CONCLUSION
The preceding pages have discussed the crisis and consequent decline of the Mughal State in the Eighteenth Century and impact of this crisis on the successor State as well as on the states which bordered its eastern frontier.

The Mughal State was founded by Babur in the early 16th century and remained very powerful for more than 200 years. The basic state structure/institution started developing from the time of Akbar's reign, who had effected grand reconciliation in the Indian masses by enunciating the principles of Sulh-i-Kul, which allowed
unhindered growth of various religious movements like Bhakti movement which were largely reformist in character. But the evolution of unique mansabdari system enabled the Emperor to concentrate the authority as the system was based on direct command and recruitment was the sole discretion of the Emperor. The majority of mansabdars were paid their salary both personal as well as for tabinan (contingent maintenance) in form of jagir. Thus, the mansabdars were also used to be jagirdars invariably. The income (jama) from a particular jagir was fixed by the Mughal land revenue administration and based largely on land measurement and commutation of demand into cash according to the schedule. The State demand happened to be about half of the produce. But the taxation system seems to be regressive as the actual tiller of land seldom enjoyed any privilege, which was prerogative of local influential elements like zamindars. The zamindars were assisting the Mughal officials in land collection for which the zamindars were receiving a certain percentage as commission. Since, the zamindars were local and hereditary, they counter checked the over exploitation of peasants by the jagirdars, who were transferable on regular interval.

These basic structures sustained the state for long but these started showing sign of weakness during the reign of Aurangzeb and since these were so linked with each other, malfunction of one was
bound to create problem for the other. In the later part of Aurangzeb’s reign, there was massive rise in the number of mansabdars which required sanction of jagir and because of its non-availability created a ‘crisis’ in the administrative structure known as ‘jagirdari crisis’ which had not only undermined the mansabdari system, the basis of military organisation and affected the functioning of the state.

The Mughal officials had tendency to artificially increase the jama (estimated income) from a jagir, from where the hasil (actual realisation) used to be very low, which often failed to meet payment commitments of state, signifying a crisis.

Right from the beginning there were several regions (zortalab) from where revenue realisation was difficult and the administration had to use force for realisation of the revenue and these areas tend to revolt on slightest opportunity.

Towards the end of the 17th century, the increased instances of revenue farming (ijaradari) was discernible and the ijaradar (revenue contractor or farmer) used to collect legal and illegal cesses with impunity, putting peasantry under great stress. Since, the Jagirdars and his agents were not sure of their continuance in a particular jagir due to transfer they used to proceed tyrannically and were unrelenting in revenue collection without paying attention to the
development of the region. Thus, due to the highly regressive taxation the peasants were forced to migrate and even good quality of land remain uncultivated for want of the peasants and they fled oppressive areas and generally take refuse with the zamindars and both of them on many occasion combined to rebel against the Mughal authority. Thus, the Jat, Satnami, Sikh and many other such peasants rebellion created the crisis characterised as 'agrarian crisis' and it indeed had made the Mughal State weak and vulnerable.

The urban centres in Mughal India being parasitic in nature and dependent on the agrarian surplus extraction from the country side, too, suffered due to the agrarian crisis and therefore, there was perceptible decline of old urban centres in India in late 17th century and first half of the 18th century.

Similarly, the society in Mughal India and its successor State display acute lack of capacity to respond to the European science and technology and failed to adopt these superior technology and continued with age old craft technology. Similarly, the Indian population growth was very low in comparison to Europe during 17 to 19th century which also indicated lack of large domestic market. The incapacity of the Mughal India to comprehend and adopt the European science and technology, which indicated the cultural failure.
Thus, the Mughal Empire failed to come to terms with these multifaceted crisis and was so weakened that even the petty zamindars were declaring their autonomy and the end of Empire had virtually seized to exist.

With the weakening of the empire, the erstwhile Mughal officials established an independent state in Bengal. Since the state continued all the Mughal institutions and in fact it had only severed the umbilical cord it was described as a successor state. The Bengal nazimate witnessed a short period of prosperity before falling into disarray.

