been stated by Gunabhiram Barua, Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan proposed, amongst other things, to undertake a survey for the settlement of lands in Habraghat and Khuntaghat parganas, and to apply the law of distraint for arrears of rent. This added a fresh fuel to the fire. The ryots opposed it tooth and nail. However, the zamindar, who looked to an equitable assessment of rent to compensate him for the loss of his revenue from illegal cesses & c, petitioned the authorities over and again to pass an executive order on his favour. This was contested by the ryots. The Collector of Goalpara and the Commissioner of Assam valley district passed their orders against the zamindar. The case was referred to the Board of Revenue, Calcutta. In 1852, the zamindar got a hearing from the Government of India, and the Board of Revenue admitted that the settlement should be completed. It should be mentioned that Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan was sent to Calcutta to pursue the case on behalf of the zamindar, while Dewan Prem Narain attended the case on behalf of the ryots.

5. Ibid., Barua, Gunabhiram, Op cit., pp. 78-83, 89.
In his report referred to above, Moffat Mills stood in support of the zamindar:

"The Habraghat Ryots, under the evil influence of a designing person called Prem Narain, are leagued together against their superior, the Bijni Zamindar, and will not come to an adjustment of their rents. The quarrel has been going on since 1823, and has caused not only great trouble but has led to violence and bloodshed, and kept the whole country in a state of fermentation. I have heard the oral statement of the both parties and read all the correspondence, and am of opinion that the cause of the Rajah is one of much hardship, and that he has been subjected to great losses by the contumacious proceedings of the Ryots, though at the same time I think that he has been ill advised, especially by his late Dewan, in endeavouring to enforce his demand by harsh measures and thereby exasperating the Ryots".

Although the Board of Revenue admitted that the zamindar had the right to enforce demands, the case was not finally settled. The authorities wished for a compromise. Accordingly, the then Collector of Goalpara, Agnew, took initiative to call a tripartite conference. In May, 1852, the conference was held, but ended in fiasco.

---

August, the tripartite conference was held for the second time at the zamindary Kachari at Dolgama. But the conference failed to break through.

During the time when the Bijni zamindary was under the administration of the Court of Wards, Government took steps to settle the quarrel that was going on between the zamindar and the ryots. The survey left incomplete by David Scott was resumed. An E.A.C. and some Amirs were employed to the task. They completed the survey and settlement in Habraghat and Khuntaghat parganas. A new rate of rent was fixed. But in Feb., 1862, 500 ryots of Khuntaghat raised their grievances on the higher rate of assessment. Their grievances were of two fold: (1) higher rate of assessment; (2) the Amirs of the Deputy Collector had included in the homelands a plot of Assco lands, and consequently they had to pay rent at the rate of Re. 1/- for land which ought to be assessed at -/4/- annas per bigha. In 1864, however, a compromise was reached, and the rate was reduced to -/8/- annas per bigha on homelands.

Barpatgeeri Hangama (rebellion of Barpatgeeri):

On the death of Kumud Narayan (1883), the Raja of Bijní, the quarrel started between the two RANIS, and was continuing for some years. The quarrel, the "Sorurani Bar-ranir Dhuna" as it was known in that locality, fomented the peasant rebellion. The peasants assembled in a Ryots' Sabha (conference of the ryots) at Jogighopa to submit their memorandum of complaints to the Bar-rani, Siddheswari. But Jiwan Ram Phukan, the Chief advisor to the Bar-rani, had the peasants frightened at blank firing. This made them rebellious. The agitating peasants proclaimed one Chandra Narayan the Raja of Bijní in place of the Bar-rani, Siddheswari, she being rejected as illegitimate wife of the late Raja Kumud Narayan. It should be mentioned that the said Chandra Narayan was first given in adoption as heir to the Raja. This rebellion was known as the Barpatgeeri Hangama. One of the agitators threw his javelin on Jiwan Ram Phukan, who escaped his death, the javelin being misaimed and thereby causing death to one of the Barkandazes on duty.9.

