CHAPTER-TWO

INTRODUCTION OF THE COLONIAL LAND REVENUE SYSTEM (A)

PRE-PERMANENT SETTLEMENT, (B) PERMANENT SETTLEMENT, (C) POST-PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

The East India Company’s land revenue system played a significant role for the development of the land reforms policy of British government. The collection of revenue agricultural lands was one of the major sources by which the English East India Company dominated their position. Actually, the East India Company realized the importance of land revenue system. Warren Hastings was the pioneer in this field but Lord Cornwallis, with the help of the Court of Directors, implemented this policy. The East India Company’s land revenue system established a new relationship among zamindar-jotdar-mahajan and cultivator.

(A) PRE-PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

In ancient Bengal, agriculture was the chief source of people in their livelihood. Agriculture was totally depended on land. Rural structure, classification of society, state and people’s relation was much depended on the basis of land. At that time agricultural based society interrelated with the land system. In ancient Bengal, this land system and their descriptions were very rare. Some descriptions were also found from Smriti Sastra, Arthasastra, Veda, Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata, Purana and books of Jatakas. Many inscriptions also give us much information about land and its related matters. Boigram Copper Plate, Damodorpur Copper Plate, Paharpur inscription, Gunaiagher inscription, Khalimpur Copper Plate etc. were written about the ancient land structure, purchase, transfer of land, revenue reports, value of land and also land description.¹
In the land structure of ancient Bengal, we got Brahmadeya, Debottar land. From Gupta period onwards the role of Pustapala (record keeper) was very important. In the case of donation and selling of land, Pustapala played a significant role. Ancient Bengal’s land structure was divided into following ways- 1) Types of land, 2) Measurement of land and their rates, 3) Demand of land, 4) Geographical location of land and revenue of land (such as Udrika and Uparikar) etc. In ancient period the amount of land was huge and at that time population was also under control. In rural areas any problems regarding land was solved by the villagers. But later due to the increase of population, land became costly and land structures were changed totally. Land revenue system was also restructured with the gradual passing of time.

Bakthyer Khalji who was the commander in chief of Sultan Qutb-ud-din Aibek attacked Bengal in 1204. At that time the king of Gour was Sena king Lakshan Sena. By the attack of Bakthyer Khalji Lakshan Sena left Nawadip and took shelter in eastern Bengal. By the hands of Bakthyer, Muslim rule gradually consolidated in Lakshanavati as well as in Bengal. Bakthyer later founded his capital in Damdama (Present Gangarampur, Dakshin Dinajpur district). Muslims, at that time, did not have much knowledge about Bengal. Hence, the land structure of Bengal remained same during the Muslim period. During this period jaigirdar system was introduced. The name of land owners and their characters gradually changed. A new class emerged which came to be known as zamindar. Zamindar came from the words ‘zamindar’ (Zamin=land and land=holder). In the Pala period Brahmana, Kayastha, Baidya were treated as zamindar.

In the Sultanate period soldiers used to get jaigir. Agricultural system transformed into different ways by the hands of zamindar. Zamindars were classified into different sections such as the title of Raja, Rana, Ray etc. They were known as feudal kings. These feudal kings had direct contact with the state administration. Second class constitutes
Chowdhury, Mukhiya, Desmukh, Talukdar etc. During the Sultanate period feudal class was emerged as powerful section. Naturally peasants faced much sufferings in the hands of these feudals.

The Mughal period before the arrival of the British was marked by changes in the system of land taxation or revenue. Peasants continued to enjoy customary rights over land they occupied and generally could not be evicted unless they failed to pay the required land revenue (land tax) to the state. The task of collecting land revenue was assigned to a class of agents called zamindars. During the Mughal period Sher Shah (1538-1545) controlled the feudal lords. Peasants and cultivators got some relief by the initiatives of Sher Shah. He introduced a new system of communication between the raiyats and the state system. ‘Kabuliot’ and ‘Patta’ were also introduced and as a result peasants got some revenue relief. But due to the sudden death of Sher Shah, the condition of peasants came at stake. At that time several posts were created such as sarkar, poddar, khijandar, dihidar etc., but peasants had to pay vast amount of land revenue to their respective land lords.

The Mughal machinery of land revenue collection system was not very complex. The amils (land revenue Collector from zamindars), faujdars (subordinate military commanders) etc. were responsible for collection of revenue. The naib, qanungoes or deputies of qanungoes collected all important documents through the patwaris or subordinate government agents in villages. The patwaris were assisted by mandals or leaders of the peasantry. Practice might have differed in different areas, but there were minute details of accounts in both land and revenue. In the 16th century Sher Shah fixed the share of the produce payable as revenue at $\frac{1}{4}$, and attempted to introduce a more regular system of assessment and collection.

The revenue of Bengal was assessed during the reign of Akbar. During the time of Akbar, his Finance Minister Todarmal made a khas or Rayatwari settlement, and divided
the Empire into fifteen revenue divisions called subhas. The standard assessment of land revenue of Bengal by Todarmal about 1582 was known for many generations as Asal Jumma Tumar. The Asal Jumma was a relatively stable amount and was theoretically connected in some way to Todarmal’s land settlement of or to some subsequent Mughal settlement. Another important minister, Abul Fazl also surveyed the land. This was known from his book Ain-i-Akbari. On the other hand, Todarmal divided the subha of Bengal into 24 sarkars. Out this six fell within the limits of Dinajpur. The sarkars were again sub-divided into mahals, which corresponded to some extent with the present parganas. The mauzas into which the present parganas were divided are said to be village divisions dating from pre-Muhammadan times and which were not affected by Akbar’s divisions.

In the mediaeval period Indian land revenue and economic system were totally dominated by the feudal system. In the Mughal period new feudals were called as jaigirdar. Actually their administrative name was ‘mansabdar’ which means rank or post. From the autobiography of Babur it was known that the cultivators’ defused to pay taxes and they participated in revolt against the Sultan. During the time of Jahangir, izaradars became powerful. In 1695 peasants protested against Sobha Singh for the collection of illegal taxes from the uncultivated land.

This appears to have the case in Dinajpur, the greater portion of which was settled with the successive princes of the Dinajpur Raj family, who were allowed to privilege of administering their own Estates. During the reigns of Raja Prananath and Ramnath, Dinajpur Raj family reached the zenith of power. But in 1722, payments of revenue having became very irregular. Mirjafar made a new settlement dividing the province of Bengal into chaklas, to each of which a chakladar was appointed as collector of the revenue.

The Mughal system was not consistent in all its parts. In the khalsa or revenue lands as well as in the jagir or assigned lands, zamindari system prevailed in the Mughal period.
The land revenue of Bengal was realized from the zamindars that collected the revenue from the raiyats or tenants. The Tumar Jumma prevailed till the days of Murshid Quli Khan. Whenever any new territory was annexed, land revenue was assessed immediately and it was known as Asal Jumma Tumar and the original amount was also recorded in the public register.

The system of revenue collection in force against the Muhammadan conquerors of Bengal appears to have been to appoint farmers of the revenue for larger or smaller areas, as might be convenient. Revenue administration was, however, very lax and little attempt was made to insist on the punctual payment of the land tax, which no doubt frequently fell into arrears. The farmers of the revenue appointed by the Afghan rulers of Gour and after them, by the Mughals were in many instances the hereditary land owners, who remained in undisturbed possession of their estates and free in a great measure from interference, on condition of paying a reasonable tribute. In the Mughal period, the last revenue settlement took place in Bengal in 1722. At that time Bengal’s Subedar was Murshid Quli Khan and the Sultan of Delhi was Sultan Muhammad Shah. During this time of survey and settlement Bengal was divided into 13 chakla and 1600 parganas. This survey and settlement came to be known as Jama–I Kamil-Tumar. In this survey revenue rates were increased. At that time land revenue system of Bengal was in turmoil. During this time income of revenue collection gradually decreased because of the increase of jaigir land. For this reason military force and administration depended on the basis of revenue which came from different regions. During the reign of Murshid Quli Khan this economic disorder gradually became disciplined.

For the collection of revenue in the villages, Murshid Quli Khan appointed Amil, Shikdar, Amin, Karkun and Zaripdaran. Every village, piece of land and every raiyat measuring the land came to be known as Hast-o-bud. Poor peasants got the opportunities of taking ‘Taquavi’d debt (Loan). Tax was imposed on industrial products. In this way
government increased their revenues. According to Jadunath Sarkar revenue increased from Rs 1, 30,000 to Rs 1, 55,000.  

During the time of Murshid Quli Khan, he appointed some government officials and contractual officials for the collection of taxes. These contractual officials came to be known as Amil (Sikder). These contractual officials paid an amount of revenue to the government and in return they got the right of revenue collection. These contractual revenue collectors were divided as follows

\[
\text{Revenue Collector} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Zamindar} \quad \text{Dihidar} \quad \text{Mastazir} \quad \text{Izaradar} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Peskash} \quad \text{Izaradar} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{State} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Zamindar/Izaradar} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{Raiyat}
\]

In this system there was a direct relation between the raiyats and contractual revenue collector.

During the time of Murshid Quli Khan, most of the revenue settlements were arranged between the Sultan and contractual revenue collectors. In this way zamindar classes were increased and zamindari system was flourished. During the time of Murshid Quli Khan land settlements were different which were as follows

1) \textit{Zamindari} land- land under the authority of Peskhas zamindar.

2) \textit{Izardari} land- land under the authority of contractual collector.

3) \textit{Khalisha} land- land which related with Amil and Shikdar.
4) *Jaigir/Amil* land- land given instead of salaries of the government and non-government officials.

Several lands give the descriptions of several related matter. Especially two types of land indicate two different things- Firstly, cultivator/raiyats had the right to enjoy the land. Secondly, contractual revenue collectors had the right of revenue collection. But, the ownership of the land remained on the hands of the state. The ownership of land was in the hands of the state, but due to the weakness of monarchical system, this ownership gradually weakened. Contractual revenue collectors or the zamindars declared as independent and claimed the right of land. For example, the role of baro bhuia (twelve bhuias) can be mentioned during the time of Akbar. Implementation of ‘Jumma’ settlement during the time of Murshid Quli Khan created a new zamindar class. This ‘Jumma’ settlement transformed into ‘Sumar’ settlement in 1728 by the hands of Suja-ud-din.

