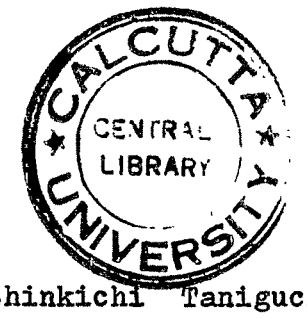
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Title : STRUCTURE OF AGRARIAN SOCIETY IN NORTHERN BENGAL
(1765 to 1800)

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph. D. (Arts) of the
University of Calcutta

SCANNED



Shinkichi Taniguchi

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GENERAL

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: A B B R E V I A T I O N S :

BDR-BRD-I	:	West Bengal District Records, new series, Burdwan, Letters Issued.
BDR-BRD-R	:	Do. Do. Do. Letters Received.
BDR-BRM	:	Do. Do. Birbhum.
BDR-DNR	:	Bengal District Records, Dinajpur (2 Vols)
BDR-RGPR	:	Do. , Rangpur (6 Vols)
BR-P	:	Proceedings of the Board of Revenue.
BR-M-AC-DNR	:	Miscellaneous Records, Board of Revenue, Account Sale or Statements of Lands sold for arrears of revenue in the District of Dinajpur.
BR-W-P	:	Proceedings of the Board of Revenue (Wards).
BT-Cm-P	:	Do. of the Board of Trade (Commercial).
CC-P	:	Do. of the Committee of Circuit (8 Vols)
CCR-P	:	Do. of the Controlling Committee of Revenue
CCRM-P	:	Do. of the Controlling Council of Revenue at Murshidabad.
Fifth Report	:	The fifth Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company. (Firminger's edition).
GGC-RD-P	:	Proceedings of the Governor General in Council (Revenue Department)
GGC-RD-Khalsa-P	:	Do. of Do. (Revenue Department - Khalsa).

JD-Cv-P	:	Proceedings of the Judicial Department(Civil).
JD-Cr-P	:	Do. of Do. (Criminal).
LCB-RDM	:	The Letter Copy Books of the Resident at the Durbar at Murshidabad.
RBCWC-P	:	Proceedings of the Revenue Board consisting of the whole Council.
RD-Grain-P	:	Do. of the Revenue Department (Grain).
SC-P	:	Do. of the Select Committee.
SKR-P	:	Do. of the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records.

INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation studies the structure of the agrarian society in Northern Bengal from 1765 to 1800.

1765 was the year when the East India Company acquired the Diwani (the authority to collect the revenue) of the Bengal Presidency and the Mughals finally lost their hegemony there. The more or less stable and well-defined agrarian social structure of the Mughal period was put in disarray. However, the new stable structure had yet to take its shape. The political confusion led to the weakening of the zamindar's control over his estate. The agrarian society was shaken up at all its levels, and the new social groups were emerging. The wealthy ryots and small revenue contractors were acquiring new powers in the countryside.

After the years of trial and error, the East India Company's government under Cornwallis started to reorganize the agrarian structure in such a manner as would best serve the Company's colonial interests. The permanent zamindari settlement of 1793 and the establishment of the elaborate judicial system throughout the country were the decisive steps towards achiving the Company's objectives. The immediate effect of these measures was the fall of the giant 'old zamindars'. Within a decade of the settlement, many zamindars, who had survived the political crisis of the mid-18th century, calmly surrendered before the high revenue demands, the sale laws & the strong judicial and administrative set-up. Very many estates of the giant 'old zamindars' were purchased by numerous upstarts , who mainly consisted of the three social groups ; government officers, zamindari officers and merchants. The Haftam (the Rgulation VII of 1799) gave the 'new zamindars' the full support of the governmental machinery in their relation with the peasants, and enabled them to check

the growing local influence of the wealthy ryots. The support of the government helped the 'new zamindars' to establish their superiority over the peasants. Our period (1765 to 1800) was, thus, a time of transition from the political as well as agrarian confusions towards the establishment of a stable government and a static agrarian structure.

Most of the existing works on Bengal of our period deal with the political, administrative, commercial or revenue history of the East India Company's government, and almost all of them ignored the conditions of life of the rural populatinn. The present dissertation tries to study precisely this relatively little-known aspect of the agrarian society of Bengal.

We examine the structure of the agrarian society, because we are more interested in the more or less unchanging conditions of rural life than in the transient political or military incidents. The present study mainly concerns the economic and political aspects of the agrarian society, because of the paucity of the source-materials about other aspects of society.

The structure of the agrarian society was presumably not unfform throughout the Province. Each locality had differant political, economic & social conditions which created distinct local characteristics in the agrarian structure. For instance, in the zamindari of Burdwan, the small local revenue-farmers, who privately farmed a few villages and were known as the kutkinadars, were mostly the followers of the zamindar and resided in the towns, while in the zamindaris of Dinajpur and Dhurrumpore (in Purnea), they were mainly the principal inhabitants or ryots of the villages that they farmed. Such an important local difference in the agrarian

structure can only be explained through minute and intensive local studies, and does not lend itself to a sweeping generalization.

The present dissertation chiefly concerns the north Bengal districts (Dinajpur, Rangpur, Rajshahi & Purnea) which contained both the big zamindari areas like Rajshahi and Dinajpur and small & middle-sized ones like the zamindaris of Edrackpore, Dhurrumpore, Sooroopoor & Bitterband. However, in order to show that certain aspects of the structure of the agrarian society in north Bengal had a wider relevance, we sometimes use evidence relating to other regions. This is also occasionally done either to illustrate, with the help of the comparative method, the local characteristics, or to supplement the inadequate source-materials pertaining to our topics, when we discuss the problems of a general nature. We have included in our study the Purnea district which was situated in Bihar. This is because Purnea was adjacent to the Dinajpur district, which is our main field of research, and some portions of it once belonged to the Bengal Soubah during the Mughal period. From 1774 to 1780, when the Provincial Councils of Revenue were functioning, Dinajpur& Purnea were placed under the same Council with its headquarters at Dinajpur.

The methods of the present research and the questions that we have tried to answer can be now briefly indicated.

The agrarian social structure has been studied at two levels ; the zamindari system and the peasant society. These two levels were closely interrelated and the changes at one level were almost always followed by reactions at the other. We, however, judge it to be more fruitful to study each of them separately, and then identify the interactions between them.

In Part One of this dissertation, we examine the zamindari system of northern Bengal with special reference to that of Dinajpur. It is studied mainly from two aspects ; its relations with the peasants and its relation with the state authority. The first aspect is more important for our study. The zamindar of our time, mostly leading a parasitic subsistence, hardly took any part in the agricultural production, and the administration of his estate was mainly oriented to the rent-collection from the ryots. The business of collection of rent was usually regulated by the usage of the country and the mutual agreements between the zamindar and his ryots. However, a semi-military establishment was indispensable to prevent the ryots from evading the rent obligations. The relationship with the government was also of essential importance for the zamindari system. Most of the zamindars of our time were far from powerful and often found it difficult to collect rent from refractory ryots. The presence of the government behind the zamindars awed even the most refractory ones, and, thus, helped the zamindars in their rent collection. Sometimes, the government found it necessary to despatch a party of military men to pacify the distrubances raised by the ryots against their zamindars. Under such conditions, the zamindars' attitude towards the ryots was largely determined by the government's policy towards the zamindar-ryots relations. In this Part, we have also analyzed the financial and managerial structure of the zamindari. Such a study shows us not only the nature of the zamindari finance & management, but also how the changes in the land-revenue administration during early British rule adversely affected the zamindari finance and how rapidly the private farming system penetrated into its management during our time. The significance of the Cornwallis system for the finances

of the 'old zamindari' has also been studied in this Part.

The study of the peasant society forms Part Two of this dissertation. The peasant society will be studied mainly from the view-point of agricultural production. Though different localities had different conditions for agricultural production according to their respective qualities of soil, distances from big markets, conveniences of transportation &ca., the basic conditions of agriculture were largely the same : land, labour & agricultural stocks. The structure of the peasant society, and eventually that of the agrarian society was greatly determined by the relative positions of these three basic elements. The well-known fact that the majority of the rural population was toiling under abject poverty in spite of the abundance of the cultivable waste lands is explicable in terms of the particular mode of distribution of the agricultural stocks in our time. The relative positions of the three elements will also explain why the wealthy ryots who possessed the large part of the agricultural stocks of the country could exercise a great influence over the majority of the ryots and dominate the village-politics. The various types of privileged peasant-holdings, which were mostly held by the wealthy ryots and where a large number of under-ryots and agricultural labourers were engaged in cultivation, were a conspicuous phenomenon in the countryside. Indeed, the predominance of the wealthy ryots in the rural areas may be considered the most outstanding feature of the structure of peasant society of our time. We try to study it from various aspects : the extent of economic differentiation among the peasantry, the economic relationship between the wealthy ryots and their under-ryots, the agrarian disturbances and the role of the wealthy ryots (the small local leaders) in them, the

possibility of uplift of the under-ryots and landless labourers, the historical origin of the privileged peasant-holdings and the attitude of the zamindar and the Company towards the wealthy ryots and their rapidly growing privileged holdings. We also tried to investigate the relation between the relative positions of the three basic elements of agriculture and these phenomena.

The market relations occupied a very important position in the peasant economy. Their effects on the structure of the agrarian society have been studied here. We study the market relations with reference to the staples of north Bengal such as rice, sugar-cane, tabacco, mulberry and indigo. The most remarkable aspect of the market relations of our time was the extensive use of the advance-system. The questions why the advance-system prevailed so widely and how the system affected the structure of the peasant society have been examined here. The study of these aspects of the market-relations leads us to a further question of the relationship between the zamindari system (or the rent payment) and the advance-system. Such investigations will explain why most of the ryots who cultivated cash crops were as poor as the others who only cultivated rice and other far less valuable crops.

PART I

THE ZAMINDARI SYSTEM IN NORTHERN BENGAL (1765-1800).- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ZAMINDARI OF PARGANA HAVILI PANJARA (DINAJPUR RAJ)

CHAPTER 1

THE SYSTEM OF LAND-CONTROL BY THE ZAMINDARS IN NORTHERN BENGAL BEFORE THE DECENNIAL SETTLEMENT (1790)

This chapter deals with the zamindar's methods and establishments for administering his people and country. Rent collection was the central issue on which the whole establishment of the zamindar was based. The system of land-control by the zamindar will, therefore, be best understood in its relation to rent collection. In this chapter we shall examine the various aspects of the zamindar's land-control, with special reference to their respective bearings on rent collection, under the following three sections : (1) The methods and establishments for rent collection, (2) the establishments for keeping peace and order, and coercion and (3) the nature of the zamindar's rule over the peasants.

Section 1 The Methods and Establishments for Rent Collection

(1) The Types of Mofussil[1] Settlement of Rent

Every year the zamindar fixed his demands on the ryots by mofussil settlement of rent.

There were several types of mofussil settlement in northern Bengal during the second half of the 18th century. Plurality of types was the result of plural land-tenures which existed in those days.

Each type of mofussil settlements had its special mode of assessment, settlement and collection of rent.

J. H. Harington, the Commissioner at the Sooroopoor zamindari in Rangpur district, observed in 1790 three different types of mofussil settlements prevalent there : Firstly, "the settlement was made for the villages collectively, and Tahud[2] for the Jumma [rent] signed by a few of the

(1) Mofussil : The interior of the country, as opposed to Sadar, the center.
(2) Tahud : An agreement, a stipulated rent, or a lease.

principal ryots (pradhan ryots)", secondly, the settlement was "concluded with separate ryots called Huzzoorree Jotedars,(3) who have each signed distinct Tahuds", and lastly, the settlement was "made with farmers of villages termed Zimmehdars who executed separate engagements."(4)

J. Shore classified in his Minute dated the 18th June 1789 the land-tenures of Bengal as follows :

> "There are two fundamental distinctions in the tenure of the ryots into which almost all the variations might be resolved ; the first, when the rents are calculated upon an Assul, or Original Rate, with an addition of the cesses subsequently imposed," and the second, "where a fixed sum is paid for a specific quantity of land at so much per bega, without any other distinction. The rate, in the first instance, may be settled with a due regard to the quantity of land and its produce. The ryots, holding under this form are compelled to stand all losses ; to pay for the land, whether cultivated or not and no security against demand but desertion."(5)

The famous Amini Report of 1778 reads :

> "Ryots, with respect to the manner of paying their Rents, may be divided into HARREE, FUSSULLEE and COMAR. The first holds a certain quantity of land, for which they pay a fixed Rent per Bega, whether cultivated or fallow. The Rent of the Fussullee Ryots depends on the crop which their land is made to produce. Thus a Bega of ground, if cultivated with Mulberry, pays a much higher Rent than if sown with Rice. The Comar Ryots pay in kind, and give a proportion of the crop as the Rent of their Land".(6)

J. H. Harington's first type, as we shall presently examine, was based on each ryot's assil jama which was regulated by the rates of rents arranged according to the articles cultivated. It, therefore, basically corresponded to J. Shore's first type and Amini Report's second type. Harington's second type(7) was identical with J. Shore's second type and Amini Report's first type. His third type was, as we shall see below, a variation

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(3) Huzuri Jotedar : A ryot who rented land directly from the zamindar.
(4) BR-P 22nd March 1790 Nos. 14 & 15. Main report.
(5) The Fifth Report, Vol. 2, p. 53, paras. 222 & 224.
(6) GGC-RD-P 3rd April 1778 No. 9
(7) For detail of this type see Section 1-(c) of this chapter & Section 2 of chap. 6.

of his first type, because these village farmers, in their turn, collected rent from the villages under them. Thus, in this type also, as in the first type, the village was the unit of rent collection and within it rent of each ryot was regulated according to his Assal Jama.

Though the Amini Report referred to a tenure of produce rent (Comar), it prevailed only to a very insignificant extent in Bengal proper and did not form any important distinction as a peasant tenure.(8) Apart from the Comar tenure, another form of produce rent known as Adhi prevailed extensively in Bengal. However, adhi ryots were under-tenants and did not have direct relationship with the zamindar.(9)

Thus, as Shore ably pointed out, "almost all the variations might be resolved" into the "two fundamental distinctions" abovementioned.

Harington observed that five-sixths of the rent of the zamindari of Sooroopoor were collected from the ryots who held lands under the first type of mofussil settlement and the remaining one-sixth from the Huzuri Jotedars, Zimmehdars &ca. In the neighbouring zamindaris of Bitterbund and Koondy, the information concerning the mofussil settlement pointed to the predominance of the Harington's first type.(10)

What was the situation in Dinajpur zamindari in this regard ? G. Vansittart, the first Supervisor, observed in 1770 that in this zamindari which he estimated to yield 20 lacks of rupees as the public revenue, "Parganas to the amount of 430,000 Sa Rs had been farmed out by me" to the public farmers,(11) and "the rest of the Province [which remained under the management of the zamindar] was divided into small Ijaras(12) & Caus lands, nearly, I believe, in the following proportions : 2/16ths Caus, 4/16ths New Ijaras & 10/16ths Old Ijaras." The old ijaraadars(13), who occupied about

(8) For more information about this see Appendix (c) to this chapter.
(9) We shall discuss this in detail in chapter 6.
(10) BR-P 22nd March 1790 Appendix F
(11) For its definition, see chapter 3.
(12) Ijara : Letting lands on farm or lease ; the lands so let.
(13) Ijaradar : The renter of estate at a stipulated rate.

60 % of the estate remained under the zamindar's management, were "the petty renters" who "according to the custom of Dinajpur Province ... continue accountable for them as a matter of course without requiring any renewal of their leases ..."(14) In such portions of the zamindari as were let out by Vansittart to the public farmers, we have evidence that there were small under-farmers called the kutkinadars under them. For example, in the pargana of Panjara, the public farmer sublet the pargana to two under-farmers and the latter, again, to the kutkinadars,(15) and in the pargana of Apole, the public farmers sublet the whole to 21 kutkinadars.(16)

G. Hatch, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote in 1788 that "the revenues of the zamindari are for the most part received by the zamindar thro' the medium of naibs or agents sent into every pargana and by them from the Farmers and Kutkinadars."(17)

Thus in Dinajpur the most prevalent form of the mofussil settlement was Harington's third type. The kutkinadars were divided into two descriptions. Some held their farms (kutkinas or ijaras) outside their resident villages. They usually possessed some property and farmed the Tarafs which were the smaller divisions of the pargana and composed of a few villages. They were none but the contractors of rent of the villages and frequently changed their farms.(18) They collected rent not from the ryots individually, but from the village collectively.(18A) Others farmed the villages where they resided and were "in general the principal riauts of the village".(19) They were mostly the representatives of the villages and therefore acted in a double capacity of the farmers of the villages and their representatives. Both descriptions of the kutkinadars could be, thus, considered as variations of the Harington's first type.

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(14) CCRM 10th May 1772 No.6
(15) PCR-DNR-P 2nd May 1775
(16) Ibid. 11th April 1775
(17) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277
(18) PCR-DNR, 14th March 1775 ; ibid., 30th Jany 1776 ; ibid., 21st Oct.1777 ; ibid., 31st March 1778 ; ibid., 14th Sept. 1779. etc.
(18A) This point is based on evidence from Birbhum. CR-P 15th Sep. 1783 Nos. 23 to 31.
(19) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 12th August 1789 No. 397.

