Chapter II

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AND LAND REFORMS

I. Land Management under Muslim Rule

Any discussion on the land revenue administration of the Government of Assam, since Independence, in the K.S. must have reference to the evolution of the land revenue administration from the days of Muslim rule in Sylhet, otherwise, no clear understanding of the agro-economic problems of the sd. will be possible.

"After the death of Shah Jalal, the district (Sylhet) was included in the Kingdom of Bengal and put in charge of a Nabab";¹ and "in the reign of Akbar, it passed with the rest of Bengal into the hands of Mughal emperors, and from that time, was ruled by an Amil (locally known as Nawab), subordinate to Nawab of Dacca".² In the "Asal Tomar Jama" (original complete Assessment of Rent Roll), as prepared by Todormal, Sylhet was classed as one of the 19 Sarkars of Bengal; and Todormal divided the sarkar of Sylhet into 8 Mahals, fixing the revenue of the whole of the sarkar at Rs. 167040/-.³

1. Principal Heads of History and Statistics of Dacca Division; (author not known presumably a Government Publication); Calcutta Central Press Co., Calcutta, 1868


(b) Gupta, K., Chirasthayee Bandobasta Purba Srihatter Bhumi o Rajaswa Babasta; Srihatta Sahithya Parishad; Sylhet, 1966, p. 26
In 1722, Murshid Kuli Khan (1705-1727) introduced a new revenue policy known as "Jama Kamale Tomar" (Revised Revenue Details) and Sylhet was included within 13 Chaklas, to which the whole of Bengal was divided; six years after this revenue policy was made a permanent feature of the Muslim land revenue administration; during the rule of Nawab Sujauddin, who divided Bengal into 25 Zamindaries, Sylhet was classed as one such Zamindari, having 36 parganas, with a revenue of Rs 70,016/-, as so fixed in 1720 A.D.¹

During the rule of the Nawabs of Bengal, Sylhet was administered like other Sarkars or Chaklas under the Muslim rule; and the Amils were responsible for collection to the Nawabs of Dacca while for administrative matters they were responsible to the Nawabs of Murshidabad.² The Chief Revenue Officer of Sylhet was the Dewan who was appointed direct from Delhi; and the Dewan was assisted by the Canungoes - the "Mazumdar Canungoes" helped in the revenue collection work and the "Dasthidar Canungoes" in survey works; besides the Canungoes the other officials of inferior rank in the Dewani Serasta were:

Mustafī, or Serestadhar, Amin, Peskar, Munshi, Muhuri, Najir, Naib Najir, Kdhanjshi and Poddhar; the Kdhanjshi was in charge

   (b) Bandopadhyya, K., Banglar Itihas, Calcutta, 1901, Part IV, p. 101

of the Tahsil, and the Poddhar examined coins. In the beginning of the British rule the posts of Dewan and Canungoes were abolished.

During the reign of Akbar one fourth of the produce was realised as revenue; and, in Bengal, those who were entrusted with revenue collection, were given the title of "Chaudhury"; at the time of later rulers the title was not kept confined to revenue collectors only; it also came to be conferred on the landholders, and the title then became hereditary.

Before Murshid Kuli Khan, who became Nawab of Bengal in 1705, _ijaradars_ were landlords; but Murshid Kuli Khan abolished the _ijara_ system, and introduced _Zamindari system_ instead; and the Zamindars were engaged in the task of revenue collection; but the change worsened the position of landlords, for, Murshid Kuli Khan and Md. Reja Khan, were merciless in revenue collection, and the defaulting _Chaudhuris_ were summoned to Murshidabad or Dacca and subjected to inhuman tortures.

But, then, generally speaking, during the Muslim rule these _Chaudhuris_ along with Rais (owner of 500 horsemen) and Rai ____________________

1. (a) Gupta, K., Chirasthayee Bandabosta - Purba Srihatter Bhumi 0 Rajaswa Babyastha, Srihatta Sahithya Parishad, Sylhet, 1966, p. 30
   (b) Chaudhury, A.C., Srihatter Itibritta, Vol. I & II, Sylhet, 1317 B.S., Vol. II, Part II, Chap. 4, p. 87
2. Chaudhury, A.C., _ibid._, pp. 5-6, 30
3. _ibid._, p. 88
4. _ibid._, pp. 87-88
Bahadurs (owner of 2,000 horsemen) were considered as the stable element in the administration.

The district, however, yielded little revenue to the Government during the Muslim rule; and there was little improvement in revenue collection in the early period of British rule; further the crowari currency embarassed the early Residents.¹

II. Land Revenue Administration under British Rule

After the annexation of Sylhet, the British Government wanted to introduce Dassana Bandabasta; and the revenue survey, for the purpose, was conducted by Mr. Willis in 1790. In the early part of the British rule "the post of Canungoes were abolished for a time and wahdadars appointed over Chaudhuris. Canungoes were again employed, for a short time, previous to decennial settlement."² But Mr. Willis "did not, as in most other districts of Bengal, enter into engagements with Chaudhuris or Land Revenue Collectors, but the settlement was as a rule made direct with actual cultivators of the soil."³

³ Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteers, Vol. II (Sylhet), Calcutta, 1905, p. 214
Mr. Willis settled 26393 nos. of mahals, and the total revenue was fixed at Rs. 3,16,911/-; and the Dassana Bandabosta was made permanent in March 22, 1973; in Sylhet, generally speaking the Chaudhuris were the principal landholders; and landholders paying a revenue of Rs 500/- were regarded as Zamindars, those paying revenue below Rs 500/- and above Rs 50/- were considered Mirashdars, and those paying revenue less than Rs 50/- were considered as Talukdars; the number of Zamindars during the first century of British rule was few, for, the number of Zamindars having an income of Rs 5000/- was not more than 15; between 1859 and 1865 the financial conditions of Zamindars and Mirashdars deteriorated, and as many as 1004 mahals were auctioned for non-payment of revenue.¹

Barring permanently settled estates, there were considerable areas of waste lands, and these were subsequently brought under cultivation, and surveyed and settled on various occasions.² “In 1802, the Collector under orders of the Board of Revenue, directed the Patwaries to furnish statements of lands not included in any estate settled at decennial settlement. The patwaries having delivered their accounts, advertisements or ilams were issued, inviting claimants or objections to come forward. Hence, all such lands came to be

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known as "ilam lands."\(^1\) In 1804 major portion of these lands were settled in perpetuity as "Halabadi"; and, besides Dassana Bandabosta, the other types of permanent settlement given in subsequent years are described below:\(^2\)

1. Halabadi Mumadi: Lands given in settlement after Dassana Bandabosta from 1807 to 1812 and these Taluks were known as Halabadi Mumadhi; there were 500 such Taluks with a revenue of Rs 2808/-.

2. Kash Halabadi: These estates were settled as Halabadi Mumadi, but subsequently auctioned for non-payment of revenue; these were purchased by the Government, and later on sold out to others, as these taluks became kash due to Government's purchasing the same these became known as Kash Halabadi; there were 15 such mahals with revenue of Rs 1328/-.

3. Kash Mumadi: These were really Dassana mahals, but auctioned for non-payment of revenue, Government purchased them, but, later on, sold out to others; the number of such mahals was 464 with revenue of Rs. 6040/-.