The new impositions of Murshid Quli, Suja-ud-din and Alivardi were not burdensome because of the new resources created in a century and a half. It has been said that zamindars were in the habit of imposition additional levies upon the raiyats and thus set an example to the Subahdars. Especially zamindars, in their turn, passed these new demands upon the raiyats with additional of their own. The Subadari abwabs amounted to about 33p.c of the increased standard assessment. But the consequential demand of the zamindars upon the raiyats amounted to about 50 p.c. The increased demands upon the zamindars perpetuated the zamindari impositions upon the raiyats. What was more the door was opened for future exactions from the raiyats which continued throughout later periods.

By the hands of Murshid Quli Khan, Alivardi and Suja-ud-din a moderate ‘Jumma’ was regularly and rigidly collected. There were no remissions and balances. It was a very well regulated period of revenue administration. There was severity and coercion but the door was not thrown wide open to corruption and chicane. From 1742-1749 Bengal witnessed a chapter of terror. Bhaskar Pandit plundered Bengal. A poetry was very popular at that time –
“Chale ghumalo para juralo

Bargi elo deshe

Bulbulite dhan kheyech

Khajna debo kishe”

(The child went off to sleep and locality became calm, the foreign attackers came to state, the birds have eaten the crops, by what means the rent can be paid.)

In 1757 British entered Bengal to exploit the common people. In the meantime Industrial Revolution swept all over England. Due to Industrial Revolution Bengal’s small scale industrial product lost their demand and as a result, colonial economy gradually flourished. British people used their capitals and the labours of India. Especially in Bengal peasants had to pay 33-50% taxes. On the other hand, small scale industries were gradually started declining.

The political system of Bengal, of which the large baronages in the Diwani areas under Murshidabad, the petty vassalages in the nibat of Dhaka, and the faujdari areas under the sadar towns of the sarkars formed so integral a part in the days of Alivardi Khan, began to break down gradually after the battle of Plassey. On the other hand, in his short-lived administration, Siraj-ud-daula had no time to act upto the advice which he had given to his grand father. Mirjafar was at the hand of a distracted and indolent administration. There was a general state of anarchy and relaxation, neglect creeping into every department. Mirjafar attended very little to business.

The English were placed in possession of the 24 Parganas in July, 1757 and the English East India Company collected the revenue for the time being. In 1759 land revenue was formed. The subordinate revenue farmers who were in possession, protested. They had served as subordinate revenue farmers under the old zamindars. Their ancestors had cleared
the jungles and populated these areas. Inspite of their protest the old zamindars and their subordinate farmers were displaced. When farming of these areas began in 1759, the farmers were without local links. Their bids were widely speculative. They rack-rented and then absconded i.e. fraudulently bankrupt.

The Select Committee of Lord Clive therefore decided to keep the collection in their own hands till such a time as the real value of the lands was exactly ascertained. Even in the cultivated lands which were farmed out the native servants and their dependants held at an under-rent- a low inequitable rent. Several types of taxes had to pay by the poor raiyats. During the years 1759-67 the East India Company as zamindar was distrustful of zamindars. Their servants made the experiment of direct administration and also farming experiments. Both these two experiments were failed.

In 1760 Mir Qasim ceded to the Company Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong for “all charges of the Company and of the army and provisions for the field etc.” In the rest of Bengal, which was made over to Mir Qasim, the Nizamat badly maulded its time-honoured revenue arrangements in a last desperate bid to save itself from further British expansion. When this final bid for survival laid inruins of the battle-field of Buxar, the zamindari system had started cracking both in the baronages and in the faujdaries as a result of extractions by the Nizamat in its effort to mobilize financial resources for defence against the East India Company.

In 1722 Murshid Quli Khan fixed the land revenue settlement of Bengal at RS. 1 crore and 42 lakhs and Mir Qasim, in his settlement of 1763, fixed an additional sum of RS. 1 crore and 26 lakhs on the territory remaining under his revenue administration, so that in the shrunken territory under the Nizamat the revenue stood at RS 2 crore and 56 lakhs. By imposing abwabs, resuming profits of jagirs and carrying out Hast-o-bud (surveys) Mir Qasim nearly doubled the revenue of his territory in course of three years from 1760 to
1763.\textsuperscript{45} This was quite impossible and this additional demand was never collected in full but the strenuous attempts to realize it began to produce structural distortions in the zamindari system.\textsuperscript{46}

Dispossessing the zamindars, Mir Qasim let loose a horde of faujdars, amils and revenue-farmers on both the Dewani and Faujdari areas, which quickly exhausted the resources of the territories made over to them. In this process the difference between the Dewani and Faujdari areas was effectively swept aside. The baronage in the Dewani areas which came under the greatest pressure was Dinajpur, Rajshahi etc. Mir Qasim threw into prison the zamindars of Dinajpur and Rajshahi.\textsuperscript{47} He subsequently killed Jagat Seth, Rajvallabh and some of the other zamindars. It is known that the Raja of Dinajpur survived and got back his zamindari.\textsuperscript{48}

But Mir Qasim was overthrown after two years in 1765; Robert Clive got the Dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.\textsuperscript{49} After that Reja khan was appointed as the Naib Diwan. At that time he was a revenue specialist. British officials followed the foot prints of Todarmal, in the field of revenue system. For the survey of land and revenue system two Revenue Councils were formed in 1770.\textsuperscript{50} Revenue Council obtained the power of land settlement and assessment of land revenue. Now land revenue and survey settlement were under the hands of the East India Company’s monopoly.\textsuperscript{51}

In the mean time a great famine took place in 1770. In this famine, at least \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the inhabitants of Bengal perished. This famine was an appalling spectra on the threshold of British rule in Bengal. In Malda the famine swept away many of the inhabitants. So much enfeebled was those who survived that the Company could not get half the quantity of cloth for investment next year. An enumeration was made of the looms employed in the Company’s ‘investment’ at Malda after the famine and it was found that the number was decreased during the calamity to near one half.\textsuperscript{52}
Dinajpur was one of the worst effects of famine. Dinajpur zamindar Baidyanath referred to the depopulated and ruined state of this district on account of drought and famine. Many villages were wholly deserted. The zamindar appeared to be interested only in the completion of ‘Malguzari’—‘the only road to his own welfare’. Malguzari agreement with zamindars and talukdars had been the common form of revenue agreement. He reported that for want of seed and implements of cultivation, large portions of his zamindari had fallen waste. The problem was the settlement of accounts.

From Naib Diwan’s report the districts which suffered least from this calamity and from which the city of Murshidabad and northern part of Bengal got some supply of rice were Dinajpur, Silberris, Rangpur, Idrakpur, Dhaka and Sylhet. The famine swept away nearly half the people of Purnia. Later it also engulfed the majority of the large zamindars of North Bengal. It also put an end to the Dual Government at the centre and the administration by amils in the districts.

Lord Clive was replaced by Warren Hastings. Assuming direct administration of the Diwani in 1772, Warren Hastings introduced for the whole of Bengal a five years (1772-1777) experiment of farming which came to be known as ‘quin-quenial settlement’. Warren Hastings was not in favour of zamindari system. At the end of five years the remissions and balances on the settlement amounted to two hundred and thirty lakhs. Many of the farmers and many of the zamindars who had become farmers were deceived in trying to meet their obligations. This ‘quin-quennial settlement’ was in its operation the most grievous and unjust, even more so than the settlement of Mir Qasim ever was.

The farmers were in many cases nominal persons. In the opinion of John Shore this new farming system was introduced with a view to securing for the banians the most beneficial farms. This was to some extent true. Hasting’s revenue policy, as Francis put it in rather violent terms, was to raise from the enormous sum required for financing the
Company’s ‘Investment’ and commercial charges and to effect this, together with some other purposes perhaps equally interesting to himself, by reducing every native of every rank to what he calls a competent subsistence.\textsuperscript{61}

The question comes what the position of the zamindars and raiyats under this farming system was. In many areas the zamindars were converted into farmers or became under-renters under the farmers of their own hereditary property.\textsuperscript{62} The farmers were granted amilnamas or commissions in the name of the government which gave them authority to call in all the zamindari pattas and issue new pattas which were perhaps from the nature of the prevalent circumstances more open to abuse.\textsuperscript{63} Philips Francis and his friends thought only of the zamindar and they felt that they were justified in thinking “where so much land lies waste the peasant must be courted”.\textsuperscript{64}

After the failure of Hasting’s quin-uenial settlement, Edmond Bark appointed Hastings in the British parliament. Court of Directors of the East India Company takes their decisions that no zamindaries will be auctioned and an annual easy agreement was made with zamindaries.\textsuperscript{65} To maintain this provisions a group of amin was appointed under the monitoring of East India Companies officials. By the collection of documents by the amins an annual zamindar settlement started between 1777-1780. But the problem was not overcome. In 1781 this settlement came to an end. In the year 1781, previous system was changed and a new revenue committee was formed. This committee established the office of the collectors in every district and created the post of ‘Qanungo’. Revenue Committee by the help of collector arranges a three years land settlement with the zamindars and this system continued upto 1784. \textsuperscript{66}

In the meantime Pitts India Act (1784) was passed in the British Parliament. It is to be noted that Pitts took the precaution of neutralizing the opposition of the English Company. The result was that the bill was introduced in Parliament fortified and recommended by the
consent of the company. The sub-title of Pitts India Act mentioned three purposes-  

1) the better regulation and management of the affairs of the East India Company; 2) the better regulation and management of the British possessions in India; 3) the establishment of a court for the more speedy and effectual trial of persons accused of offences committed in the East Indies. Pitts India Act of 1784 says Auber, ‘formed a new era in the Indian system’. The most remarkable feature of the new era was the ‘double government’. The board, on its part, claimed that the Act of 1784 (section-11) gave it full control over the civil and military government or revenues of the British territorial possessions in the East Indies.