The wide prevalence of the small mofussil farmers was also the case in the zamindari of Dhurrumpore in Purnea. For example, in 1778 "the Ryatts of the Mouza Dumadah came to the Catchari (office) and in the name of Bachoo Sing and Mohun Chowdry concluded their Bandobust (settlement) agreeable to the last year and delivered their Cabooleats (written agreements)."(20)

In the zamindaris of Rajshahi,(21) Baharband(22) and Edrackpur(23), both in Rangpur district, we have evidence about the prevalance of the small mofussil farmers who were more or less identical with the kutkinadars in Dinajpur and Zimmehdars in Sooroopoor.

On these grounds, we may consider Harington's first type and its variation (namely, his third type) as the regular form of mofussil settlement in northern Bengal.

(1-a) The immediate Parties concerned with the Regular Mofussil Settlement

In the smaller zamindaris like Bitterbund and Sooroopoor where the zamindars' control over their estates was, comparatively speaking, effective and the penetration of the farming system was negligible, the lowest agents of rent collection on the part of the zamindars were not the small mofussil farmers, but the village amins or village gomastahs who were the zamindari officers stationed in the villages in order to transact the rent business with the ryots.

In the bigger zamindaris such as those of Dinajpur, Rajshahi, Edrackpur and Dhurrumpore where the zamindars' control over their country was relatively weak and ineffectual during our period and the penetration of the farming system was deep and wide, the business of the actual collection of rents from the villages was delegated to the numerous small farmers.

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(20) PCR-DNR-P 1st Decr. 1778. See also ibid. 14th July 1777 & ibid. 1st March 1799 & ibid. 9th March 1779.
(21) BR-P 13th April 1787 & ibid. 28th May 1790
(22) CR-P 3rd April 1786 Nos. 43 to 49 & BR-P 16th June 1786 No. 31
(23) RBCWC-P 7th June 1774

In both cases, the representatives of the villages called Mandal, Paramanick, Pradhan and Busneah stood responsible for the settlement of the village jama and its collection and negotiated with the zamindars or the persons who farmed the villages.

(1-b) The Method of the Annual Regular Mofussil Settlement of Rent

In a rice producing country like Bengal where the main winter rice (Aman Dhan) entirely depended on the Monsoon, people had to suffer from recurring scarcity of rains, inundations or storms. On the other hand, an exceptionally bumper harvest was equally ruinous to the ryots who paid their rents in money, because of the subsequent cheapness of the grains.(24)

Besides these natural calamities, there were many other causes that necessitated the mofussil settlement to be made annually ; the increase of the village jama due to the settlement of the new-comers, new cultivation by the resident-ryots (Deriabad or Noabad), imposition of new taxes, detection of the concealed land &ca, and the decrease of the village jama due to desertion of ryots (palataka), ravages of the wild animals (tigers, elephants & wild boars), plunder by gang-robbers (dacoits), alienation of land by the zamindar and collusion between the ryots and the zamindari officers.

In the second half of the 18th century, we find two types of the mofussil settlement both of which could be called regular : the 'Fussili Settlement'(25) and the 'Tahudi Settlement'.(26) The following description of the two types of the regular mofussil settlement is mainly based on the Harington's report on the zamindari of Sooroopoor in Rangpur in 1790.(27)

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(24) RBCWC-P 17th Nov. 1772 Nos. 17 & 20
(25) Harington wrote : "The Jamabundy (rent-roll) was adjusted annually according to the fussil (articles cultivated)."
(26) He himself used this term.
(27) BR-P 22nd March 1790. It consists of a main report and enclosures Nos. 1 to 28 and A to G.

In the locality where the fussil settlement was prevalent, a general measurement was made regularly at the interval of several years. At each general measurement, the quantity of land held by each ryot, the kinds of articles grown by him and the quality of soils in his possession were surveyed and recorded in the village accounts. By applying the established table of rates of rents (nirkh bandi), which was arranged according to the quality of soils and the articles of cultivation (fussilwari), to his holdings, the original rent (assil jama) of each ryot was worked out. And by adding up the assil jama of the villagers, the assil jama of the village was calculated. The assil jama which was thus computed and the customary cesses (abwabs & mathots) constituted the total jama of the village demandable by the zamindar.

During the years between the two general measurements, an annual survey was held in the month of Maug (January/February) after the main crop of the year was reaped. By this survey, the quantity of land actually cultivated and the articles of cultivation were investigated and the assil jama of each ryot was adjusted accordingly. Until the annual survey was made in Maug, the zamindari officers at the pargana sent monthly note of demand (chiti), which was based on the instalments (kists) of the preceding year, to the village amin who, in his turn, issued the corresponding chiti on each ryot. The ryots paid their rents accordingly. At the end of the year, the rent to be paid by ryots was finally fixed by adding up the customary cesses and the actual expenses of the village (gram kharcha or mofussil karcha) and apportioning the sum to the adjusted jama of each ryot.

On the annual survey, if there appeared any decrease in the assets of the village due to the desertion of ryots (palataka) &ca., the zamindar allowed a proportionate deduction from the jama of the village.

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(28) About Gram Kharcha, see 1-(4) of this chapter.

In the locality where the tahudi settlement was prevalent, the zamindar at the beginning of the year sent for the principal ryots (pradhans) of the villages and ordered the village amins to submit the papers which were supposed to show the current assets of the villages. The zamindar or his naib (agent) then asked the principal ryots "what increase they would give." Negotiations ensued and the sum of increase (Andazi Beshi) was settled between them. The pradhans then signed their engagements (tahud) and the new year's rent collection started accordingly.

On returning to their respective villages, the principal ryots reported the settled sum of the village for the year. The zamindar on his part sent the tahudi jama of the village to the village amin. The tahudi jama of the village was distributed on each ryot in the following way ;

> "The village chitties are then issued from the Sadar for several monthly kists [instalments] according to the Sadar Jumma - and I [village amin of Hurreepoor] issue chitties on several Ryots conformably thereto, stating number of Phurees(29) to be paid by each ryot on their Assil Jumma. The number being determined by a consideration of the amount to be paid account the Sadar Kist, the Shomar Kurtun(30) and expenses of every kind, in Assin [September/October] the Principal ryots and many of the others come to me and receive the explanation of the Receipts and Expenditures on every account to that period, and at the end of the year all the Ryots receive a similar explanation of the total receipts & disbursements. No sum is fixed for each Ryot account Tahood Jumma or Khurch at the beginning of the year. It is always calculated on his Assil Jumma, but the number of Phurees varies according to the expenses and to the proportion of Hazera [the ryots present] and the Palateka [the ryots absconded]."

In some villages, the Phuree practice did not prevail and "the chittee [note of demand] states the proportion of the Tahood Jumma, Khurch and general assessment account Palateka, and the Ryots understand their own Jumma as composed of Assil, Abwab & Mathote."

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(29) Phuree was a number by which the assil jumma of each ryot had to be multiplied. If a ryot's Assil Jama was Re. 1 and the phuree of the village for the current year was 24, he had to pay Rs 24.

(30) Shomar Kurtun : "An assessment on the Ryots of 10 Gundas per Re in the Tahood Jumma to pay the allowances of a Jemadar and 10 Burkandazes at" the pargana office and also" of 15 Gundas on the Jumma for Deib Kurch [Expenses on religion] and other expenses at the Sadar".

Under the tahudi settlement, no annual survey was made to adjust the assil jama of each ryot. Though the village amin recorded the annual change in the holdings of each ryot of the village, it could not be very accurate. Furthermore, the ryots, especially the wealthier ones, often entered into collusion with the village amin and caused a decrease in the rates of rents on their holdings with the result that even on the same articles of cultivation in the same village there were 10 to 15 different rates. The assil jama thus became "altogether void of proportion to the produce" by the time Harington made his survey.

Another drawback of the tahudi settlement was that under this mode the zamindar would not allow decrease in the Tahudi Jama on account of the desertion of the ryots (Palataka). Therefore the deficiency had to be borne by the remaining ryots (Hazera).

The fussili settlement seems to have been the regular form of mofussil settlement under the Mughal government. Mir Kasim's exorbitant demand on the zamindars and the East India Company's high demand of revenue during the early years of its rule made it impossible for many of the zamindars to allow deductions to the ryots on any account. The zamindars' local influence decreased and they found it very difficult to keep up the direct and minute superintendence over their countries.(31) Furthermore, in consequence of the great famine of 1770, a vast quantity of cultivated land turned waste and the demand for labour became acute in the countryside.(32) The ryots were, thus, in a stronger position in relation to the zamindars than before. Under such circumstances, the fussili settlement was being superseded by the tahudi settlement in many parts of north Bengal. In Dinajpur, such transformation in the form of the mofussil settlement took place about 25 years before Harington's survey(33) and in Sooroopoor, the fussili settlement was

(31) See section 2 of chap. 2, section 2 of chap. 3 and section 1 of chap. 4.
(32) See appendix(b) to this chapter and section 2 of chap. 5.
(33) Harington report, Enclosure No. 24.

discontinued in 1184 B.S. (A.D. 1777) as a consequence of the confusion caused by the oppression of the public farmer. Since then the tahudi settlement continued till Harington's survey in 1790.(34)

The method of mofussil settlement in the zamindari of Dinajpur which we shall describe below is reconstructed from the available fragmentary information relating to the 1770's and the 1780's. The following description should, strictly speaking, be considered as "an ideal type" as Max Weber put it.(35)

Every year, the zamindar sent his officers, called abadgars, into the mofussil to ascertain the state of cultivation. From their reports, a fixed jama on each pargana was calculated at the Central Office (Sadar Kachari). The zamindar, then, selected choudhuris for each pargana out of the applicants for that office, which was open to competition, or farmed out the pargana to the chief farmer (Sadar Mustajir or Sadar Ijaradar). The selected choudhuris executed an instrument called Ferd for an fixed Jama of the Pargana.(36)

In the pargana, the choudhuri or the chief farmer computed the amount to be demanded from the pargana by adding the estimated sum of the pargana expenses (Pargana Sarinjami) to the stipulated jama of the pargana. He then summoned the kutkinadars of the pargana and informed them of the demand on each of them for the current year. The latter, if they judged the demand tolerable, accepted the farms for the year.(37) When they came to an agreement, the choudhuri or the farmer of the pargana held the mofussil punya(38) at the pargana office and the kutkindars went back to their respective villages or farms. Though very rare, the choudhuri sometimes failed to persuade the kutkinadars to take up the farms. On such occasions, the former made the settlement with the ryots directly, but he was always obliged to allow a considerable deduction to the ryots.(39)

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(34) For more discussion on this historical transformation, see section 1-:(2)-d of chap.6.
(35) "Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences", trans, and ed.by E.A.Snib and H.A.Finch, 1949.
(36) BDR-DNR Vol.2 17th March 1787 No. 125
(37) CCRM 16th April 1772 & ibid. 25th May 1772
(38) Punya : An assemblage of the rent-payers forming a kind of festival or
(39) PCR-DNR-P 26th June 1775 & CR-P 4th Sept.1783,LR Nos. 4 to 7. holiday

The kutkinadar, in his turn, distributed stipulated sum of jama on the kutkina among the villages that composed his farm. This distribution was made according to the preceding year's jama of the villages and the report of the patwari on the assets of the village for the current year.(40) The agreement reached between the kutkinadar and the mandal and a few principal ryots was considered as binding on all the inhabitants of the village.(41) When the principal ryot of the village was its farmer, this process of agreement between the village-farmer and the villagers must have been omitted.

The village jama thus agreed was again distributed among the villagers proportionately to the quality and quantity of the land possessed by each ryot.(42) The basis of the internal distribution of the village was the assil jama of each ryot which was recorded and preserved by the patwari.(43)

G. Hatch observed : "The annual settlement being made according to the gross jama as rated for the preceding year, and not from any examination into the particular assets which compose it."(44) The regular mofussil settlement in the zamindari of Dinajpur was thus the tahudi type.

We cannot, however, overlook a great difference between the tahudi settlement in the zamindari of Sooroopoor and that in Dinajpur. In the former, the distribution of the village jama was made by the zamindari officer (village amin), but in the latter it seems to have frequently been in the hands of the principal ryots in their capacity as the farmers of the village.(45)

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(40) CR-P 11th August 1783 & BDR-DNR Vol.1 17th May 1789 No. 347
(41) See section 1-(4) of this chapter.
(42) BR-P 11th April 1788 No. 58 Enclosure (b)
(43) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277 & BR-P 30th July 1793 & BDR-DNR Vol.1 12th August 1789 No. 397
(44) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 12th August 1789 No. 397
(45) See section 2-(c) of chap. 6

(1-c) Another Type of the Mofussil Settlement

Here we shall discuss the second type of mofussil settlement described by both Harington and Shore.

As both Harington and Snore wrote, the basic characteristic of this type of mofussil settlement was that the rent was fixed according only to the quantity of land, not to the articles cultivated. Generally the rate fixed for such land was much lower than that for land under regular mofussil settlement. We may therefore call them the privileged ryoti-holdings. Such privileged conditions were granted by the zamindar on various occasions. The zamindar granted them in order to encourage the cultivation of waste lands, deserted lands and such lands as were vulnerable to natural calamities.(46) Favourable tenures were also granted to the inhabitants of superior castes who were prohibited by caste rules from holding the ploughs themselves.(47). They were called under various names such as pahi kasht,(48) chukani,(49) gatch,(50) tika,(51) jote,(52) bitwari,(53) hari,(54) aima,(55) and khosh bashi(56) in various districts. The tenures of this description were, generally speaking, long and the quantity of land thus leased out was extensive. The initial settlement was followed by a measurement of land and a fixed sum was determined on the whole land measured out with or without the limitation of time. There was usually no restriction on the kinds of crops to be cultivated on it.(57) The following is a specimen of a chukani pottah prevalent in Rangpur district :

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(46) See section 1 of chap. 5, and also Appendix (b) to this chapter.
(47) See foot-note (56)
(48) See Appendix (b) to this chapter.
(49) BR-P Harington report Appendix F & ibid. 7th Sep. 1791 No. 15 & ibid. 7th Oct. 1791 Nos. 19 & 20.
(50) See section 2-(4) of chap. 6
(51) SKR-P 26th July 1776 Letter No. 134
(52) See section 2-(4) of chap. 6
(53) CR-P 3rd April 1786 Nos. 43 to 49 & BR-P 16th June 1786 Nos. 30 & 31
(54) BR-P 10th April 1787 No. 4 & ibid. 5th August 1787 Nos. 15 & 16
(55) See section 1 of chap. 5
(56) BR-P 13th April 1787 Nos. 88 & 89
(57) BR-P 7th Oct. 1791 Nos. 19 & 20 & Harington report Appendix F.

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Good fortunue attend you Sree Sungier Sunnassie. -

This is a Mussukussy Chookaney Pattah subject to no increase written in the year 1196.

We have given you a Mussukussy[58] Chookaney Pattah not subject to any Increase for 1 Beesee 5 Dhones[59] of uncultivated ground formerly belonging to Badhoo Ryot in Talook Godah Simlah Pergunnah Oodassey Chukla Futtypore Sircar Cooch Behar at the annual Rent of 6 Rupees full weight - You are to have nothing to do with Sudder or Mohussil Charges - Assnanee Purbee, Ameen Charges, and with this Intention, we have given you a Mussukussy Pattah subject to no increase dated 5th Poose .

Breejeekisore Surma

Sd. Neelmony Surma[60]

In the above case, about 20 Local Bighas of uncultivated land were granted at a low fixed rate of 4 Annas 16 Gandas per bigha. The grantee was exempted from the payment of Sadar & Mofussil kharcha and presumably allowed to hold this land for ever as long as he paid his fixed rent. He was subject to no increase of rents whatever crops he might cultivate. However Rs. 6 were payable whether he cultivated the whole area or not.

Some of the holders of this type of tenure acquired the privilege to pay their rent immediately at the zamindar's office and thus their holdings were separated from the villages to which they originally belonged. These ryots were known as the huzuri jotedars.

One special feature of this type of tenure was its extensive abuse by the zamindars, farmers and the ryots. The ryots collusively acquired such lands through various devices.[61] On the other hand, the zamindars granted them to the ryots or to their dependants in order to diminish the ostensible assets of the zamindaris in their attempts to lessen the revenue assessment on their estates.[62]

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(58) Mushakkasi : The subordinate tenures for which the holders engage to pay a fixed rent annually upon the whole lot.
(59) I Beessee = 16 Dhones, and 1 dhone = 0.8 bigha.
(60) BR-P 7th Oct. 1791 Nos. 19 & 20
(61) See section 5 of chap. 4 & section 1 of chap. 6
(62) CR-P 14th April 1783 LR No. 43 & BDR-DNR Vol. 2 22nd Feb 1787, No. 112.

(2) The Table of Rates of Rents or Nirkhbandi

When the zamindar wanted to fix the demands on his zamindari, he had to depend on the usage of the country concerning rent. These usages were formed in the process of history and altered gradually in accordance with the changing conditions of society. Among such usages concerning rent, the table of rates of rents (nirkhbandi) occupied a pivotal position.

In such a locality where the tahudi settlement was prevalent, the assil jama was the basis of assessment of the country. As G. Hatch stated, it was "the nirkh upon which the Assul Jamma is established".(63) Even where the fussili settlement was prevalent, land measurement and investigation of the kinds of crop cultivated had to be followed by a process of computation of the assil jama of each ryot and of each village on the basis of the nirkhbandi of the locality.