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4. **Bajafti Mumadi:** These were another kind of Chirasthayee mahals, which were given in settlement, after the Government established claim to them as per regulation 2 of 1819; there were 50994 such mahals with a revenue of Rs 367600/- and these mahals were divided into various categories.

The Halabadi survey began in 1820, but discontinued after a brief period of progress; it was Mr. Thacker who completed the survey in between 1822 and 1829. The Takbast survey was completed in between 1859-1866; the survey left demarcation marks on the ground specifying one village from another, and one estate from another; and, hence, arose the name of Thakbast survey.

Besides permanently settled areas, there were also some areas which had been temporarily settled; and there are different categories of temporarily settled areas which are locally known, as described below:

1. **Ilam:** These are by far the most extensive class.

2. **Nankar Patwarigi:** The lands held by Pargana patwaries as nanker in lieu of salary, were brought

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3. *ibid.*, pp. CVI-VII
under assessment in 1838 after the abolition of patwaries.

3. Charbharat: The alluvial accretions which were subject to assessment of revenue from time to time were temporarily settled.

4. Bilbharat: The permanent settlement excluded the silted up beds of bils; and these were subsequently settled temporarily.

5. Izad: The surplus lands which were not included in permanent settlement, and which were not proclaimed as Ilam lands, were temporarily settled.

6. Revenue free land, when found to be held on invalid titles, were reassessed, and thus settled temporarily.

7. Kash: When the permanently settled estates were purchased by the Government for arrears of revenue, these were settled subsequently temporarily directly with cultivators.

III. Settlement of Pratapgar

It is interesting to note that barring Jayantiya, the Pratapgar pargana had the largest area of Ilam lands; for this there was a demand for establishment of a separate Tahsil at Pratapgarh as early as 1878; the revenue from Ilam lands at Pratapgar rose from Rs 3600/- to Rs 11800/-; and a separate Tahsil was
established in 1909. The settlement history of Pratapgar reveals some interesting features. Some of the "Chaudhuris" of Maina voluntarily surrendered settlement in some Dassana mahals, probably due to family feuds; and such mahals were treated as Kash by the Government; but these Chaudhuris again obtained these surrendered lands as Myadi Bandobasta; and these gave rise to a new class Taluk known as Rasid Baban.

There are another kind of Taluk known as Baban. As a result of the abundance of forest lands in Pratapgar, it was difficult to demarcate Taluks; there were some Mauzas with 80 such Taluks; and these gave rise to 80 Baban Taluks in Pratapgar; and these Baban Taluks and Rasid Baban Taluks are peculiar features in the land settlement of the K.S.; and these have no parallel, neither in Bengal nor in Assam.

There were in reality 86 Chirasthayee Taluks in Pratapgarh; six Taluks having numbers 81-86 were without any connection; and in the remaining Taluks numbering from 1-80, the land of one Taluk was mixed up with another. At the time of permanent settlement, about three-fourths of the lands in Pratapgar were covered with forests, and for this these could not be surveyed. The Thak survey also failed to solve the problem; as a result,

2. ibid., Vol. II, Part Chap. 7, p. 229
AS the proprietors claimed title to these forest lands, these became Ejmali Taluks; even the new Ilam survey conducted by Mr. Backett in 1877 could carve out the areas of the estates; and, result Ilam lands and Dassana lands got mixed up; the Dassana mahals, ranging from Taluk No. 1 to 80, remained the permanent anomaly in the settlement of Pratapgar pargana; and these Ejmali Taluks bearing Nos. 1 to 80 came to be known as Baban Taluks and the Ilam portions came to be referred to as Rasid Babans.  

Referring to the peculiarities of land tenure system in Sylhet, W.W. Hunter, in "A Statistical Account of Assam" remarked, "The Land system of Sylhet differed in several important respects from that of generally prevalent throughout Bengal, nor does it bear any resemblance to the Mauzadari system of Assam proper. This is due to the circumstance that the District was in a very backward condition at the time of permanent settlement (1793); and the anomalies unavoidably

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2. (a) ibid., pp. CXI-XII
left at that date have never since been systematically redressed, but have been allowed to give birth to the present state of confusion. The chief peculiarities are: (1) the large proportion of area that is only temporarily settled; (2) the excessive extent to which the sub-division of estates has been carried out; (3) the deficiency concerning the assessment of ilam lands; (4) the small number of large Zamindars. Only about one third of the area of the District was included in permanent settlement, the remaining two-thirds being left unsettled as hills, jungles, bils etc. and returned as unoccupied.¹

IV. Settlement for Tea Cultivation

During the last part of the nineteenth century, tea cultivation was greatly encouraged by the British Government, and land was settled for tea at very favourable terms. Stopping the system of direct sale of land, the system of thirty years leases were introduced in 1876; under which the lease was sold at an upset price of Re 1/- per acre; and the leased areas were liable after a revenue free term, to assessment at progressive rates rising the last period of lease to Re 1/- per acre.² But the

practice of granting land under the system discontinued long ago, obviously due to non-availability of such lands; and the past leases were reassessed at renewed rates. In the post-Independence period, the area under tea included the following tenures of settlement:

Table 2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Under new lease rules of 1886 in temporarily settled areas</td>
<td>1,07,152 bighas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Under pattas granted for special cultivation</td>
<td>60,331  &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Under direct control of landlords or leases in permanently settled areas</td>
<td>7000  &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V. System of Land Measurement

The Dasthidari Nal has been used in land measurement since the days of Muslim rule; it was equivalent to \( \frac{61}{4} \) Dasth (where 1 Dasth = \( 21\frac{5}{6} \)"); and this was quite distinct from the system of land measurement prevalent in other parts of Bengal; and that Nal measurement was based on the following calculation

1. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, p. 2320
in Kedar formula.¹

Table 2.2

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\frac{6}{1_2}$ Dastha</td>
<td>1 Nal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nals</td>
<td>1 Kahan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bargakahan</td>
<td>1 Jasthi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Jasthi</td>
<td>1 Poa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Poa</td>
<td>1 Kedar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Kedar</td>
<td>Hal (6315 Square Cubits, where 1 Cubit = 18&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the passage of time the Nal also underwent changes in size; and Nals of varying sizes are reported to have been used in the past; and in Halabadi survey the Nal of 9 cubits was used. It has been found that the Zamindars reduced the size of the Nal to their advantage and, in the two big Zamindari estates of Karimganj, viz., the Dewan Manik Chand Estate and Kdhanjshi Estate, before the acquisition of Zamindaris, the Nal of 7 cubits was used; at it is still prevalent in these areas. The Nal of 7 cubits reduces the measure of Kedar to 5488 sq. cubits.²

   (b) Gupta, K., Chirasthayee Bandobasta-Purba Srihatter Bhumi O Rajaswa Babyasta, Srihatta Sahithya Parishad, Sylhet, 1966, pp. 26, 71

2. Gupta, K., ibid., p. 26
It has also been found that in some Taluks such as 37 Hals and 42 Hals at Ratabari, which has been possessed as Chirapattani right from the Zamindars of Maimansingha, the Nal of $7\frac{1}{4}$ cubits was previously used, but now they are using Nal of $7\frac{1}{2}$ cubits.

