Chapter II

THE ANNEXATION

The annexation of Awadh in 1856 was the logical outcome of the policy being pursued by the East India Company since 1764. Between the period from 1765 and 1801, the Company concluded a number of treaties with the native state solely for the purpose of tightening the grip over her and keeping her as a buffer state between the territorial possessions of East India Company and other native states. The Company was in dire need of financial support and preservation of peace in her own territories to pursue the policy of expansion and consolidation elsewhere. Once this objective was achieved, the Company took its next step. During this whole period the Company realized from Awadh on an average nearly seventy lakhs of rupees per annum over and above the ad hoc amounts realized from it after the battle of Buxar, during the Rohilla War and by the sale of Allahabad and Kara in 1773.

From 1801, the Company was no longer in need of treating Awadh as a buffer state. The main opponents of the Company's supremacy in India like Mysore and Marathas had been defeated and were brought effectively under the control of the Company. Awadh lost its importance as a buffer state and was converted into a dependency of the Company by the treaty of 1801. According to the treaty of 14 November 1801, the Nawab Wazir ceded half of his
territories to the Company in lieu of the subsidy which he had to pay for the Company's troops stationed in Awadh. The area taken over by the Company was the much coveted area of Doab which gave a continuity to the British possessions in the north-west. Hence by taking over this area, Awadh was encircled by the British territories and was completely cut off from the rest of India.

Although, from 1801, Awadh became a dependency of the East India Company, its importance as a native state gradually increased due to a number of factors. It was situated in such a position that the Company's territories in northern India were practically divided into two parts. Lacking the modern means of communication, it began to create administrative problems for the Company. Her northern neighbour was Nepal which during this period was arming herself and posing a threat to the Company. The result was that the Company had to keep a large force to watch the movement of the Nepalis. An unfriendly Awadh might have been a source of trouble and danger to the British possessions. Under the circumstances it was necessary to evolve some pretext to annex the state. During the first phase, the plea was taken of "the best means of securing the regular payment of the subsidy from Oude, and re-forming the Nawab's army". Under

2. Papers relating to the East India Company, printed by order of the House of Commons, 1806, Vol. 3.
this pretext half of her territory, paying a land revenue of Rs.1,35,23,470 was taken over by the Company in 1801. During the second phase, the bogey of chaos in administration, anarchy in the countryside and fulfilling the wishes of the people, gradually began to be raised.

It seems that during the reign of Sa'adat Ali Khan, no voice was raised about the mismanagement of Awadh. But after the death of Sa'adat Ali Khan, we find slanderous reports began to be circulated about the ruin of Awadh. The campaign was started with ulterior motives because in 1824-25 Bishop Heber visited Awadh and contradicted the reports being circulated purposely. He says that "I can bear witness certainly to the truth of the King's statement that his territories are really in a far better state of cultivation that I had expected to find them. From Lucknow to Sandee, where I am now writing, the country is as populous and well cultivated as most of the Company's provinces".

This positive evidence of Heber was not taken into account and the trade against the native government continued unabated. Even a liberal person, Lord William Bentinck was

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1. Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sunnuds by Aitchison, Sir C.U., Vol. ...
misled by the constant reports of the Residents. Naturally he issued a warning to the Awadh authorities and reported the matter to the home authorities and received the necessary sanction for appropriate action from the Court of Directors in 1835. 1 Meanwhile Hon'ble Shore visited Awadh in 1833 and his remarks deserve full consideration. "I have travelled over several parts of Oude, and can testify, as far as my own observation went, that it is fully cultivated according to the population. Between Canpore and Lucknow numbers must daily pass, who can confirm or deny this statement. Let them declare if any portion of land there lies waste which is fit for cultivation. I have known many officers who have been stationed at Sitapoor, and have made excursions into the neighbouring parts, without any exception, they describe the country as a garden. In the number of cattle, horses, and goods which they possess, and in the appearance of their houses and clothes, the people are in no points worse (in many, better) off them over own subjects. The wealth of Lucknow, not merely of those in authority, but the property of the bankers and shopkeepers is far superior to that of any city (Calcutta, perhaps, excepted) in the British dominion. How can all this be the case, if the Government is notorious for tyranny and oppression?". 2

1. An abstract of the Political Intercourse between the British Government and the Kingdom of Oude by Captain Paton, Assistant to Resident, p.102, National Archives, F.D. Misc. 1764-1836; also Sleeman, Vol.II, pp.194-96; also Parliamentary Papers, Oude, 1856, p.155.

2. Notes on Indian Affairs by Hon'ble F.J. Shore, p.156.
Bentinck must have heard all this from Shore, and when he received the Court's directive, he simply wrote to the King for improving the administration. The inference can be drawn that the whole reporting about the misery of the people and anarchy prevailing in the country was the product of the Resident's mind and Lord William Bentinck was thoroughly misled. When he realised his mistake he took no action. Moreover, a liberal person like Bentinck could not annex the state on a false pretext. But the process of presenting Awadh as miserable state continued and from time to time necessary advices were given to the Awadh authorities for the improvement of the administration. The last such warning was issued by Lord Hardinge on 23 November 1847 to eradicate the evils.

A new chapter started with the appointment of Col. Sleeman as Resident in 1849. In selecting Sleeman, Dalhousie had already made up his mind to take over the state as it is clearly shown by his instruction to Sleeman. He says, "The reconstruction of the internal administration of a great, rich and oppressed country, is a noble as well as an arduous task for the officer to whom the duty is intrusted, and the Government have recourse

1. An abstract of the Political Intercourse between the British Government and the Kingdom of Oudh by Captain Paton, pp.111-13, National Archives; also Sleeman, Vol. II, p.196; also Parliamentary Papers, Oude, 1856, p.155.

to one of the best of its servants for that purpose. . . . . . I do myself, therefore, the honour of proposing to you to accept the office of Resident at Lucknow, with especial reference to the great changes which, in all probability, will take place.  

Taking clue from Dalhousie, Sleeman began to interfere systematically in the internal affairs of the state and undermining the authority of the King. The most celebrated was his tour of the state "during which he has been encouraging applications and receipts of petitions from all quarters. This, no doubt, is an extraordinary interference with the native Government." He was quite impatient to bring about the 'great changes' which Dalhousie had referred in his letter of 16 September 1848. His intention was to discredit the Awadh authorities before its own people on one hand, and on the other, to impress upon Dalhousie to take the necessary steps to bring about the 'great changes' so that he might get the necessary opportunity to reconstruct the internal administration of the rich state of Awadh.