Bengal was one of the most prosperous suba of the Mughal Empire and it had become an important centre of international and national trade as well as its fertile land enabled it to get very high agricultural production. In the first half of the 18th century it kept on sending revenue remittances to the Empire even during the period of crisis in Mughal State. The Europeans were aware about the richness of the suba and they harboured territorial ambitions in Bengal.

The Bengal nobility like its parent state, too suffered from corruption, involvement in intrigues and failure to appreciate changing times and the participation of the nobility in power struggle along with Ghasiti Begum had undermined the strength of the state.
The British conquest of Bengal followed largely due to the sub-imperialism of the English East India Company officials, who were much involved in the private trade and were increasingly misusing the dastaks depriving the nazimat treasury a huge sum. The British officials resorted to bribery and dangling of other allurements to the nazimat officials which created a critical period in Bengal finally leading to British conquest.

Besides, the successor state of Bengal, a number of state formation had also developed in the eastern frontier of Bengal. Most of them were tribal polities developing into a feudal state formation. The formations, we are concerned with, are Ahom, Koch, Tripuri, and Dimasa state formations. All these state formations developed from a tribal polity into a monarchy and their feudalization was strengthened by gradual sanskritization from across the border, i.e., Bengal.

The interesting point here is that the economic basis for all these formations were primarily slash and burn cultivation, which graduated into settled rice-culture. The mode of appropriation was payment in kind and added to this was 'corvee' system of obligatory labour service to the state. Obviously the states were not monetized (absence of cash nexus) and there was almost lack of growth of trade and commerce, as well as trading class. The main reason behind this
was the subsistence economy, non-production of surplus and a curious state regulation over trade and commerce.

The geographical location of these states on the Bengal border was a kind of sealed their fate. These states by virtue of their location were destined to face intervention from their mighty neighbour - the Mughal State. This intervention was mainly of three kind: political, economic and cultural.

The destiny of these states were bound with the destiny of Mughal State, even though they were not organically a part of the Mughal State. Therefore, when the Mughal State was plagued by multiple crisis and decline, these states had also similar fate. Importantly, it was not just political and economic impact but also cultural impact, which bound their destinies together.

It is the cultural influence of the mainland India that brought sanskritization to these states and the small tribal polities required cultural and ideological legitimacy from mainland India to ensure their sustenance. It came in the form of sanskritization - main features of which were: Hinduism, caste system, appropriation of the pantheon of god and Goddess and overall Brahmanical ideology. Since, this influence had come from their immediate neighbour, Bengal the nature of Hinduism and caste system that entered their zone was of the Bengal variety. This cultural borrowing had its
economic content too. The sanskritization was actually a process of feudalization of tribal structure, hence, often the feudal features have manifested in religious forms.

As a political entity the survival of these states have always been suspect due to its location and the history of Mughal Empire shows that it has rarely allowed an independent neighbour to perpetuate its independent existence, sooner or later these type of states had been absorbed into the Empire. But the eastern state did not suffer such abrupt fate mainly because they did not had much to offer in terms of economic gain and secondly they were remote and inaccessible, but whenever the Mughal Empire was in need of extra revenue or would turn expansionist, these states were the targets.

The Koch-Behar and Tripura state due to their proximity had been subjected to continual invasion and intervention. Koch-Behar was virtually, an extension of Bengal. The Chakla Roshnabad area of Tripura State was in reality part of Bengal, which was the only substantial revenue generating area of the hill state. This did not escape the attention of the Mughal State, so whenever they intervened into the affairs of state, they displayed interest only in these sources of revenue.

Similarly, lower Assam sector of the Ahom State was the area, the Mughals were interested in and although there was large plain
areas under the Dimasa State, it was neither populated nor cultivated
and the absence of any revenue from this area was a potential
distracter for the Mughals.