The principal object in framing the Act of 1784 was to take from the Company the entire management of the territorial possessions and the political government of the country. This Act gives information about the zamindar-jaigirdar-raiyat relations, right of land, revenue reports etc. From Pitts India Act, it is known that the kings of Coochbehar, Assam and Tripura give revenue to the Mughal king and enjoyed their estate rights. Some old zamindars played a fixed number of revenue to the Bengal provincial administrators and in return they established their rights in their own regions. Rajshahi and Dinajpur kings enjoyed this type of freedom. Some Mughal kings donated land for the collection of revenues and East India Company after getting Dewani (1765) they give the rights of the collection of land revenues by the hands of land owners.

For the implementation of Pitt’s India Act, court of directors of East India Company appointed Lord Cornwallis as the Governor General. Cornwallis noticed the failure of five years settlement. He assessed the collection of revenue and land settlement. He abolished the previous revenue board and appointed five members and formed board of revenue in 1786. Now Collectors got the special power including Magisterial and civil court power. The Board of Revenue published their rules and regulations. In this administrative set up Bengal
Decennial Settlement Regulation Act was passed in 1789, 18\textsuperscript{th} September and this settlement came to be known as ‘Ten Years Settlement’.

By this Act government got relief for the collection of revenues. On the other hand zamindars collected revenues from the tenants and raiyats. Zamindars also give attention about waste lands. The East India Company got taxes in right time. This ten years settlement became the pioneer of Permanent Settlement.

(B) PERMANENT SETTLEMENT

Why Permanent Settlement introduced in Bengal? Who was the chief framer of this settlement? What were the objectives of Permanent Settlement? Is this Settlement introduced for the domination of British colonial rule in Bengal or for the benefit of the Bengalees? There was an impression in the last quarter of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century that the chief framer of the Permanent Settlement was Lord Cornwallis. The main reason for the responsible of this impression was James Mill. According to Mill, Lord Cornwallis was one of the most experienced British aristocratic representatives. After the arrival of Lord Cornwallis he created another aristocratic class in Bengal.\textsuperscript{75} But in the first quarter of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Mills impression faded away.\textsuperscript{76} Many scholars want to say that Cornwallis was not responsible for the introduction of Permanent Settlement.

From 1770 several opinions developed about this settlement and it flourished during the time of Cornwallis. Actually Permanent Settlement replaced the old zamindari system.\textsuperscript{77} Some historians think that Permanent Settlement was introduced for the strengthening of the backbone of British colonial rule. According to Warren Hastings; Company’s main aim was to transfer the surplus revenues of India to Britain.\textsuperscript{78} In 1770 eminent historian Alexander Dow gave the proposal of Permanent Settlement. He thinks that Bengal’s economic downgrade start from the beginning of the English rule.\textsuperscript{79} He also thinks in the Mughal period
Bengal was a rich country. In order to stop the export of gold by the foreign merchants, Company dismissed the Dual Government and announced the introduction of Permanent Settlement. Henry Pattulo was a *Physiocrat* and an agricultural specialist. He believed that agriculture was the main source of wealth and happiness. He also thinks that agricultural land was the chief source of national income.\(^8^0\) Pattulo favoured the implementation of Permanent Settlement.

In 1772, Company took the charge of *Dewani* administration. For the collection of maximum taxes a five years land auction settlement was done. Hastings was not satisfied in this five years *izaradari* settlement. He informs the provincial revenue councilors that they must justify the failure/success of the five years settlement. Most of the provincial councilors depict the picture of economic distress. George Vansitart, one of the members of provincial council, recommended the Permanent Settlement. So it was noticed that every provincial councilors were against *izaradari* system and they favoured Permanent Settlement. For the importance of Permanent Settlement, there was an ideological unity among Dackess, Midoltion, Burwell, and Vancitart but in other sides different opinions came out.\(^8^1\) Burwell and Vancitart recommended that before implementation of Permanent Settlement, Company should verify the wealth of the country, peasants’ right, their interest, unless everybody could not got the same justice. Warren Hastings formed *Amini Commission* in 1776 to investigate the *raiyats* interest and survey.\(^8^2\) But councilor Philip Francis strongly condemned *Amini Commission*.

In 1776, in the month of January, Philip Francis planned a revenue settlement which was totally different from Hastings revenue policy. Francis got the help of Richard Gudlad, David Enderson, Richard Bechar, George Duracel, Philip Dakrace, John Shore, Barton Rouse and William Haward. Every member was specialist and they were the chief framer of Permanent Settlement.\(^8^3\) Their opinion deeply influenced Francis. Apart from this, Francis
was influenced by Physiocrat ideology. He was against izaradari system and expressed deep faith about the fixed revenues of the Company. Francis’s Permanent Settlement’s main subject was that the zamindars were the owner of the land and from them Company got a fixed revenues permanently. On the other hand, cultivators and tenures were nourished by the zamindars. Thus, turmoil continued between the Hastings and Francis about Permanent Settlement. In the meantime, Court of Directors denies both the plan of Hastings and Francis. They ordered that no zamindars should be evicted from his land and further izaradari system should no longer be extended. New settlements were done by the initiatives of the government for three years with the zamindars. But this method could not solve the problem. In suggesting the principle of a permanent assessment, the object of the Directors was to remove the distrust which had been caused by the frequency of change. That is why they recommended that the assessment now to be formed shall, as it can have received our approval and ratification be considered as the permanent and unalterable revenue of our territorial possessions in Bengal, so that no direction may be exercised by our servants abroad in any case, and not even by us, unless in some urgent and peculiar case of introducing any alteration whatsoever. But as they felt that the idea of a definite term of years would be more pleasing to the zamindars ‘than a dubious perpetuity’, they ordered the Governor General-in-Council to fix the assessment in the first instance for a period of ten years. They made it clear that once they approved the Decennial Settlement no further alteration would take place.

The East India Company was commanded by the Pitts India Act of 1784 ‘to enquire into the alleged grievances of the land-holders and if founded in truth to afford them redress and to establish permanent rules for the settlement and collection of the revenue and for administration of justice, founded in the ancient laws and local usages of the country’. After that the Court of Directors, in one of their letters, referred to the heavy arrears on the settlement of the last few years and expressed their opinion that with a view to avoiding such
defalcations in future a Permanent Settlement of revenue should be made estimated in its amount on reasonable principles for the payment of which the hereditary tenure of the process should be the only the necessary security. Hence, between August 1784 when Pitts India Bill became law and April 1786 when these instructions were sent to the Governor-General and Council of official view of the Parliament and the Court of Directors was that a Permanent Settlement of the land revenue of Bengal should be made with the zamindars. In regard to both the questions, conclusions had in fact been already worked out by the home authorities. The duty assigned to Cornwallis was to work out the details and execute them. He thus fell heir to the results of twenty years of experiment in rural administration.

In its political survey of the northern circars, James Grant had already shown in December, 1784, that a zamindar was a temporary official appointed by the government to collect and pay rent, with no right to property in land which was vested absolutely in the state. Hastings also in the same opinion and even the Court of Directors later endorsed it. In a minute of 1788, John Shore held on the contrary that the sovereign was entitled only to the rent, not the land which belonged to the zamindars. In a second minute of June, 1789, he traced at length the development of zamindari tenures and their character under the Mughals, and recommended that government should make a settlement with the zamindars as hereditary proprietors for an initial period of ten years on the basis of recent collections.

At this stage of the growth of the policy of the Permanent Settlement, the role of Cornwallis began. Cornwallis could argue that there was nothing new in the plan except the great advantages which were given to the zamindars (talukdars and raiyats) on one side and the additional security which the Company had against losses by balances. He was not in favour of this settlement in the interest of the existing zamindars. To the government it was immaterial what individual possessed the land provided he cultivated it, protected the raiyats and paid the public revenue. 1/3 of the Company’s territory was a jungle. A very
advantageous tenure would be necessary to induce the people to make exertious for any substantial improvement. But he was very emphatic that the word permanency extended to the *Jumma* only.\(^{92}\)

Cornwallis wanted to set up a system. He fixed the revenue demand from land. But he saw that the whole weight of government demand fell mainly upon the land holders and peasants. In 1792 by resolution of Supreme Council, and in 1793 by regulation, the *zamindar’s* authority over his under-tenants was further limited.\(^{93}\) Cornwallis policy was approved by the home authorities, and the Decennial Settlement was proclaimed on 22\(^{nd}\) March, 1793 to have been fixed in perpetuity. The Governor General-in-Council declared to ‘the *zamindars*, independent *talukdars* and other actual proprietors of land that at the expiration of the term of the settlement no alteration will be made in the assessment which they have respectively engaged to pay, but that they and their heirs and lawful successors will be allowed to hold their Estates at such assessment for ever. Under this regulation, the various land holdings were now made homogeneous and empowered to transfer their lands by sale, gift or otherwise, without the sanction of government. The Governor General-in-Council however, reserved the power of enacting from time to time regulations either for protecting the rights of the *raiyats* and dependent *talukdars* or for resuming all such lands as might be found to have been illegally alienated.\(^{94}\)

The Collectors and the Board of Revenue were divested of their judicial authority. But the provisions were made under Regulation xiv of 1793 for the imprisonment of the *zamindars* and the attachment of their property to secure the collection of the revenue positively at the end of every year and Regulation iii of 1794 amended this rule, and required the proprietors of land to pay their monthly installments into the collections treasury by the first day of the ensuring month without waiting for the demand being made by government.\(^{95}\) Regulation, vii Section v of 1793 gave recognition of independent *talukdars*. The proprietors
of *taluks* who now pay the public revenue assessed upon the land through a *zamindar* or other actual proprietor of the land and whose title deeds contain a clause stipulating that the revenue is to be paid through him shall continue to pay that revenue through such *zamindar* or actual proprietor of land. But when George Hatch appointed as a Collector of Dinajpur, the sufferings of the *zamindars* was beginning. Dinajpur king Radhanath was perished by the hands of Governor General. Radhanath was obstructed to appoint officials to his court. The East India Company forced to pay high rate of revenues by the hands of Permanent Settlement.