He began to emphasize the importance of Awadh. Pleading the cause of directly taking over the administration of the Province, Sleeman writes to Dalhousie: "With steamers to Fyzabad,

2. M.M. Masiuddin- "Oude, its Princes and It's Government Vindicated, ed. by Safi Ahmad, p.84."
and a railroad from that place to Cawnpore, through Lucknow, the Nepal people would be forever quieted, with half of the force we now keep up to look after them; and the N.W. Provinces become more closely united to Bengal, to the vast advantage of both".  

He again and again emphasises the importance of Awadh and for taking over the administration of the country and the benefit which would be derived from such a course of action. In his letter to Sir James Hogg he points it out:—

"We should derive substantial benefit from the measure, without in any degree violating our declaration of disinterestedness. We now maintain five regiments of Infantry, and a company of Artillery, at a cost of from five to six lacs a year. We maintain the Residency and all its establishments at a cost of more than one lac of rupees a year. All these would become fairly chargeable to the Oude revenue under the new administration; and we might dispense with half the military forces now kept up at Cawnpore and Dinapore on the Ganges, as the military force in Oude will relieve us from all apprehension as to Nepal.

"Oude would be covered with a network of fine mechanised roads, over which the produce of Oude and our own districts would pass freely to the benefit of the people of both; and we should soon have the river Ghagra, from near Patna on the Ganges, to Fyzabad in Oude, navigable for steamers; with a railroad from Fyzabad, through Lucknow to Cawnpore, to the great benefit of the North-West Provinces and those of Bengal".  


Such was the strategical position of Awadh. So long as it remained independent all these benefits, which Sleeman had enumerated from time to time and which were immensely important financially as well as politically for the East India Company, could not be achieved. The only solution was the annexation of the Province. The Nepali problem and the administrative and financial problems were not the only problems which the Company was facing at that time. There were other problems also which were baffling the East India Company. The imposition of check by unilaterally raising the custom duties on British goods by the Awadh authorities was also causing a serious loss and irritation to the British authorities. A controversy was raised during the Residentship of Sleeman about the Commercial Treaty of 1783 which regulated the commercial relations of the British Government and Awadh. There was also the question of salt. The Company had suppressed the manufacture of salt in her territories around Jaunpur for the sake of expected higher revenue, which was bound to prove a failure so long as Awadh remained independent from where smuggled salt could be taken to the adjoining districts of Banaras and Allahabad. There was also the question of Opium which was also being smuggled into the British territories. The question of timber for gun carriages had also become a problem at that time. Over and above all these problems, the question of fully integrating the Awadh sepoys as part of the British
territories had become by now the paramount necessity. The Awadh furnished nearly fifty thousands alien sepoys to the British Government. To keep a tighter control upon them, who were till now foreigners, could no longer be delayed. When all these problems combined together, the logical step was the annexation. So long as the problems cropped up separately, it did not bring a problem but now the position was different.

Sleeman submitted his report to Dalhousie in 1851 but it was thought insufficient by Dalhousie himself. Regarding the insufficiency of the report, Dalhousie was not confident that only Sleeman's report will be able to convince the home authorities. He was sure that the Court will never sanction annexation of the state. In one of his letters, dated 30 July 1851, to Couper he confesses "but in these days annexation is so unfashionable, and the charter Committee is so near, that I don't think the court would approve of my shaking the tree to help it down".¹ He had also the knowledge about the Treaty of 1837 and its rejection by the home authorities. It seems that Sleeman's Report was only meant for paving the way to and preparing the ground for convincing the home authorities. He could not annex the state without the prior sanction of the court and no other pretext was available except to present such reports and making out a case for its annexation. It is absolutely misleading that Dalhousie was busy

with the Burmese war and could not attend to Awadh. The fact remains that he was never confident that the home authorities will ever permit him.

Sleeman's Report was thought to be insufficient for effecting the great changes. It was thought necessary that a second report must also be prepared by a different person. Under these circumstances Sleeman was replaced by Outram and he was instructed "to determine whether its affairs still continue in the state in which Colonel Sleeman from time to time described them to be".¹

Outram was appointed Resident at Lucknow on 24 November 1854, and took charge of his duties on the 5th of December. On 15 March 1855 he submitted this celebrated Report to the Supreme Government at Calcutta in spite of the fact that he was quite ignorant of the Persian language. According to the biographer of Sir James Outram he "protested that he will ill deserve the confidence placed in him.......saying "I allude to my ignorance of the Persian language, in which I understand the Resident's transactions with the Court of Oudh are conducted, and a thorough knowledge of which may perhaps be deemed essential to the representative of Government at that Court".² In spite of the lack of

¹ Dacoitee in Excelsis by Captain Bird, p.133.
² The Bayard of India - A Life of General Sir James Outram by Captain Lionel J. Trotter, p.169.
knowledge of the Persian language, he was entrusted with the job of preparing the Report. As his biographer says "In the preparation of this report Outram had been largely aided by Dr (afterwards Sir) Joseph Fayer, who combined the duties of Medical Officer and political assistant to the Lucknow Residency. Possessing that Persian which Outram lacked, Fayer had been requested to furnish his new chief with a daily precis of the events recorded by a native scribe in the court circular of his time and country". 1

It is very interesting to note that the precis supplied by Dr. Fayer to his chief mainly consisted of the events regarding the private life of the King. 2 This Report is only a copy of Sleeman's Journey through the Kingdom of Oude in a true sense. In para 15 of Outram's Report, he writes "In fact, I do not think that His Majesty will ever be brought to feel the responsibility of sovereignty strong enough to be induced to bear that portion of the burden of its duties which must necessarily develop upon him...... During former reigns, the Kings always held a Durbar once a week, and often more frequently. At this, all his relations and native gentlemen in the city, had an opportunity of paying their respects to their Sovereign, and speaking to him. This

1. The Bayard of India, A Life of General Sir James Outram by Captain Lionel J. Trotter, p.175.
2. Dacoitee in Excelsis or The Spoliation of Oude, p.158.
custom was continued for the first three or four months of the present reign, when it was discontinued. Now let us see what Sleeman says about the King of Awadh. "He has no desire to be brought to take any interest whatever in public affairs; and is altogether regardless of the duties and responsibilities of his high office....... His father and grandfather, while on the throne, used to see the members of the royal family and aristocracy of the city in Durbar once a day, or three or four times a week....... The present King continued this system for a short time, but he soon got tired of it and discontinued altogether the short Durbar and at which all the members of the royal family and aristocracy of the city attended, to pay their respects to their sovereign".¹ In fact Outram had not only consulted the Residency records but had copied down what Sleeman had written in 1849, 1850. Such is the celebrated Report of Outram, who was quite ignorant of the Court language and whose only contribution was to copy down whatever Sleeman had written, upon which the annexation of the state was effected.