As already suggested, nirkh was nothing but the institutionalized usage of the locality, its contents differing very much from pargana to pargana or even from ryot to ryot.(64) Harington found that there were, in many instances, more than four rates for the same fussil (crop) in the same village and in some cases the number of rates increased to as many as 10 to 15.(65) The productivity of soil differed even within a village and the ryots often reduced their rates by bribing the zamindari officers.(66) These circumstances would largely account for the great variety in the nirkhbandi. Another interesting aspect of the nirkh, in this connection, was that it was signed by the ryot in the zamindari of Baharband in Rangpur.(67) This would indicate that the nirkhbandi was determined through negotiations between the zamindar and the ryots, or at least, that the consent of the latter was considered necessary when it was fixed. The process of negotiations or agreement would certainly tend to produce different varieties from place to place.

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(63) BDR-DNR Vol.2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277
(64) Ibid. Vol. 1 14th Decr. 1788 No. 495 & BR-P 24th June 1788 No.20
(65) Harington report. Main report
(66) Ibid.
(67) See foot-note (53)

The nirkhbandis prevalent in the zamindaris of Purnea,(68) Sooroopoor, Bitterband,(69) and Koondy,(70) were arranged according to the articles of cultivation (fussilwari) and the quality of soil. The Collector of Rajshahi reported in 1782 that the nirkh was arranged according to the produce of lands and "if a ryot should plant sugar-cane, tobacco, or any other valuable crops" on the land rated as "producing Gram or [other] crop of inferior value, he is by general custom liable to be taxed the difference."(71) Though in many zamindaris, where tahudi settlement prevailed, the village jama was determined regardless of the articles cultivated, the internal distribution of the stipulated jama of the village was based on the customary fussilwari nirkh. However, the situation differed in the Zamindari of Dinajpur.

Answering the queries sent by J.H. Harington, G. Hatch wrote in 1789:

> "The rates apply to all articles of cultivation whatever... The rates include the whole demand of revenue, and which ought to be the only demand they are liable to... The distribution of the nirkh into the Assils and Abwabs, I believe ... are but little known in the mofussil, and the minute application of them became obsolete previous to the Company's accession to the Dewanny..."(72)

Thus in Dinajpur, the nirkhbandi was arranged according only to the quality of the soil, and even the distinction of Assil and Abwab was not applied minutely and became obsolete.

Harington wrote that "the local rates of the Assil have been reduced ... since the Abwabs payable thereon were established, as well as the Company's Accession to the Dewanny in 1765." Hatch also observed in 1788 that "The nirkh ... has fallen in its rates, and for centuries... has been in a state of constant fluctuation - and the abwabs have been multiplied in

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(68) See section 1-(2)-d of chap. 6
(69) Harington report Appendix F.
(70) Ibid.
(71) CR-P 30th May 1782 No. 19
(72) Harington report. Main report.

proportion as the Nirkh has diminished. They are both entered in the Riauts Pottah - the latter being consolidated whenever the articles become too numerous ..."(73)

The diminution of the nirkh pointed out by both Harington and Hatch was brought about by the manoeuvres of the ryots who attained this objective in collusion with the zamindari officers. It was always the chief object of the ryots to lower their assil jama.(74) For this purpose, they exerted themselves in lowering the nirkh which was the basis of the assil jama. To make up for the deficiencies thus created the zamindar imposed abwabs from time to time in proportion to the diminution of the nirkh.

The decrease in the rates of rents and the accumulation of imposts was a result of the same historical process that caused the transformation of the fussili settlement into the tahudi settlement in many parts of Bengal. We shall discuss this in a later chapter.(75)

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(73) BDR-DNR-P Vol. 2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277
(74) Ibid. Vol. 2 9th March 1787 No. 121
(75) See sections 1 & 2 of chap. 6

(3) The Cesses and Contributions

Besides the collection of the annual rent according to the regular moffusil settlement, the zamindar imposed from time to time various cesses and demanded contributions.

In the zamindari of Sooroopoor, the zamindar collected extra cesses and contributions called Mathot, Barburdari and Sheropa Nazar. Mathot consisting of customary expenses for various items such as Hindu festivals, offerings to Muslim saints, diet money for the officers, presents to the zamindars, repairs of the office-building, stationing the peons to prevent desertions &ca amounted to Rs 850 in 1194 and Rs 1905 in 1195. From its nature, mathot fluctuated from year to year according to the actual sum spent on these items at the Sadar office. Barburdari was "contributed by the Ryots, at the desire of the Naib [agent], to defray travelling charges incurred by Gopee Mohun [the new zamindar] in visiting the Pargana in 1194." Sheropa Nazar was the "voluntary presents to the zamindar in return for shawls, tarbans, cloth &ca bestowed on them in 1194." The former amounted to Sa Rs 2420 and the latter Rs 838. These two items were temporary and discontinued in the next year.

Mathot was, though annually fluctuating, an established cess and collected automatically with the groundrent without previous negotiations with the ryots. But those contributions of a more temporary nature could not be collected without the previous consent of the principal ryots. It was made in the following way : When certain needs for the additional expense occurred, the naib of the zamindari asked the principal ryots to contribute that sum. The pradhans of the pargana assembled together and discussed the matter among themselves. If they judged the demand just, they agreed to its payment and distributed the sum amongst all the villages on the basis of a general per centage. They then gave a note of the demand (chiti) for each village, huzuri jotedar and zimmehdar (the local farmer) to the naib and the latter collected the same accordingly.(76)

(76) The foregoing description depended on Harington report, Main report & Appendix E

In the zamindari of Dinajpur also, the zamindar levied cesses on various pretexts. On the occasion of a marriage, death or birth in his family, the zamindar levied a certain amount of money from his people.(77) Such levies were, in principle, temporary and were not demanded in the next year. In 1771, the Maharajah Bydenaut levied a Mangan when his sister's daughter got married.(78) Again in 1780, when the Maharajah died, his successor Rajah Radhanaut imposed a Mangan for the expense of the Seraud (funeral ceremony) at the rate of 1½ to 2 months on the annual jama of the zamindari. It amounted to Rs 230,920.(79) In 1797, Rajah Radhanaut exacted about two lacks of rupees for the expenditure incurred of going to Kasi (Benares) to worship the late Maharajah.(80)

Apart from the above temporary cesses, the zamindar of Dinajpur levied a Mathot called Deo Kharcha (or Deb Kharcha) on the ryots for annual expenses of the religious establishments in the parganas. Cottrell, the Supervisor, explained : "Deo Karcha is the total expenses incurred at the several Takoorbarrys [Hindu temples]."(81) In 1770, this levy amounted to Rs 19,613.(82) Besides Deo Kharcha, there were several mathots that used to be collected from the ryots at customary rates : Furbanny (Rs 9,046),(83) Sausty Tallah (Rs 1,046),(84) Beldarry (Rs 102),(85) Diadarry (Rs 17),(86) Mofussil Expenses (Rs 1,576),(87) and Chand (Rs 53).(88) The ryots paid these customary cesses as a matter of course without a murmur.(89) Deo Kharcha was collected by the Choudhuris of the parganas and disbursed by them for the prescribed purposes.(90) Such customary cesses (mathots) were called by a general term of "Mathot Berege" and amounted to the sum of Rs 31,453 in 1770.(91)

(77) CCRM 23rd Sept. 1771 These cesses were called 'Ghurmoy'.
(78) Ibid. 13th Jany 1771
(79) CR-P 5th Jany 1783
(80) JD- Cv-P 5th Jany 1798 No. 19
(81) CCRM 21st Jany 1771
(82) Ibid. Appendix Volume. 25th July 1771 Statement No. 11
(83) Purbani : An impost to defray the cost of a religious ceremony.
(84) Suaty Tallah : Its purpose is unknown.
(85) Beldari : Do.
(86) Diadari : Do.
(87) Mofussil expenses : It's particular use is unknown.
(88) Chand : An impost for charitable purposes.
(89) CCRM 25th July 1771 & BDR-DNR Vol. 2 n.d. No. 139
(90) CCRM 25th July 1771. (91) Ibid.

There were other kinds of cesses. Due to the weakening influence of the zamindar, and to the declining discipline among his officers, the assets of the Dinajpur zamindari were constantly decreasing during the early 1780's.(92) To fill up the deficiency and to pay up the public revenue, the zamindar began to impose taxes on various pretexts, proper or improper. In 1780, these new cesses amounted to 1 Anna 16 Gands per Rupee or about Rs 170,000.(93) Such new taxes tended to be perpetuated.(94) In the districts of Purnea the ryots agreed to pay a general rate known as Bonaup on condition that the zamindars abandoned the proposed measurement of their estates.(95) Such a cess also tended to continue.

In the distribution of the cesses and contributions, not all the ryots were equally assessed. Some were exempted wholly or partly from their payment due to their positions in society. Brahmins and other high caste Hindus,(96) some of the influential jotedars,(97) weavers working under the Commercial Resident of the Company,(98) holders of the chukani land(99) and the pahi kasht ryots(100) were usually exempted from these payments. Village-heads (mandals or pradhans) were also often allowed such favours.(101) The poorer ryots, therefore, had to bear a disproportionately heavy burden of the new cesses and this resulted in a considerable difference in the rents paid by the principal ryots and poorer ones.(102)

The ryots paid the new cesses, if they conformed to the custom of the country and were not too heavy. Otherwise, they resisted strongly, One of the main causes of the agrarian disturbances of Purnea in 1779,(103) Edrackpur in 1782(104) and Rangpur in 1783(105) was the new and exorbitant impositions. The levy of a mangan to the amount of Rs. 200,000 in Dinajpur in 1797 caused a great desertion of ryots and consequently adversely affected the financial condition of the zamindari.(106)

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(92) See section 1 & 2 of chap. 4
(93) CR-P 24th April 1782 LR No. 16
(94) Ibid. 4th Sept. 1783 LR Nos. 4 to 7 & BDR-DNR Vol. 2 No. 277
(95) BR-P 7th July 1790 No. 30
(96) Harington report. Appendix E & GGC-RD-P 10th Feb 1790 No.43
(97) Harington report Appendix E
(98) BR-P 25th May 1789 No. 12

Foot-notes(99) to (106) will be found on the next page.

(4) Village as the Unit of Rent-collection

As we have seen in the zamindari of Sooroopoor, the regular mofussil settlement was made "for the villages collectively" through negotiations between the zamindar and the representatives of the villages (pradhans). Thus the village was the smallest unit of rent-collection in relation to the zamindar in this zamindari. In the Dinajpur zamindari, kutkinadars were the persons who stood responsible for the collection of rent from the cultivators of land. The kutkinadars were, in fact, mostly the principal ryots of the villages and therefore, their engagements with the zamindar might well be considered as a variation of the village-wise settlement of rent. The practice of Najae (that the remaining ryots were held responsible for the payment of the rent of the absconding ones), which was extensively seen in this zamindari at the time of the great famine of 1770(107), also strongly suggests that, at the lowest level, settlement was made village-wise. In Purnea, in some localities, a mofussil settlement was made on the basis of gatch (an area cultivated by a number of peasants who were led by a settler known as gatchdar), and in others it was made village-wise. For instance, in the pargana of Tera Curdah, the zamindar issued only one pottach for a whole village and again, in the pargana of Sultanpore it was the usage that "the agreement [concerning the revenue matter] entered into by the Patwarris and Principal ryots is binding on the rest of the Ryots."(108) In Birbhum also the rent-collection was made village-wise and the village headmen were held responsible for the payment of rent of their villages.(109)

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(99) Harington report. Main report
(100) See Appendix (b) to this chapter. & GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790 No. 49
(101) Harington report. Main report
(102) See section 1-(2) of chap. 6
(103) PCR-DNR-P 8th Feb. 1780
(104) See section 1-(2) of chap. 3
(105) CR-P 23rd Sept. 1783 Paterson report, dated the 22nd Sept. 1783.
(106) JD-Cv-P 5th Jany 1798 No. 19
(107) CCRM 4th Feb. 1771
(108) For gatch, see section 2 of chap. 6 : PCR-DNR-P 1st Feb. 1780 BR-P 7th July 1790 No. 1
(109) CR-P 11th August 1783 No. 6 & GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790 No. 49

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In the district of Bhagalpur, "the custom in such part of this pargana where pottahs have been at all granted has been for all the inhabitants of a village to be bound by the same pottah, which recites the names of a few of the principal ryots and includes the rest with an &ca.-"(110)

These instances show that in the northern and western parts of Bengal the regular mofussil settlement was made village-wise and the villagers were collectively held responsible for the payment of the village-jama which was settled through the negotiations between the zamindar and the principal ryots.

Let us study relevant aspects of the village on the basis of the available fragmentary information.

The size of the village of our time was rather small. The Collector of Purnea computed the average population of a village as 183.(111) The Magistrate of Murshidabad put it at 223.(112) The numbers of the registered peasants in three villages in the zamindari of Sooroopoor were 9, 14 and 50 respectively.(113) In Nadia, the Collector calculated that the average number of the houses in a village was 22 and the population 132.(114)

Each village had definite boundaries and a lump sum was assessed on the whole village, which was then distributed among the villagers and all were held responsible for its payment. The villagers selected one of the principal ryots as the village-head (mandal, pradhan or pramanick) who transacted the revenue business on the part of the ryots. The zamindar appointed his agent (patwari or village amin) who was stationed in the village and transacted the business concerning rent collection in cooperation with the mandal. The village maintained a common fund from which all the necessary expenses of the village (gram kharcha) were defrayed. The village amin of Hurreepoor in the

(110) BR-P 4th Decr. 1787 No. 32
(111) JD-CV-P 8th July 1802 No. 111
(112) Ibid. No. 58
(113) See section 1-(1) of chap. 6
(114) JD-Cv-P 8th July 1802 No.s 107 & 108
(115) For more detail on village officials, see section 1-(5)-c of this chap.

Zamindari of Sooroopoor explained the nature of the gram kharcha or mofussil kharcha as follows : "[The Mofussil Kharcha] consists of the diet money of the pykes and piadehs [footmen] who come from the Sudder with the monthly chitties [notes of demand] or who are placed as mohussil(116) : of the expenses of the ryots who come to the Sudder ... : and of religious charges incurred by the ryots." He continued, "The mofussil khurcha amounts this year (1780) to 10 Gundahs on the Tahdood Jumma (or about 40 Rs.)" There was another expense called Gram Curz Sood which was "the interest paid at the rate of 15 Gundas per Rupee per Mensem for money borrowed to pay the rents and is made good by a general assessment on the ryots which is estimated this year at 10 Gundas on the Tahood Jumma, or about 40 Rs." The stipulated Jama of this village was Rs 1,250. Though the amin did not mention, he received diet money of one or two annas a day in the name of Bhasa Kharcha from the villegers.(117)

During our period economic differentiation of the peasantry was going on. However there was still a sense or equality among the villagers which to some extent checked this process. A village amin of Buzoorg Vilay-chundee in Sooroopoor explained thus : "In 1193, at the desire of the ryots, I made a measurement ... If more land was ascertained by measurement, the ryots considered the excess and the fussul [kind of crop] cultivated on it and determined the Jumma accordingly. This was merely the satisfaction of the ryots and was made by them. It was not made by order of the zamindar or government." Sometimes, however, such re-distribution of the rent was made by an order of the zamindar. On another occasion, when the rent-burden of a ryot became too heavy, the villagers decided to assign him a certain quantity of deserted land at a favourable fixed rate (chukani).(118)

The system of collective rent settlement was considered by some of the Collectors as a source of misery for the poorer ryots who were in many ways

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(116) Mohussil : An officer deputed to realize arrears of revenue.
(117) Harington report. Appendix 17 & D
(118) Ibid. Appendix D

oppressed by the principal ryots who manipulated the settlement.(119) At the time of the decennial settlement, the collectors of Birbhum,(120) Dinajpur,(121) Bhagalpur(122) and Purnea(123) strove hard to get rid of the evils derived from the system of collective village settlement by granting the pottahs to the individual cultivators. These efforts, however, turned out to be futile.

(5) Zamindari Establishments for the Collection of Rent.

The zamindar of Dinajpur maintained the establishments for rent collection and for the general control over the country at three levels ; at the central office, at the pargana office and in the village. Besides these, he maintained an establishment at Murshidabad (afterwards shifted to Calcutta) to make negotiations on all matters concerning the zamindari with government. The function, expense and significance of each of them will be studied here.

(5 - a - 1) Establishment at the central Office (Sadar Kachari)

The zamindar had a central office at the town of Dinajpur and transacted the public business there.