In the northern part of North Bengal especially Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Coochbehar give us a new idea about the illegal cesses and duties of *zamindars*. Regulation xxvii of 1793 had never been in force in the Darjeeling district, or the countries annexed from Bhutan and have no reason to suppose that illegal exactions are made there. The Regulation in question was in full force in the portions of districts of Jalpaiguri and Goalpara transferred to the Coochbehar division, except in so far as that Regulation has been repealed under xxix of 1871. The Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri knows of no illegal cesses in the district, nor any compensation having been awarded for abolition of cess to *zamindars* and apprehended it and ascertained satisfactorily by reference to the Board of Revenue, as to whether remissions were granted for abolition of Syer in the Estates lately appertaining to Rangpur, called Boda, Bykuntpore, Patgram and Poorbobhag: all about the Kuntpur, appear to have been under the Commission of Coochbehar during the minority of the *Raja*, that is till about 1801. Coochbehar, prior to perpetual settlement. Different types of land actually mentioned- land from *zamindar* or sand from the *khalsa*. The Regulation relating to separation of *taluks* continued in operation till 1801.

The impositions upon the *raiyyats* under the denomination of *abwab*, *mathot* and other appellations formed an important part of Permanent Settlement. No actual proprietor of
land or dependent talukdar or cultivator of land of whatever description shall impose any new abwab or mathot upon the raiyats under any pretence whatever. A raiyat where his rent has been ascertained and settled may demand a patta from the actual proprietor of land. The form of patta was an ancient as Todarmal’s settlement. The role of rupees three per bigha was in accordance with the standing law of the Mughal Empire.102

It has been pointed out that in Bengal there was a general dislike of written law. The zamindar could not like it because it would prevent the levy of unauthorized cesses in future. The raiyat disliked a written lease because it might create a new asal which might lead to new cesses.103 A question arises whether a patta for a term would diminish the force of the prescriptive right in favour of a raiyat.104 Even where there was written lease it contained only a part of the contract. It must be also noted that there was a general distrust in the protection of government.

After the failure of the Patta Regulations, the scenario was totally changed. The zamindars thought it against their interests to limit their claims; while the raiyats apprehended that they might be evicted at the expiry of the 10 years prescribed by the patta. On the other hand, British government faces the subsequent insecurity of revenue collection. The effect of this provision was to throw on the raiyats the onus of proving what the customary pargana rates were, and to produce a huge volume of litigation with which the courts were unable to deal. The records of that period and the Fifth Report show that more than half the estates of Bengal were sold for arrears of revenue; many of the large zamindaris were dismembered; and most of the original zamindars reduced to poverty.105

The situation that developed led to the passing of the notorious ‘Huftam’ (Regulation vii of 1799) by which the zamindars were vested with wide and arbitrary powers of distraint.106 Government was able to safeguard their revenue, but it is generally agreed that it was a mistake to arm the zamindars with such drastic powers without first enquiring into the
root cause of the trouble, which was, that the rights of the khudkast raiyats had been left undefined. The ‘Panjam’ (Regulation v of 1812) mitigated distraint, without remedying the real defects.\textsuperscript{107}

In practice however, the Permanent Settlement placed the raiyats at the mercy of the zamindars. In his anxiety to form a uniform system of little form a variety of proprietary and possessing tenures, Cornwallis neglected to ascertain the extent of estates, the limits of revenue-paying and waste lands, the quantity of chakaran or service lands, and the boundary of villages. This neglect afforded opportunities to the zamindars to encourage upon the rights of the raiyats to the waste or pasture lands attached to every village.\textsuperscript{108}

The Company’s Permanent Settlement of 1793 fixed the land revenue demand at R.S 2.68 crores, of which almost R.S. 2.20 crores was for Bengal proper, without Bihar and Orissa.\textsuperscript{109} During this time collection of abwabs was an important event. Abwabs were collected by the Nawabs and Zamindars.\textsuperscript{110} A further category of cess reinforces the notion that villagers may have frequently understood abwabs to serve a corporate purpose. These were grammathnts (village cess). Grammathnts included demands imposed by village leaders on their fellow inhabitants, usually for the benefit of the community.\textsuperscript{111}

The Regulations of 1793 specifically limited the rights of the zamindars by the rights of the raiyats. The government reserved the right of legislation to regulate their relations, and the importance of thus reservation was proved by the passing of the Rent Act of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885. The rights that the Governor General-in-Council and the Court of Directors proposed for the raiyats under the Permanent Settlement was very different from those of tenants under English landlords and quite inconsistent with the existence of the proprietor of the land in the person of the zamindar.\textsuperscript{112}
The zamindars were not landed proprietors before 1793, nor were they constituted as such by the Regulations of 1793. In the absence of any radical change in the social basis of production after the Permanent Settlement, the zamindars were afforded no opportunity for converting their title to revenue collection into actual possession of land. The state of agricultural technology did not permit large scale farming directed from estates.

The changes brought about by the Permanent Settlement in the position of the zamindars lay in an altogether different direction from that intended by Cornwallis. The role of the zamindars, after all, lay in the governance of the country; and it was here that Cornwallis’s judicial and administrative reforms brought about a great transformation. The most revolutionary innovation in the field of governance in the history of British administration in Bengal was the establishment, by Cornwallis, of a network of Collectorates and Magistracies (later fused into a single unit under a district officer keeping peace and collecting revenue) Cornwallis entirely changed this pattern. Big zamindaries like Jessore, Rajshahi and Dinajpur were constituted as separate Collectorates and smaller zamindaries and taluks were amalgamated into Collectorates of similar size. No Collector could intervene effectively in the mufassal business for the protection of the raiyats from exactions without impairing the authority of the zamindars.

Another development which the originators of the Permanent Settlement could not foresee was the appearance of the patni system. It has been said that $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the whole landed property of Bengal was actually sold by the rigour of the sale law. At that time the people of Bengal delighted those days in country life. The ambitious city merchant was not often enveloped in the landlord atmosphere. The heirs and successors of the new purchasers became less active and more extravagant and began rivalry with each other in nuptial entertainments, funeral obsequies and religious ceremonies. They would run into debt and bring their estates again to market. The old look of confusion and weakness did not
return entirely, the sale law was there to see to it, but it did not. But subinfeudation, rapid increase of population, decay of domestic handicrafts and disappearance of tillage rights of the peasantry brought about a change which became very noticeable one generation after.

*Patwaris* also played a significant role. They were the subordinate of *zamindars*. *Patwaris* maintain the revenue records, collect taxes. *Patwaris* were appointed by the *zamindars* sometimes by the villagers. Sometimes *Mandal* works for *Patwaris*. *Patwaris* also work for collection of the actual amount of the lands of *raiyats*, amount of revenues, revenues paid by the *raiyats*, waste land and new cultivation etc.

The *zamindar* or *talukdar* could not become a mere rent receiver and he continued to be the dispenser of justice. Frequently petty disputes were solved by him. He remained the centre of social life. To some extent old traditions were asserted themselves. Big *zamindars* used to share in these traditions of rural life through their *naibs* or deputies. But the new absentee *zamindars*, administering their estates with the help of agents, did not. A new relationship was also emerging and was perhaps intended by the administration to emerge. The Permanent Settlement created a class of rural capitalists. Interspersed by several layers of absentee land holders, whose care was confined to the rent they received from their under-farmers. A new class formed who played an important role in social life. Permanent Settlement created a new class of *zamindars*. Under the *zamindar* several sub-contractors were raised their hands in Bengal’s rural society.

Apart from this a group of intermediaries interfered in the rural society and created several changes with the passing of times. An English writer wrote “The creation of middlemen, on permanent tenures down to the third and fourth degrees and lower, was permitted without stint……the permission of numerous grades of middlemen between *zamindar* and *raiyat*, on old estates, all of whom, as well as *zamindar* derived their income out of the *raiyats* payments, only set in train so many agencies for repeated illegal
enhancements of rent, beyond the amount warranted by established custom. These middlemen or farmers of rents have proved a scourge of the country”.\textsuperscript{119} ‘\textit{Sambad Prabhakar}’ (B.S.1259) also describes the atrocities and explorations of the middlemen at that time.\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Zamindars} and later middlemen got the right to exploit the common people.\textsuperscript{121}

But on the whole it would not be wrong to conclude that even in this new age of regulations and law courts old relationships, which were calculated to disappear, did not completely disappear in many parts of Bengal. The Cornwallis system might have elevated in some parts ‘parcel of tax gatherers and land-stewards into a sham gentry’, but the inadequacy of the new system of administration-The Collector, the Judge, the Magistrate and \textit{Daroga}-could not push the \textit{zamindar} or the \textit{talukdar} from the helm of affairs in the village and there the old landlord atmosphere to some extent influenced even these new comes resident there.\textsuperscript{122}

Thus inspite of a legislative blunder followed in its wake by blunders in the form of new regulations like Regulation vii of 1799 and Regulation v of 1812 things did not become as bad in Bengal as they were in Ireland.\textsuperscript{123} The new landed gentry in many parts of Bengal engrafted itself as it were on the old. According to Badru-ud-din Umar this system made an adjustment between the class and tenant interest.\textsuperscript{124} Permanent Settlement created a new \textit{zamindar} class. Old \textit{zamindar}’s domination came to an end. Hunter assembled the hand letter manuscript and edited into four volumes. He also wrote- “In these four volumes of Bengal Records, I cite many hundred letters written at that disastrous period, and showing how the disintegration of estates went on every district of Bengal”.\textsuperscript{125} Due to Permanent Settlement rural middlemen flourished and the social structure was totally changed.

Bankim Chandra Chottapadhaya throws light about \textit{zamindar-raiyyat} relation in his essay ‘\textit{Bangadesher Krishak}’.\textsuperscript{126} This essay depicts the picture of social life and \textit{raiyyat-zamindar} relations. Atul Gupta’s ‘\textit{Praja Sammilani}’ was also an important part in this regard.
Later several writers wrote about the role of *zamindars*, their relations with common people, social status and other development. Permanent Settlement developed a new social fabric. Aristocratic *zamindars* and rich people’s domination came to an end and on the contrary role of intermediary became important in the society. Over and again, Permanent Settlement only solved few problems but created lot of anxiety and uncertainty.