But in Ilam lands, i.e., in the temporarily settled areas the land measurement in Bigha calculation is in vogue.

VI. Zamindars of Karimganj

When Sylhet was annexed by the Britishers, feudalism introduced by the Muslim rulers had already struck a deep root in the K.S.; and there were many renowned feudal houses before Dassana Bandabosta; amongst which mention may be made of the Zamindars of Jaldup, the Chaudhuris of Agiaram, the Pals, Dases and Dattas of Panchakhanda, the Adityas of Choflekha, the Purkayasthas of Rafiqnagar and Egarosati in Dewadi, the Senapathis and the renowned Purkayasthya family (the family of Hukmat Rai who got the Nawabship of Sylhet) of Barlekha, the Muslim Chaudhuris of Pratapgar (the descendents of Raja Malik Pratap), the Hindu Chaudhuris of Jafargar, the Chaudhuris of Maina, the Muslim Chaudhuris of Dewadi and Pancha Khanda Kala and Sahabajpur, the Muslim Jaigirdar family of Rajakpur and the Dattas of Dattagram, besides others.¹

As Passana Bandobasta was conducted with the actual occupiers of the soil and not with Chaudhuris, the Chaudhuris and other feudal lords of the K.S. did not get the benefit of privileged settlement as in other places of Bengal; and, as such, they could not grow into powerful Zamindars during the British rule; and it was precisely for this reason that there were few Zamindaris worth the name owned by the local landlords after Partition; and these were: the Durga Prasad Estate and the Golak Chand Kayastagram (these two estates were acquired by the Court of Wards but subsequently released); the Krishna Gobinda Estate of Nilambazar; the Muslim Chaudhury Estate of Mahakal; and the Muslim Chaudhury Estate of Patherkandi. Of course, there were three big Zamindari estates in the K.S., and these belonged to the Zamindars outside the K.S.; and these were Dewan Manik Chand Estate (hereinafter D.M.E.), Kdhanjshi Estate (hereinafter K.E.) and Maharaja Kirit Bikram Kishore Manikhya Estate (hereinafter M.K.B.K.M.B.E.). Before the British annexation, the Maharaja of Tripura had vast areas in Pratapgarh under his suzerainty, which came to be ruled over by Nawab Radharam under his due authority; but, after the capture of Nawab Radharam, who revolted against the British, the territory of the Maharaja, under the rule of Nawab Radharam, was also annexed by the British; however, by

2. Note on the Court of Wards Branch, File No. II-51 of 1963-64; D.C.'s Record Room, Silchar
4. Allen, B.C., op.cit., Chap. II, p. 41
a strange chance he became one of the joint proprietors of the Taluks numbering 1-80 (known as Baban Taluks) in Pratapgarh; and he also came to possess the Taluk No. 14136–85, a Dassana Taluk in the name of Md. Jalil, when the respondent (Atal Sing and others), whom he financed and supported in Privy Council case, against the Appellant Kumar Gopika Raman Roy, won the suit;\textsuperscript{1} further he purchased \(-\frac{1}{4}\)-Anna share of the Taluk No. 16316/6 in the name of Badar Uddin; after the 2nd Partition suit the estate was separated as Maharaja Kirit Bikram Kishore Taluk; he had also share in Taluk No. 14132/81 relating to Nawab Radharam and his son Jaymongal. The Taluks numbering from 1-80, i.e., the Baban Taluks in which the Maharaja had a share is a unique example of joint proprietorship in K.S.

The Maharaja set up his own Revenue Collection office at Patherkandi; and only \(-\frac{8}{8}\)-Anna revenue per Bigha was realised,\textsuperscript{2} perhaps the lowest in the Dassana mahals; and before acquisition, he paid\textsuperscript{3} the revenue and local rate to the Government.

When the Tripura Rajya was merged with the Indian Union, following the Tripura Merger Agreement between Maharani Regent Tripura State and Adviser to Government of India, Ministry of

\begin{itemize}
\item 1. A.I.R. 1929, Privy Council 99 (From Calcutta : A.I.R. 1926, Calcutta, 193, 2nd January 1929
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
\item 2. Revenue Collection Records relating to M.K.B. K.M.B. Estate at Patherkandi, now lying with Shri S. Das, Ex Nayeb, R.K. Nagar, Cachar, Assam.
\end{itemize}
States in 1949 the Maharani Rajmata was allowed to retain the estates of Pratapgar and Jafarghar as private property.¹

The owners of the D.M.N.E. and K.E. came to acquire Zamindaries in the K.S. by purchasing auctioned Taluks. The Dassana mahals were auctioned for arrears of land revenue not only of Mahals but also of the fragmented portions of the Mahals² as there was no system of recording of fragmentation of the Dassana Mahals by changing the original Patta; and, also, for arrears of Local Rate, after Sylhet's merger with Assam. It may be mentioned here that the intelligentia of Sylhet appealed to the Governor General Lord North Brook representing against the transfer of Sylhet to Assam in 1874; but the Governor General could not stop the transfer of the District as it had already been passed under the Act, and he promised that "there will certainly be no change whatever in the system of the law and judicial procedure under which the inhabitants of Sylhet have hitherto lived, nor in principles which apply throughout Bengal to the settlement and collection of land revenue."³ But the British Government failed to keep their promise; the Sec.1 of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation of 1886 was enforced in Sylhet and the former distinction between Land Revenue and

¹. Letter No. 466/21-R/P.P., Secy, Finance Deptt., Government of Tripura, April 15, 1950
Local Rate in Sylhet was abolished, and the Taluks began to be auctioned for arrears in Local Rate also; this affected badly the landholders of Sylhet.¹

As a result of the frequent auctioning of the Taluks for reasons mentioned above, the wealthy persons and rich landlords outside the K.S. came to possess the auctioned Taluks in the sd. through purchase; and the most prominent such purchasers of such Dassana Taluks were proprietors of D.M.E. and K.E. of Sylhet and the proprietors of Lala Gour Hari Estate of Maimensinga; and of the three estates the biggest was the D.M.W.E., and a brief resume of this renowned Estate of the Sylhet district is given below for a clear understanding the Zamindari system that was prevalent in K.S., before the acquisition of the Zamindaries.