Between Sleeman's and Outram's Report, there is a gap of more than four years and during this whole period he had been convincing the home authorities regarding the approval of such an act. In one of his letters he says "General Outram, in

pursuance of instructions with which he was furnished, has sent us a report on the condition of Oude. It seems impossible that the home authorities can any longer hesitate to overthrow this fortress of corruption and infamous misgovernment. I should not mind doing it as a parting coup. But I doubt the people at home having the pluck to sanction it, and I can't find a pretext for doing it without sanction. I must, therefore, have authority from home— and, as I said before, I doubt their giving it.  

But in spite of all his pleadings he was not sure about the final outcome. Even Outram's Report did not give him the confidence and he was much perplexed being unable to find any other pretext to annex the state. He did not find any encouragement from the home authorities. On the contrary they were not relying upon the report of Outram and Sleeman. In one of his letters he pleads "You say that Outram's report on Oude is considered over-coloured at the India House. But the picture of Oude, as it is, is not of his drawing. Such a case has gone to them as they cannot resist. Whether the deed be done by my hand or by Canning's, it must be done immediately."


There were other factors which created the crisis and which forced Dalhousie to prepare the groundwork for its annexation. Primarily these were related to the administrative problems, the financial position of the East India Company and the Nepal. The administrative problem was taking day by day a serious turn. After the annexation of Punjab the Company's territories covered the whole northern India except Awadh which was lying in the heart of her dominions. The greatest problem was the N.W. Provinces. The communication problem with the western part of the N.W. Provinces through her eastern part was creating much difficulty. There was no direct line except through Allahabad and Kanpur resulting in much delay. We have already seen Sleeman pointing out the advantages which could be gained. Related to this administrative problem was a dotted series of customs posts maintained at a very heavy cost to prevent smuggling from Awadh into the British territories which in spite of all vigilance on the part of the customs authorities was proving ineffective. G. Couper, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner while reporting about the Awadh salt in 1856 informed the Government "But the report of the Commissioner of Customs, and of the Benaras Division to the Sudder Board of Revenue, North-Western Provinces induce a belief that the preventive line on the Oudh Frontier was in-effective, and that the common Oudh Salt was consumed in considerable quantities by the village population of the Benares
Division...... but the double duty imposed in that year (1843) has not been attended with the increase anticipated to the customs Revenue, notwithstanding the more stringent rules for its realization, and the great additional cost at which the preventive Establishment has been increased and organised under European Officers........ At the commencement of the operation of Reg. 14 of 1845, a considerable increase was obtained; but the returns have not progressively increased with those of population, and the conclusion thus arrived at that only the affluent are able to consume the taxed salt, and that the lower classes are supplied in Agra, Delhi, and Doab Divisions, with salt obtained in the manufacture of salt petre, whilst those of Rohilcund, and Benares obtain it from Oudh".1

The only inference which can be drawn is that in spite of her/efforts to prevent the loss of customs revenue, the East India Company failed to prevent the smuggling of salt in her territories. We must also keep in mind that except the northern side, the British territories were lying on all the three sides of Awadh. To prevent the smuggling of Awadh goods in British territories was rather impossible. The same was the position of Opium.

1. George Couper, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Oudh to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Calcutta dated Lucknow 28 May 1856, Foreign Political Consultations No.195, 12 December 1856, National Archives, Delhi.
In his minutes on the question of Awadh Opium, Mr Campbell, Judicial Commissioner of Awadh, who was previously Commissioner of Customs admitted in 1858 that "Further upto the present moment, the Opium cultivation in Oudh, Nepal and other places is quite free while Allahabad Salt preventive line of weak and distant posts is a mere farce, as a check on the imports of so little bulky and very valuable an article as Opium". Thus these smugglings created a problem. On the one hand these smugglings from Awadh decreased the revenue of the British Government and on the other hand they had to employ a large number of officers and men to try to prevent it and in both ways the real loser was the British Government in revenue and heavy Establishment.

Over and above this smuggling problem another controversy arose about the levy of customs duty at Lucknow on all the imported goods entering into Awadh territory, which the Awadh Darbar imposed on it to discourage the import. In 1783 a commercial Treaty was signed between the East India Company and Awadh by which on payment of a certain fixed amount a Rawana or permission was granted to the merchant. These Rawanas were

1. T.D. Forsyth, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Oudh to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India dated Lucknow 20 September 1858, Foreign Consultation Nos.201-210, National Archives, New Delhi.
issued at certain fixed places on the border of the East India Company. By the Treaty of 1801 half of the territory of Awadh was ceded to the East India Company and the places where the check posts were established all came under the jurisdiction of the British Government and no attempt was made to fix new check posts. Consequently there was no fixed check post from where a Rawana could be issued. By the Treaty of 1793, it was stipulated that the goods passing through Awadh and not meant to be sold in Awadh were, after paying the necessary customs duty were issued the Rawana but those goods which were for Awadh had to pay over and above the customs duty a certain amount of local tax levied in the market.

In 1801 when half the territory of Awadh was ceded to the British Government, the Rawana system ceased. All the goods either passing through Awadh or imported were now charged fifty per cent more of the original customs duty. Gradually the duty was increased by every ruler. When the Kanpur-Lucknow road was made, the British Government introduced Bullock Train from Kanpur to Lucknow to import the British goods in Awadh. In 1850 the charges of the customs had risen to a very high degree\(^1\) and the

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\(^1\) A. Bell to W.H. Sleeman dated 4 September 1850, Levy of Custom Duties in Oudh, Foreign Political Consultation No. 218/1850, National Archives, New Delhi.
Durbar wanted a share in the profit arising from the introduction of the Government Bullock Train. The British Government did not want to share the profit. Consequently the Durbar threatened the merchants not to use the Bullock Trains. This last act of the Durbar created a crisis and British Post Master of Lucknow, A. Bell, complained to the Resident about the excessive duty imposed by the Durbar and the threat about the Government Bullock Train which might jeopardise the whole system of export from the British territory.