(C) **POST-PERMANENT SETTLEMENT**

From the beginning there have been two views on Indian agriculture. There were those who thought that the production in Indian agriculture could be increased only by way of institutional changes such as land reform, and the establishment of Co-operatives and Panchayats. The second view was that ‘technological’ measures such as higher-yielding seed varieties, irrigation, fertilizers and iron ploughs used as inputs would provide the right solutions. Post-Permanent Settlement witnessed several changes in Bengal such as holding of *raiyyats*, tenant-*zamindars* relation, land revenue structure, gradual changes of Bengali rural societies, and land lords after Permanent Settlement, abolition of *zamindari* system, North Bengal’s rural societies structure, land movements, Operation Barga etc.

Permanent Settlement created capitalist social structure in Bangladesh and promoted capitalism in agriculture. From 1950 Permanent Settlement’s fragrance gradually faded away. From 1950-1978, rural social structure and agricultural system got a new momentum. Actually after the Permanent Settlement *raiyyat*, tenant and cultivators relations with agriculture created a new turn as a result of which several peasant movements flourished. Some movements turned into violent shape. In the first half of the 19th centuries Wahabi, Farazi, 1859’s Indigo Revolt, 1872-73’s Pabna and Bogra insurrection etc. spread rapidly. Some movements have religious nature but inspite of that most of the movement raised their slogans against *jotdar, mahajan, zamindar* and British government.
From 1793-1947 several Acts were passed for the protection of tenants, *raiyats* and cultivators. Verbally it was said that all the Acts protect the *raiyats* and their justification of revenue. Rent Act was passed in 1859; Tenancy Act was passed in 1885. But in reality due to the pressure of the *zamindars*, most of the Acts give us fruitless result. Actually the pressure of land-revenue continued. Even in the natural calamities, tenants could not get relief, either by the hands of *jotdar*, *zamindar* or by the hands of British government. Bengal estimate for 1872-73 were follows-

Table No: 1.2 (Collection of Land Revenue from 1872-1873)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Land revenue-3,975,424</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final 3,950,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctioned 3,950,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Proceedings of the Administration of Bengal in the Revenue Department, Index No.34-35, June, 1872, W.B.S.A

Sometimes these Acts favoured the peasants' interest. In 1938 Fazlul Haque government appointed a land revenue commission under the guidance of Sir Francis Floud.132 In 1940 the Commission presented a detailed report of the assessment of Permanent Settlement, land revenue system and share-cropping cultivation.133
Actually from 1940-47 lot of incident took place. Polarisation of Hindu-Muslim relationships, bitter political crisis, breakout of Second World War, famine, communal tension and political instability could not implement the Floud Commission Report. On the contrary, 1946-47 Tebhaga movement raised the voices of the peasant.\textsuperscript{134} In the period marking the ending line of the British rule, in the districts of Jalpaiguri, parts of Malda, Dinajpur and Rangpur the Tebhaga movement in order to assert the $\frac{2}{3}$ demand of the share-cropper of the produce in the land under share-cropping tended to draw considerable public attention begetting anxieties of the big \textit{jotdars} and partially of people in power of the government; yet after 15\textsuperscript{th} August, 1947, Tebhaga dwindled under the groan of partition of India and the aftermath of refugee crisis.\textsuperscript{135}

The cause of the marginalized peasants, espoused by the Tebhaga was highlighted in the new situation after the abolition of \textit{zamindari} system. (Indian landlordism) The introduction of the system of land ceiling increased the amount of vested land under the government due to the want of law and government decision. Even the distribution of those vested lands among the landless peasant and agrarian labourers could not mitigate the condition of those people. Despite the failure of the Tebhaga movement was remarkable in the history of peasant’s movement. Badruddin Omar has rightly remarked that inspite of having many shortcomings this was the only glorious movement in the history of organized peasant movement in Bengal.\textsuperscript{136}

After independence in 1947, the West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953 was passed; its implementation began from 1955; and then there came the West Bengal Land Reforms Act. The \textit{zamindari} system and the \textit{jotdari} system were done away with; and the amount of lands possessed by \textit{jotdars} or \textit{zamindars} was brought ceiling.\textsuperscript{137} By the WBLR Act a large number of \textit{jots} all over West Bengal were declared excess; but all excess lands were not brought under government \textit{khas} land. Moreover even the declared \textit{khas} lands were
not distributed among the landless peasants and bargadars. The jotdars possessed the excess land in the name of each member of the house. Moreover they possessed the excess arable lands over ceiling declaring them as orchard.

The Naxalbari movement (1967-1972) drew the attention of thousands of people in India either against it or in favour of it. Charu Majumder, Kanu Sanyal fought for the favour of the peasants. Both of them was the key figure commanding respects from thousands of peasants and tea-garden workers in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling.\(^{138}\) The work of land records over ceiling and distribution among the landless peasants actually started from 1967 by the state government. According to the director of land records and survey, West Bengal, it was not possible to say the exact quantities of lands vested before, August, 1967.\(^{139}\)

The total lands held by various ex intermediaries and tenants over and above the originally stipulated ceiling vested in Alipurduar Sub-division (present Alipurduar District) until 31\(^{st}\) March, 1973 amounted to 39,288.45 acres.\(^{140}\) In Jalpaiguri Sadar Sub-division there was some discrepancy between the figures given by the settlement wing of the land revenue department and management wing of the same department. According to the former 1, 68,215.05 acres of land were vested till 31\(^{st}\) March, 1973; the later wing maintains that up to that date 155341.96 acres were vested.\(^{141}\) Only a small fraction of the 171018 holdings, spread over 598 mauzas of the district had so far been covered by the operation for the preparation of a new record of rights under the WBEA Act and the WBLR Act.\(^{142}\)

Due to ideological differences Leftist party divided into two sections- CPI and CPI (M) as to the question of parliamentary policy. A group of peasants organized by Charu Majumder came to occupy land with arms on 3.3.1967, demarcated land with Red Flag and declared it as the land of Krishak Sabha, a sub organization of CPI (M).\(^{143}\) Several incidents were found in Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa police station. Besides occupation of land, threatening and attacks continued by the hands of jotdars.\(^{144}\) The first area conference
of Krishak Sabha of Siliguri Sub-division was held on 18.03.1967 and it was resolved that the lands would be occupied forcefully. Naxalbari movement was extended to the Jalpaiguri district in very short period. Small pesant, adhiars or bargadars were being organized to occupy excessive lands over ceiling from jotdars forcefully with revolutionary activities. Peasants wanted to change the rural society. The failure of the movement proved that the radical changes of the village society could not be possible and also raised a doubt about the applicability of Marxism in the Indian socio-economic and political context. In Darjeeling plain, Tarai-Hill and Jalpaiguri Duars region, land revenue system was different. The district of Darjeeling and the Duars of Jalpaiguri was, therefore, non-regulated region. In 1875, these two districts became scheduled districts under the Act of that name of 1874. The Government of India Act of 1919 transformed them further into Back-ward Tracts and they were outside the sphere of representation in the legislative council created.

The history of the three northern districts of West Bengal viz. Coochbehar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri are different from that of the rest of the state. These three districts came into being existence from British involvements in the eastern Himalayas. Majority of the population depended on agriculture. Most of the adhiars (share-croppers) cultivated land under the suzerainty of jotdars. In the one hand, condition of jotdars gradually flourished on the other hand, the adhiars were exploited. In 1945 ‘The Bengal Administrative Enquiry Committee’ declared jotdari system as unlawful. By the Act of 1955 the ceiling of land decided to maintain 25 acres. As a result many jotdars’ economic condition degraded. Duars region was a non- irrigated land and it was difficult to produce crops.

In the 60’s landless jotdars wanted to occupy their land. They started a movement which came to be known as ‘Uttarkhand’. But this movement failed. In rural areas bargadar, adhia, share-croppers were come to known as barga cultivator. Bargadar cultivated the land of the land owner and in return he gave a one portion of crops. For this distribution they
were known as adhiar. First United Front government was formed in 1967 and second United Front government was formed in 1969. After that Left Front government captured khas lands, excess lands. In a detailed filed work it was known that instipe of glorious tradition and consciousness when State government launched the policy of Operation Barga in 1978 many bargadars were not interested to record their name. In many cases it was proved that there were lack of interest of the land owners, administrative failure and lack of political leadership were responsible. But in the mean time West Bengal Government launched a procedure the Operation Barga Programme in 1978 due to which situations were changed. By the government declaration many land owners wanted to evict bargadars from their land. For this reasons bargadars were compelled to join a movement which were organized by the Leftist leaders. Operation Barga gave them fresh oxygen. An aspiration turned that Operation Barga able to stop the exploitation of mahajans and record their name. Bargadars got hereditary right of land. So there was no chance of eviction from land and they can also get loan from bank.

The specificities of economy and society of North Bengal consisting of the districts of Coochbehar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda, Uttar and Dakshin Dinajapur effected various social groups and social classes in significant ways and had their imprints on the various socio-political activites that unfolded in the region. The Rajbanshis constituted the most numerous grouped among the autochthons of the region. Charu Chandra Sanyal, in his outstanding work “The Rajbanshis of North Bengal” observed that the Koches are non-Aryan in origin; some of them adopted Hinduism and became Rajbanshi. Rajbanshis were successors of king. Panchanan Barma and Upendranath Barman claimed that Rajbanshi Hindus were Kshatriyas of Aryan origin.

Operation Barga Programme was not fully free from criticism. A section of peasants and cultivators got the benefit of this government programme. Important thing was
that most of the bargadars could not hold their ‘barga land’. Many of them could not maintain their land and sell their lands due to financial crisis. It was seen that poor rural bargadars used Operation Barga as an arms against local rich land owners and mahajans.

Post-Permanent Settlement made some changes in the field of land revenue. Malda was one of the oldest districts of North Bengal. It was related with the parts of northern Bihar such as Purnia, Katihar and Darbhanga. Many of the inhabitants were Maithili. Marwaris also lived in Malda. Among them ‘Satihar’ and ‘Podder’ Marwari were common. Satihar mixed with the Bangalees. Permanent Settlement not only restructured the rural social and agrarian scenario of Malda but also Bengal as a whole. The Permanent Settlement meant a very sharp rise in the land revenue obligation of the zamindars. Two consequences were flourished such as- Firstly, land as an income-bearing asset could not become very attractive immediately after the settlement. Later this in turn, slowed down the process of easily marketable asset. Secondly, there was an unprecedented element of risk in the land holding system.