VII. Dewan Manikchand Wards Estate²

Dewan Manik Chand was the founder of the Estate known as Dewan Manik Chand Estate, which in course of time acquired the distinction of becoming one of the oldest and biggest Zamindari Estate in the Sylhet district. After the Partition of India, it was, however, found that 95% of the Zamindari

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². A Short History of Dewan Manik Chand Wards Estate, File No. 11-51 of 1963-64 prepared by Shri A. Das, A.C.S., Manager, Court of Wards Estate, D.C.'s Record Room, Silchar
portion of the Estate fell in the K.S. of Cachar. The genealogy of the proprietors of D.M.E. is given below to show the line of successors up to the present day:

Table 2.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dewan Manik Chand Roy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murari Chand Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braja Sundari Chaudhury (Wife of Gour Chandra Mazumdar)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raja Girish Chandra Roy (adopted son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumar Gopika Raman Roy</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishna Chandra Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rohini Bala Roy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radhamoni Roy (Wife of Gour Kishore Datta Chaudhury)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The share of Krishna Chand Roy was long disposed of, and acquired by heirs of Murari Chand Roy; and at the time of Partition Gourish Chandra Roy appeared to be the sole proprietor of the Zamindari Estate.
Raja Girish Chandra Roy (the title of Raja conferred on him in 1898) was a great philanthropist, and his bounties and his generosities are well known throughout the district. He was the pioneer in the field of modern education in Sylhet and he founded such institutions as Murari Chand College, Raja Girish Chandra H.E. School and other educational institutions in Sylhet. He also set up some Tea Gardens of which Bidyanagar and Sonaicherra were under the Wards Estate. But his son Gopika Raman Roy was a spendthrift, and by his extravagant and lavish expenditure incurred debts without numbers; he was almost over head and ears in debt and the Estate was going to sold under a decree obtained by the Zamindars of Gouripur Estate of Waymensing. Thereupon, there had been some public agitation in the district in favour of the Estate as the people of the S.D. gratefully remembered the generosity of the Late Raja; and pressure was created upon the Government of Assam to take over the Estate under the management of the Court of Wards. Then, on receipt of petition of Late Gopika Raman Roy, the Court of Wards took over the management of the highly encumbered estate in 1938, by its order No. 501/3719/R, dated 31.10.38.

After much negotiation with the Gouripore Estate, the authorities of D.M.W.E. waved off the major debts by floating a debenture loan of Rs. $12\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs in 1943; since then the

Estate was being managed by the Court of Wards, Assam, till it was finally acquired by the Government under the A.S.A.Z.A., 51.

At the time of partition, i.e., before acquisition, the D.M.E. comprised of two separate Estates - (1) D.M.E. - owned by Gopika Raman Roy (hereinafter G.R.E.), and (2) D.M.E. - owned by Mrs. S.B. Roy (hereinafter S.B.R.E.). Regarding the creation of the latter Estate it has been gathered that Mrs. Suruchi Bala Roy Chaudhury purchased the property called "Suruchi Bala Roy Chaudhury Estate" from Late Kumar Gopika Raman Roy for good consideration which she paid from her own funds. Late Kumar Gopika Raman Roy used to take loans from Late Mrs. Suruchi Bala Roy Chaudhury; and Kumar, on failure to repay the loan, sold the properties to her in consideration of the aforesaid loans. The S.B.R.E. comprised of a very small but most litigious parts of the undivided D.M.E. The management of the first Estate was taken over in 1938 and the second Estate, in 1939.

Late Mrs. Suruchi Bala bequeathed the properties by a will to their family deity Shri Shri Modan Mohan Jiew. Sanaicherra T.E. fell within this Estate; the other lands of the Estate fell within Muktanagar Dihi and Mukarampore Dihi of the Estate. The annual rental demand of the Estate was Rs. 7,753/- before acquisition as against Rs. 3,801/- at the date of assumption; and the total collection of the Estate went up to Rs. 6,205/-, from Rs. 1,361/-, in the first year of assumption; the rental demand of the proportion of property in Pakistan was to the extent of Rs. 415/- only.
The G.R.E. comprised of the overwhelming portion of the undivided E.M.E.; the area of the Estate was about 30,150 acres, excluding fisheries and forests of which no survey was ever made; about 26,491 acres appeared to be under tenants; the Government survey, before acquisition, following settlement operation, fixed up approximately 8,923 acres as Kash lands, including fisheries, forests, roads, etc. This Estate also comprised of the Bidyanagar T.E. with a total grant of 5,000 acres, of which 900 acres were under tea; the parent Estate gets Rs. 5000/- annually as rent of Bidyanagar T.E.; there was also a Zamindari portion in Bidyanagar and Sonaicherra T.E. with annual current demand of Rs. 9,689/- and Rs. 242/- respectively. While Bidyanagar and Sonaicherra T.E.s were managed directly by the D.C., the Zamindari portions were managed by the Estate Manager.

The Estate granted lease of lands to the following Tea gardens, for which annual rent was realised:

(1) Maniknagar T.E.
(2) Kalinagar T.E.
(3) Rajarampore T.E.

The Estate had a big forest with an approximate area of 76 sq. miles, out of which a good income was derived by way of royalties, permit fees etc. As there was no scheme for plantation in the forest the income from the forest land dwindled over the years. The Estate had a large number of fisheries including Son Bil which yielded a good revenue to
the Estate. However, out of the total income of Rs. 2,63,432/-, the rental collection from the tenants amounted to Rs. 1,67,650/-. The survey of the settled areas was made last in 1921-22; and though maps were copied and corrected from time to time no detailed survey of the Estate was ever made for lack of funds; the current demand before the acquisition of the Estate was 1,99,019; both the Estates had also landed properties in the S.D. in E.P. - the G.R.E. had the current demand of Rs. 4,556/- and the S.B.R.E. had the current demand of Rs. 415/-. When the Estate excluding the Debottar was acquired by the E.P. Government, the Estates in E.P. lost all income.

As alluded to earlier, the Estate was saved from the clutches of the creditors by floating debenture loans of Rs. 12½ lakhs in 1943; the loan was issued in Bonds of Rs. 1000 each for 20 years (1943 to 1963), and bore an interest at 4% per annum; the date of redemption of the bonds was the 21st Oct 1963, after which no interest was allowed. The loan was founded on the rent, royalty, assets and properties of the D.N.W.E. and was guaranteed to the extent of payment of the principal and punctual payment of interest by the Government of Assam; the official trustees of the Government of Assam also acted as trustees of debenture holders. As stipulated by Shri R. V. Purkayasthya, the Government agent, in the Prospectus in connection with the loan showed that there would be an annual surplus of Rs. 93,000/- in the income of the Estate till 1948; and after assumption of management the Bidyanagar T.E. in 1949 the annual surpluses will increase to Rs. 2,30,000/- from
the profits of the Estate. The Government agent deliberately
gave a too rosy picture in the prospectus and the estimates
were never materialised rather remained illusory. Actual
financial position of the Estate since 1938 was very
precarious; and after payment of annual interest on debentures
amounting to Rs. 50,000/-, and Central and Agricultural Income
Tax, rents to superior landlords, establishment charge, etc.,
there was hardly any surplus left. As a matter of fact,
during the period of stress and strain, such as partition of
S.D., communal riot and natural calamities like floods, the
rental collection of the Estate suffered immensely; and during
the years 1948-49 the Estate had to take loans from the
Government amounting to Rs. 1,00,000/- for its management.
Fortunately, the whole of the loan had been repaid and the
Estate did not have any other occasion to go to the Government
for a loan since 1949. A Sinking Fund was created after that
date, to which all the Annual Surpluses were transferred; the
total sum of investment in Sinking Fund amounted to Rs. 127,000/-
with a provision for investment of another sum of rupees forty
eight thousand.

The last heir of the Estate Kumar Gourish Chandra Roy lived
in his Rajbari in Sylhet with all his pride and prejudices
till the last days of his life.

The Estate's rental demand increased from Rs. 1,00,663/- in
1938 to Rs. 1,09,010 in 1965; however, the management costs
had also increased proportionately yet the Estate was being
managed without taking any loan. Excepting Debottar loans, all other loans had been liquidated. The relation between landlord and tenants was very satisfactory and all the refractory tenants were brought under control.