The following description of the central office of the zamindar is based on the report of G. Vansittart, the first Supervisor of Dinajpur, 1770.(124)

Under the head officer of the Sadar Kachari (Dewan), there were one deputy Dewan (naib dewan) and four revenue accountants (Majumdars). These six officers were the top officers and formed the council of the Rajah in all matters concerning the business of the zamindari and the negotiations with the Supervisors and government. Under their general superintendence, there were following departments : Munshis(125) Vakils,(126) Amin Daftar,(127)

(119) See Section 1-(2) of chap. 6.
(120) BR-P 6th May 1788 No.1
(121) See section 5 of chapter 4
(122) BR-P 21st Sept. 1787 No.7
(123) Ibid. 7th July 1790 No. 35
(124) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Main report & Appendixes
(125) Munshi : a writer, a secretary, an interpreter of Persian and Hindustani
(126) Vakil : A representative, an attorney
(127) Daftar : an office where records are kept

Bakhshi Daftar,(128) Chakla Daftar,(129) Adalat Daftar,(130) Sadar Daftar,(131) Nakl Daftar(132) and Shroffs.(133)

The important duty of the dewan was to reply to the mofussil correspondences(134) sent by the naibs or choudhuris of the parganas. The naibs or choudhuris sent their reports on various subjects concerning their parganas and asked for the instructions from the center. The nature of the subjects often referred to the center was as follows : the petitions of ryots for deductions of rent, information on the plunder by dacoits, sannyasis and fakirs, petitions for grants of land for the excavation of tank, interference by the gomasthas of the Commercial Residents in the business of rent collection, disputes regarding payment of rent of pahi kasht ryots belonging to other zamindaris, disputes with the neighbouring zamindars about the boundaries and about the establishment of new markets to the prejudice of the established ones nearby. The Dewan reported these problems to the Rajah and asked for his decisions on them and gave instructions to the naibs or choudhuris in the mofussil.

If the zamindar thought it necessary, he sent a zamindari officer called Amin from the center into the mofussil to investigate the matter on the spot. On the occasion of a land dispute, the amin made the measurement of the land in question(135) and reported the result to the center and the decision was made at the center on the basis of his report.

The total expense of the central office for the Bengal year 1176 (A.D. 1769) was 2,000 Sonaut Rs per mensem or 24,000 per annum.(136)

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(128) Bakhsi : A paymaster
(129) Chakla : A large division of the country, comprising a number of Parganas.
(130) Adalat : A court of Justice
(131) Sadar : Center (132) Nakl : A register
(133) Shroff : A money-changer, an officer employed to ascertain the value of dedifferent currencies.
(134) Also called the country correspondence.
(135) PCR-DNR-P 4th Novr. 1774 & ibid., 4th April 1775
(136) CCRM-P 31st Decr. 1770 Appendix No. 4

(5 - a - 2) Establishment of the Vakils at Murshidabad

During the Mughal times, all the zamindars in Bengal went up to Murshidabad to hold the Sadar Punya there at the beginning of the year, and after the confirmation of their titles to their zamindaris by the Nawab, they went back to their respective zamindaris to commence the rent settlement and rent collection for the year.(137) The zamindar had to maintain an establishment at Murshidabad which was the then capital of Bengal to make negotiations with the Mughal government on the revenue and other matters.

In the Bengal year 1176 (1769 A.D.), the zamindar of Dinajpur maintained an establishment of 106 Vakils at Murshidabad at an annual cost of Sonaut Rupees 9,660.(138) After the assumption of the whole authority of government by the East India Company and the abolition of the Council of Revenue at Murshidabad in 1772,(139) this establisnment was shifted to Calcutta and continued to function as the channel between the zamindar and government. Satanund, the head vakil in Calcutta played an important role at the time of the succession of the new zamindar to the zamindari in 1780.(140)

(5 - b) Zamindar's Establisnment at the Pargana Kachari

In 1770, the zamindari of Dinajpur comprised 65 parganas. Each pargana had a central office (pargana kachari), the size of which varied very much according to the areas and importance of each of them. The smallest one was that of Pargana Muddynaut with one choudhuri only, at the annual expense of St. Rs. 48. The biggest one was that of Pargana Suntose with one choudhuri, 3 Peshkars,(141) 5 Munshis, 2 Vakils, 1 Amin, 1 Karkun,(142)

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(137) SC-P 21st June 1770
(138) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Appendix No. 7
(139) M. Jones, "Warren Hastings in Bengal" P. 261
(140) GGC-RD-P 17th Decr. 1779 & ibid., 23rd May 1780
(141) Peshkar : An agent, a deputy
(142) Karkun : A clerk, a writer, a registrar.

1 Mohurir,(143) 1 Bakhshi, 1 Arzi Navis,(144) 1 Podar,(145) 2 Jamadars,(146) & 32 Peons, 2 Kanungoes,(147) 1 Daftari,(148) 1 Bunga Burdar,(149) 1 Paik,(150) and Bearers at the annual cost of Sonaut Rs. 7,679. The expenditure of the zamindar on the whole pargana kacharis was Sonaut Rs. 56,998 per annum. A standard establishment for a pargana kachari would be 1 Choudhuri, 1 Peshkar, 1 Amin, 1 Karkun, 1 Podar, 1 Jamadar, & 9 Peons and 1 Daftari at the annual cost of Sonaut Rs. 877.

The head of the pargana kachari was called naib or choudhuri. He was held responsible for the collection of rent for which he executed an instrument (Ferd) at the commencement of the year. He farmed out the pargana to the small mofussil farmers (kutkinadars) and collected the sum from them. In the realization of rent, he often had recourse to coercive means(151) with the help of the "Tynaute of pargana" such as attachment of crops, placement of mohusil(152) over the farmers and ryots, confinement of kutkinadars and mandals and corporal punishment.

Amongst the other duties of the naib, his function as the magistrate & judge of the pargana deserves special notice.

In almost all the parganas, there were establishments called "Tynaute Pargana". They were semi-military establishments and functioned as the police and security force of the parganas. They were under the direction of the naibs of the parganas. With the help of this establishment, the naib of the pargana protected the ryots and travellers within his jurisdiction. The naib sometimes ordered the Jamadars of the "Tynaute" to

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(143) Mohrir : A writer
(144) Arzi Navis : Arzi means a petition, and navis a writer
(145) Podar : A cash-keeper. an officer whose duty it was to weigh and examine money.
(146) Jamadar : A native sub-altern military officer, second to the Subahdar.
(147) Kanungo : An expounder of the laws & customs.
(148) Daftari : A keepers of papers, an inferior office servants.
(149) Bunga Burdar : His duty is unknown
(150) Paik : A footman, an armed attendant, a messenger
(151) See Section 3 of this chapter.
(152), Mohusil : Restraint placed on a person to prevent his escape or to enforce payment of a demand.

send a party of paiks and barkandazes[153] into the villages to arrest dacoits.[154] Sometimes, he, by the order of the zamindar, sent forces into the neighbouring zamindaris to establish the right over disputed lands or to compel people of the other zamindaris to desert their lands and to settle in his pargana.[155]

The choudhuri of the pargana exercised a judicial authority in the pargana. According to the "Regulations established by Mr. Vansittart at Dinajpur, from the 30th April to the 30th September of 1770",[156] the choudhuri was allowed to settle the complaints referred to him and to levy fines on the persons found guilty of the crimes. He was directed to send a full account of his decisions to the center. The former usage of taking fees called "Chouk Terrymans, Shookerana &ca in the decision of the causes" was abolished and in lieu thereof, a fee of 2 annas per rupee was established, one anna to be paid by the persons who gains the cause, the other by him who cast."[157]

Such complaints by peasants about the collection of rent as were referred to the British officers stationed at Dinajpur were usually then referred to the zamindar. He then passed them on to the choudhuri of the pargana where the complainants were residing.[158] It meant that one of the parties concerned acted as the judge of the case on rent matters.

The above description of the duties and functions of the choudhuri or naib of the pargana indicates their importance in the zamindar's system of land-control and rent collection.

The zamindar's actual business of land-control and rent collection was effected by the choudhuris deputed to all the parganas. The choudhuri in his double capacity as the rent-collector and the judge & magistrate of the pargana, and with the help of the "Tyanute Pargana" effectively controlled the countryside.

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(153) Barkandaz : An armed men, serving as watchman, guard, escort &ca.
(154) BDR-DNR Vol.2, 27th Feb 1788 No. 309 & ibid., 13th March 1788 No. 318
(155) PCR-DNR-P 15th Decr. 1778
(156) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770. Appendix No. 14
(157) ibid. (158) PCR-DNR-P 2nd May 1775.

The great influence and authority which the choudhuris exercised in the parganas rendered it possible for them to make private gains at the cost of the zamindar. Once the zamindar lost his control over his followers, the assets of the zamindari were sure to be depleted by their embezzlements. The downfall of the Dinajpur Raj at the close of the 18th century clearly showed this.(159) The zamindar often changed and transferred the naibs or choudhuris in order to avoid this evil.

(5-c) Zamindar's Establishment at the Village Level :

Under the choudhuris of the parganas, there was a vast number of inferior rent collectors called Karamacharis who "are the persons immediately employed in the collections."(160) Some of them were stationed in the villages to assist the mandals and the patwaris in the collection of rent, and some others acted as the messengers between the pargana offices and the small farmers (kutkinadars) or villages. The total number of this kind of officers was more than 11,000 men. They received a small quantity of rent-free land (chakeran land) as their reward.(161)

The village officers of a standard village were mandal, patwari and gram-kotwal or paik.

The mandal was the representative of the village, who was elected by the villagers.(162) He was one of the principal ryots and often possessed considerable land in and outside the village.(163) He was held responsible for the payment of a lump sum (village jama) to which he agreed and gave in an engagement (tahud). He, with the help of the patwari and the kotwal, collected rent from the other members of the village and then made it over to the inferior rent collectors or to the village farmer (kutkinadar). If any ryot fell into

(159) See chapter 4. Due to scarcity of source materials, we use here those concerning other adjoining zamindaris of northern Bengal also.
(160) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Main report
(161) Ibid. 25th July 1771 Appendix No.6. See also section 1-(3) of chap. 2.
(162) BR-P 30th Decr. 1788. No. 9
(163), See section 1-(2)-a of chap. 6

arrears of rent, the mandal ordered the kotwal of the village to attach his crops.(164) At the end of the year, he issued general releases (Chit Ferruck) to the ryots who paid up their rents and these releases became the standard of rent of each ryot for the ensuing year.(165) It was also his duty to bring back the deserted ryots or to find out others to cultivate the deserted lands.(166) He also checked the injustice on the part of the inferior zamindari officers and afforded protection to his ryots.(167)

When an amin was sent from the center into the village to measure the disputed land or on any other occasions, the mandal and a few of the principal ryots attended him to explain the boundaries and customs of the village, and to vouch for the exactness and fairness of the measurement.

Some of the leading mandals were granted rent-free lands from the zamindars for their services and their office tended to become hereditary.(168) They were usually exempted from the payment of cesses and contributions.

In the zamindaris of Sooroopoor and Bitterband, a zamindari officer called village amin played a very important role. He was directly appointed by the zamindar. He was not only authorized to distribute the village jama amongst the villagers, but also to "place Mohussils, confine and chastise slightly, and if complaints be made to them for small debts or petty offences, he examines into and decides the same, but he cannot inflict any considerable degree of punishment ... [complaints of consequce] being preferred to me [naib of the pargana]... I also sometimes refer complaints to the amin to be settled by him."(167) The village amin received his salary from the zamindar and also collected Rs. 2 to 4 from the village in the name of Bhasa Kharcha (expense for residence).

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(164) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 9th March 1787 No. 121 & BR-P 30th July 1793 Nos. 3 & 9.
(165) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 9th March 1787 No. 121 & BR-P 15th July 1788.No. 25
(166) BR-P 30th Decr. 1788 No. 9
(167) Ibid.
(168) PCR-DNR-P 1st Decr. 1778 & CCRM 25th July 1771 Appendix No. 6
(169) Harington report. Enclosure No. 17

The patwari was an inferior officer of the zamindar stationed in the village in order to record and preserve the village accounts and to help the mandal in rent-collection. He was either appointed by the zamindar or elected by the villagers. It was not rare that the mandal also functioned as the patwari. In the patwari accounts such information about the village as the quantity of land held by each ryot,(170) the rent and cesses paid by them,(171) the arrears of rent due from them,(172) desertions, new cultivation,(173) new-settlers, and alienation of land was recorded. The internal distribution of the village jama, the new impositions and the village expenses was made on the basis of the assil jama of each ryot thus recorded and revised from year to year by the patwari.(174) The assets of the pargana were calculated by the choudhuri from the accounts submitted to him by the patwaris.(175) It seems that where a village amin was appointed, these duties of the patwari were transacted by the village amin. The Patwari usually received wages for his service.

The village kotwal was under the direction of the mandal and helped him in his rent collection by compelling the ryots to attend the mandal and by attaching the crops of the defaulting ryots. He also guarded the village treasury and acted as the watchman of the village.(176)

In Rajshahi and Birbhum, there was a village officer called Halshana whose particular duty was to prevent the ryots from reclaiming waste lands without receiving the patthas for the same and from assuming the unlicensed lands as rent-free lands (bazi zamin).(177)

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(170) LCB-RDM No. 8 19th June 1770 Enclosed statement.
(171) CR-P 11th August 1783 No. 14
(172) LCB-RDM No. 8
(173) BR-W-P 7th July 1795 No. 6
(174) Cf. section 1-(1)-b of this chapter
(175) LCB-RDM No. 8 & CCRM 4th Feb. 1771
(176) Harington report Enclosure No. 17
(177) BR-P 13th April 1787 No. 89 & ibid. 18th Oct. 1790 No. 33(?)

Section 2 Zamindar's Establishment for keeping Peace and Order, and for Coercion.

Here we shall examine the condition of law and order and the establishments for its maintenance in the zamindari of Dinajpur.

The establishment for keeping peace and order also functioned as the means of enforcing the payment of rent. In view of the abundance of arable lands and scarcity of labour,(178) the ryots, especially the wealthy ones, were in a strong position in their relation to the zamindar. But for the use of coercive measures, the zamindar must have immediately faced a financial crisis due to the accumulation of arrears of rent payable both from the ryots as well as from the small mofussil farmers.

The zamindar was frequently involved in disputes with the neighbouring zamindars on various matters. During early British rule, government's authority had yet to be established and it could not function as the arbitrator of disputes between the zamindars. The contending parties, therefore, often tried to force their claim by the use of their armed followers. Plunders by the Sannyasis, fakirs and dacoits were rampant.

Under such conditions, the zamindar could not control his country without the semi-military forces both for the sake of the security of the country and for the realization of rent.

(1) State of Peace and Order in North Bengal during the second half of the 18th century.

The fall of the Mughal power in Bengal at the middle of the 18th century created confusion in rural Bengal. The Company's government had yet to establish an effectual judicial system to supress the disturbers of the peace of the country. The security of the country, in most parts of Bengal,

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(178) See chapter 5

depended on the local prestige and establishment of the zamindars. We shall briefly examine the problems concerning the peace of the country which the zamindars had to deal with.

We can classify such problems into four groups ; raids by the Sannyasis and fakirs, gang-robbery (dacoity), conflicts between the zamindars and the disturbances set on foot by the ryots against the zamindars or public farmers.

The sannyasis and fakirs were the mendicants, Hindu and Muslim respectively, who were wandering over north & east India and constantly on motion from one holy place to another in groups.(179) On their way to the place of worship they exacted money from the villagers and wealthy inhabitants. When they entered the village, they confined the mandals and other principal ryots and demanded a certain amount of money from the villagers.(180) Sometimes, they even raided the pargana offices and plundered the public treasures kept there.(181) As long as their demands were complied with, they remained peaceful. The following extract from a letter of G. Hatch explains the nature of their demands on the ryots : "it would seem that formerly the inhabitants of the villages of this and of other districts voluntarily gave a small gratuity by way of charity to the Fakirs when they approached their villages - that this donation in progress of time was converted into a fixed contribution, and that separate Banditti set up claims to the right of levying it and support these self-created titles by proceeding to acts of hostility and bloodshed to the great annoyance of the inhabitants."(182) The East India Company's government considered this forcible contribution

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(179) See for detail J. Ghose's two books. "Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal", 1930 and "The Sannyasis in Mymensingh", 1923. Also Branjen dranaut Banerji's small book, "The Sannyasi Rebellion in Bengal",1927.
(180) BDR-DNR Vol.II 25th Sept. 1786 Nos. 47 & 48
(181) CCRM 13th Decr. 1770 Letter 122 & CC-P 13th Jany 1773
(182) Quoted in J. Ghose, "Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal" PP. 22 to 23.

inadmissible and made systematic attempts to annihilate these banditti from their territory.(183) But even as late as in 1799, Rajah Radhanaut of Dinajpur in his petition deplored that "the plundering Fakeers with a number of armed men are in the habit of annually committing depredations in the parganas belonging to my zamindary, plundering the houses of the ryots and taking away the Revenue from the catcharry, and also murdering and wounding the inhabitants, burning their houses and carrying them to the Hills. In this manner, they carry on their oppression."(184)

Gang-robbery or dacoity was a permanent evil all over Bengal in the 18th & 19th centuries. During the period under review, murders, plunders and setting houses on fires were quite often referred to in the official letters. Even public treasure escorted by a party of armed guards was attacked and plundered.(185) The following description of the conditions in Tippearh helps us to visualize the extremity of the evils and terrors of the dacoits ; "So familiar is murder & robbery that the life of the fellow creature is scarce of more value than that of a fly - Bands of decoits are kept by the zamindars and Talookdars under the name of Negabuns to defend their Districts, ... every village had its dacoit Protector & the Public Robber who has gained the most notoriety for intrepidity & cruelty, has the greatest number of village under his protection."(186) Thus, the zamindars assisted the dacoits in some localities.