When the crisis developed, Sleeman reported the matter to the Governor General and recommended that all other items of duty which were not authorised by the Treaty of 1783 should be cancelled and Rawana should be issued by the Awadh authorities at the border of Kanpur. He also recommended that "If it be His Lordship's opinion that one cannot with propriety insist upon the Bullock Train being kept up under the Post Master, it might be made over to the authorities, but it will be indispensably necessary in order to secure adherence to the Treaty that a Munshee on the part of the British Government be in attendance at the Custom

1. King to Resident dated 4 September 1850, Levy of Custom Duties in Oudh, Foreign Political Consultations No.218/1850, National Archives, New Delhi.

2. A. Bell to W.H. Sleeman dated 21 August 1850, Levy of Custom Duties in Oudh, Foreign Political Consultations No.218/1850, National Archives, New Delhi.

3. Ibid.
House with authority to see that no unauthorised exactions be made, and to report to the Resident any case of exaction, or exactions contrary to the Treaty. For this Office I should recommend a salary of seventy rupees a month with thirty for a Muharrir to be charged to the Darbar, since the acknowledged breach of the Treaty by the Durbar have led to his appointment.¹ But the Governor General did not take any action and status quo was maintained. An inference can be drawn that the Durbar did not want to import goods from the British territory. This was a clear clash of interest between the British Government and Awadh Durbar.

Related to the Awadh trade was the problem of Timber. In the Tarai area of Awadh the finest quality of Shisham was available for the manufacture of gun carriages. The British Government had already some areas in the tarai region of the N.W. Provinces. But this area did not meet the full requirements of the Government Gun carriage Factory at Fatehgarh. The availability of the fine quality of the material in the vicinity of the Factory had become a problem. From the far flung areas it was difficult to bring the timber due to defective and nearly non-existent means of transport. Only Awadh Timber was the

¹ Memorandum of Sleeman on the "Levy of Custom Duties in Oudh", Foreign Political Consultations No.218/dated 27 December 1850, National Archives, New Delhi.
nearest from the site of the factory and was of the best quality. The British Government always sent its officers to the Awadh tarai in search of timber and signing agreements with owners of the forest. The British Government had to pay one rupee per tree whatever its description and size might be.\(^1\) This purchase of timber was an economic burden on the East India Company.

The financial condition of the East India Company had never been sound. According to Dalhousie "When I came to India five years ago, we had barely 9 millions of cash balances - a 5 per cent loan open - and a deficiency on the year of a million and a quarter sterling".\(^2\) The expenditure of the East India Company had so much increased that the Company had become nearly bankrupt. Naturally it was looking for other avenues from where it should supplement her resources and meet the expenditure. It has already been pointed out that the Company had to sustain a heavy loss by keeping Awadh as an independent Native State. When the state was annexed, Dalhousie heaved a sigh of relief by exclaiming "So our gracious Queen has 5,000,000 more subjects and £1,300,000 more revenue than she had yesterday".\(^3\)

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But the most important and pressing problem was Nepal where Jung Bahadur was expanding and modernizing his army. We have already seen Sleeman pointing out the danger from Nepal to Sir James Hogg, Deputy Chairman of the East India Company and the advantage of Awadh as the proper place where to employ the army to check the Nepalis. He also pressed this point on Dalhousie. "With steamers to Fyzabad, and a railroad from that place to Cawnpore, through Lucknow, the Nepal people would be for ever quieted, with half of the force we now keep up to look after them". It was not only Sleeman who wanted to check the Nepalis activity or was feeling danger from that quarter but it was Dalhousie also who shared the same opinion and was doubtful of their motives. In one of his letters he says "I forget whether I told you that our friend Jung Bahadur is arming Nepal. He has officially explained that the object of it is to exact reparation from the Chinese authorities in Tibet for injuries done to Nepalese subjects. This is probably true, for he is repairing the roads into Tibet, making snow-shoes, and has always had designs on the province he is about to attack. But it is to be noted that Nepal armed in the same manner on the last occasion on which it was thought we were going to war with Russia; and the feeling in

Nepal is strong that Russia seriously menaces us and that we are not match for her. So we keep one eye on our friend Jung.¹

Suffice it to say the danger from Nepal was too serious as subsequently we find that Jung Bahadur did not attack Tibet. The conclusion can be drawn that all these factors, i.e. commercial problem, financial problem and the problem of Nepal forced the hands of the British Government to annex. Outram's Report was simply a cover to hide the real facts. The charges of maladministration, precariousness of land tenure, defective land revenue system, defective judiciary, no police measures, were simply a hoax. They could be equally applied to the adjoining British territories. Actually the conditions in the adjoining districts in the British territory were far worse than in Awadh. "An appendix in Sir R. Montgomery's Report on Cawnpore shows that between 1802 and 1846, 1450 villages out of 2258 or nearly 65 per cent have changed hands. It is unquestionable that no such extensive changes have taken place in the Oonao District".² A confession of destruction in the British territory by Sleeman himself is exceedingly interesting and gives a true picture of their interest towards the welfare of the masses and for whose sake they annexed Awadh. He says "The soil of some of the districts, about

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the source of Nerbudda is among the finest in the world. The
district of Mundula, which intervenes between them and the rich
and highly-cultivated district of Jubbulpore, in the valley of
that river, was populous and well cultivated when we took
possession of it in the year 1817; but it has become almost as
waste under our rule by a more gradual but not less desolating
process. Not considering the diminishing markets for land
produce, our assessments of the land revenue were too high, and
the managing officers never thought the necessity of reduction
established, till the villages were partially or wholly deserted.
The farmers and cultivators all migrated, by degrees, into the
neighbouring districts of Nagpoor and Rewa". 1

No such immigration took place from Awadh in spite of
the fact that Sleeman and Outram painted a picture in which it had
been shown that masses were being crushed and the cultivation
was being destroyed and where no safety of life and property of
people could be expected. But from their own statement we find
a very serious picture of people in their own territory. We do
not find such glaring examples in Awadh as had been shown in
Montgomery's Report of Kanpur where out of a total of 2258 villages
1450 villages had been sold by auction due to non-payment of the

1. Journey through the Kingdom of Oude by W.H. Sleeman,
Vol. II, p.44.
Government dues. We do not find a single instance where the whole population of a district in Awadh had migrated as in the case of Mundula. In Awadh no owner of a village was ejected for ever. Although it was a common practice that the landowner lost his ilaqa but it was temporary which he regained within a very short time, but the position in the British territories was quite different. In the words of C. A. Elliot "But under the British Government, a village once lost is always lost. The Nuwabee principle was to drive no one to desperation. The English, to mete out to every one the same inexorable justice".¹