A Community Development Block was started on the Estate Lands at Ramkrishnanagar in 1953; communication within the Estate was also considerably improved with the construction of P.W.D. roads and E & D. Bunds, connecting the inaccessible areas of the Estate with the important outlaying trade centres and also with Headquarter Town.

One of the most important functions of the Estate Manager was to collect rent from the tenants, for which Cutchuaries or Tashil Centres were established at the different convenient places by the proprietors of the Estate during their management. A Cutchuary with its specified jurisdiction was known as Dihi. D.M.E. - G.R.E. had five such Dihis, viz., Muktarampore, Maniknagar, Muraripore, Rajarampore and Suruchiganj. The first four Dihis were named after the forefathers of Late Gopi Raman Roy and the fifth after the name of the younger wife of Mrs Suruchoi Bala Roy. S.B.U.E. fell within Muktarampore Dihi and Maniknagar Dihi. The tenants of the Estate were by and large agriculturists; and their number was roughly 10,000 in 1961-62.

The D.M.W.E. was acquired by the Government of Assam under the Assam State Acquisision of Zamindaar Act 1951 in 1965-66.
At the time of Partition, most of the land in K.S. was permanently settled. "Permanently settled estates were found in the districts of Sylhet and Goalpara. After a part of Sylhet went over to Pakistan, the remaining area of Karimganj Sub-Division was attached to Cachar district. The word Sylhet in the Regulation was, therefore, substituted by the word Cachar in accordance with the Adaptation Laws (Third amendment) Order, 1951."1 The district of Sylhet was a part of Dacca Division of the Province of Bengal prior to the creation of Chief Commissionership of Assam, and, for this, it came under the operation of Permanent Settlement as the other districts of Bengal was under the same land revenue administration, but "the two features distinguished the settlement, as there effected, from that carried out in most of the districts of Bengal. In the first place, nearly the whole was settled like the district of Chittagong, after survey, so that all the lands which do not come under the decennial settlement of Bengal or have not since been settled in perpetuity or temporarily or for a term of years, were not held revenue free under valid titles; and the Government claimed title to them."

1. Saikia, K.N., The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation 1866, New Book Stall, Gauhati, Assam, p. 44
2. Saikia, K.N., ibid., pp. 44-45
As such, the land revenue administration of the K.S. in the pre-partition days were different from other parts of Assam. To quote Baden-Powell, "The revenue management of Sylhet, though generally by regulation of 1886 has some peculiar features maintained by the existing rules. There are Tahsils in Sylhet ... ... In the Assam Valley the land is often grouped into mauzaas under a mauzadar, directly under the district or sub-divisional officer; the tahsil system has only been partially introduced. In Sylhet, one system of management prevails in headquarters and sub-division tahsils, and another in the Jaintiya tahsils and in the Pratapgarh tahsil."¹

The land tenure system that was prevalent in the K.S. before Partition was continued after the attainment of Independence; and the Sylhet Tenancy Act of 1936 remained in force in the P.S. areas till the implementation of the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindari Act 1951 (hereinafter A.S.A.Z.A.). The land in the K.S. for revenue purposes was classified into the following categories:²

1. Permanently Settled Areas known as Dassana.
2. Temporarily Settled Areas or Ilam areas.
3. Reserved Forest Areas.

² The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, Notification No. RSR 30/77/30, p. 2320
4. Unsurveyed Areas between Surveyed Areas and Bangladesh Border and Forest Reserves.

The area under P.S. in the K.S. comes nearly to 2,07,633.55 acres with 4,739 nos. of estates; it is however estimated that about 1000 acres of land are unsurveyed in Bangladesh Border and Forest Reserves, while the rest is covered by temporarily settled areas known as Ilam areas. The distribution of the P.S. areas circle-wise is given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Circle</th>
<th>P.S. Area in acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Karimganj Circle</td>
<td>1,09,253.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ramkrishnanagar Circle</td>
<td>65,052.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Patherkandi Circle</td>
<td>33,328.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proprietors of the larger P.S. estates call themselves Zamindars or Talukdars who sublet their lands in pattani or under leases fixing the rent in perpetuity or cultivators whose rights in land are governed by Rent law in force in Sylhet, i.e., The Sylhet Tenancy Act 1936. Barring the

1. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978; Notification No. RSR 30/77/30, pp. 2320, 2323
2. ibid., p. 2320
CIRCLE WISE DISTRIBUTION OF PERMANENTLY SETTLED AREAS IN K.S.

Scale of small units = 2,000 acres
lands settled for tea the large ilam or temporarily settled areas were also held by middlemen who sublet to the tillers or others inferior in their rank; and the owners of small estates, both permanently and temporarily settled areas call themselves asMirashdars, as in Cachar, a term which means that they consider their property in these holdings heritable and transferable. "They cultivate for the most part of their lands and may be described as "peasant proprietors." The same term applies to the large majority of settlement holders in the five upper districts of Brahmanutra Valley and Cachar, the only distinction in the K.S. being that some of these peasant proprietors are proprietors as defined in the Land Revenue Regulation, i.e., have had the revenue on their lands fixed in perpetuity while others are landholders only, i.e., have had their revenue fixed for a term of years, subject to revision when settlement requires.

Almost all the permanently settled estates in the K.S. were small estates, as is evident from the particulars of estates published in the Assam Gazette vide Notification No. RRZ 211/59/F/22 Dt. 24.3.60, No. RRZ 14/62/17 Dt. 4.4.62, No. RRZ 63/63/29 Dt. 15.3.63, No. RRZ 10/64/21 Dt. 10.3.64, No. RRZ 18/64/13 Dt. 6.4.65, No. RRZ 9/66/22 Dt. 3.3.66 following acquisition of Zamindaries under the A.S.Z.A.A. 1951. The

2. ibid.
number of small estates was large in Tarimganj mainly due to the fact that here, as hinted earlier, the settlement was effected with riyats and middle men and not with Chaudhuris, and, secondly, because, the estates were sub-divided and fragmented in accordance with the prevailing laws of inheritance; and there being no law to prevent such fragmentation, the number and smallness of such estates increased. Besides Sub-division, there was also another peculiar practice of joint ownership of estates, and both these contradictory process of ownership of land produced evil effects on the agro-economic conditions in the K.S. The small estate holders earned a low income and consequently could save little, for which, there was little scope for capital formation or investment in trade and industry. The small surpluses being useless from that point of view was spent lavishly on luxurious life. The small landholders were also very particular in collection of revenue; and no attention was paid for agricultural development, as land was treated as a source of revenue, and not of production. There was also a strong tendency to sub-divide the holdings because, the smaller was the holding, the greater was the chance of rack-renting and easier was the collection; the sub-agents found it easier to extort from the tenants. ¹ Similar agro-economic conditions prevailed in Orissa, referring to which Dr. K. C. Jena, K.C., *Socio-Economic Conditions of Orissa during the 19th Century*, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1978, p. 80.

Jena in his book "Socio-Economic Conditions of Orissa during the 19th Century" has remarked, "these innumerable proprietors and joint holders engrossed themselves in rent collection and owned no obligation to the common cultivators. Without obligation to estate there could be hardly any chance of agricultural progress", and particularly for the same reason there was no agricultural progress in the K.S. during the British rule.