There were various causes of conflicts between zamindars, such as claims over disputed lands or disputed sources of income (Jalkar, Bankar and Sayer),(187) the resistance of the deposed zamindars against the present zamindar,(188) the family feuds, and the flight of ryots from one zamindari to another.

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(183) See J.Ghose op. cit. Chapters 7 & 12
(184) BR-P 2nd April 1799 No. 10
(185) BR-P 18th April 1791 No. 8 to 16
(186) BR-P 7th May 1789 No. 35
(187) PCR-DNR-P 30th March 1779, & ibid. 15th June 1779. &ca.
(188) GGC-RD-P 13th July 1799 & PCR-DNR-P 30th June 1778.

Conflicts arising from the flight of ryots may require an explanation. In those days, Pahikasht cultivation prevailed all over Bengal. Pahikasht ryots often refused to pay their rents and fled away to other zamindaris where they cultivated land as resident ryots. When the former zamindar demanded the latter to produce the absconding ryots, disputes would ensue between the two.(189) In other case, the stronger zamindar sent his people into the adjoining smaller zamindaris at the time of cultivation and raised disturbances there to force the ryots to quit their lands and to take up lands in his own zamindari.(190) In both cases, scarcity of labour in the countryside was the real cause.

When the demand of zamindars or revenue farmers on the ryots became exorbitant, ryots protested against it in various ways - desertion, refusal of payment of the enhanced rent, and representation of their grievances to the Collector or even to the highest authority at Calcutta.(191) As a last resort, after the unsuccessful efforts through peaceful means, they were sometimes forced to take the law in their hands. Disturbances of ryots of our time were always led by wealthy ryots with or without the support of the rival zamindars.(192) The most outstanding example of this was that of Rangpur ryots against the public farmer, Devy Singh, in 1783. In the Dinajpur district also, the ryots raised a disturbance against one of Devy Singh's gomashtas in 1782.(193)

(2) Zamindar's Establishment for the Maintenance of Peace and and Order, and for Coercion.

In the zamindari of Dinajpur, the establishments called "Tynaute" were maintained both at the Sadar and in the mofussil. Besides these, outposts were established at the frontiers to protect the country from the inroads of hill people, Sannyasis etc.

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(189) PCR-DNR-P 6th Decr. 1779 & CR-P 14th March 1782 Letter 11
(190) PCR-DNR-P 15th Decr. 1778.
(191) See Section 1-2-b, of chapter 6
(192) Do.
(193) See 1-2 of chapter 3

(2 - a) Establishment at the Sadar

At the town of Dinajpur, the Rajah maintained two distinct Tynautes, one at the Rajah's residence (Raj-bari) and the other at the Sadar Kachari.

The total number of the servants attending the Rajbari including the menial servants was 2,214 persons and they held rent free lands to the amount of 56,190 bighas. Among them were 21 horsemen holding 3,947 bighas of chakeran land, 109 peons holding 2,794 bighas and 497 paiks holding 12,925 bighas.(194)

At the Sadar Kachari, there were 7 horsemen holding 2,869 bighas of chakeran land, 8 sadar naibs holding 400 bighas and 509 paiks holding 12,383 bighas.

The Rajah had, therefore, under his immediate command, 1,151 armed men who held 35,321 bighas of chakeran lands in different parganas.

Besides the above chakeran servants attending at the Tynaute at the town of Dinajpur, he held 77 Swar (horsemen) and 464 Barkandazes who were paid in money. Their annual salary of Rs 24,000 was deducted from the public revenue of the zamindari by a Sanad (a grant) of Mohammed Reza Khan, the naib Dewan of the Khalsa.(195) This nagdi (196) force, therefore, seems to have been originally the Mansab assigned to the zamindar of Dinajpur by the former Mughal government.

In cases of urgencies, such as violent disturbances of ryots, clashes with the other zamindars, forced occupation of a pargana and the depredation of banditti, the zamindar sent a party to reinforce the pargana tynaute.(197)

(2 - b) Establishment in the Mofussil

There were 48 'tynaute parganas' in the zamindari of Dinajpur. The size of them differed very much according to the extent, situation and importance of the respective parganas. The smallest one was tynaute of pargana

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(194) CCRM 25th July 1771 Appendix 6
(195) Ibid. 31st Decr. 1770 Main report
(196) Nagdi : paid in cash
(197) BDN-DNR Vol. 2 7th March 1788. No. 317 & ibid. Vol.1, 20th March,1788 No. 146.

Ackbarabad consisting only of 4 mandals and 2 paiks with 62 bighas of chackeran land. The biggest one was that of Chakla(198) Suntose consisting of 1,617 persons with 16,631 bighas of chackeran land. The total number of the chackeran servants employed in the mofussil tynautes was 15,126 persons holding 201,560 bighas of chackeran land.

The tynaute pargana, thus, occupied by far the biggest portion of the whole establishments of the zamindari.

The tynaute of pargana Mohosow, the detail of which is given below, may be considered as an standard one.(199)

Pargana Mohosow

Tynaute Pargana	Number of Servants	Chackeran land(bighas)
Paiks employed to collect the rents from the under farmers	44	774-15
Peons	15	390
Tanadars	30	786- 8
Daftaris (inferior office servants)	2	50
Tomtom Wallah (drum beaters).....	1	60- 6
Bearers	12	144
Gram Kotwal or Paiks employed to collect rents from the ryots ..	206	2,370
Mandal	1	18
Matraine or sweeper	1	0- 7
Bundari or servant employed at Takoor Bari	1	15-18
	313	4,556-14

In the above statement, the paiks and gram kotwals both of whom were employed in the rent collection occupied the biggest portion of the tynaute of this pargana. In the whole mofussil tynautes, out of 15,126 persons employed, 11,319 (75 %) were employed directly for the rent collection. The importance of the business of rent collection in the duties of the mofussil tynautes is thus evident.

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(198) Chukla : A large division of the country under the Mughals.
(199) CCRM 25th July 1771 Appendix 6

At the Takoor bari, Rajbari and market places, the zamindar kept a small party to guard the places.

The tynaute pargana was under the control of the choudhuri of the pargana and acted for the maintenance of the security of the pargana as well as for the promotion of the collection of rent.

Gram kotwals were, as we have already seen, stationed in the villages and acted under the direction of the mandals of the villages.

In the villages, the mandals were expected to act as the police agents. They were ordered to report to the pargana office about the notorious and reputed dacoits, and suspicious persons who took shelter in the village.(200)

(2 - c) Establishment for the Protection of the Frontiers of the Zamindari

The guards of the boundaries were called Girdwars. They were stationed in the parganas of Salbari, Gora Ghat, Suntose, Surjanagar, Barbila, Battason and Mahasingpur at the annual cost of about Rs 6,000.(201)

Their main duty was to check the inroads of the fakirs, sannyasis and other robbers to the zamindari.

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(200) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 20th Novr. 1789 No. 470 &
ibid. 5th Decr. 1789 No. 488

(201) BR-P 13th March 1789 No. 5 to 7. Enclosures & ibid.,
28th May 1789. No. 16. Enclosure.

Section 3 The Nature of the Zamindar's Control over the Ryots

There was always a tension between the zamindar and the ryots over the quantum of rent. The zamindars had to maintain huge civil and semi-military establishments at a great cost for the collection of rent. The zamindar could not expect a smooth realization of rent from the ryots by these establishments alone. He had also to retain a local prestige which kept the ryots in awe. The foundation of such local prestige lay in the sanction of the State for the appropriation of part of the produce of the country in consideration of the zamindar's role as the collector of the state's demand on the country and as the protector of peace and order, in the physical strength of his establishments (sadar and mofussil tynautes) which enabled him to keep the country under control, and in the sanction of the ryots for the continuation of the ancient zamindari system.

Though the ryots did not openly deny the right of the zamindar to collect and appropriate part of their produce, they did everything in their power to evade or diminish the burden of rent. When the zamindar's local prestige declined due to political confusion and natural calamities during the early years of British rule, it became "customary for many of the ryots to embezzle their harvest and quit their habitation without paying the public revenue."(202) The zamindars, on their part, frequently attached the crops in the fields until the payment of rent was completed.(203) The use of coercive measures was neither rare nor exceptional. The zamindar of Burdwan wrote in his petition ; "Mofussil collections cannot be carried out without severity and without my possessing authority".(204)

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(202) PCR-DNR-P 28th Octr. 1774.
(203) Ibid. & BR-P 22nd March 1790. Main report
(204) BR-P 11th Oct. 1790. No. 14

The zamindari of Rajshahi wrote that the usage and practice in the collection of the revenue "throughout the Province of Bengal is as follows - Mohussils, Piadehs(205) are placed over all the Naibs, Farmers, Under-renters, and Malgoozars,(206) to collect from them the Public Revenue ... If they delay and neglect the payment thereof, they are confined and fettered, and if this fail of obtaining the realization of the Public Revenue, corporal punishment is inflicted ,,. and the Houses and Effects of those in balance are attached and held in sequestaration ..."(207) In the zamindari of Sooroopoor, when certain villages failed to pay their instalment of rent, the zamindar at first sent a Paik to demand the arrears and, then, a Piadeh was sent to chastise the village amin who was the zamindari officer. If the rent could not still be realized, he chastised the head ryots of the village.(208)

Though the coercive measures were frequently made use of, daily transactions of the business of rent collection were regulated by the usages of the country. As was shown earlier, at the time of negotiations over abwabs, the ryots accepted the demands only when they judged them to be in accordance with the usages of the country. In case of disputes between the zamindar and the ryots on any matters, it was the custom of the country (Raj-ul-mulk)(209) on which both parties claimed the justice of their stands.

According to the usage of the country, "the ryot is liable to his rent from the moment of his ploughing the ground."(210) But after the discharge of rent, the ryot was at liberty to quit the land, and the zamindar had no prescriptive right, to prevent him from doing so. The zamindar, on

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(205) Piadeh : A footman, an armed servant : the same as peon.
(206) Malguzar : A revenue payer through a sub-ordinate native collector.
(207) BR-P 29th June 1792 No. 19
(208) BR-P 22nd March 1790 Main report
(209) BR-P 16th June 1787 No. 30 to 31.
(210) BR-P 20th Oct. 1786 No. 2

such occasions, might offer a better condition to persuade the ryot to stay on, but it was unlawful for him to compel the ryot not to leave the zamindari.(211)

It is quite important, nevertheless, to note that the alterations in the "Raj-ul-mulk" were taking place from time to time. The Raj-ul-mulk was largely the agreements reached in the past between the ryots and the zamindar and, therefore, changeable in accordance with the changes in the relationship between them and with the changes in the basic conditions of agricultural production.

By 'the basic conditions of agricultural production' is meant the relative positions of the labour, land and agricultural stocks.(212) During the period under review, there were extensive arable lands waiting for the hands of the cultivators. Desertion by the ryots was, therefore, an effective method of harassing the zamindar. Ryots with stocks sufficient to reclaim the waste lands were welcomed by every zamindar. Under this condition, it was not possible for the zamindar to demand more than what they used to pay. In the agrarian society in those days, distribution of the agricultural stocks was quite unequal among the peasantry. For the zamindars who were, mostly in desperate financial conditions, it was out of question to give loans to the poorer ryots who were badly in want of them, to promote the cultivation of their zamindaris. The zamindars, therefore, depended on the money-lenders,the small local farmers (kutkinadars) and the wealthy ryots for the supply of agricultural stocks to the poorer ryots to enable them to continue and, if possible, to extend cultivation. The zamindar, in return for the essential role of these people in the production process of society, had to give them concessions in various forms. This situation also explains why the zamindar had to abide by the usage of the country.

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(211) PCR-DNR-P 6th Decr. 1774
(212) See chapter 5

As we have seen above, the zamindar often attached the crop as security for the payment of rent. This rendered it necessary for the ryots to borrow from the merchants to pay the rent. Besides, this, the poorer ryots were chronically indebted to the money-lenders who were mostly the wealthy ryots and the grain merchants. The ryots were, thus oppressed by the double-burden of the debts from the money-lenders and the payment of rent. The zamindar welcomed the money-lenders, as the loans given by them facilitated the collection of rent from the ryots.(213)

For the zamindar, the most dangerous form of resistance by the ryots was their collusive acquisition of previleged tenures. This abuse went to an incredible degree. The Collector of Birbhum reported that in one pargana about one half of the assets was sunk by the wealthy ryots in this way.(214) The increase of such abuse meant, on one hand, the fall of the numerous small self-sufficient ryots to the rank of share-croppers (adhiyars), under-ryots (pirjas) and agricultural labourers (krishans) and, on the other hand, the accumulation of land in the hands of a few wealthy ryots. It also meant the diminution of the assets of the zamindari. The wealthy ryot became powerful opponents to the zamindar's authority in the countryside.(215) They went, on some rare occasions, as far as entertaining a party of armed men in their pay and openly resisting the authority of the zamindar.

It was, therefore, the obvious interest of the zamindar to prevent the small self-sufficient ryots from becoming adhiyars, Pirjas and krishans. By keeping up the small self sufficient ryots under the regular mofussil settlement, preferably the fussili type, he could have prevented the growth of the wealthy ryots in the countryside. Besides this, the small self-sufficient ryots paid a higher rate of rent and the full amount of the abwabs and mathots.

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(213) See section 3-(2) of chapter 6
(214) See section 1-(2) of chapter 6
(215) Do.

But the zamindar's local influence, which was constantly declining due to the confusion abovementioned during the second half of the 18th century, was no longer enough to suppress the growing local power of the wealthy ryots. The zamindari system in the late 18th century lost its vigour and could not control the country by its establishments alone. It was the support of the state authority, namely the Regulation 7 of 1799 (216) that revived the zamindar's authority over the ryots at the beginning of the 19th century.

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(216) See chapter 7

Appendix (a) to chapter 1 On Khod Kasht Tenure

The famous Amini Report submitted on the 25th March 1778 to Warren Hastings, the Governor General in Council says ; "The name of Hoodcasht is given to those Ryots who are inhabitants of the village to which the lands they cultivate belong. Their right of possession whether it arises from an actual property in the soil or from the length of occupacy is considered as stronger than that of other Ryots and they generally pay the highest rents for the lands which they hold ... Hoodcasht Ryots partake the rights of hereditary landholders."(1) J. Shore's Minute dated the 18th June 1789 adds some important information ; "Puttahs to the Khode Khosht ryots ... are generally given, without any limitation of period ; and express that they are to hold the lands, paying the rents from year to year. Hence the right of occupancy originates ; and it is equally understood as a prescriptive law, that the ryots who hold by this tenure, cannot relinquish any part of the lands in their possession, or change the species of cultivation, without a forfeiture of the right of occupancy, which is rarely insisted upon ; and that the right of occupancy is admitted to extend, even to their heirs of those who enjoy it."(2)

J. Shore's contention that the khod kasht ryots paid their rents according to the articles of cultivation and that any change in such articles of cultivation could not be done without the consent of the zamindar cannot be generalized. As we have seen, in many zamindaris where the mofussil settlement was of the tahudi type, the ryots were at liberty to cultivate whatever articles they pleased. Only in the well-managed zamindaris, the land-holders could charge higher rents for profitable articles. Concerning the relinquishment of part of the holding, Shore again over-simplified the

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(1) GGC-RD-P 3rd April 1778 No.9
(2) Fifth Report. pp. 87 to 88 Para 406.

matter. In the districts of Rangpur in 1789,(3) in Tipperah in 1789 & 1793(4) and in Dacca,(5) we have evidence that rent was determined by the size of the cultivation that the annual measurement showed. The ryots of these districts, therefore, paid only for such portion of his holdings as he cultivated in the current year without forfeiting the right of occupancy.

So loose was the concept of khod kasht, that it actually included a very wide range of tenures from the lands under the regular mofussil settlement to the lands held at privileged and fixed rent.(6) It is possible to conclude that we had better not consider the Khod kasht ryot as belonging to a single social group.

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(3) BR-P 22nd March 1790.
(4) BR-P 7th May 1789 No. 35 & ibid. 28th Feb. 1794 No. 32 to 35.
(5) Fifth Report. p. 90. Para 418.
(6) CR-P 3rd April 1786 No. 43 to 49 & BR-P 16th June 1786 No. 30 to 31

Appendix (b) to chapter 1 On Pahi Kasht Tenure

It is difficult to define the pahi kashtt tenure in a clear-cut way, as it underwent considerable changes during the period under review. The following loose definition of it in a Khalsa report in 1776(1) would hold good for the whole period in question.

> "Pyekashtryets are those who cultivate the lands not particularly appropriated either by annual Pottah or for a longer Term, as may be agreed on by the parties. They pay only for such land as they cultivate ... There are subdivisions of the Pyekasht ryets such as Teka ryets who undertake for a certain quantity of ground at a fixed rate, Comar where the produce of the ground is equally divided between the Ryets and Farmer."

As shown in the above extract, the term Pyekasht was loosely used for those ryots who cultivated land "not particularly appropriated" and the payment of rent was made in various modes ; firstly, for those lands as actually cultivated, secondly, by a lump sum for a certain tract of land and lastly in kind. But originally, this term was used for such ryot who cultivated land of a village where he did not reside.(2) And in some districts, they were classified into two types ; Beer Gird ryots were "Ryotts of Neighbouring Villages" and Pahikasht ryots were "Ryotts of Neighbouring Province not Residents."(3)

The Pahi kashtt tenure prevailed where there were plenty of arable lands "not particularly appropriated". Political disorder such as the Maratha raids in the middle of the 18th century, the exactions by Mir Kasim, by the public farmers and by the zamindars and the natural calamities such as the great famine of 1770 and the large scale inundation of 1787 caused deaths and desertions of numerous ryots and large tracts of unoccupied arable lands appeared in many parts of the country.