The net result was that the people in the British territories were much greater sufferer than they could be in Awadh. According to Sleeman himself "In 1801, when the Oude territory was divided, and half taken by us and half left to Oude, the landed aristocracy of each were about equal. Now hardly a family of this class remains in our half, while in Oude it remains unimpaired. Everybody in Oude believes those families to have been systematically crushed".²

This was not the case with only the landed aristocracy. If their exclusion had brought any benefit upon the masses it could be justified. But instead of being the benefactor of the masses

¹. Chronicles of Oonao by C.A. Elliot, p.129.
the British authorities were really a curse to them. By the treaty of 1801, half of the Awadh territory was ceded to the British Government. A comparison of the revenue in 1801, when the ceded territory was brought under British control and 1846-47 will give a clearer picture of the hardship of the masses for whose so-called benefit the latter half of Awadh was also annexed in 1856. The following was the revenue of the ceded districts of Awadh in 1801:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Etawa, Korak, Kurra</td>
<td>55,48,577-11-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehur and others</td>
<td>5,33,374-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furruckabad</td>
<td>4,50,001-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khyregurh and Kunchumpore</td>
<td>2,10,001-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azimgurh, Mounal and Bunjan(Mau Nath Bhanjan)</td>
<td>6,95,624-7-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goruckpore</td>
<td>5,09,853-8-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botwul</td>
<td>40,001-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahabad and others</td>
<td>9,34,963-1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bareilly, Moradabad, Bijnore, Budown, Pilibheet and Shahjehanpore</td>
<td>43,13,457-11-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nawabgunge, Rehlee, etc.</td>
<td>1,19,242-12-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohowl and other with exception of Jaulluk Arwul</td>
<td>1,68,378-4-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,35,23,474-8-3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By the Treaty of 11 May 1816, the following districts were given back.

- Nawabgunge: 1,19,242-12-0
- Khyreegurh: 2,10,001-0-0

**Total**: 3,29,243-12-0

**Remaining Total**: 1,31,94,230-12-0

The following district was added in the same Treaty:

- Handeea or Kewae: 1,52,905-0-0

**Grand Total**: 1,33,47,135-12-3

The following was the revenue in 1846-47:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the District</th>
<th>Land Revenue</th>
<th>Abkarea</th>
<th>Stamp</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tohilcund</td>
<td>64,44,341</td>
<td>2,47,854</td>
<td>2,04,576</td>
<td>68,96,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allahabad including</td>
<td>21,29,551</td>
<td>1,41,409</td>
<td>61,802</td>
<td>23,32,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handeea alias Kawa</td>
<td>13,57,541</td>
<td>83,061</td>
<td>49,698</td>
<td>14,95,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furruckabad</td>
<td>12,33,901</td>
<td>24,822</td>
<td>20,484</td>
<td>12,79,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tynpooree</td>
<td>12,80,596</td>
<td>19,647</td>
<td>10,335</td>
<td>13,10,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itawa</td>
<td>20,80,296</td>
<td>2,10,045</td>
<td>96,549</td>
<td>23,86,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhoruckpore</td>
<td>14,39,837</td>
<td>81,257</td>
<td>53,925</td>
<td>16,25,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izimgurh including</td>
<td>21,51,139</td>
<td>1,26,155</td>
<td>57,406</td>
<td>23,34,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawnpore</td>
<td>14,25,431</td>
<td>60,370</td>
<td>21,063</td>
<td>15,06,864</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 1,95,92,686 | 9,99,620 | 5,75,358 | 2,11,63,164


It will not be out of place to give the revenue figures of Awadh for 1846 and 1847.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue (in lacs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1846</td>
<td>1,35,13,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>1,33,58,886</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the above figures are Jama figures which were fixed at the beginning of the year and which were never adhered to. If the harvest was bad the demand was lowered and if it was good the demand was raised, but not above the stipulated Jama. According to Elliot the figures of 1801 were the highest which the people ever paid. "Cownpore, when its taxes had been changed twice or thrice on occasions of excellent harvests, had never paid more than 22½ lacs. After cession it was raised at once to 24½ lacs".  

Within a period of 45 years the revenue of the ceded territory was raised to more than 58½ which naturally placed a heavy burden upon the meagre resources of the people. On the contrary no increase was made during the whole period of Awadh Government in spite of the fact that new areas were brought under cultivation.

Not only the people had to pay more in revenue, but they were also deprived of elementary necessities of the life. The preparation of salât in Jaunpur was prohibited in 1843 depriving

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2. Ibid., p.130.
a considerable number of people of their means of livelihood. 1

Moreover, the imported salt was too costly for the masses. The imported salt carried two rupees eight annas as import duty whereas in Awadh the best quality salt was available at the rate of 14 seers per rupee. The imported salt was an article of luxury which was beyond the means of the ordinary people. Such was the misery of the people that Mr Tucker, the Commissioner of the Benares Division, had made use of very strong language in reporting officially on the subject, representing the miseries inflicted on the mass of the population.

The late Commissioner of Allahabad in reporting on the impoverishment and depopulation of the two large Parganas of Barah, and Khujragarh, to the south of the Jumna, attributed them to heavy assessment, and the want of salt causing disease, and epidemics. 2 But in spite of all these miseries no action was taken to relieve the people. But in Awadh a campaign was started that the King was a debauch, mentally unfit, the court corrupt, officials inhuman, population dacoits, revenue falling, judiciary incompetent where justice could be purchased, people suffering from the oppression of officials and ravages of the King's army, and a number of other fictitious charges. We do not find that a

1. George Couper, Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Oudh to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to the Government of India in Foreign Deptt. dated Lucknow 28 May 1856, Foreign Political Consultation No.195 dated 12 December 1856, National Archives, New Delhi.

2. Ibid.
regular campaign was started to relieve the people from such sufferings but we do find everything hideously painted and against the humanity in the native states.

It has been brought out that the people were 'crying for a change' in Awadh. The Awadh population consisted of members of royal family, court nobles, British guaranteed persons residing at the Capital, landed aristocracy, government officials, British sepoys, the masses, and the traders and merchants. A thorough analysis is required to examine who wanted the British rule and who opposed it.

The members of the royal family had always been excluded from the management of the state by every ruler of Awadh. During the lifetime of the King, he purchased some promissory notes from the British Government for the maintenance of his wives and other relatives and after his death the interest of which was distributed by the Resident himself and these Wasiqadars were the guaranteed persons by the British Government. According to Sleeman "About three crores and half of rupees, or three million and half sterling, have been at different times contributed to our loans by the sovereigns of Oude as a provision for the different members of their respective families and dependents". The amount of the interests was fourteen lacs thirty five thousand four hundred and ten rupees per annum.