As mentioned earlier, there were a few big Zamindari estates in the K.S., viz., D.M.E., K.E. and M.K.B.K.M.B.E.; and these were the big permanently settled estates into which the evils of Zamindari system ultimately crept. The D.M.E. and K.E. were the two biggest estates in K.S., and these two were, to all intents and purposes, feudal estates for lands were given in settlement to the favourites of Zamindars, who in turn settled them with their favourites; and so on, till the last man in the soil is reached. Kumar Bhabur (so he was popularly known), son of Girish Raja, lived a life of luxury and lavishness and squandered the property.

The proprietors of big estates were men outside the sd.; they had all the characteristics of absentee landlords; they had no intention of agricultural development or well being of the tenants; and their only aim was revenue collection. The D.M.E.

1. Jena, Dr. K.C., Socio-Economic Conditions of Orissa during the 19th Century, Sundeep Prakashan, Delhi, 1978, p. 60
and K.B. had Cutchaaries set up at various places in the estate under the charge of Naibs; and these Naibs and Gomostas collected revenue from the tenants. Even petty Zamindars and big Mirasbdars also appointed Naibs and Gomostas for revenue collection; and these Naibs and Gomostas were, as a class, oppressing sets of people, who as agents of Zamindars and landholders exercised tremendous authority over the people.

Referring to evils of Zamindari system under permanent settlement B.H. Baden-Powell had remarked, "The Zaminder was more oppressive than an English landlord, therefore, measures of protection were required for tenantry; that seemed the chief, if not the only thus." Continuing he said, "Grievous as the failure of Permanent Settlement has been, its failure is not due to the fact the Zaminders were confirmed or that, in unavoidable necessity of defining and securing their position in English legal documents they were called and made landlords. The evil consisted in this, that their right was not limited with regard to all the older raiyats, leaving new comers to be in principle (with such detailed conditions as might be advisable) contact tenants. The other evil - that of assuming to a legislature the power of binding all future law givers, and permanently exempting a certain class of proprietors from their due share of the State burdens at the expense of the other people and provinces - that is a matter quite unconnected with the grant of proprietary rights or the protection of tenants." ¹

Although the P.S. in the T.S. was somewhat different from what was prevalent in Bengal as the settlement was effected with raiyats and middlemen, yet in the few big estates that the sd. had the Zamindari system with all its attendant evils prevailed as the lands were lent out at high rent to the tenants; and the Sub-Division was also not free from the other evils of Zamindari system as discussed earlier. In fact, Zamindari villages were divided into, "two agricultural classes - the absentee owners and the non-owner cultivators. The absentee owners exploited the actual tillers. Absence of state interference of any type gave a free hand to the exploiting classes to indulge in rack-renting, evictions, begar and many other social evils. The landlords symbolised oppression and tyranny." 1 To these were added other evils of permanent settlement which omitted to define the limit of pargana rates and thus made the ryots liable to enhancement of revenue, and neglected the rights of peasants of hereditability and transferability of land. 2 The Government was deprived of the share of increased revenue income of the landlords arising out of the increased value of land.

So, it was recommended by Manilal D. Nanavati, one of the members of the British and Indian experts of the Bengal Famine Enquiry Commission (1945) that no scheme of agricultural


planning for the post-war period could achieve material results if it overlooks the adverse affects of a defective land tenure system on the productivity of land; and he remarked, "the Zamindari institution is too obsolete to fit into any government organisation. Any attempt to enforce such a measure would not only fail to benefit the people but will meet with friction and disharmony at every step and be a perpetual embarrassment to Government." Therefore, the Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee 1949, after attainment of Independence, on careful consideration of pros and cons of the Zamindari system, recommended that in the agrarian economy of India there was no place of intermediaries and the land must belong to the tiller; and, in pursuance of the above recommendations, the Zamindaries were abolished in all the States; and against this background, Assam also passed the A.S.Z.A.A. of 1951.

The Act provides for acquisition by the State of the interest in proprietors and tenure-holders in the permanently settled estates; but in the K.S. it was found difficult to implement the Act without detailed survey and preparation of record of rights; and, as such, the preparation of Records of Rights was stated in 1956.


Under Passant Dandabosta the land was classified as:
(i) cultivated, (ii) fallow, and (iii) waste land; and during the Revenue Survey of 1850-66, the Dassana areas and Ilam areas were demarcated by Thak marks under "Thakhast Survey". Though this survey created boundary maps and other revenue records, yet it did not provide the details of classification of different lands, according to use such as homestead, paddy, etc. Since this last and only survey there has been no revision of records inspite of thousand and one changes that occurred in course of a century in respect of ownership, changes of estate, boundaries and so on; and the Government of Assam, vide its Notification No. RT.22/54/33 dt. 20.1.56 u/s 117 of S.T.A XI of 1936, issued orders for preparation of Record of Rights in the P.S. areas; and that operation of preparation of Record of Rights was the second survey of the P.S. areas which consisted of the following main stages:

1. Theodolite traversing
2. Fixation of boundary villages
3. Cadestral Survey of villages (Kistware)
4. Preliminary record writing (Khanapuri)
5. Record attestation of villages (Tazdik)
6. Publication of Draft Record
7. Publication of Final Record

1. The Assam Gazette, Part II(A), August 30, 1978, Notification No. RSR 30/77730 p. 2391
(8) Distribution of Final Record.

There were altogether 274 thak villages in N.S.; and these villages have been splitted up into 656 units of Survey or New villages; and these units were created by theodolite traversing for the purpose of the survey; and all the stages, except publication of Final Records, were completed in August 1964.1

In the Ilam Circle the last Resettlement Circle was carried out in 1922-27 and the period of Resettlement was extended up to 31st March, 1957; and after Independence, the Resettlement operation was carried out, under order dated 10.3.60, for 22 years, from 1965, for 245 villages in Karimganj Circle and 275 villages in Patherkandi Circle (including 55 waste land grants with an area 149.25 sq. miles); and resettlement operation covered the following distinct stages:2

(1) Map revision including survey and reclassification of lands,
(2) Record attestation and attestation of Thatians,
(3) Draft Publication of Tenants Thatians,
(4) Preparation of assessment statements and submission of assessment report,
(5) Revenue attestation including offer of settlement.

1. Papers prepared by Revenue and Settlement Officer, Karimganj, in connection with preparation of Records of Rights of N.S. areas of Karimganj u/s 117 of S.T.A. Act XI of 1956 for discussion in the 16th Meeting of Assam Land Reforms Board held at Karimganj on 20.4.65; S.D.C.'s Record Room, Karimganj.