The system of land tenure was extremely simple. In many estates the cultivating tenants paid rent directly to the zamindars. In others, where tenures exist, there were little sub infeudation, and it is uncommon to find more than two grades of tenure. The large first grade tenures were generally known as Putins. About $\frac{2}{3}$ of them were permanent and held on fixed rents or at fixed rates of rent, and the remainder were permanent and liable to enhancement of rent. These tenures were commonly known as jotes and their Sub-tenures as Dar-jotes. In some cases tenancies which were claimed by their occupants to be raiyati holdings were recorded as tenures on the ground that they were largely sublet and where in possession of non-cultivating tenants or that they were over 100 bighas in area. The under-tenants were in consequence recorded as raiyats. In Malda there were a comparatively small number of
temporary tenures or izaras. They were leased for the collection of rent and expire when the period of the lease terminated.

Among the zamindars and jotdars there were some ‘Bihari’. Many zamindars and jotdars of Malda invited Santhals from Chotonagpur to cultivate the waste land. In the 2nd half of the 19th century they were the old inhabitants of Malda. Due to Bargi invasion many people came to Malda from South Bengal. During these periods land became the chief source of occupation. British government depended on land because land was the chief source of their income. But at that time fluctuations of land revenue were slight.

The incident of land revenue in permanently settled Estates was 5 annas 5 pies per acre, whilst in Estates managed by government as proprietors the incidence of rent was Re. 1 as 9 per acre. Taking this letter figure as the average rental for the district, the rental of superior landlords would be 18.5 lakhs of rupees, on which the percentage of land revenue would be 21.7. The cess valuation gives the figures of Rs. 15,17,036 as the gross rental and the percentage comes to 25.9. A general revaluation was, however, in progress.

In the second half of the 19th century J.J. Pemberton gave us vivid description about agricultural economy. The productions of soil were wheat, barley, pulse of various sorts, rice, indigo, mulberry; in the detached portions, gram, mustard-seed, koorthee, bajeera and tobacco. The harvests are Bhudoee, Khureef and Rubbee. At that time influential land lords were the chief framers of agricultural economy and land owners tried to appease them. But in the first half of the 20th century peasants were searching for lands but on the contrary land owners were not in need of peasants in Malda. In the 20th century zamindars increased the rate of revenue in Malda. The lands of the Barind region of Malda were flourished by the hands of Santhal clans. Zamindars were benefitted from it as the waste land gradually turned into cultivated land by the hands of tribal people. Later zamindars adopted the term of
abwab from the tenants. Due to increase of revenue rates, however, the condition of the tenants remained miserable.

It is true that the Bengal Rent Act of 1859 and Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 partly stopped the atrocities of the zamindars and jotdars. But some clever zamindars and jotdars increased revenue tactfully. In 1931 two types of revenue adopted among the occupancy raiyats and under-raiyats people. The following table of 1930 gives us detailed picture of that time.

Table No: 1.3 (Types of Revenue Adopted Among the Occupancy Raiyats and Under Raiyats)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Occupancy Raiyats</th>
<th>Under Raiyats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rupees</td>
<td>Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habibpur</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Malda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamongola</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A. Mitra (ed.), Census 1951, West Bengal District Hand books: Malda, New Delhi, 1954, PP.1 xix

Though different Acts were passed but the condition of the raiyats remained the same. One of the oldest newspapers of Malda as well as North Bengal was ‘Gourdoot’. Its editor was Lalbehari Majumder who mentioned that from 1910 zamindaries of Barind tried to increase the revenue rates in several times. Another type of exploitation was that the
share-croppers were not getting the revenue receipts at regular intervals. In most Estates rent receipts were not even properly granted. The most common form of illegality was to accept a part payment of rent, and to refuse any sort of receipt until the whole rent had been paid. The receipt was, however, granted when the full rent along with the necessary abwabs had been paid, although sometimes peasants would have to wait for several days even after the payment had been made.\textsuperscript{170}

In this way peasants were compelled to take debt from mahajans and it became dangerous for the peasants and cultivators. In the village agricultural structure ‘Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee’ treated mahajans as an important part of rural economy-‘He alone is in a position to provide the bulk of the capital required for current agricultural needs and on a recurrence of serve distress, he will continue, as in the past, to support the people by timely loans.’\textsuperscript{171} According to Buchanan Hamilton, most of the mahajans were Bengali and others were Marwari.\textsuperscript{172} Sugata Basu wrote that for a brief period in the later 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the mahajans were able to siphon off the peasant’s surplus through usury interest, while the landlord was unable by either law or the lathi to collect the full rent.\textsuperscript{173} In the last quarter of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century a new group of mahajan appeared in the rural society of Malda. Actually they were rich land lords and jotdars who were connected with mahajani business.

At that time rural economy was depended upon jotdars. In the early 70’s there was no mahajan who fraud the peasants and cultivators of Malda and Dinajpur. Benoy Bhusan Chowdhury wrote that jotdars were influential in Malda, Jalpaiguri, 24 Parganas and Bakharganj.\textsuperscript{174} Hunter mentioned that many peasant became bonded labour because they could not pay the debt and its interest.\textsuperscript{175} From 1923-1938 many tribals of Malda lost their lands. Many of them cultivated land as bargadar. Most of the tribals were Santhals. Though it was they who first started to cultivate the waste land but once the lands started making
satisfactory productions, they lost their lands by the hands of *zamindar* and *mahajans*. Following table shows the way by which the tribals of Malda lost their occupancy rights.

**Table No: 1.4 (Captured Land of Barind in 1951)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police Station</th>
<th>Area in Square Miles</th>
<th>Area expropriated in Square Miles</th>
<th>Estimated area expropriated from Aboriginals</th>
<th>Land of Santhals (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gazole</td>
<td>196.84</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habibpur</td>
<td>155.73</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Malda</td>
<td>87.15</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamongola</td>
<td>69.32</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawabganj</td>
<td>55.90</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomastapur</td>
<td>122.64</td>
<td>20.34</td>
<td>10.17</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nachol</td>
<td>109.70</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>798.28</td>
<td>64.77</td>
<td>38.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A. Mitra (ed.), *Census 1951, West Bengal District Hand books: Malda*, New Delhi, 1954, PP.1 xxiv

But in Malda there were rent free grant too. Rent free grants fall into two classes. The first class consists of grants for charitable or religious purposes. They are permanent and heritable. The different kinds of rent-free grants are *Brahmottar, Debottar, Mahatram, Pirpal* and *Aima*. The last named rent free grant ‘*Aima*’ is a kind of grant made to pious
Muhammadans; the others are well known. The second class consists of chakran or service tenancies. They are not Permanent, heritable, or transferable and their existence continued so long as the service was required by and rendered to the grantor. The different chakran tenancies found are Napit (Barber), Dhobi (Washerman), Paik (Peon), Astoprohari (a watchman), Pujari (for the performance of pujas) and Khadem (a caretaker of a Darga or saint’s grave).  

In Malda, some agricultural tenancies had occupancy rights. Ordinarily under- raiyats did not acquire occupancy rights of custom, while those who had been recognized by their landlords to have permanent and heritable rights, were few. The rate of rent was more than double the average rent of occupancy raiyats. Zamindar’s of Chanchal Raj Estate Ishwar Chandra Roy Chowdhury, Maharani Sidweswari Devi and Sarat Chandra Chowdhury expanded Chanchal Raj Estate. In 1873 Sati Kanta Mukherjee, who was a revenue officer mentioned four types of land taxes. At that time Mr.H.R. Raily was the manager under the court of wards of the Chanchal Raj Estates. The tenures are divided into four classes: i) The Estate paying rent direct to government, ii) Intermediate tenures, iii) Cultivating and miscellaneous tenures and iv) Rent free tenures. Harishchandrapur’s (Malda district) Zamindar Raja Rajendra Narayan Roy, Kaliachak’s Rani Sudharani Devi, Singhabad’s Raja Rajendra Narayan Roy played a significant role. These entire zamindar families’ role in social and cultural field made a land mark in the rural society of North Bengal especially in Malda. But economically raiyats were exploited. Several Acts were passed but the condition of the peasants, cultivators, tenants, labourers remained the same. Some zamindars, though, took little steps to save the peasants but most of the zamindars exploited them.

Dinajpur District changed its faces with the passing of time. Pre-colonial and colonial Dinajpur covered a large area. But after independence Dinajpur district changed its shape. Dinajpur was divided to West Dinajpur and then formed Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur.
Hence, from 1948 to 1992 there was a long journey in the fate of Dinajpur. The large influxes of people of North Bengal and particularly to the districts of the region led to a demographic change and consequently the original indigenous peoples of the region got annoyed about their own identities.\textsuperscript{182}

There were, however, no proper land reforms after independence. The marginal peasants had no right to land with increasing influxes of people from outside; these poor people faced an acute shortage of agricultural land to survive on. However, the previous Leftist government of West Bengal did a great deal by enacting proper land reform and implementing them accordingly. Unfortunately the seeds of discontent once sown earlier were difficult to be uprooted even by now. Although much progress in land performs has been achieved, simultaneously many problems in the matter remain to be solved.\textsuperscript{183}

Post-Permanent Settlement made a rapid change in the structure of claimed land revenue system and structure of the rural society of Dinajpur too. In the case of Dinajpur it was seen in regular intervals that post-Permanent Settlement made the \textit{raiyats} twined to \textit{bargadars}/share-croppers and then daily labourers. D.S. Dhanware in his book ‘\textit{Peasant Movement in India, 1920-1950}’ draws a vivid picture of the way in which the \textit{raiyats} turned into share-croppers due to the exploitation of \textit{mahajan}. Due to Permanent Settlement a group of agricultural moneylender appeared in the rural society of Dinajpur. In Dinajpur language they came to be known as \textit{Latdar}. So the new group of middleman, \textit{jotdar, mahajan} and agricultural moneylender dominated not only in agricultural economy but also in the rural society.\textsuperscript{184}

From the Settlement Report of F.O. Bell it is known that during the period from 1934-1940 there were 1055 revenue paying private estates on the \textit{Tauzi} roll of the district of Dinajpur.\textsuperscript{185} There were six Crown Estates having an area of 4746 acres excluding T.302 which had been brought by the Collector in a revenue sale only recently \textit{Tauzi} 784 had
become a Crown Estate. Some of these estates had lands pertaining to them in other districts like Rajshahi, Bogra, Rangpur, Malda, Jalpaiguri and Purnia while there were also Estates in these districts the lands of which were situated in the district of Dinajpur.