Over and above this amount they received allowances from the ruling King. But sometimes the members of the royal family were dangerous rivals to the King as was the case with Wazir Ali who succeeded his father Asif-ud Daulah in 1797 and was deposed in 1798 and in his place Sa'adat Ali Khan, one of the brothers of Asif-ud Daulah, was installed by the British Government and from whom half of the territory was taken away in 1801. Similarly, after the death of Nasir-ud Din Haider, his son Munna Jan was deprived of the throne and was made a prisoner and in his place Muhammad Ali Shah was installed on the throne of Awadh in 1837 and with whom a treaty was concluded which was ultimately turned down by the Court of Directors and on the basis of this treaty Lord Hardinge gave two years grace for the improvement of the country in 1847. Naturally, the rulers of Awadh were very cautious towards the members of the royal family. The opportunity arose when the King fell ill in 1849. Sleeman proposed a Board of Regency during the minority of the heir-apparent. ¹ Later on when the King recovered from his illness, Sleeman suggested that a Board should be formed consisting of three persons, a President and two members nominated by the King and confirmed by the Governor General for the administration of the country and the King will have no control over this Board. ² He suggested that the King should

delegate all the powers of sovereignty to the Board and forwarded a complete plan of administration.¹ Sleeman began to contact the members of the royal family secretly for some change and reported to Dalhousie that "The members of his family who have its interests most at heart, are becoming serious for some change."² Within a few days he succeeded in his intrigues to win over the members of the royal family for such a change. On his success he reported to Sir H.M. Elliot that "The whole family are most anxious that the King should resign the reigns into abler hands, and would hail the arrangement I have proposed as a blessing to them and the country......At the head of the Board, or Regency, I should put Mohsin-od Dowla, grandson of Ghazee-od Deen, the first King, and son-in-law of Moomummer Alee Shah, the third King...... I should probably put two of the King's uncles in as the other members, Azeemoshan and Mirza Khorum Buksha".³ He was confident that the change will be hailed by the people of Awadh. It should be kept in mind that his scheme was only to replace the King with some Regency in whose hands the powers of administration would be concentrated and he reported to Elliot that if his plan was accepted


"We shall have the royal family, the court, and the people with us". ¹

But Dalhousie was not prepared at this stage for a coup. But Sleeman continued his intrigues, and in all his letters he was pressing the problem that the members of the royal family wanted a change. In one of his letters he declared that "No part of the people of Oude are more anxious for the interposition of our Government than the members of the royal family".² During this whole period he tried unsuccessfully to persuade the King to abdicate in favour of his son or resign his sovereignty in favour of the Board of Regency.³ But when Sleeman found that the King was not prepared to act according to his wishes, he began to canvass support for his own ideas to set aside the King and suggested three courses open in such a case. (1) To appoint a regency during the minority of the heir-apparent who is now about eleven years of age, to govern with the advice of the Resident; (2) To manage the country by European agency during the regency, or in perpetuity, leaving the surplus revenue to the royal family; (3) To confiscate and annex the country, and pension the royal family.⁴

Sleeman favoured the second course regarding which he reported the concurrence of the members of the royal family. In all his correspondence he pleaded that the surplus revenue should be given to the members of the royal family. He convinced every section of the society that the country will not be annexed. He had first lesson when the Sikh war started. After the complete victory and its subsequent annexation, he ascertained the feelings of the people of Lucknow and reported to Elliot. "They (native aristocracy) said that the Seikhs could not fight as they were fighting unless there had been some general feeling of distrust as to our ultimate intention with regard to the Punjab which united them together."¹ This feeling of the Lucknow aristocracy became his guiding principle and in all his correspondence wherever he had raised a slogan that the people wanted a change it meant not confiscation and annexation but simply the removal of the king and to substitute with a Board where the Resident with the help of the native aristocracy should govern in which the position of the sovereign should be nominal. Having this plan in mind he ascertained the wishes of the members of the royal family and the nobility who fell to his intrigues. Sleeman never thought in terms of annexation. In one of his letters he

¹ Sleeman to Elliot dated Lucknow 7 March 1849, Journey through the Kingdom of Oude by WH Sleeman, Vol. I, p.Xlix.
says that "Were we to take advantage of the occasion to annex or confiscate Oude, or any part of it, or good name in India would inevitably suffer; and that good name is more valuable to us than a dozen of Oudes". ¹ He was even prepared to resign if Lord Dalhousie forced its annexation. "If he wishes anything done that I do not think right and honest, I resign, and leave it to be done had by others". ² Therefore Sleeman's pleading for change/got quite a different meaning than what was interpreted by the Governor General and his Council. Sleeman's pleadings that the people wanted a change, meant that the native state will remain intact and only the King will be changed, but it was interpreted everywhere that the people were crying to merge the state with the British territory. The people were always under the impression what Sleeman gave them to understand viz., that the kingdom will be independent and only the King will be changed or made ineffectiv.

To remove the King, Sleeman, however, adopted another method. He incited some members of the royal family and some leading aristocracy to present a petition to the Governor General for the removal of the King and to put one of the brothers of the

King, Mustafa Ali, on the throne which he subsequently denied. But his subsequently pleading the case of those who were involved to give them British protection in which he was successful, confirms the suspicion.

Thus the nobility and the members of the royal family were not at all prepared for the confiscation and annexation of the state. A section of the nobility and the members of the royal family were prepared to enthrone another King instead of the present one to meet their own selfish end. When the state was finally annexed, it came as a shock to them and everywhere the whole nobility and particularly the members of the royal family and court was completely stunned. The whole city of Lucknow became a city of mourners. Their whole expectations for their own selfish ends were frustrated by the act of the British Government.

So far as the landed aristocracy was concerned, they were totally opposed to any idea of British participation in the administration of Awadh. They were fully alive to the position of the landed aristocracy in the ceded districts of Awadh where

hardly a family of previous days existed and where the land was so minutely divided amongst the peasants that it had become impossible for the growth of a middle or upper class. These members of the landed aristocracy always complained about the cost and uncertainty of law in civil cases and about the periodical settlement of the land revenue in which they were left with a very meagre proportion of the annual produce resulting in the incurring of debts and consequently in the auction of their estates.