2. Papers prepared by Revenue and Settlement Officer, Karimganj, in connection with Resettlement Operation of Ilam areas and
It was proposed by the Revenue and Settlement Officer of Karimganj that the sd. should be divided into three circles instead of two for speedier disposal of land record works, and for land revenue and rent collection, particularly in the P.S. areas. The proposal for creation of a new circle was put forward by the Revenue and Settlement Officer in 1965 to the Land Reforms Board and was finally materialised in 1968 by creating the new circle of Ramkrishnanagar of following description:

Table 2.5

1. Name of the Circle: RAMKRISHNANAGAR CIRCLE
2. Number of villages:
   (a) P.S. villages: 194
   (b) Ilam villages: 90
3. Area of circle in sq.miles: 241 sq. miles
4. Total No. of Dags:
   (a) P.S. areas: 72,096
   (b) Ilam areas: 20,882
5. No. of Sub-circles: 2
6. No. of Lot Amins: 24
   (In the average a lot Amin covers an area of 11.5 sq.miles or 5000 to 8000 in settled areas)

Waste Land Grants in Karimganj Sub-Division, for discussion in the 19th Meeting of Assam Land Reforms Board held at Karimganj on 20.4.65; S.D.O.'s Record Room, Karimganj.

1. Papers relating to Proposal for creation of Additional Tahsil Offices and Revenue Circles as a result of acquisition of P.S. areas under the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindaries Act; S.D.O.'s Record Room, Karimganj.
(b) Papers relating to creation of New Circle in 1968; Record Room, S.D.O.'s Office, Karimganj.
But the Government did not eventually wait for publication and distribution of final records; and before completion of the final stage the superior rights of the proprietor were acquired in between 1960 and 1966; though Khutians showing position of ownership was also prepared, the vital task of assessment of rent was left incomplete; and "persons, who are liable to be assessed as per provision u/s, 4 and 6 of the Assam State Acquisition of Zamindari Act 1954, were left out unassessed causing thereby a sharp decline in collection. The Records of rights operation failed to augment the revenue of the Government as far as the permanently settled areas of the S.t.e are concerned. It is estimated that lakhs of Rupees are lying outstanding on account of rent in the permanently settled areas alone."  

The payment of compensation to Ex-Zamindars is being made since 1966, on the basis of returns submitted by them, showing income from the estates immediately before vestiture of the estates, to the State; up to 1976 the amount of compensation paid was Rs. 37,97,817; the figure rose to Rs.43,906 in January 1979; out of 1175 acquired Taluks 2,363 did not submit any claim; the delay in payment was mainly due to large number of pending cases which numbered to 1778, of which 947 numbers of cases are still pending, while only one Appeal case lies pending in the District Judge Court, Silchar.  It is clear that the

2. Office of the Compensation Officer, Karimgani, File No. CR 1/76
ex-Zamindars in order to get more compensation managed to put some fictitious accounts, which was submitted to the Government immediately before acquisition of the estates; and subsequently, in some cases, neither the plot of land in question nor the landholder could be traced, for which, the Government was compelled to commute the land revenue, and take up remission proposal, while in some cases unaccountable lands were traced based on verbal settlement with no basis records. There are seven such villages in Tangubhari in Ramkrishnanagar Circle where there are no Toujis, no records on which to realise land revenue.¹

The absence of Toujis in many cases has created the greatest handicap for realisation of revenue, e.g., the vast areas in Lullabcherra T.E. in Ramkrishnanagar have been settled under Khatians but the Government could not realise land revenue for want of Toujis.² There was also loss of revenue for non-realisation of Local Rate in P.S. areas, under Nilambazar Sub-Tahsil, from 1.4.74 to 30.6.77.³ Further, there was considerable loss of revenue for disputed titles in the land; the revenue for Taluk No. 14132/B1, regarding Radharam Das, was not realised, for, the matter relating to the title, is

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1. Draft Audit Note by the A.G.'s Audit Party in 1973 on the Accounts of Ramkrishnanagar Tahsil; Audit Cell; S.E.O.'s Office, Narimganj.

2. Records relating to Assessment of Land Revenue as per Existing Land Records; Office of the Assistant Settlement Officer; Ramkrishnanagar Circle, Ramkrishnanagar.

sub-judice vide Partition Suit No. 42 of 1954 and T.S. No. 12 of 1968 in the Sub-Judge Court, Silchar. Though one such Commission has been set up in 1964, following a reference to which the disputants arrived, yet it is feared that in case of any partition amongst the disputants, about 400 poor families, who are in actual possession of the land, are likely to be evicted; there is no possibility of the dispute being resolved soon; and under these circumstances the Government would not be able to realise land revenue in foreseeable future from this disputed land.

The sd. is yet to get rid of the inherent defects of the P.S. and the Zamindari system; and a re-settlement operation in P.S. areas is essential on the following grounds. First, in many cases the P.S. and T.S. areas overlap, and, actually, some P.S. villages are included in T.S. areas, which hinder revenue work; secondly, the owners of P.S. estate fixed rent on "Nedar" rate which was uniform for all classes of land but varied from owner to owner, for which there were different rates of rent for the same class of land in the same village, while the rate of rent is generally higher than what a landholder is assessed as land revenue in P.S. area for a similar class of land; thirdly, the Assam Land Holding Act, 1974, has laid down, "the land revenue assessable shall not exceed the amount paid or payable as rent for such rent in respect of the area for a period of 25 years or till the terminal year of assessment, made during the last resettlement operation of temporarily settled estates of that area" (3.4). 1

1. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978 Part II(1) Notification No. R3R 30/77/30, p. 2795
The second and the third problems referred to above are difficult to reconcile for not only the "kedar" rate of rent varies within the village; but it also varies with and higher than the higha rate of land for neighbouring T.S. area. Hence a uniform land revenue system has to be evolved.

There is also another problem which must have to be resolved in the next resettlement operation. The land revenue for the P.S. areas was fixed in perpetuity at a very low rate. The 4730 P.S. estates, in 1958-59, contributed only a nominal revenue of Rs. 19,750 only; and, at present, even after the Final publication of Records of Rights, the rents from Khatiandars are realised as per Toujis obtained from ex-Zamindars and ex-tenureholders; but as few of them have submitted Toujis, the scope of collection has been dwindled, and the annual demand for P.S. areas in 1970 was estimated as under:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Karinganj Tashil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Patherkandi Tashil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ramkrishnanagar Tashil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. 1 Kedar measures 1 Bigha 4 Kata 4 chatak land.
2. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, Part II(1) Notification No. RSR 30/77/73, p. 2323
3. ibid., p. 2323
The Tashil collection in K.S. is thus peculiar and anomalous; and it is estimated from the rate notes in Chatians, that revenue collection in the K.S. will be enhanced substantially when all the private lands will be settled according to the existing laws; the Dhakaldars will be settled, and the raiyats will pay rent according to land revenue shown in final Chatians; the estimated demand will be:  

1. Karimganj Tashil - 9,00,000.00  
2. Patherkandi Tashil 1,50,000.00  
3. Ramkrishnanagar Tashil 2,50,000.00  
\[ \text{Total: } 13,00,000.00 \]

A resettlement operation is thus essential to tone up revenue administration in K.S. by making it free from the encumbrances of the system of P.S.; and such resettlement operation will bring the added benefits such as modification of the existing system of classification of land suited for the purpose of agriculture, updating of maps, and records and collection of various datas which are essential for crop statistics and crop forecast reports; further the resettlement operation will facilitate land reform measures.

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1. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, Part II(1), Notification No. RSR 50/77/50, p. 2593
IX. Land Reforms

The main objective of land reforms policy of India are two fold, viz., social justice and economic efficiency; it includes measures for making adjustments in the rights of various classes interested in land, for a more equitable distribution of land and the reorganisation of the agrarian structure in order to remove institutional defects which hinder agricultural development; wide disparities in social status, income and opportunity have to be removed to establish the right type of democracy. Thus, the land reforms measures have a special significance, as by these measures social, economic and institutional framework is provided for agricultural development.