But things took a sharp turn in the late 17th and early 18th
century AD when Aurgangzeb took over the reign of the Mughal
Empire. In pursuance of Aurangzeb’s expansionist policy, Mir Jumla
and his successor in Bengal subdued both Koch-Behar and Assam on
the one hand and Tripura on the other. The state of Tripura was
virtually reduced to a zamindari, while the Koch-Behar to a vassal
state. This precipitated the crisis in these states. It was further
compounded by the ever increasing demand of tribute as well as war
indemnity. Since, these states were neither monetized nor generating
cash revenue it was difficult to meet tribute demand and the
establishment of several Mughal administrative features subverted
the existing order which in turn produced the crisis.

Although the Ahom State was able to throw out the Mughals
from its boundary it was hardly able to shake off Mughal influence.
Lower Assam remained a part of the Mughal Empire for a
considerably long period and due to its influence the Ahom State had
tried to absorb some of its impacts like, partial commutation labour
service into cash and parallel continuance of labour service was
bound to create contradiction. In the process it gave rise to massive
contradiction in the economic, political and cultural terms. Politically *satras* became the alternative centres of power, economically to escape obligatory labour service and payments of cash revenue, peasant cultivators rallied round the *satra* causing starvation to the royal treasury. Culturally the strength of *vaishnavite satra* vis-à-vis *sakta* culture of the Ahom royalty and weakness of the Ahom State led to great uprising against the Ahoms. It was basically a peasant uprising which broke out in religious garb creating a chaos in the state. The revolts appears to be similar to which Mughal Empire faced in the form of agrarian revolt and crisis. The chaos brought two other interventionist forces firstly, the Burmese and then the British into the area. While the advent of the Burmese marked the physical devastation for the area, the British arrival signalled the demise of the Ahom State.

As far as Koch-Behar was concerned the advent of the Mughals and the imposition of revenue assessment and collection, according to the regulation followed in the *mahals* of the imperial territories, caused a general revulsion against the conquerors among the peasants immediately before the beginning of the 18th century and the massive uprising forced the Mughals to physically evacuate from the area. But they continued to collude with the local officials and *zamindars* who sought to break away from the Koch State. The cumulative
result was the reduction of the Koch king into an insignificant tributary of the Mughal power in Bengal. This also marked the disintegration of the Koch sate as a number of its officials and zamindars declared their independence from it and pledged tributary status to Bengal. The crisis in Bengal Nazimate due to the advent of the British failed to retrieve its status and from its earlier master it was transferred to the regime of English East India Company. The status of Koch vassal state did not improve further and eventually it signed the subsidiary alliance to retain semblance of its independence.

The State of Tripura had to face the greed of the English very early. As soon as East India Company assumed the diwani of Bengal it eyed the fertile region of Roshanabad. The crisis ridden Tripura State provided the required opportunity to the company to interfere and it snatched Roshanabad from the Tripura State. In fact it even refused to recognise Tripura as an independent state. It treated the State merely as a zamindari. Once the revenue generating area of Roshanabad was given the British showed no interest in the rest of the Tripura. Therefore, it could retain its nominal independence but the payment of huge tribute every year gradually weakened the state. The Reang and the paite rebellion only worsened the condition.
The tiny state of Dimasa (Cachar) came to the limelight only when the Burmese invaded Manipur and the Manipuri princes took shelter in Dimasa territory. Once the British established their foothold in Ahom State on the north Bengal and Tripura on the west the British had occupied Dimasa State taking advantage of Tularam’s rebellion. The Dimasa State was eventually absorbed into the British Empire. The society in these state formations did not show capacity to respond to the European science and technology. Adoption of some of which could have arrested the crisis emerged due to labour shortage caused by the flight of a large number of paiks to satras in Ahom State.

Therefore, the crisis and contradiction that emerged in the Mughal State in general and Bengal State in particular, had its deep impact on these frontier state. While rise of a mighty state was a threat to their independent existence the eclipse of the Mughals also did not signify their increased strength. As a system they were an organic body whereas as entities they were independent of each other. The development in each bound to influence the other. The history of Eighteenth Century in India testifies these phenomena. The crisis in the Mughal State’s resulted in the decline not only of the successor states of Bengal but also the frontier States of Ahom, Koch, Tripura and Dimasa. Thus, the decline of all these states at a time was not co-
incidental. In this sense, the history of the frontier states of Northeast are an integral part of the Indian History.