Post-Permanent Settlement made the zamindari estates turned into different shapes. As time were on, the reshuffling of Estates showed three basic trends: a) the old giant estates expect for one or two continued in a partially truncated form and, over the whole of the 19th century, regained some of their lost territories. The Dinajpur Raj provides the best example of such a process; b) many of the small Estates grew into vast estimates due to successful land speculation by their business like proprietors; c) majority of the Estates were, however, small or medium sized and were managed by capable holders. Most of the large estates were propped up by numerous under tenures of various grades. The picture that emerged at the end of our period is somewhat as bellow: the following pictures of Estates of various sizes (1873):151 (class i: over 20,000 acres; class ii: between 500 and 20,000 acres; class iii: under 500 acres excluding lakhiraj under 20 acres).

Table No: 1.5 (Estates of Various Sizes in Dinajpur and Malda in 1873)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dinajpur</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malda</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: D J McNeille, *Memorandum on the Revenue Administration of the Lower Provinces*, Calcutta, 1873 Appendix, I
Immediately after the partition of the district and formation of the district of West Dinajpur there were 481 revenue paying Estates and the total annual demand of land revenue was Rs. 489,636.00 and the biggest Estate was held by the Dinajpur Raj and the annual demand on account of this estate was Rs.11, 783-8as-11p. on account of land revenue only. From 1931-1950 lands were divided into agricultural land and non-agricultural land. Share-cropper, peasant, tenant, cultivators, and businessman carrier, serviceman all sections of people were related directly or indirectly with the land. On the other hand, share-croppers cultivated the land by the law of barga system. The cultivated crops were distributed between the owner of the land and bargadar. By the Tenancy Act of 1928 bargadars were treated as agricultural labourers. Land Revenue Commission gives us detailed picture that in 1940, \( \frac{1}{5} \) of the share-croppers land were treated as Korpha jot. At that time many bargadar’s land was auctioned due to their short payment of revenues. They were treated as share-cropper. Later Rayatwari, Mahalwari and Bhaiwachari system were introduced by the British government in different parts of India as a land revenue reforms. Actually, British government’s land revenue reforms shattered the developments of agricultural economy of Dinajpur.

British government formed the Land Revenue Commission in 1938 and its Chairman was Sir Francis Floud. This Commission was known as Floud Commission. In 1940 the commission declared that zamindari system should be abolished and middlemen’s dominance should be stopped. By this policy zamindars were in great turmoil condition. In the meantime Second World War broke out. By the end of Second World War in 1945, ‘The Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee’ was formed. This committee examined the decisions of the Floud Commission. Later ‘Agrarian Reform Committee’ was also formed.

Pre-independence Revenue Survey depicts the picture of lands of Dinajpur. There were described the roll of Collector, Peshkar, Amin etc. Apart from these mahal, zamindar and land diversity were mentioned as well. Following table mentions that pattern of Dinajpur.
Table No: 1.6 (Structural Pattern of the Land of Dinajpur)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Revenue</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
<th>a.</th>
<th>p.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akbarree</td>
<td>48,555</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamps</td>
<td>82,703</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries (1860-61)</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19,03,466</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Post-independence incidents proved that middlemen exploited the rights of the peasants. So land reforms were inevitable. The developments were also seen in the structural pattern of the agricultural society. In the field of revenue government revised the eastern Bengal districts. Capitalist value of government orders regarding the payment of the rent-free holding of the occupants got a new momentum.

On the other hand, Leftist powers started to capture of land i.e. land to the tiller. In this time government recaptured land from the middlemen and distributed them among the landless peasants. At that time some changes were made about land related Acts and bargadari laws. Bargadari system had a long past history. In the colonial period this system was flourished in different ways. Due to the famine of 1930 and 1943 peasants were in the condition of huge debt and as a result the numbers of bargadars were increased. In the year 1940, the Malda Landholders’ Association observed that the Debt Settlement Boards had completely failed to deal with the problem of agricultural debts. The defects were i) the Boards were inefficient and unable to interpret the law; ii) the Bengal Agricultural
Debtors Act had been enacted to evade payment; iii) the costs were enormous; iv) it had practically made it impossible for the mahajans to realize their dues and for land lords to realize their rents from the tenants.

After independence government changed some rights of the bargadars. In 1950 Bargadar Acts was passed. In Bengal, land reforms works were started in 1950. The West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, came into force on the 12th February, 1954. The effect of this was that all the intermediaries who stood between the tillers of the soil and the state ceased to exist. The state, therefore entered into direct dealings with the tillers of the soil, and as a first step adhoc rent roll was prepared on the basis of returns submitted by ex-intermediaries. According to that rent roll, the demand for 1362 B.S. consisted of Rs. 1418.534 as rent, Rs. 54,570 as road and public works cess and Rs. 92.822 as education cess. This demand related to only the Sub-divisions of Balurghat (Dakshin Dinajpur) and Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

The number of intermediaries who used to take the difference between the present annual demand and the land revenue as it stood before implementation of the Estates Acquisition Act was 60,335 and the number of persons who now pay revenue direct to the state was 4, 98,006. There was, therefore, one intermediary for approximately every eight tillers of the soil. For realizing rent from tenants state had been compelled to create a fairly large hierarchy of officials. For both the districts of Malda and West Dinajpur in each Sub-division there was a Sub-divisional land reforms officer at each of the Sub-divisional head quarters of Balurghat, Raiganj and Islampur. The whole district was divided into nine collection circles under the authority of a Junior Land Reforms Officer. The Estates Acquisition Act had provided for payment of compensation to the ex-intermediaries for acquiring of their interests. The compensation was being assessed by the Settlement Department in 1963.
compensation to ex-intermediaries was under the direct control of the Additional District Magistrate of Malda and West Dinajpur.

Actually in the Settlement Report of 1964-65, there were only very few words about the existence of bargadars. Later several Acts were implemented for the uprooting of bargadars. But bargadars were not evicted. Zamindars and jotdars gave some terms and conditions by which they transferred by the hands of bargadars Lands in excess of ceilings prescribed under the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, which had so far been taken possession of by the collector. The surplus agricultural lands were, however, not lying fallow, and were being settled temporarily on year to year basis with the actual cultivators having less than five acres of land on payment of an annual fee of Rs. 10 per acre. Settlement operations were in progress, and when they were completed, the final picture regarding total number of tenants, the incidence of rent, etc. may be expected to emerge clearly.

Before the coming of the United Front Government in 1967 land reforms were only in papers. By the on coming of Left Front government land reforms started in West Bengal. Land reforms in West Bengal comprises i) vesting of ceiling surplus land, ii) distribution of vested land, iii) recording of share-croppers, iv) giving title for homestead land to the landless and homeless agricultural laboures, fisherman and rural artisans, v) arranging non-land input to the beneficiaries of land reforms and other small and marginal farmers and vi) preparation of village record-of-rights. Lots of agricultural lands were vested.
Table No: 1.7 (Progress of Land Reforms in West Bengal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vesting of Ceiling Surplus Land -</td>
<td>13.02 lack acres (Net Agri.Land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Distribution of Vested Land -</td>
<td>10.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Number of Vested -</td>
<td>23.86 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Number of Share-Croppers Recorded -</td>
<td>14.76 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of Homestead Beneficiaries -</td>
<td>2.77 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vesting of Ceiling Surplus Land

Position upto July, 1967

Vesting under W.B.E.A. Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Agricultural Land-</td>
<td>6,00,576.22 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Non- Agricultural Land-</td>
<td>4,13,462.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forest &amp; Others -</td>
<td>8,69,865.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total : 18,83,903.84


After that several Acts were passed in 1972 a correction of Acts was made but the distribution of crops remained the same and during the left period landless people got lands but the way in which the production of crops should be increased or revenue should be
collected, that process was not clear. According agricultural land, waste land, land for industry and SEZ (Special Economic Zone) related matter all these were a difficult task for any ruling government.

From Tebhaga to Naxalbari land and land related movement, question of ceiling, *bargadar*, land distribution, several movements took place. Entire Malda and Dinajpur swept the waves of Tebhaga movement. In Khapur village of West Dinajpur (present a part of Dakshin Dinajpur) twenty-two peasants were killed by the attacks of the police. Tebhaga movement spread throughout North Bengal, however, Naxalbari movement had its spread mainly in Darjeeling, Siliguri, and Jalpaiguri. It is true that Tebhaga and Naxalbari first expressed views about land system of Bengal and the crisis of agricultural economy.

Previously in West Dinajpur there were two departments- Settlement Department and Management Department. Apart from these there were Inspector Office, BLRO Department, RO Department, DLRO Department etc. But the collection of revenue system was very old. After land reforms, poor peasants and cultivators get food from their agricultural products. Many landless *adhiar* (share-croppers) got their own land.

In West Dinajpur there were three-types of cultivation: 1) Cultivation by the peasants by their own land, 2) *Bargadari* system, 3) Lease system (for 2-10 years). Actually the land reforms started from 1977 after the coming of the Left Front government. The prominent name in this segment was Benoy Krishna Chowdhury. He created a land mark in the land revenue system of Bengal. Now land acquisition and its distribution in West Bengal were as follows-
Table No: 1.8 (Land Acquisition and Distribution in West Bengal)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Land in Acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Land Vested</td>
<td>28.82 lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Land Vested</td>
<td>12.80 lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of Vested Land</td>
<td>9.82 lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Assignee of Vested Land</td>
<td>22.71 lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share-croppers Recorded</td>
<td>14.66 lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homestead Beneficiaries</td>
<td>2.71 lac</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Conference of Revenue Minister, Address of Benoy Krishna Chowdhury, Land and Land Reform Minister, Delhi, 27 December, 1995

In 1951 when first five years plan and later second five years planning formation passed, in these plans agrarian reform was one of the major issues. Upper limits of land were fixed. In the case of West Bengal that limits were- agricultural land 25 acres, other residential land 20 acres, mechogori land- no upper limits, religious and charitable institution- no upper limits. The Ceiling Act of 1960 gives some information about the limits of land. In West Bengal limits of agricultural and own lands upper limit was 25 acres and later this Act was rectified in Bidhan Sabha in 7.8.1967 and family ceiling became 12.36 to 24.20 acre.