Besides the acquisition of Zamindaries other land reforms measures adopted in Assam were also extended to K.S. in the post-independence period; the main objectives of these reforms were to provide security of tenure to the cultivators, to protect the tenant from exploitation, to enable him to establish direct relationship with the Government and to fix ceilings on land holdings. The Assam Adhikar Protection and Regulation Act, 1948, regulates the crop-sharing and protects the interests of the share-croppers; the Assam Fixation of Ceiling on Land Holdings Act, 1956, imposes limit on the amount


of land that may be held by a person; the Assam State Acquisition of Lands Relating to Religious or Cheritable Institutions of public nature Act 1959 was passed to provide for acquisition of lands belonging to religious or cheritable institutions. The other land reforms measures were: The Assam Consolidation of Holdings Act, 1960, the Assam Gramdan Act, 1961; and the Assam "Bhudan Act 1965; and to regulate the relationship between the landlord and tenant and to enable the cultivator to become the owner of the land. The Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act was passed in 1971; and following this The Adhiaar Protection Act was repeated since the crop-sharers were given the status of tenants. 1

The Ceiling Act of 1956 was amended in 1970 and the Act was made effectively applicable to the Tea Estates, and the level of ceiling was brought down from 150 bighas to 75 bighas; and the level of ceilings was further brought down to 50 bighas with allowable 4 bighas for orchard; the procedure of acquisition of ceiling surplus land was simplified by withdrawing the scope for filing Appeals. 2 Under the Act, in the K.S., 93,705 bighas of land were acquired by 1976, out of which, 84,202 bighas were acquired from the Tea Estates, while 9503 bighas were acquired from individual landlords; 65793 bighas of land were distributed to private parties and 70870

bighas were reserved for the C.S.W. As a result of the distribution of land to the landless, about 11248 families were benefited, out of which 1827 families were scheduled castes, 174 scheduled tribes, and 390 other backward classes; the total number of beneficiaries were 5 lac 82 thousands.

From the above it is clear that by 1976 only 9503 bighas have been acquired from individual landlords in the K.S. which was till the other day the land of Zamindars and Mirashdars; and this shows the inefficacy of the Ceiling Act in the K.S. The reasons are that, in absence of updated Khatians, the facts on records are far removed from the reality on ground, and in absence of such Records of Rights, it is altogether impossible to implement the ceiling law effectively to bring about the necessary agro-economic change, and, in implementation of land reforms, "the chief lacuna has been the absence of updated and dependable record of rights." The need for updating Khatians has become very urgent since the S.T.A. 1936 has been replaced under Government Notification No. LJT 79/74/50 dt. 14.2.75 by the Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act 1971, and it has come in force in the permanently settled areas of K.S. u/s 4(2) of the Assam Land Holdings Adoption of Relationships under the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation 1886 in the Acquired permanently settled estates Act, 1974, providing,

2. ibid.
"Every person holding any land as a tenant of another person in the area shall continue to hold the same with the status of a tenant as per the provisions of the Assam Temporarily Settled Areas Tenancy Act 1971." The extension of this principle of "raiyatwari" to the permanently settled areas of S.S. has brought about radical change in the status of Chatiandars, and, henceforth, they will be treated as land holders and they will be assessed land revenue instead of rent as per provision under the regulation; and in order to give the above agro-economic policy a definite shape a re-settlement operation should be immediately started.  

X. The Agrarian Conditions

The agro-economic life of the sd. is reflected in the sample survey of the households engaged in cultivation, classified by interest in land and size of land, conducted by the Government of India, during 1961 Census operation, which will be evident from the following table (based on 20% sample):  

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1. The Assam Gazette, August 30, 1978, Part II(A), Notification No. GSR 30/77/30, p. 2727

Table 2.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest in land cultivated</th>
<th>No. of cultivating house holds</th>
<th>Less than 1</th>
<th>1.0-2.4</th>
<th>2.5-4.9</th>
<th>5.0-7.4</th>
<th>7.5-9.9</th>
<th>10.0-12.4</th>
<th>12.5-14.9</th>
<th>15.0-29.9</th>
<th>30.0-49.0</th>
<th>50+</th>
<th>Unspecified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Karimganj Thana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>3,830</th>
<th>672</th>
<th>1,708</th>
<th>933</th>
<th>309</th>
<th>91</th>
<th>54</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>30</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)**</td>
<td>1,873</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>841</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)**</td>
<td>1,133</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)**</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2. Badarpur Thana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>1,306</th>
<th>212</th>
<th>567</th>
<th>342</th>
<th>105</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Owned or held from Government.

**Held from private persons or institutions for payment in money, kind or share.

***Partly held from Government and partly from private persons for payment in money, kind or share.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest in land cultivated</th>
<th>No. of cultivating households</th>
<th>Less than</th>
<th>1.0-2.5</th>
<th>2.5-4.0</th>
<th>4.0-7.5</th>
<th>7.5-10.0</th>
<th>10.0-14.0</th>
<th>14.0-20.0</th>
<th>20.0-30.0</th>
<th>30.0-40.0</th>
<th>40.0-50+</th>
<th>Unspecified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. PALLIPCANDI THANNA</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3015</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>1,264</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>1179</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>..</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>467</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. KAPALAK THANNA</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2991</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>1,494</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>724</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>2076</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>1,041</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c)</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the above table it is clear that most of the cultivators have small and medium holdings, and moreover there are also many marginal farmers, but nothing seems to have been done for the small and marginal farmers. There are also a large number of landless labourers in the sd. and the number in 1971 was 33,948;¹ and the number rose to 42010;² and as hinted earlier only 11248 families have been given land in 1975-76; and for the remaining vast number nothing seems to have been done as yet. To provide the landless with house sites and cultivable land the scheme of setting up Agricultural Farming Corporations was implemented by the Government in 1973;³ and an Agricultural Farming Corporation was also started in the K.S. along with 11 others in different parts of Assam. The Agricultural Farming Corporation of the K.S. is located at the backside of the Cachar Sugar Mill with a total area of 1023 bighas of land, which was handed over to the Agricultural Department on August 25, 1975 by the Revenue Department. The Agricultural Farming Corporation was formed with a Chairman and 11 other members and named as Chorgolla Agricultural Farming Corporation (hereinafter C.A.F.C.).⁴ A small office of the C.A.F.C. has been functioning in Ramkrishnanagar since 1976. But it is a matter of pity that the C.A.F.C. could not start work

1. Census of India, 1971, Series 3 Assam, pp. 204-207
4. Special Officer-cum-Manager, Chorgolla Agricultural Farming Corporation, Ramkrishnanagar, File No. Miscellaneous/1975/
as it could not take possession of the land in which many
have claimed title; and the matter is sub-judice; the very
existence of the C.A.F.C. is doubtful, and there is little hope
of its functioning.

1. Special Officer-cum-Manager, Chorgolla Agricultural Pursuing
Corporation, Tarkkrishnanaagar, File No. Miscellaneous/1075