Although there was cessation of the acts of violence on the accession of the Sarurami Abhayeswari to the gaddi agitation continued in the form of organised withholding of rent, particularly in Habraghat and Baitamari. Similarly, in Karaibari estate the relations between the zamindars and the tenants were far from satisfactory. The circumstances in which the former zamindar, Mahendra Narayan, was ejected and his zamindary was sold off in auction sale were peculiar. Even the purchaser of the zamindary, Ramanath Lahiri, was engrossed in difficulty in taking the possession of the zamindary. Thus, there must have been an adverse effect on the new purchaser of the estate. Consequently, the zamindar could not maintain good contact with the tenants. The relations of the zamindars of Karaibari with their tenants were further strained by the litigations commenced in 1824 between the co-sharers, which continued till 1854. The position of the Parbotjoar estate and Mechpara estates was no better than other estates. Family quarrels, which were rampant in these two estates, ruined the management of the respective estates. The quarrels amongst the co-sharers

in Parbotjoar were so serious that one of them was sentenced to imprisonment by the Deputy Commissioner. In Mechpara, family feuds were so acute that led to split up the management into four collecting agencies, which harassed the ryots.

Litigation:

In his report on Goalpara, Moffat Mills pointed out that the number of summary suits instituted under Regulation 1799 was 38, and that of summary suits instituted under Regulations V of 1812 was 4; of the 4 cases decided by the collector in one case the zamindar was complained against for demanding excess rent, and in another for exacting rent for land not in complainant's possession. The number of rent suits in Goalpara was comparatively small in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The practice of distraining the property was wholly unknown in this district until it was attempted to enforce in Bijn estate in 1849-50 by the Dewan, Ananda Ram Dhekdal Phukan.


Towards the later part of the nineteenth century, the relations of the zamindars with their tenants were being strained. In 1892, the Bengal Rent Law of 1869 (Act VIII of 1869) had been extended to Goalpara district with a view to controlling the relations between the zamindars and the tenants. Mismanagement of the zamindaris, corruption of the estate officials, collection of exorbitant abwabs, enhancement of rents and curtailment of the customary rights enjoyed by the ryots from time immemorial caused widespread discontent amongst the tenants, culminating in a huge number of disputes between the zamindars and the tenants, and between the tenants and the under-tenants. Obviously all disputes did not come to the civil courts. Some of the disputes were settled by executive orders, while others were referred to the courts. The number of civil litigations was thus being increased in the beginning of the current century. Within a period of ten years, from 1907 to 1917, as many as 5,782 rent suits were instituted in Dhubri and Goalpara courts. The majority of the rent suits were complicated by various questions. Some of the typical cases taken from the Munsif and Sub-Judge's records by A.J. Laine, were complicated by questions such as the following:

(a) uncertainty as to rate of rent payable for each class of land due to absence of pattas and Kabuliyats or any other records in possession of the tenants, i.e., in rent suit No.529, D.M. of 4,6,18, Plaintiff claimed to realise rent at a rate higher than that was given in the patta (disallowed);

(b) uncertainty as to area of holding, more particularly due to vagueness of boundaries, extension of cultivation in waste land, expansion or contraction of the holding by accretion or dilution, i.e., in suit No. 445, 15th December, 1913 (M.D.) Karaihari zamindar sued tenants for rent on greater quantity of land than found;

(c) uncertainty as to the occupants of the holding caused by frequent transfers which took place without the knowledge of the landlord, i.e., in S.J. Rent Appeal no.7 of 1909 (Nazir Sh Vs Gardi Sh) registered co-sharing tenants pleaded -/16/- annas Sale which was repudiated by others;

(d) uncertainty as to payment of rents, i.e., in case no. D.M.89, 15th September, 1913, rent receipt did not show jotes for which the rent was paid.
(e) attempts sometimes made by the zamindars to resume jotes which had not been fully relinquished, and to settle them with others at enhanced rates, i.e., Kamuddin vs Nesabttla S.J. Appeal no 1909 and other cases in 1910 & 1911.

(f) In Gauripur, the custom prevailed for the estate to take over temporarily the management of a jote which had been fallen into difficulties and advantage was sometimes taken thereby to raise the jotedar's rent or to partition the holding, viz., Raja P.C. Barua vs. Chalimanessa Bibi in 91 R. 1910.

(j) Ejection of tenants-at-will without valid reason or record.