In West Dinajpur there were several types of lands found such as Debottar, Pirottar, Wakaff and Church land. In order to hide lands zamindars, jotdars and some middlemen transferred land to charitable trust because that land should not be vested by the Operation Barga of 1978. In West Dinajpur there were several estates and among them prominent were Churaman Estate, Pirali Estate, Thakur Estate, Bahin Estate, Thangamara Neogi Estate, Dinajpur Estate, Sanyal Estate, etc. Thakur Estate related with Tagore
family. In these Estates, lands were occupied by the government for the implementation of Operation Barga. There is a *Wakaff* Estate at Chakbaliram under Tapan police station (present Dakshin Dinajpur). There are some lands in the name of *Pir*, along with *Darga* (holy shrine) and mosque. The *Motowali* of this *Pirottar* property is Nazim-ud-din Mahalat.\(^{211}\) The *Wakaff* Estate is looked after by Mashir Muhammad. This *Wakaff* Estate is now under the caretaking of Kolkata *Wakaff* of the West Bengal Government.\(^{212}\) In Kurmail (present Dakshin Dinajpur) there was a *Wakaff* Estate which came to be known as Sonaullah *Wakaff* Estate. Once upon a time this *Wakaff* Estate had 300 *bigha* lands. A high school is situated in the name of Sonaullah. A *Masjid* is situated in Kurmail. Present *Motowali* of Kurmail is Habibur Rahaman and he was appointed by the Commission of *Wakaff* in 1972.\(^{213}\) One thing must be clear that *Pirottar* land was private land but *Wakaff* land was under the authority of government.

A case was filed by the lands of Sonaullah Estates in 1964. At that time the Chief Minister of West Bengal was Bidhan Chandra Roy. Later when United Front Government was formed in 1967, this case was transferred to judicial court. The case continued till 1969. The information reached to the BLRO that lands were vested. Later the case started to the Land Tribunal Court of Calcutta. High Court gives their verdict that the lands that were vested were illegal. That matter was informed to BLRO and DLRO. It was decided that until the case was resolved a ‘*status quo*’ should be maintained. But later political parties vested the land and issue ‘*patta*’ for the landless peasants. At present the case is pending in the Land Tribunal Court. The case is following—\(^{214}\) Certified Copy Demand Notice No.1400 dated 9.9.1936 in respect of E.C. No-2262 (D.E.No-624-p) 1 No-1400 Dt.9.9.1936 Commissions of *Wakaff*, Bengal Government House.21, Old Court House Street Calcutta, Notice of Demand under Section 59, B.W.Act-1934 No-642-P.Date-7.9.1936.
To

Mussmats Subdhan Nessa Chowdhurani and Mussmat Misbhahan Nessa Chowdhurani-Kurmail, P.O-Teor, Dinajpur Motowali of the Wakaff Estate of Sonaullah Mondal Enrolled as number-2262

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross income</th>
<th>a/a of Revenue Rent etc.</th>
<th>cost of collection</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7,000/-</td>
<td>3061</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>3936/-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net income u/s</th>
<th>class of Wakaff</th>
<th>Rate of assessment assessed</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 (6) B.W.Act</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3064</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S D-H Sobhan</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 9.1936</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Rs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This appeal is allowed on contest but, in the circumstances, without cost, the judgment and decreepessed by the court below, are set aside and suit is decreed in contest but, in the circumstances, without cost, the plaintiff’s title and the right to retain the suit lands are here by declared and the defendant is permanently restrained from interfering with the possession of the plaintiff on the strength of the ‘B’ from return submitted by hait Motowali Dildas Bux Mondal.

Sd-R.K.Sharma

11.9.1964

Additional District Judge
Habibur Rahaman still believes that the present State government will solve the problem of illegal vested lands. In the case of Church land, we have to say few words about Christian community. Christian community divided into following groups. 

1) Roman Catholic 2) Puritan 3) Protestant

a) Methodist
b) Baptist
c) Luthadian etc.

Religions head of the Christian community were divided into following parts:
Pope → Cardinal → ArchBishop → Vicar General → Father → Brother (Who were teaching and learning to occupy the post of Father). In North Bengal there was North Bengal Diocese (N.B.D) Bishop house was under the authority of North Bengal Diocese. Bishop house managed the Churches of Malda, Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur. Apart from these in North Bengal there were Bagdogra Diocese, Jalpaiguri Diocese, Darjeeling and Alipurduar Diocese. In North Bengal most of the Churches were under the authority of Catholic society. Churches were never getting charitable lands. In most cases Churches purchased land and after that the construction was made. In Malda and West Dinajpur many tribals were converted to Christian religion.

In the colonial period land revenue system had a distinct feature. In Dinajpur an agricultural based economic-social infrastructure was building up. Zamindars were upper caste Hindu but on the other hand raiyats and tenants were lower or subaltern class Muslims and non-caste Hindus. There were lot of differences between zamindars and raiyats. But in
the northern part of North Bengal there was no difference between *jotdars* and *adhiars*. The main reason behind this was the socio-cultural intermingling relations.

From pre-Permanent Settlement, Permanent Settlement and post-Permanent Settlement, rural society witnessed a huge change both socially and economically. Permanent Settlement broke down agricultural based economy of Malda and Dinajpur. On the other hand, *zamindari* system gradually abolished. After the abolition of *zamindari* system middlemen, *adhiar, bargadar*, share-cropper, and tenant formed a new class of society. The character of the land also radically changed. Cultivator, peasant and tenant’s agricultural based life totally changed in North Bengal. Two types of peasant actually found in North Bengal, namely- i) landless peasant ii) wage-earner or labourer. In North Bengal, especially in Malda and West Dinajpur, several changes took place in the rural society from the Permanent Settlement to the Operation Barga.

British government, in a quest for enhancing the revenues, put a major emphasis on formulating a stable policy relating to land. By the hands of land it was found that rural society undergone changes due to the growth of urbanization. Later land turned into a political issue of the political parties. Political parties’ ideologies gradually changed following the issue of land. 1946’s Tebhaga movement, Naxalbari movement of 1967, formation of United Front Government in 1967, implementation of Operation Barga- these changes gradually took a concrete shape in the rural society. North Bengal’s economic outlook, motivation of people changed and in the cultural spheres, a new dimension is clearly discernible. From pre-Permanent to post-Permanent Settlement colonial economy especially land revenue system totally changed. Especially in Malda and West Dinajpur, social and economic status takes a new turn and rural life of the people gradually shifted to urbanization.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


28. *Ibid*


43. *Ibid*.

44. *Ibid*.


47. Sirin Akthar, *op.cit.*, p.27.


49. Todarmal, *Bhumi Rajaswa O Jarip* (Bengali), Sri Dhar Printers, Kolkata, B.S, 1382, pp.11-12.

50. *Ibid*.

51. *Ibid*.


71. Todarmal, *op.cit.* p.16.


77. Indrajit Chakraborty and Subhasish Gupta, *Dinajpur (1757-1947)* (Bengali), Kolkata, 2014, p.73.


82. *Amini Commission* was formed in 1776 in the month of November. There were four members named David Enderson, George Bogle, Henry Vancitart and Dewan Ganga Govinda Singh. Court of Directors was not support the formation of *Amini Commission* because this commission could not include the council and an indigenous member attached with this commission.


89. Ibid.


96. *Bengal Regulations, 1795-1805*, Reg-Viii, L

97. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, File Nos. 46-52, 24th September, 1793, W.B.S.A

98. Proceedings of the Administration of Bengal in the Revenue Department, File No.1112, 26th April, 1872, W.B.S.A

99. Proceedings of the Revenue Department, Index No.34-35, April, 1872, W.B.S.A

100. Ibid.


102. Ibid. p.164.

103. Ibid. p.168.

104. Ibid.


110. Proceedings of the Judicial Department, File No. 359-61, February, 1861, W.B.S.A


113. Cultivation continued on the basis of small plots of *raiyati* land worked by the *raiyats* themselves or by their under-tenants, share croppers and hired labourers.


117. Proceedings of the Board of Revenue, No-6, 7th July, 1795, W.B.S.A


126. *Bankim Rachanavali* (Bengali), Sahitya Samagraha, Tuli Kalom, Kolkata, B.S., 1393, p.287.


146. *Ibid*.


148. *Ibid*.


153. *Ibid*.


156. Ibid. p.76.


161. Ibid.


163. Ibid.

164. Ibid.


166. Ibid. p.53.

167. M.O. Carter, op.cit., p.64.


169. Lalbehari Majumder (ed.), Gourdoot (Bengali), Weekly, Malda, 27.08.1949


183. Ibid. p.177.


186. Ibid. p.171.


188. Ibid.


193. Ibid. p.374.

194. Memorandum of the Malda Landholders’ Association to the Land Reform Commission.


204. Samit Ghosh, ‘Gourbange Bhumi Sanskar’ (Bengali) in *Bartaman*, 27.07.2006


210. Old *zamindari* papers and Revenue Receipt (Thakur Estate of Patiram and Thangamara Neogi Estate of Adamdighi, Bogra) give information about *zamindar* families.

211. Interview with Nazim-ud-din Mahalat (*Motowali* of Chakbaliram *Wakaff* Estate), Age-60, Tapan, Chakbaliram, Dakshin Dinajpur, Date, 15.05.2016

213. Interview with Habibur Rahaman (*Motowali of Sonaullah Wakaff Estate*), Age-70, Kurmail, Dakshin Dinajpur, Date, 31.05.2012