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(1) SKR-P 26th July 1776. Letter No. 134
(2) Fifth Report. J. Shore's minute dated the 18th June 1789. Para 225
(3) BDR-BRM 16th August 1787 p. 7.

The great famine of 1770 had the most devastating effects on the country. It caused a drastic change in the relationship between the land and labour. J. Rider, the Collector of Krishnagar (Nadia), wrote in 1772 :

> "Before the extraordinary Dearth of 1770 which carried off so many of the inhabitants, the Gomastah in the Mofussil could say with great insolence to a Ryat, "If you had not commenced upon the culture of this Jellah [district], there were many that would have been glad of it, and, therefore, you must not expect to be execused any thing in your payments whether you turn up the whole of the grounds or not, which is at your option." But the case being so miserably altered. I apprehend that the greatest encouragement is not only necessary to be given but I do not believe the Ryat will be induced to settle anywhere but upon his own terms. Land being so plenty."(4)

Cultivation under the Pahikasht tenure rapidly expanded under such conditions. In Nadia, 41.5 % of the total rental was expected to come from the lands under "Rieatee Pyecushta" in 1771.(5) Considering that the rate of rent for the pahikasht tenure under such circumstance could not but be very low, the size of the land under this tenure immediately after the great famine must have exceeded half of the total cultivated area in Nadia.

The extensive practice of pahikasht cultivation was thus, seen in Bengal in the early part of 1770's. Ryots of Burdwan and Birbhum went to Rajshahi and cultivated the lands there in 1772.(6) In pargana Apole in the zamindari of Dinajpur, one fourth of the rental was paid by the pahi kasht ryots from Rajshahi, Silberis, Edrackpore, Barbuckpur, Andalgong &ca. in 1774.(7) The ryots of Dinajpur went to the zamindari of Rocunpore in the district of Murshidabad and cultivated the lands there in 1775.(8)

Thus, the zamindars did their best to repeople the deserted lands by allowing low privileged rates of rent to the ryots who came to their zamindari.

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(4) CC Vol.1. 10th June 1772 (at Krishnagar). Collector's letter.
(5) Ibid. Enclosure entitled "Abstract of the Hustabood of Nuddea Assul or Rents".
(6) CCRM 24th Feb. 1772.
(7) PCR-DNR-P 6th Decr. 1774 & ibid. 10th Octr. 1774.
(8) Ibid. 27th Novr. 1775.

The ryots who remained at their resident village also took up lands under the pahi kasht engagements in and outside their villages(9) and by this means were enabled to pay up the extra taxes called najae which were imposed on the remaining ryots (Hazera ryots) to make up for the deficiency caused by desertion of ryots (Palataka) in the total amount of the village jama.(10)

The cultivation under the pahi kashit tenure, which rapidly increased after the great famine of 1770, tended to decrease in the middle of 1780's. The decrease was accelerated by the pattah regulation which sought to remove the distinction between the low privileged rent and the ordinary rent in many districts of Bengal and Bihar.

In the district of Dinajpur, G. Hatch started a powerful attempt at the abolition of the pahikasht tenure in 1787.(11) Under the background of the gradual recovery of the country from the damages of the great famine of 1770, and the improving balance between the labour and land, the zamindar would no longer allow the disadvantageous tenure like pahikasht to the ryots. The rental from the pahikasht cultivation dwindled to Rs. 19,053 in 1792 and it disappeared in the next year.(12)

In the district of Birbhum also, introduction of the Cornwallis's pattah system severely affected the holders of pahikasht tenure. The rate of rent for one bigha of pahikasht land leaped up from 11 annas in 1786 to Re. 1-6 in 1787 by the equalization of the nirkh in this district.(13) This must have contributed greatly to the diminution of the pahi kasht cultivation in Birbhum.

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(9) W.W. Hunter "Annals of Rural Bengal" Indian Studies Edition 1965 p. 39
(10) CCRM 4th Feb. 1771
(11) See section 5 of chapter 4
(12) BR-P 3rd Jany. 1794 No. 45
(13) BDR-BRM 16th August 1787. Enclosure. The figure for the year 1768 given there contradicts our argument, but a figure of only one village can not be a sufficient refutation. So many local conditions should be taken into consideration to appraise properly the figure given there and it is out of the present author's capacity to do it.

However, the pahikasht cultivation did not disappear from Bengal once for all. The Pahikasht tenure temporarily and locally revived when gross mismanagement by the Zamindar or natural calamity occurred in a certain locality. The inundation of 1787 was one of such occasions. Rangpur district suffered greatly. The zamindari of Futtypore $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas division was one of the most severely injured estates : "10 annas of the lands of the pargana are Jungle and 6 in cultivation. About 4 annas has been Jungle from the period of the Mussulman Government and 6 annas has remained waste since the Inundation in 1194 (1787 A.D.)."(14) The manager of this estate promoted the cultivation of these deserted lands "by encouraging the ryots, and employing the Abadgeers to induce them to settle ... Sometimes, a few are induced to come from other Districts, and settle them as Pycusht Ryot which occasion improvement in a small degree." In a small zamindari of pargana Sultanpore in Rangpur, oppression and exaction of the former zamindars in 1790 caused a desertion of many khodkasht ryots and pahikasht ryots refused to cultivate the land as heretofore. "It has been usual for the abaudgeers of the pargana ... to establish Pyecusht ryots every year on the unoccupied grounds at the Nerk of the other lands in the neighbourhood, but this year ... the abaudgears found it necessary to reduce the Rates..."(15) The above two instances would show that when acute scarcity of labour occurred in certain locality, the landholders were obliged to grant the pahikasht tenure at a privileged rate. But on the whole the panikasht tenure was on the wane at the end of 1780's in Bengal.

Under the changing conditions of the pahikasht cultivation, the nature of the tenure showed some changes.

Originally, as Amini report put it, the pahi kasht ryots "rented land belonging to a village in which they do not reside. They are considered

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(14) BR-W-P 6th Novr. 1792 No.3
(15) Ibid. 6th Novr. 1792 No.7

as Tenants at will and having only a temporary and occasional Interest in the soil which they cultivate, will not submit to the payment of so high a Rent as the preceding class of Ryots /Khod kasht ryots/, and when oppressed, easily abandon lands to which they have no attachment."(16) By the end of the 1780's, the country recovered considerably from the damages of the great famine, and the size of the good unoccupied lands greatly diminished. For the zamindar, it was in his interest to have his estate cultivated by the khod kasht ryots, because the khod kasht ryots paid higher rate of rent than the pahi kasht ryots did and they, moreover, paid the full abwabs and mathots, while the pahi kasht ryots were often exempted from the payment of many of these impositions.(17) It was also easier for him to collect the rent from the resident ryots than from the non-resident ryots who easily escaped with their crops into other estates where their residences were. The absconded ryots took shelter under their zamindar to whom they paid their rent as khod kasht ryots. Both zamindars, then were involved in a dispute which frequently developed into an armed clash or a prolonged petition to the higher authority.(18) The local custom gave the khod kasht ryots the priority for the possession of the unappropriated lands in the villages.(19) Some of the pahi kasht ryots, however, began to claim their strong right over their pahi kasht lands which they brought into cultivation from the state of waste lands and continued to cultivate.(20) The pahi kasht ryots, thus, grounded their claim to the pahi kasht lands on the prescriptive right of the clearer of the waste lands which, it seems, the zamindar and the resident ryots could not ignore altogether. The pani kasht ryots, on their part, were prepared to pay a higher rate of rent than before if their right over the lands would be acknowledged. Thus, a tendency to the perpetuation

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(16) GGC-RD-P 3rd April 1778 No.9
(17) SKR-P 26th July 1776 LR. No. 134. Enclosures.
(18) CR-P 14th March 1782 LR. No. 11 & ibid. 6th April 1786 No. 39
(19) BR-P 9th Jany 1789 (A letter from P.Speke dated 26th Decr. 1788).
(20) BR-P 11th Feb. 1790 No. 13.

of the khud kasht tenure was unmistakably seen.

C. Oldfield, Collector of Murshidabad, wrote in 1795 that "they [the Mokuraurry, Keraurry & Pykasht leases] are in fact merely nominal, or ... terms for indulgence. Very few, if any, having got any Pottahs for the lands they so held. Those who hold lands under these tenures being in general the Mandals or principal people of the village who have procured their names to be entered in the Jama Wassil Bawkey Accounts ..."(21) A similar practice was reported by the Collector of Birbhum in 1790. The Mandals there incited the ordinary ryots to desert and then took in those deserted lands "under the mofussil term Benyamy or Pyecast with the usual indulgence to such Ryotts."(22) The following strange construction of the pahi kasht and the khod kasht by J. Kinlock, the Collector of Burdwan, in 1788 would be only understandable in this context. He observed, "The first are the Khood Kasht, or aborigines being ryots of inferior Cast, who pay a House rent (torn) a greater revenue for the lands they are (torn) than the Pykasht who are ryots of a superior Rank that neither pay rent for their dwelling house, nor do they pay so high a revenue for their lands."(23) The abuse of the pahi kasht tenure in the district of Burdwan was so widespread that the Collector had mistaken a term of pahi kasht for a general denomination of the privileged low rent land held by the principal ryots of the villages. Thus, developed the notion of Nichgong Pahikasht.(24) This must have been the result of the manoeuvre of the wealthy ryots and of the compromise between the zamindars and the principal ryots.(25)

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(21) BR-P 12th May 1795 No. 51
(22) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790 No. 49
(23) BR-P 24th June 1788 No. 24
(24) Ibid. It literally means "resident-pahi kasht", or "resident non-resident".
(25) See section 5 of chap. 4 & Section 1-(2) of chap. 6.

Appendix (c) to chapter 1 : Some Instances of Produce Rent

In the parganas of Shujahnagar and Santosh in Dinajpur, considerable lands were cultivated on produce rent. Though these lands were called Adhi-jots, the holders rented the lands directly from the zamindar and, therefore, were not under-ryots but cultivated them on their own. On such lands disputes concerning the form of rent frequently occurred. In 1782 when "the crop being this year abundant & paddy very cheap & not readily convertible into money", the zamindar demanded thika rent (a certain rate per bigha in money) and by force collected it. Two years after when the prices of grain became high, the ryots wanted to pay their rent in money and the zamindar agreed to it. The ryots this time gained considerably, because "a bigha which last year yielded 8 annas, bringing [brought] about double sum". Hatch thus observed : "custom, for time immemorial has established the privilege of a choice to the government... The riaut in return may when he finds it beneficial from grain being in Demand, or other advantageous circumstances, pay in money with this further advantage : that a deduction of $\frac{1}{4}$ from the price [which] grain is valued at in the pargana is granted to him."(1)

The custom thus enabled the government or zamindar to preserve the usual amount of rent by demanding the money rent in the years of low prices, while it allowed the ryots to enjoy the profit from the high prices of grain by converting the produce rent into money rent. But when the prices remained at the usual level, both the zamindar and ryots had no objection to continue the produce rent.

In the zamindari of Sooroopoor in Rangpur, the zamindar held 700 to 800 bighas of Khamar lands spreading over 8 villages. He stationed an inferior

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(1) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 Nos. 51 & 188 : ibid. Vol. 2 No. 114.
BDR-RGPR. Vol. 2 Nos. 247 to 249
CR-P 5th Feb. 1784 No. 63

officer called Khamaroo and five or six labourers (Halooahs) in these villages in order to cultivate the khamar land. The produce from them was kept in the khamar golahs (storehouse) and was sold according to the instructions from the center. A clerk was sent from the center to take accounts of the sale of the produce and remit the profits. Some portion of the khamar lands was rented out to the ryots on money rent. The zamindar derived a profit of Rs. 500 to 600 from these lands. The khamaroo and halooahs received chakeran lands for their services.(2)

In a very small estate of Kismat Koodlah in Dinajpur, which comprised only 206 bighas, there were 22 bighas of Khamar land which were cultivated by the adhiadars. Its produce was appropriated for the use of the zamindar.(3)

In Birbhum, there were two types of produce rent ; (a) Khamar and (b) Sanjah. (a) The share in the produce of the khamar land was determined through two distinct processes : Coot and Coot Khammar. Coot was "an estimate of the quantity of Grain a field will produce. This estimate is made by five or more of the principal men of the village who with the Gomastha [agent] and Ryot repair to the spot, the half of whatever they estimate the field will produce, must be paid to Government, be the ryots a loser or gainer by it." And when the harvest was got in, and grain trodden out, the gomastha & the ryot made a division of it. A practice of Coot Khammar was carried out at this time as follows : "[The gomastah] taking from each heap as much as he can draw at once with both hands, as the further advantage of government, and somewhat less quantity for himself... The straw in both instances was appropriated by the ryots." (b) The Sanjah lands "pay at all times the same, be the season more or less favourable, or the Land altogether

(2) Harington report Appendix E
(3) BR-W-P 4th Sept. 1793 No. 7

unproductive. According to their quality, they pay from one and half to five maunds of grain Annum ... Should they be do[4], or producing a crop of rice and one of cotton &ca, nothing is paid for the cotton, or whatever may be the second crop." The ryots possessing this type of produce-rent land were well-off due to its favourable tenure.[5]

In Burdwan district, we find two types of money rent, which were evidently transitional forms from produce rent to money rent. One was called the Sajah tenure under which the ryots had to pay the value of a certain fixed amount of paddy that was "calculated on the Market price of rice on the day [the ryots] make the payment". Another one was called the Baug Khamar tenure. Under this the ryot had to pay the value of a fixed share of the produce which was determined by estimation ; "Having brought into cultivation, the principal ryots of your village & the mundull shall in your presence decide the average produce, and you are to give a division." Though the mode of calculation of the value of the Zamindar's share was not shown, it must have been computed on the market price of rice on the day when the payment was made as in the above case.[6]

We find thus some similarity between the two types of produce rent in Birbhum, and two types of money-rent in Burdwan.

In Bengal proper, produce-rent still persisted on the nankar land[7] of the zamindars &c., but generally speaking it was no more a dominant form of rent payment. The surviving produce rent in Bengal was more or less mixed with money rent, except where the produce of such land was actually applied for the use of the zamindar.

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(4) Do : Literally it means two, hence double-cropping.
(5) BR-P 29th March 1790 No. 67
(6) Ibid. 11th Oct. 1790 No. 15
(7) 'Nankar land : Land assigned to the zamindar as an allowance or for his subsistence.

In the Bihar districts, the situation was different from that in Bengal districts. Here, produce-rent prevailed widely and the right of the ryots who held lands under produce rent was as secure as that under the regular mofussil settlement in Bengal. The tenure of produce rent, which was generally known as bhaoli or bhatai must, therefore, be considered as one of the regular types in Bihar.

In Purnea, produce rent was rapidly disappearing during our period, but it still prevailed extensively in some parganas. In the zamindari of Dhurrumpore, both money-rent system (naqdi) and produce-rent system (bhaoli) were prevalent and holdings of many ryots contained both tenures. Colebrooke ably described the transformation of produce rent into money rent in this zamindari in 1790 which had been the stronghold of the produce-rent :

> "The whole pargana was formerly regulated by payment in kind ; anciently by an actual division of the produce ; more lately by an estimation of the crop valued at the Market Price. Leases for payment in specie have been introduced at different periods, in the several sub-divisions of which this Pargana consists. - In Gondawara, Teeka rates [certain rates per bigha in money] were universal before the Company's accession to the Dewany excepting the dependency of Dera Khawasspore, where payment in kind was not discontinued until the fussily year 1192 [1784 A.D.]- In Beernagar, Teeka Pottahs had been granted at a nearly (sic) period ; but were so far from having become general, that as late as the year 1177, half the cultivation is reckoned to have been on the Buttye Rule or Payment in kind - but in 1180, the whole was become Teeka ... In Bhowannypore only, the payment in kind yet remains ; but here also the Teeka rates had made considerable progress ; formerly cotton was the only produce cultivated at money rates, but from 1180 onwards, Leases have been given at Teeka rates for other produce. As late as 1185, the whole amount of the Teeka was only 10,000 Rs. In the last year ... the cultivation for specie rates was to the amount of near 23,000 Rs [or about half of its Jama]."

The mode of settlement of produce-rent in Bhowannypore in 1777 was as follows : The sezwal[8] of the pargana appointed the Mushriff (inspector or examiner)

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(8) This pargana was then under direct management of government and an government officer (Sezwal) took charge of it.

and Mahajan in order to settle the government's share (Danabandi) and measured off a certain quantity of land for government. The government officer delivered "the Sircar's proportion" then weighed off its produce to the Beoparies (small itinerant grain dealers) and from them received its value. It was the custom of the pargana that "should the ryots who pay in kind out their grain before the Dannabandy is settled, they are to account for the produce at the rate of 10 maunds per Bega." On such occasions, the ryots had to pay the equivalent of 10 maunds of paddy at the Market price of the former year in money. In 1777, due to cheapness of grain, the government officers faced great difficulties in selling the government share of paddy at reasonable prices. In 1789, when the prices of grain became very high, the ryots tried to convert the bhaoli land into naqdi land through various means : neglecting the cultivation of the bhaoli land in their possession and cultivated only the naqdi one or cultivating the fallow or waste land known as khil, as half of the new cultivation was allowed to be possessed on money rent according to the custom.(9)

In Bhagalpur district, both money rent and produce rent were prevalent, but the transformation of produce rent into money rent was unmistakably going on. Thus wrote S. Davis, the Collector, in 1790 ;

> "Sometimes, the share of Government, of the zamindar and his aumlah are actually received in kind, but more frequently, the Ryot pays in coin for the amount of those shares estimated at the current price."