Several Munsif's cases, 1909 Dhubri, i.e., DH 220 1911 of 9th April, 1915 1915

The Munsif after instituting local inquiry came to the conclusion that "regular traffic is going on in ejecting old tenants and settling new ones on heavy Salami. Many sub-tenants have been ejected without reason by occupancy tenants, when the sub-tenants had originally cleared the land and occupied it for many generations..." 14

14. Ibid.
Local Agitation:

In Bengal, the Rent Law (Act VIII of 1869) of 1869 was repealed and a more comprehensive tenancy law was enacted in 1885. Being oppressed at the hands of the zamindars, the tenants who were influenced by the tenancy measures in Bengal looked for a better tenancy law for Goalpara district. Unfortunantly, Government did not pay attention to it. The zamindars were left free to manage the administration of their respective estates according to their sweet will. Enhancement of rent and abwab was the order of the day. Thus ryots started agitation for redressing their grievances, specially for a rent law, right from the beginning of this century. It deserves mentioning that the problems faced by the ryots were not identical in all estates. The ryots combined together locally as circumstances demanded of. The petitions and memorials submitted to the Government from time to time contained the grievances of the ryots against their landlords.

In 1903, the Bijni tenants submitted a series of complaints against Bijni Raj. The petition dated 16th Fartik was submitted to the Government stating that—

i. That the ryots paid more revenue than was actually due;
ii. the receipts given were most deceitful as they contained no mention of the lard;

iii. the lands of the ryots were let out to persons who were willing to pay extra rents;

iv. certain ryots had been ruined by the execution of civil court decrees.

Another petition was submitted to the authority on October 21st, 1903, alleging that—

i. the Rani was a goodwaman, but her officials were bad;

ii. they had little chance of representing their grievances before the Rani on account of her being a parda Nashi (secluded) woman;

iii. the Dewan was oppressive and his subordinates were his relatives;

iv. the ryots were required to pay more revenue than was actually necessary and the protest against this was met with ill treatment.

The petition dated 21st November, 1903, was submitted to the Government stating that—
i. 10 per cent of the people of Bijni Raj estate were poor and destitute, and there was not being a single educated man among a thousand, they could not lay their grievances before the Government;

ii. the people had been driven to misery owing to—(a) Kalazzar, (b) earthquake of 1897, (c) the people being illiterate could not understand what was land and what value was attached to it, but in spite of their strenuous efforts they had not been able to escape exactions;

iii. Whenever new land was leased out to them, they were required to pay Rs. 2/-, and they paid annas -/4/- on each rupee for rent;

iv. Certain officers realised Rs. 2/- or Rs. 4/- in excess to that;

v. If any one cultivated one or two kathas of Basti land, he was to pay for one bigha.  

---

As to the complaints an enquiry was instituted early in 1904. The gist of the enquiry was "the raiyats had not much complain of except that form of rent receipts granted to them was vague and opened the door to abuses".16

In 1908, the Mechpara tenants started an agitation through vernacular press against—

1) Rent which was previously Rs. 6/- a hal (which was said to be 30 bighas) was being enhanced, to annas -/13/- a bigha plus anna -/1/- local rate;

ii) Exaction of dasturie for settlement;

iii) Annas -/8/- as Masuli;

iv) Rupee 1-8 per house for forest dues;

v) Bullock cart tax started;

vi) other abwabs;

vii) Two bighas out of 20 bighas of holding held by the tenant as khamar terms;

16. Letter from the Commissioner, Assam Valley Districts to the Secy. to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, dated 10th March, 1904, Assam Secretariat Record Room, Dispur.
viii) *Amlahs* constantly surveying and inquiring land so harassing tenants;

ix) *jotes* being resumed by the *zamindar*.¹⁷

It should be mentioned that affairs in the Mechpara estate were so unsatisfactory that the immigrant *ryots* and the *jotedars* placed their demands with the Government for the extension of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. In fact, the agitation was started by the tenants against *zamindars* for their misrule, and the demand for a better Rent Law for the district of Goalpara had become a concern for the Government. The Chief Commissioner of the Assam Valley districts, Monahan, was entrusted with responsibility to enquire into affairs of the permanently-settled estates. Monahan submitted the report, but it was kept confidential¹⁸.

In 1910-11 certain Gauripur tenants petitioned for the extension of the Bengal Tenancy Act, referred to above, to Goalpara. In June, 24, 1972, memorial was submitted to the Chief Commissioner of Assam by Madharam and 

---

"your humble memorialists used to enjoy several rights and privileges under Bijn Raj from time immemorial. But from the beginning of the reign of the present Rani Srimati Abhoyeswari Devi most of the privileges and rights are going to be denied to them at the instigations of the three successive Bengal Dewans under the present Rani. Besides that, the raiyats are made subjects to various oppressions in various ways. The most prominent of them are enumerated below:

1. Ryots required to apply for pattas for which Rs. 2/- to Rs. 10/- Salami was charged;

2. Mankujl realised on reclaimed lands not applied for;

3. Partial relinquishment was not permitted;

4. Rents were enhanced without knowledge of the tenants;

5. Rents receipts should shew rate of rents, class of lands areas of holding arrear due;

6. Notices for ejectment being served to coerce payment at enhanced rate;

7. Concession of free grant of sal trees for repairing houses etc. 19.

In 20th Jan. 1912, Thandaram Das, Kali Charan Das and others submitted petition to the Chief Commissioner of Assam Valley district stating that—

1. the survey for re-settlement of revenue in Bijnd Raj estate was conducted against the consent of the people;

ii. the zamindar had repeatedly brought suits against the ryots for arrears of rent as well as for ejectment, though ejectment suits were stopped for the time being 20.

In 1913, five memorials were submitted from the Gauripur Estate tenants headed by (a) Gajendra Nath Rai Sarkar, (b) Jamir Shekh, (c) Pahali Mandal, and others to the effect that—

i. Jotedars held extensive tracts at low rates of rent;

ii. Chukanidars cleared jungle, settled and made lands fit for cultivation at much cost and paying galami to jotedars;

---

iii. Nevertheless, the jotedars realised exorbitant rents from Chukanidars and ejected them without reason and even on ejectment, Chukanidars only got expense of removal;

iv. Chukanidars had no status under Act VIII of 1869;

v. Jotedars possessed occupancy rights and were protected from enhancement;

vi. Chukanidars, though the actual tillers, had no protection as a class, they were ignorant and at the mercy of unscrupulous jotedars;

vii. Jotedars realised abwabs in addition to exorbitant rents;

viii. Rights of ejectment without compensation, after six months notice, was powerful weapon in the hands of the jotedars;

ix. Jotedars realised at 4 to 6 times the rate paid by them to the zamindars;

x. False measurement were taken and false receipts given;

xi. Tenants prayed that jotedars holding more than 50 to 75 bighas of land should be classed as middlemen and tenants under them should get occupancy rights, if holding lands more than 12 years;

xii. Rights of summary ejectment should not be entitled and in case of ejectment reasonable compensation should be tried by law;
xiii. Under-tenants wanted receipts giving actual quality of land, and actual rent payable;

xiv. Lands from which tenants were evicted were re-settled with new tenants at higher rates of rent plus salami;

xv. Many Chukanidars had held land for several generations and large numbers for 12 years;

xvii. When the zamindars enhanced jotedar's rent by 25 per cent, jotedars often doubled their sub-tenants rent. If sub-tenants did not agree, ejectment notices were served.

In the same year, certain tenants headed by Kali Charan Brahma agitated for (i) preparation of record of tenants' right, (ii) permanent status for tenants, (iii) rules for regulating enhancement of rents. Next year Chapar tenants petitioned for undue enhancement of rent by zamindar. In 1915, Karaibari Chukanidars submitted memorials to Government alleging (i) oppression of jotedars; (ii) enhancement of rent by 75 to 100 per cent; (iii) acquiescence of jotedars enhancement for sole purpose of justifying sub-tenants greater enhancement. In the same year, the Garo tenants of Habraghat pargana headed by Mangal Singh etc. Petitioned Government demanding Garo tenants'

right to collect fuel, straw etc. to cut down sal trees for building houses and making ploughs, to cut down trees (grown) on own holdings, to graze cows in the zamindary forests. It is worth noting that they claimed those rights on the basis of local custom which was recognised by the former Rajas of Bijni.

It should be noted that the tenants' agitation in Goalpara during the period under review was widespread. Added to it was the agitation of the Garos, who, under the leadership of Sonaram Sangma, rose against the oppression of Bijni Raj.

The agitating tenants, though failed to be organised in a single body in the district level, succeeded to draw the attention of the local press as well as the intelligentsia to their plight. Consequently Government prepared a draft of a rent law suitable for Goalpara. But the measure was dropped due to the opposition of the zamindars.