The ordinary people were bitterly against the imposition of the British rule. They bitterly complained against the atrocities committed in the British territories and the harrassment which they had to face. Sleeman confirms that "Still the people generally, or a greater part of them, would prefer to reside in Oude, under all risks to which these contests expose them, than in our own districts, under the evils the people are exposed to from the uncertainties of our law, the multiplicity and formality of our courts, the pride and negligence of those who preside over them, and the corruption and insolence of those who must be employed to prosecute or defend a cause in them, and enforce the fulfilment of a decree when passed". Certainly the

abuses mentioned by Sleeman and Outram and prevalent in Awadh were much less than those prevalent in the adjoining territories of the East India Company. The above statement of Sleeman confirms the gross negligence and corruption which was at such a high pitch that the people never wanted to be placed under the British management and which also confirms that Awadh was not being ruled so miserably and corruptly as had been painted by the officials of the East India Company. Moreover, the excessive increase of revenue at every periodical settlement which weakened the financial position of the masses in British territories was also well-known to the people of Awadh.¹ Sleeman remarks "That the lands, under the settled Government of the Honourable East India Company, are becoming more and more deteriorated by over-cropping is certain".² Naturally with these drawbacks how could they be expected to plead for the merger of the country with the dominions of the East India Company, and to settle themselves under its so-called 'benign government'?

Regarding the other sections of the people, the British officials had already campaigned against them. The native officials had been termed as robbers, ministers incompetent, other functionaries corrupt, the army and police enemy of the masses.

2. Ibid., Vol.I, p.69.
Under these circumstances there was no question of their supporting the idea of the imposition of the British rule in Awadh. Suffice it to say a few persons among the nobility and the members of the royal family wanted a change in the kingship for their own selfish ends but they never thought nor were they prepared for its outright annexation, and when ultimately the state was annexed, they were dumb founded. The other classes were vehemently opposed to any idea about the imposition of the British rule in Awadh.

Outram's report which was submitted on 15 March 1355, was divided into seven major heads: (1) The Sovereign and his Minister, (2) Revenue and Finance, (3) Judicial Courts and Police, (4) Army, (5) Roads and Public Works, (6) Statistics of Crime, (7) Oppression, cruelties etc. Dealing about the Sovereign and his Minister, Outram had depicted a very distorted picture and quoted from the writings of the previous Residents which forced Major General, then the member of Governor General's Council, to repudiate the charge by publicly declaring "that sort of language is positively untrue, as regards every one of the last five kings". The other aspects of the Nawabi administration have already been dealt with in the previous Chapter. Suffice it

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1. Foreign Political Consultations No.311-330, dated 28 December, 1355, National Archives, New Delhi.

to say that the report contained nothing substantial and was definitely overcoloured.

This overcoloured report was sent to Dalhousie at Ootacamund in May 1855\(^1\) who wrote a voluminous minute on 13 June 1855 tracing the relations of the East India Company from the days of Warren Hastings to the present day. In his Minute he had tried to build up a case of anarchy and plunder prevalent throughout Awadh and the incompetency of the rulers to check it. He suggested four courses open to tackle the problem. These four were:

(a) The King might be required to abdicate the sovereign powers he had abused and consent to the incorporation of Awadh with the territories of the Company;

(b) The King might be permitted to retain his royal title and position but might be required to vest the whole civil and military administration of his kingdom in the Honourable Company for ever;

(c) His Majesty might be urged to make over his dominions to the management of British officers for a time;

\(^1\) Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie, ed. by J.G.A. Baird, dated 2 May 1855.
(d) The King might be invited to place the management of the country in the hands of the Resident, under whose directions it should be carried on by the officers of the King acting with such British officers as might be appointed to aid them.

Dalhousie preferred the first course which fully fulfilled his principle. He was of the opinion that "It consists in taking advantage of every just opportunity to take possession of states which may lapse in the midst of territories that already belong to us - thus getting rid of those petty intervening principalities, and in extending the uniform application of our system of government". But he was towards the Awadh ruling dynasty because they had been always faithful to the East India Company. It would have been a very harsh punishment to annex the state outright and to deprive the faithful ally from all the semblance of sovereignty. The third course suggested was undesirable because it gave temporary power to the British authorities. The fourth might have created more difficulties because it would have introduced a dual government. Therefore, the best course was the second which might satisfy both the parties. The ruling dynasty would have been able to retain the sovereignty and the Company would have been able to take permanently the whole

administration of the state. Leaving aside the question of merit about the annexation of the state, the proposal recommended by Dalhousie was the best to satisfy both the parties.

The proposal recommended required the consent of the king which could have been obtained either through persuasion or coercion. This consent would have been obtained through a fresh treaty by means the East India Company should have taken the territorial possession and the king and his heirs and the members of the royal family would have been provided stipends from the revenues of the state.¹

Lord Dalhousie circulated his minute among the members of his Council. The Council at that time consisted of J. A. Dorin, Col. John Low, John Peter Grant and Barnes Peacocke. All of them wrote their separate minutes and had different approach towards the problem, but one point all of them agreed - that action had to be taken whether in the shape of outright annexation or by simply taking over the administration.

Dorin was of the view that the title of kingship should be abolished and the state should be completely merged with the East India Company. In other words, he preferred the first course.

¹. Foreign Political Consultations No.319 dated 23 December 1855, National Archives, New Delhi.
suggested by Dalhousie. He wanted de facto as well as de jure control over the state.¹

John Low, who had been Resident at Lucknow, wanted to take a liberal view due to the fact that the Awadh rulers had always been helpful and obedient. They had never been hostile towards the Company. Hence the sovereignty of the ruler must be retained and liberal provision should be made for the King and the members of the royal family. He also wanted to continue the protection given by the Company to the Wasiqadars. On this account he recommended the second proposal of Dalhousie and concurred with his views.²

Grant treated Awadh as a completely subordinate state with no sovereign rights. Hence the King of Awadh could not claim any right because it was the Company which was the paramount power. On this account he recommended the first proposal by means of which Awadh should be completely incorporated with the territorial possessions of the East India Company and the King should be completely deprived of all the semblance of sovereignty.³

¹ Foreign Political Consultations No.323 dated 28 December 1855, National Archives, New Delhi.
² Ibid., No.327.
³ Ibid., No.328.
Barnes Peacocke gave his minute as a jurist. He analysed the whole issue from a legal angle and came to the conclusion that Company was fully entitled to take action on the basis of the Treaty of 1801. He suggested that the all expenditure except the military expenditure should be met out of the Revenues of the state. The remaining surplus amount should be spent for the welfare of the state and should not be merged with the revenues of the East India Company. On this account he preferred the second course and upheld the views of Dalhousie and Low.¹

Ultimately, General Outram's report along with the minutes of Governor-General and his Councillors was forwarded to the Court of Directors for final orders.² The Court of Directors on 21 November 1855, gave their assent for the first course and rejected the recommendation of Dalhousie. He was given a free hand to bring about the necessary changes. They informed him that "we abstain from fettering his Lordship's discretion by any further instruction, and feel assured that, whichever mode of attaining the indispensable result may be resolved on, the change will be carried into effect in the manner best calculated to avert collisions of any kind, and with every proper and humane consideration to all persons whose feelings

¹. Foreign Political Consultations No.330 dated 28 December 1855, National Archives, New Delhi.
². Ibid., No.332.
have a just claim to be consulted". At last Dalhousie was able to receive the sanction and was given a free hand to implement.