The rent of the main harvest (Kharif crop) was generally paid in money. In this district also we find the commutation of money rent into produce rent and vice versa in accordance with the fluctuation of prices of grain. Davis continued ;

In certain localities "the collections are by custom Haal-hassily ;

(9) PCR-DNR-P 14th July 1777 & 11th Nov. 1777 & 6th Decr. 1777 & 24th March 1778 & 1st March 1779 : BR-P 1st Feb. 1790 No. 36 & 1st April 1790 Nos. 18 & 19 & 20th Oct. 1790 No. 40.

> the zamindar may at his pleasure collect under the terms Nuckdy or Bhoway (sic)... his interest naturally inclines him to adopt the first in times of plenty, when grain sells cheap and the latter in times of scarcity when it seels dear."

In this pargana, the proportion of the share for the zamindar, ryots and common expenses differed according to the descriptions of soil. The following statement clearly shows this.

A Statement showing the Proportions appropriated by the Zamindar, Ryots and the Common Expenses in a maund of produce (rice)

	Pah land[10]		Khunkut land[11]		Kheel land[12]	
	Seers		Seers			
Malguzary	20	50. 0 %	16	40.0 %	13- 4	33.1 %
Ryot (his share)	15	37. 5 %	20	50.0 %	23-12	59.4 %
Seery (expenses)[13]	5	12. 5 %	4	10.0 %	3	7.5 %

In 1783, a severe drought occurred in this district and considerable tracts of lands did not yield any crops. Clevland, the Collector, adopted a traditional method which used to be followed on such occasions in order to relieve the ryots and at the same time, to evade the probable deficiency of revenue from the district :

> "Mr. Clevland, who was then Collector, therefore, consented to a proposal made by the zamindars and Farmers which was readily agreed to by the Ryots that the collections instead of being continued Nuckdy, should for that year be made Bhowly, or the rents taken in kind at the customary rates for the best land of 16 sheers to the Ryots and the remaining 24 Seers to Government or the zamindar. By this mode of adjustment, the advantageous price of grain on the Budvy [Summer crop] and Rubby [Spring crop]... (illegible)... the rents of which are partly receivable in kind, deficiency (of) Revenue was, I believe, wholly averted."

(10) Pah : The best land
(11) Kankut : Khunkul in original, but most probably the miscopying. Valuation of standing crops by measurement of the land and inspection of crop, hence the land subject to such survey.
(12) Khil : Waste or uncultivated land, though capable of yielding crops.
(13) Seery : It consisted of wages for patwaris, mukadams (village-head) and Deh Kharcah or Gram Kharcna &ca.

Thus, commutation of produce rent into money rent was adopted to evade the inevitable ruin from the failure of crops.(14)

For both the zamindar and ryot, such a commutability of the two forms of rent afforded a safe-guard against disastrous seasons and excessive fluctuations in the prices of grain.

It is outside the scope of this dissertation to fully examine the reasons why produce rent persisted more extensively in Bihar than in Bengal. It may be due to the difference in the degree of penetration of the market-economy (money-economy) between Bihar and Bengal and also to the fact that in Bihar more lands were liable to annual inundation than in Bengal.(15) When production was uncertain, produce rent certainly tended to persist, "by which means any failure of crop is borne proportionably by both [the zamindar and ryots]."

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(14) BR-P 1st Feb. 1790 No. 12 & 28th Dec.1791 No. 1 & 21st Feb. 1794 No. 46.

(15) See a table in Appendix (a) to section (2) of chap. 6

CHAPTER 2

THE FINANCIAL & MANAGERIAL STRUCTURE OF THE ZAMINDARI OF DINAJPUR

Section 1 - The financial Structure of the Zamindari of Dinajpur

(1-a) Gross Assets of the Zamindari of Dinajpur - An Estimate -

Here we shall try to give a general idea about the actual assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur.

According to J.Grant, the Chief Sheristadar,(1) the total area of this zamindari was 4,119 square miles or 7,974,384 bighas(2). This figure seems to have been a gross overestimation(3). He estimated the quantity of rent-free lands (Bazi Zamin) in this zamindari at 6 or 8 lacks of bighas.

Thomas Graham, the Acting President of the Board of Revenue, submitted a minute to the Board of Revenue(Wards) on the assets of the Dinajpur zamindari(4). In it, he quoted the following abstract memorandum taken by him from the accounts of the Committee of Circuit in 1179 B.S. (1772 A.D.)

	Beghas
The total quantity of land in Havely Pinjurah	3,974,826
Deduct Dewuttaer, Bermutter and Chackeran	441,255
Remaining Begas liable to assessment	3,533,571
From which was deducted for Jungle & uncultivated land	1,209,999
Leaving land in cultivation	2,324,172(5)
To which was added Begas resumed from Chackeran	87,010
Making total cultivated land in Begas	2,411,182(6)

Graham observed that 2,411,182 bighas of land were,therefore, "estimated to yield resources for the payment of the Sadar Assessment... The gross resources of the District do not appear to have undergone any material alterations as far as the respective statements of 1179 & 1201 furnish

(1) Chief Sheristadar : Keeper of Records at the Khalsa.
(2) Fifth Report Vol.2 Appendix 4.
(3) According to J.Grant, the number of the parganas in the zamindari of Dinajpur was 121, but, as we have seen earlier, the zamindari contained only 65 parganas. And Graham observed that Rennell's Survey put the total area of the Dinajpur zamindari at 4,349,484 Bighas.
(4) BR-W-P 7th July 1795.
(5) Miscalculation in the original. The correct figure should be 2,323,572
(6) Do. Do. 2,410,582

evidence of that fact."

According to the above abstract, the extent of the cultivation in the zamindari of Dinajpur would be as follows ;

Cultivated land yielding rental (Malguzary land)	2,410,582	60.6 %
Do Do. no rental (Bazi zamin)	354,245	8.9
Jungle & uncultivated land	1,209,999	30.4
	3,974,826	99.9

Another important index of the assets of the country is the rate of rent. There was an upward trend in the rate of rent in this zamindari during our period. The average rate of rent in Dinajpur would be as follows:

1770's	10 to 12 Annas	per Bigha(7)
1780's & 1790's	1 to 2 Rupees	per Bigha(8)

From the foregoing figures, we can roughly estimate the actual assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur :

1770's	Sa Rs. 1,506,614	to	1,807,937
1780's & 1790's	2,410,582	to	4,821,164

Considering the reclamation of the vast waste lands since 1772, the actual assets of the zamindari should have been greater than those in the above calculation.

But the history of the zamindari of Dinajpur contradicts this inference. Far from affluent, the zamindari was always encumbered with heavy debts and, in the end, fell into pieces. It would be relevant to investigate the causes of this curious phenomenon.

(1-b) Shore - Grant Controversy on the Assets of the Zamindari of Dinajpur

The Chief Sheristadar, James Grant, submitted two reports on the assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur, one to the Governor General in Council

(7) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770. Vansittart's Report.
(8) For 1780's CR-P 28th April, 1783 : BDR-DNR Vol.2 28th Feb.1787 No.114 and Ibid. Vol.1 19th Jany 1789.
For 1790's BR-P 31st Octr. 1791 No. 31. "Tables of Rates established in the year 1198 B.S."

on the 28th February 1788[9] and the other to the Board of Revenue on the 22nd April 1788[10]. In these reports he argued that the assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur had been greatly under-rated and that the estimate of the assets made in 1168 B.S. (1761 A.D.) represented the true resources of the estate. He observed that, in 1168 B.S., the gross Jama payable to government was worked out by the Sezwal[11] Ramnauth Bhaduri after a very minute investigation into the actual resources of the country. It amounted to Sa Rs. 2,910,885 inclusive of both the Sarinjami[12] and the zamindar's house-hold charges to the amount of Sa Rs. 266,152. Though he admitted, in the second report, that the above sum was not realized, he did not imply thereby any deficiency in the assets, and ascribed the balances to the disorderly conditions of the country due to the general political crisis of the time. Grant's real intention was to criticize the Board of Revenue's assessment of revenue of the Dinajpur zamindari in particular, and the principles on which the Board's assessment for the Decennial Settlement was based in general.

In answering the criticism of Grant, Graham, a member of the Board of Revenue, submitted a Minute on the 3rd April, 1789[23]. He called the assessment of Dinajpur in 1168 B.S. "unjust and excessive and being found upon no constitutional principles whatever but made up of arbitrary imposi--tions." He went on that according to one "native who was at that time employed at Murshidabad in the business of the revenues under Cossim Alli Khawn," the above figure of the gross jama of Sa Rs. 2,910,885 was calculated by adding up such improper items as "the Birt[14] and Comar[15] lands, the profits of the Neez Talooks[16], the Bazee Zamin of the former

(9) Fifth Report Vol. 2 Appendix 4
(10) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 29th April, 1788 No. 152.
(11) Sezwal : An officer appointed to take charge of the estate from the management of which the owner has been removed.
(12) Sarinjami : Allowances granted or admitted as deductions to the zamindars for the charge of collection of revenue.
(13) BR-P 3rd April, 1789. No. 47.
(14) Birt : A grant or endowment for religious and charitable objects.
(15) Comar : The land the rent of which was paid in kind.
(16) Niz Talook : The private lands of a Zamindar.

zamindars of Suntose, Coolygong &ca., Bazeeafty Jamma[17] and the Taxes levied on account of the War "to the amount of Rs. 8 lacks. Though Ramnauth Bhaduri, the revenue farmer of Dinajpur in 1169 B.S.(1762 A.D.), made the "most cruel severities" to collect the stipulated sum, he could not collect more than Sa Rs. 1,932,195, leaving a balance of Rs.773,824. Graham thought that the district of Dinajpur was slowly recovering from the effects of the great famine and estimated the present gross assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur at Sa Rs. 1,716,750 on the basis of the report submitted by G.Hatch, the Collector of Dinajpur, in 1789.

In addition to the Graham's able minute, J.H.Harington, the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, submitted a report on the same subject[18]. In this, he clearly showed that until 1168 B.S. (1761 A.D.) the jama of the Dinajpur zamindari hardly ever exceeded the sum of Sa Rs. 1,249,816 and that the highest ever gross collection[18A] was that made by abovementioned Ramnauth Bhaduri in 1169 B.S. The high demands and the severities in the collection in 1169 B.S. caused a large scale desertion of ryots, whose jama amounted to as big a sum as Rs. 233,746[19]. The Naib Dewan of government, Nand Kumar was obliged to give large deductions in 1170 & 1171 B.S. The gross jama of 1171 B.S. was Sa Rs. 1,782,218 and it was continued in 1172 B.S. The whole jama was realized in 1172 B.S. The jama was again increased to Sa Rs. 1,922,218 in the next year, but the collection fell far below the expecta-tion. Between the Company's acquisition of Dewani (1765) and 1789, the highest collection was the one made in 1172 B.S. and the average gross collection of the period from 1172 to 1192 (1765 to 1785 A.D.) was Sa Rs. 1,499,393. He argued on the basis of the past experience that the basic error of Grant's calculation was that he based the Kasim Ali's short-sighted and exorbitant demand on the country "the standard for a permanent

(17) Baziafti jama : Bazi means miscellaneous,and Yaft means profit, gain, fees. Hence, miscellaneous revenues.
(18) BR-P 13th April, 1789 No. 50.
(18A) Harington meant by "Gross Collection" such a sum as was received at the Sadar Office from which the zamindar's allowance and Sadar Kharch (expenses) were to be deducted.
(19) Fifth Report Vol. 2 Appendix 1, p. 123.

revenue."

The clear exposition of the subject in John Shore's famous minute of the 18th June, 1789[20] finally put an end to the controversy. As his arguments were more or less similar to those of Graham and Harington, we need not recapitulate them here.

As both Shore and Grant could not avail themselves of the data on the assets of the recent years, they had to depend on past records. Even admitting this flaw in his estimate, we incline to Shore's conclusion : "If an estimate were to be formed of the gross capacity of the district from the accounts here discussed, I should adopt the collections of Ramnaut Buddre stated at Rs. 2,010,335, after making some allowance for the severities of his proceedings. If this demand had been limited to something less than this sum, it might have been realized without distress to the Ryots or undermining the sources of future resources."[21]

The following abstract shows the gross assets for the several years the records of which are available.

1169 B.S. or	1762/3 A.D.	Sa Rs. 2,010,335
1187	1780/1	2,037,744 (22)
1188	1781/2	1,927,044 (22)
1189	1782/3	1,552,293 (22)
1190	1783/4	1,312,679 (22)
1192	1785/6	1,840,007 (22)
1196	1789/90	1,860,114 (22)
1200	1793/4	1,973,423 (22)

The gross assets of 1187 & 1188 requires an explanation. In 1187, Rajah Bydenaut died and a huge sum was spent on his funeral ceremony. To defray this, new taxes to the amount of Rs. 279,849 were levied and large loans were taken from the merchants by the new zamindar[23]. Still, the zamindar fell into arrears of revenue and the zamindari was farmed out to Devy Sing at Rs. 1,604,444 by the Committee of Revenue[24]. The large collection of

(20) Fifth Report Vol. 2 Appendix 1.
(21) Ibid. Para 60.
(22) For 1187, CR-P 10th July, 1783 : For 1188, 1189 & 1190, CR-P 4th Sept. 1783 : For 1192, BR-P 6th Novr, 1786 : For 1196 BR-P 20th August,1790 : For 1200, BR-W-P, 25th July, 1794.
(23) CR-P 10th July, 1783 : BDR-RGPR Vol. 4 9th Novr. 1781.
(24) See section 1-(2) of chapt. 3.

1188 was made through unprecedented severities and thus caused a sharp fall in the assets in the following years. Therefore, the large collection of these two years should not be considered as representing the gross assets of the zamindari.

We may conclude that the gross assets of the zamindari were less than Rs. 20 lacks during the second half of the 18th century.

(2) The Structure of the Zamindari Income :

It is difficult to analyse the entire structure of the zamindari income, partly because it was the interest of the zamindar to conceal his assets and partly because the structure of the zamindari income itself changed from time to time.

We can classify the various sources of the zamindari income into three categories according to their respective relations to the demands of government.

(a) Sources of income which were subject to the assessment of the government's public revenue.

(b) Sources of income which were not liable to such demands. They were often called 'the income separate from the hastabud or rent-roll of the zamindari.'

(c) Zamindari income concealed from the government.

(2-a) Sources of Income subject to Payment of Public Revenue.

The main sources of the zamindari income on which the revenue demand was assessed were the rent paid by ryots, miscellaneous levies and cesses (Bazi Jama) and the market duties (Sayer). Besides these incomes of a permanent nature, there were some temporary incomes that were also subject

to the payment of public revenue such as "new taxes" and the loans from the money lenders. Most of the temporary incomes were the measures by which the zamindar sought to make up the deficiency in the assets in order to meet the demands of government. Though temporary in nature, the successive recurrence of them tended to be a permanent feature of the zamindari finances.

Rent collection was by far the largest and the most important source of income of this category. The modes of the mofussil settlement and collection of rent from the ryots have been discussed earlier. According to J. Lawrell's "Account Settlement of the Revenue for the Bengal Year 1178,"(25) out of the total jama of Rs. 1,763,605, Rs.1,752,681 or 99.4 % were due from the parganas, and the remaining Rs. 10,924 were due from the duties from the market-places which were directly managed by the zamindar(Huzuri Hauts).

Sayer collections occupied the second position in the articles of the assessable assets of the zamindari. Sayer collections consisted of the levies on the goods brought in and sold at the market-places, and the duties on the goods passing through the zamindari, which were collected at the several spots called Chokis. There were two types of sayer collections; Huzuri Hauts and Tackshim Hauts of the parganas. The former were separated from the pargana where they were situated and managed by the Sadar officers who farmed them out to persons at a certain stipulated sum(26). The latter were the market-places belonging to the parganas and their income formed part of the assets of the parganas(27).

At the time of the 5-year settlement of 1772 & 1773, the Company's government abolished the duties on the goods passing through the zamindari (Sayer Chulltur & Rahdari taxes) and a deduction of Rs.18,514 was granted to the zamindar of Dinajpur on this account(28). The zamindar, however,

(25) CCRM 25th July, 1771 Appendix No. 1
(26) PCR-DNR-P 18th August, 1778
(27) Ibid. 25th August 1778 & Ibid. 15th Feb. 1780
(28) CC 26th Jany. 1773 & PCR-DNR-P 28th Oct. 1774.

continued to collect these duties on the goods and the merchants and others frequently complained of their hardship due to the illegal impositions(29).

Impositions of fixed duties on the goods sold in the market-places and the taxes collected from shop-keepers by the zamindar continued(30) until 1791 when the collections of this description from the traders were taken over by Government(31). The Company's government continued this collection in the name of Police-Taxes in order to defray the expenses of the reorganized judicial system in the rural area(32).