In the wake of non-cooperation movement, some tenants in Goalpara combined together to refuse to pay

22. Ibid.
24. Infra, Chapter XII,
their rents, viz., in Ghurla Pargana the tenant stopped paying rent to the Raja of Gauripur in 1921, until an amicable settlement was reached over the disputed rent enhancement

In view of the non-payment of rent to the zamindar by the tenants in Ghurla Pargana, the Government of Assam introduced the Assam Land Lord and Tenant Procedure (Amendment) Bill in 1922, to make arrears of rent recoverable as arrears of land revenue in the districts of Goalpara and Sylhet. The President of the Krishak Sarmilani, Goalpara, submitted a memorial on 9th April, 1922, to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, while requesting him to stop the Bill, the said President of the Krishak Sarmilani stated:

"I hope you will be able to see the real grievances of the original inhabitants of the Goalpara district. Since the time of Sir Erchdale Earle, the then Chief Commissioner of Assam, the simple and ignorant tenants of the district submitted many memorials to the Government, but unfortunately their grievances remained the same. It is by no means the spirit

of the Permanent Settlement that tenants' interest should not be looked into by the authority. The oppression of the zamindars and their officials is well known throughout the country and there is no doubt that the helpless poor tenants scarcely get justice in the law courts against the powerful zamindars. The continuous memorials of the tenants of the Goalpara district bear good evidence to the truth of it.... The continuous oppression of the zamindars has now made them suspicious of the zamindars; still they never willfully stopped payment of their fair rent. But the zamindars have been gradually demanding more and more rent which people are unable to pay.... owing to the failure of crops last year due to high floods. The people have been in distress, so this year they could not pay their rent.... The conduct of the tenants never justify the introduction of the Bill27.

The bill was dropped, as the Europeans and zamindars could together master only 17 votes against 21 non-official Indian votes in favour of this motion28. However, in the course of debate on the bill there was a general opinion that a Tenancy Act was of utmost necessity for Goalpara.

During the time when the drafting of the proposed tenancy bill was undertaken, some tenants from Bijni Raj estate submitted a memorial to the Governor of Assam in Council stating some of their rights and grievances, which, they hoped, might be considered duly and provided in the proposed Rent Law, viz., infringement of their customary rights to (a) graze cattle in the Khas land, (b) to cutting away thatching grass from Khas land for roofing of their houses free of charge, (c) taking away dead sal posts free of charge from the estate forest for using them for their own purposes, and (d) cut or sell the fruit and other trees planted and grown up in their own holding according to their own will and pleasure. The memorialists prayed the Government to safeguard their above mentioned customary rights against future infringement on the proposed legislation.

In March, 1929, the Goalpara Tenancy Act was passed. By it, the ryots, who held land for 12 years, secured occupancy rights. But the adhiars were left on the same footing as they were before. There was no organisation worth the name in Goalpara district to do spadework for

29. Revenue A, December, 1927, no 64-75, Assam Secretariat Record Room, Dispur.
redressing the grievances of the Adhiars. The Krishak Sammilani referred to was perhaps affiliated to All India Congress Organisation. The Sammilani, thus, could not take up the local problems as much as it was involved in the national programme, though in several places, there was confrontation between the zamindars and the oppressed peasants during the years 1937-40.

After the formation of a unit of the Communist Party in Goalpara, a Krishak Sabha was held at Gaurangatarang in Kokrajhar under the leadership of the Communists. A Reception Committee was formed with Mahendra Nath Rabha as President and Rabin Basumatari as Secretary. Of the members Kamakshya Brahma, Manik Gowari, Soroj Gowari, and Adal Brahma were worth mentioning. Amongst others (i.e., price rise, black marketing etc.) the problem of the Adhia-Ryota was raised in the Sabha and resolution was passed to that effect.


Parbortjoar Daffadar-Kuthari Movement:

According to Daffadar Kuthari system, introduced in Goalpara by the zamindar, the ryots had to pay to the zamindar a six anna share of the sale proceeds of the wood taken away from the forest for sale. It should be mentioned that the ryots enjoyed the customary rights to the consumption of woods of the forest free of any charge. It was, thus, an infringement on their rights, and the ryots complained against it from time to time. The zamindar of Parbortjoar estate on the other hand stuck to it, and sold the forest in auction to the contractors. The ryots offered organised resistance, a Parbortjoar Pargana Krishak Sabha being formed with Debendra Brahma as Secretary. The Second Conference of the District Krishak Sabha was held at Tipkai in 1947 on this issue. A band of nearly five thousand Krishaks came in a procession to Bagribari, headquarters of the estate, and demonstrated their grievances against the Daffadar-Kuthari system. In view of the intensity of the movement, the contractors could not get the woods cut with their labours. A compromise was got through at the initiative of the then Congress leader of the district, Sri Sarat Chandra Sinha.32

32. Ibid.