Thus the impeachment of Awadh was based on the seven different heads by Outram and Dalhousie which we have already examined. A thoroughly disgusting picture was painted about the king and his courtiers and the nobility which was nothing else but character assassination. The intention behind this move was to arouse the feeling of the people against the king thereby to force him to resign or abdicate in favour of a Directorate or Regency controlled by the Resident. We have already seen that the move failed to materialise. It was also moved that his brother Mustafa Ali should replace him but Sleeman could not get the support of the masses and denied his involvement in the case.

Consequently, this move also failed. During this whole conspiracy Sleeman had given to understand to the nobility and the members of the royal family that the kingdom will not be merged with the British territories but it will remain an independent native state with the only difference that instead of the king it will be governed by a Directorate which will have all the powers of sovereignty and the king will be the nominal head. Under this impression a few sided with Sleeman for their own selfish ends

but they were definitely opposed to the annexation as subsequent proceedings had shown. Thus neither the nobility nor the members of the royal family nor the court favoured any idea of annexation and neither they were prepared for such a blow.

The other item of impeachment was the Revenue and the Financial position of Awadh and the misery of the country in general. We have already seen the heavy taxation on the masses in the ceded districts in comparison to Awadh. The gross rental of Awadh remained constant whereas in the ceded districts it was raised by more than 70 per cent. The financial condition of the masses had deteriorated to such an extent that they were unable to procure the necessities of life. The soundness of the economy can be gauged from the fact that Sleeman himself admits that "the Government has all the revenues to itself, having no public debt and paying no tribute to any one, while the country receives from the British Government alone fifty lacs, or half a million a year".¹ Over and above this income there were many important Holy places where a large number of people came every year. This was also a source of income for the local people. Regarding the out-flow of money, Awadh imported a few luxury goods such as shawls, silk, muslin, guns, watches etc.² and the rest were produced locally and were exported into Nepal and even in

British territories. A large quantity of contraband goods were exported to the adjoining territories of the East India Company especially salát and opium which had become a problem, as already observed. When the import was restricted to such a limit and money flowed in Awadh from the British territory, it naturally raised the purchasing capacity of the people. Moreover, Government revenue was spent upon the local functionaries which was bound to circulate. Therefore, the economic condition of the masses was far better than what prevailed in the British territories. In the British territories they were being crushed due to high taxation but in Awadh the case was quite the reverse. Industries were being patronized resulting in the employment of the people whereas in the British territories the local industries were being crushed by legislation and cash crops were being converted into Government monopoly. Therefore, this allegation was more applicable to the British territories than to Awadh. Regarding the allegation of high assessment and frequent changes, it might be pointed out that the realisation of revenue depended upon the crop. If the crop was a good one, the full amount of revenue was realised, but if it had been damaged by bad weather, remission was granted so that the cultivator might not be the lone sufferer, whereas in the British territories there was no question of remission, instead the demand was raised after every settlement. Therefore, the allegation is quite contrary to the facts. We have
already observed thoroughly the attitude of landed people towards the administration of the East India Company which does not require any further explanation.

The third allegation was regarding the Judicial Courts which had been pointed out as most corrupt where no justice could be found. But the position was far more worse in the British territories. It has already been shown how much corruption was prevalent at the British courts about which the natives of Awadh dreaded. Giving a testimony before Sleeman, a villager of Awadh said regarding the British Courts and laws: "Your Courts of Justice (adawlats) are the things we most dread, Sir, and where the wrong doer often escapes, and the sufferer is as often punished". Such were the prevailing conditions and they need no further elaboration. The necessary conclusion can be drawn as to which courts the people of the state respected. It has already been pointed out that corruption was prevalent at the British Courts where justice was bought and sold. Certainly, it was not the condition of Awadh. We have already seen that only serious offences such as murder, dacoity were referred to Lucknow for trial and other minor cases were adjusted and decided by the village Panchayats.

Regarding the allegation against the Awadh army, we have to keep in mind that the British Government was treaty-bound to protect the state from all internal as well as external aggressions. The army was a para-military force and not in the sense of a regular field army. The role, organization and functions of the Awadh army have already been discussed. As regards the other allegations such as crimes, oppression, cruelties etc., it is more a fiction than a fact. It is beyond imagination that if the condition of Awadh had deteriorated to such an extent where the life and property was not secure and where the Government officials and Taluqdars were constantly in the habit of destroying the villages and burning the harvest, why people remained in Awadh and did not choose to migrate to the adjoining British territories. We do not find any evidence or any example where the people of Awadh migrated into the British territories nor any desire on their part to migrate; nothing to speak of the fact that the people were not at all prepared to substitute the native rule for the British rule. Therefore, there is no escape from the fact that the charges were illusory and were made to convince the home authority regarding the annexation. The real motive could not be disclosed. No other pretext could be found to annex the state except by levelling such absurd charges to convince the home government about the justification of the policy of annexation.

1. See Chapter I.
The causes of annexation were to be found somewhat else and definitely these were not the causes as had been pointed out by Sleeman, Outram and Dalhousie. There was no public feeling in support of annexation. The people were decidedly against the imposition of the British rule because they were quite well off under the native rule as compared to the conditions obtaining in the British territories. Their economic condition was far better. Neither they were being grounded under the heavy taxation nor they were harrassed by a corrupt judiciary as was the case in the adjoining British districts. The real causes of annexation were financial bankruptcy of the East India Company, the administrative problem, strategical position and lastly, the ultimate consolidation of the British empire. These were the real causes which forced the hands of Dalhousie to embark on such a dangerous policy.