From the limited information on the sayer collection in the parganas (Takshim Hauts of the parganas), we find that the collection from them constituted from 2 to 6 % of the gross collections of the parganas(33). The total sum of the sayer collection in the zamindari of Dinajpur amounted to Rs. 75,661 in 1197 B.S.(34) or about 4.5 % of the total income of the year(35).

For the zamindar, the collection from market-places was a very attractive source of income, because such an income could be expected all the year round(36). As the settlement of new merchants in the zamindari added to his income, the zamindar encouraged them to do so. Sometimes, the zamindar granted the merchants the privilege of occupying, at a nominal rent, a certain quantity of land in the vicinity of the market-places in order to build their residences and the store-houses (Golahs) on it(37).

We have a lot of instances regarding disputes arising out of the erection of new market-places to the prejudice of the established ones. Once Rajah Bydenaut, the zamindar of Dinajpur, ordered his people in the

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(29) CC 16th March, 1779 & BDR-DNR Vol. 1 13th August, 1786, No. 11.
(30) PCR-DNR-P 28th Oct. 1774 & BDR-DNR Vol. 1 5th Jany, 1789 No.301.
(31) BR-P 30th Sep. 1794 No.14 to 17 & Ibid. 23rd Decr. 1794. No.40.
(32) Ibid.
(33) CR-P 16th Oct. 1783 : BR-P 15th June, 1789 Nos. 50 & 51.
(34) BR-P 23rd Decr. 1794.
(35) BR-W-P 12th June, 1792 No. 16.
(36) BR-P 15th April, 1790 No. 40 Answer of the Collector of Burdwan
(37) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 15th Sep. 1789 No. 418.

mofussil to prevent the ryots of his zamindari from frequenting the markets of the neighbouring zamindari and a long dispute ensued as a result(38). In another occasion, such a dispute ended in an armed clash(39). The frequent incidents of this nature would show the importance of the income from the sayer collection.

Miscellaneous taxes (Bazi Jama) composed the assessable source of income when they could be detected and annexed to the assets of the zamindari. For example, in 1771 J.Lawrell brought to the public account an amount of Rs. 31,453 which had been collected under the head of "Motute Berege"(40). This collection consisted of Dess Karch, Purbonny, Sausty Tallah, Beldarry, Mofussil Expenses and Chand(41). These were "fines, fee or duty paid upon the determination of the cases, marriages, sale of goods &ca."(42) Lawrell found that the ryots had long been accustomed to pay those taxes. He, therefore, entered these collections in the Dole Pottah(43) executed by the public farmers. In 1772, W.Marriot, the Supervisor of Dinajpur, wrote that as the farmers were not allowed to exercise judicial power in their farms, they had no means to collect fees on the decision of the cases. He recommended that these collections should be struck off from the Dole Pottahs of the public farmers(44).

In 1787, G.Hatch brought to the public accounts some miscellaneous taxes called generally the Sewaee Jama(45). They were "licences to retailers of spirituous liquors, tax on manufacture of spirituous liquor, tax on Idlers viz, Tom-tom beater, bird-catchers, and the persons detected in vending of intoxicating drugs."(46) The total sum of the taxes, thus, resumed was,

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(38) PCR-DNR-P 18th May, 1779
(39) Ibid. 15th June 1779 & Ibid. 13th July,1779 & Ibid. 6th June, 1779
(40) CCRM 25th July, 1771 Main Report & Appendix No.11.
(41) The meanings of these were given in foot notes Nos.58-63 of chap.1
(42) CCRM 20th April, 1772.
(43) Dole Pottah : An estimated lease.
(44) CCRM 20th April, 1772.
(45) Siwaee Jama : The additional cesses or imposts.
(46) BDR-DNR Vol. I, 17th May, 1789. No. 347.

according to G.Hatch, Rs.8,132, but the zamindar of Dinajpur asserted in his complaints against Hatch that he had collected about Rs.25,000 under these heads but credited the zamindar only Rs.3,000 in the public Treasury Accounts(47).

(2-b) Sources of Zamindari Income not liable to Government Demand.

The second category of the sources of income was those which were either authorized to be deducted from the gross collection of the zamindari or entirely separated from the rent-roll(hastabud) of the zamindari.

When G.Vansittart made the settlement in 1770, he fixed the allowance to the Rajah at Rs. one lack(48). In 1771, when the whole zamindari of Dinajpur was farmed out to the public farmers by J.Lawrell, Rajah Bydenaut demanded a sum of Rs.250,000 as his allowance, and the Council of Revenue at Murshidabad allowed him a sum of Rs. 150,000 at the advice of the Naib Dewan of the Khalsa who said,"The Rajah Bijinaut is a zamindar of the first rank and holds an hereditary possession" and "he had no longer any income or resources" but the Moshaira from government to sustain himself and his family(49).

From 1772 to 1785, the zamindar of Dinajpur received an annual sum of Rs.150,000 as his allowance and Rs.34,476 as the Akrajauts or zamindari expenses. These sums were deducted from the gross revenue demand of government.

In 1786, the newly constituted Board of Revenue asked the Collector of Dinajpur to annex the above sums (Rs.184,476) to the rent-roll of the zamindari(50). The zamindar, hereafter, was to defray all the expenses

(47) BDR-DNR Vol.2 27th July, 1787.
(48) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770.
(49) Ibid. 23rd Sep. 1771.
(50) BDR-DNR Vol.1 29th Decr. 1786. No. 38.

incurred in the management of the zamindari and the household of his family from the surplus collection which was left after the payment of the public revenue to government.

The assets set apart for the expenses on account of religious & charitable purposes were not assessable under the Mughal government. The Company's government also allowed them to continue, as it had been the custom of the country from time immemorial(51).

In the zamindari of Dinajpur, the zamindar maintained Takoorbaris or Hindu temples in almost all the parganas and the fund assigned for that purpose was called Sheo-Deo Kharch(52). He also maintained some big religious establishments in and outside the zamindari and their costs were met out of a fund called Batta Birt(53). He also granted annual pensions to a considerable number of Brahmins living in and outside the zamindari the sum of which was called Brahmin Birt(54). Besides these, he sponsored annual Hindu Festivals(Jatra)(55).

At the time of the settlement in 1771, J.Lawrell authorized a sum of Rs.16,279 as Sheo-Deo Kharch(56). This expense was "inserted in the Mofussil Karcha of Dinajpur" and, therefore, deducted from the gross collection from the parganas. The sum was "settled and disbursed in the different parganas by the chaudhuris or collectors. This expense is for the support of the religious building (Takoor-barry)" and "for the expense of Takoor Shewa(57)

Batta Birt was "collected in the manner of Punnah(58) and separate from the Hastabud(rent-roll)... The different collectors at this station since the year 1177 never once annexed it to the Bandbast(settlement). And

(51) CR-P 24th July, 1783. No. 30 & Ibid. 11th August, 1783. No. 14.
(52) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Appendix 6.
(53) CR-P 13th Novr. 1783.
(54) CR-P 11th August,1783 & BDR-DNR Vol.1 13th Novr. 1787. No.115.
(55) Ibid.
(56) CCRM 25th July, 1771.
(57) Ibid.
(58) Punya : Assemblage of rent-payers farming a kind of festival.

several Farmers used to keep the amount collected under that head separate from the Malguzary(revenue), because it was appropriated solely to the religious and charitable purposes."(59) Batta Birt was appropriated in the following manner :

Sri Sri Kant Ji Tagore	Rs.	9,120
Sri Sri Radamohun Tagore		5,098
Kali Chamunda		6,785
Do.		2,139
Kasi Khettre at Benares		2,344
Poorsthan Khettre		700
		26,208 (60).

Batta Birt was collected from almost all the parganas, and kept separate from the assets of the parganas till the Decennial Settlement when the Board of Revenue ordered that these expenses should be disbursed from the zamindar's private fund or from the surplus collection of the zamindari, but not from the gross collection(61).

Brahmin Birt was the annual pension to the Brahmins who formed the body of Brahmin Pundit(62) of the Province. It amounted to Rs. 7,717(63). Like Sheo-Deo Kharch, this sum was deducted from the gross collection of the zamindari and was never resumed or annexed to the malguzary till 1787 when the Board of Revenue ordered that the sum of Naqdi Birt(64) should be resumed and the zamindar should defray it from his own fund, if he thought it proper to continue it(65).

There were other important unassessable assets in the zamindari of Dinajpur. They were the revenue-free lands called Bazi Zamin. Bazi Zamin consisted of the lands, the income from which was spent for religious and

(59) CR-P 13th Novr. 1783.
(60) Ibid.
(61) BDR-DNR Vol.I 19th June, 1787. No. 73.
(62) Brahmin Pundit : Hindu priest of Brahmin caste : CCRM 13th Jany,1772.
(63) CR-P 11th August, 1783.
(64) Naqdi Birt : An endowment for religious objectsor to any person for maintenance in money.
(65) BDR-DNR Vol. I 13th Novr. 1787. No. 117.

charitable purposes, and of the service lands (chackeran lands). Instead of granting pensions or allowances in money (naqdi) to the Brahmins and of paying wages to the servants, it was the prevalent usage of the country to grant a certain quantity of lands to them free of rent. After the acquisition of the Dewanny, the Company's government prohibited the aliena--tion of lands from the assets of the zamindari under these pretexts. The Company's government, however, conceded that the lands for religious & charitable purposes, if granted before the five-year settlement of 1772, would not be resumed. But the Company's government retained the power of resuming the service lands(66), if they thought it proper to discontinue it.

In a Dole Pottah executed by the sadar farmers who farmed one fifth of the zamindari of Dinajpur in 1770 under the settlement made by G.Vansittart, there was a clause that the farmer should "let remain" the established chackeran & charity lands within the limitation of his Ijara and should not "intermeddle with them without orders [of government]".(67) We also find in a sale-deed of pargana Salbari a sentence that the sale excluded "the Devotter, Bermooter, Peraun, Fakeraun &ca Bazee Jamin."(68) Thus, the established Bazi Zamin remained intact, even if the mahals in which they were situated were farmed out to the public farmers or sold to others.

In 1789, G.Hatch found 11843 Bighas of rent-free land possessed by Rani (wife of the late Zamindar). He resumed it, on the order of Governor General in Council, and allowed a monthly pension of Rs.1,500 to her by way of compensation(68A).

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(66) BDR-DNR Vol.I. 10th August, 1788. No. 195.
(67) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Appendix 13.
(68) CR-P 3rd March, 1785, Nos. 20-32.
(68A) BDR-DNR Vol. I. Nos. 308, 347, 392.

The following statement shows the quantity of the Bazi Zamin as G.Vansittart, the Supervisor of Dinajpur, came to know in 1770;(69)

	Persons	Bighas	Bighas
Religious land -			
Bermooter &ca			166,635
Servants land -			
The Rajah's servants & old family servants		23,140	
Public servants	13,995	250,165	
Cutcherrys -		9,495	282,801
	14,878(70)		449,436

Assuming the average rate of rent per bigha to be one rupee, the income from the Bazi Zamin in the zamindari of Dinajpur would amount to Rs.450,000, which indicates the enormity of the extent of this kind of lands.

The following extract would explain the reason why the grants of lands, instead of the payment in money, were so extensively adopted by the zamindars in Bengal; -

> "regarding Surhutta, a mehal held Khas in this District, [the late acting Collector] found 403 Bighas / occupied by the Kutwal and Pykes employed in the collection / to be assessable... the assessment of the 403 Bighas amounts to Sa Rs.445. The Kutwal &ca whose lands have been thus resumed amount to 36 persons, and supposing them all to be retained at the small salary of Re 1½ per month, their allowances per annum would amount to 648 Rs..."(71)

Grant of rent-free lands to religious establishments and zamindari servants had, thus, an economic reason. During the period under review, there were abundant waste lands and it served the zamindars' interest that they paid their servants through land grants. In the above case, the zamindar saved Rs. 203 through this device. The servants also found it more satisfying to receive the rent-free lands than to receive a small salary of Re.1½ per

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(69) CCRM 1st Decr. 1770. Appendix 12.
(70) As it is in the original.
(71) BR-P 27th Feb. 1801 No. 36.

month. In the above case, a Kotwal received on an average about 11.2 bighas of rent-free lands. Considering that rent occupied nearly half of the total value of the assessed land (malguzary land), the economic benefit from 11.2 bighas of rent-free lands would have been more than equal to that from 20 bighas of ordinary assessed lands. A salary of Re.1½ per month was, on the other hand, as low as an income of an agricultural labourer.(72)

(2-c) Zamindar's concealed Income :

The third category of the zamindar's income was a concealed income created by secretly making new impositions on the ryots or by alienating certain source of income from the rent-roll of the zamindari.

In 1771, J.Lawrell brought to public accounts a sum of Rs.31,453 which was used to have been collected in the mofussil under a general name of "Mothote Berege". In 1772, a sum of Rs.30,055 called "Bazi Bobbut" was annexed to the rent-rolls of the parganas(73). These were, till then, secretly collected by the zamindar in the mofussil.

The imposition of such levies and taxes continued throughout the period under review, but most of them were made with the consent of the Company's Collectors or Commissioners who sought thereby to make up the apparent deficiency of the zamindari assets for the purpose of making good the public revenue(74). Some of such levies, therefore, were acquiesced in as necessary evil by the Company's government, though illegal in nature, and constituted part of the assessable assets of the zamindari.

The zamindar tried to create secret sources of income by alienating the lands or market-places and by lowering the rate of rent of certain profitable lands on false pretexts. As early as in 1770, G.Vansittart reported that "the choudhries and aumeens by taking Nuzzeranahs(75) for

(72) See section 2 of chap. 6.
(73) CCRM 20th April, 1772.
(74) CR-P 4th Sep. 1783 No.4 - 7. BDR-DNR Vol. 2, 15th Jany.1788 No.277.
(75) Nazrana : A gift from an inferior to a superior.

themselves instead of the Revenue for the Public, by accounts of the petty Izarahdars /farmers/ absconding, of land becoming Caus[76], & uncultivated, of Losses by drought or by Rain, & in... (torn)... a variety of collusions will be sure to procure reductions."[77]

In 1783, MacDowall who was deputed from Calcutta to make a settlement of the zamindari of Dinajpur after the devastating experiment of Devy Sing's public farming, reported that his minute investigation revealed unjust alienations of various mahals from the zamindari's rent-roll by the zamindari officers (amlah). He resumed these alienations that added Rs.74,495 to the jama of the zamindari[78]. He also came to know of the existence of the alienated lands as well as the lands held at low rates in different parganas[79].

In 1786, G.Hatch reported to the Board of Revenue that the zamindar of Dinajpur had alienated lands under the heads of Bazi Talook[80], Birtee Burtee, Devottar, &ca to the amount of Rs.152,879[81]. These concealed income had been put under the direct management of the zamindari dewan, Jankiram Sing who was a brother of the young Rajah's mother-in-law. In the same year, Hatch further reported that the dismissed old servants of the Rajah had selected the most profitable lands in the zamindari, greatly lowered the rate of rent on them and formed them into a separate mahal called Huzuri Mahals at the time of the mofussil settlement in 1786[82].Collections of the alienated sources of income thus created were made in the office called Comar Daftar[83]. He resumed these unlawful alienations and put them under the management of a special office set up by him for this purpose[84].

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(76) Khas : A mahal managed directly by the zamindar or by government.
(77) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Main Report.
(78) CR-P 16th Oct. 1783 No. 22.
(79) Ibid.
(80) Bazi Talook : Miscellaneous lands, or rent-free lands.
(81) BR-P 6th Novr. 1786 or BDR-DNR Vol.II 30th Oct. 1786. No.66
(82) BDR-DNR Vol.II. 20th Novr. 1786. No. 80
(83) BDR-DNR Vol.II. 25th Oct. 1787 No. 222.
(84) Ibid. n.d. No. 131.

Hatch also resumed the levies on the sale of spirituous liquor and gambling &ca to the amount of Rs.25,000, the collection of which had been made by a Darogha(85) appointed by Jankiram Sing(86). These secret collec--tions were called Comar Mahal the business of which was perhaps transacted in the abovementioned Comar Daftar.

Furthermore, Hatch wrote in 1787 that he had detected a considerable difference between settlement-accounts delivered by Jankiram Sing and the original accounts upon which the former accounts were formed. He wrote, "Upon the discovery of this deception, I had assets to the amount of Rs.184,747 to look after."(87)

The zamindar usually took a certain amount of money from persons, when he appointed them to the zamindari office. This also formed one of the sources of the secret income.

The zamindar, thus, tried to create secret sources of income whenever he found occasions for these. The size of this income fluctuated from time to time according to the circumstances. When the government pressed hard for the maximum collection of revenue from his zamindari, the zamindar tried to guard his interest through these devices.

(3) The Structure of the Zamindari Disbursement :

Here we shall summarize our foregoing argument on the financial structure of the Dinajpur zamindari from the disbursement-side.

During our period, there was a big change in the zamindari system of Dinajpur which naturally affected the structure of the zamindari finances. This change was brought about by the new arrangement initiated by Cornwallis;

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(85) Darogha : A native chief officer of any department, a superintendent.
(86) BDR-DNR Vol.II. 27th July, 1787. No.165.
(87) Ibid. 6th March, 1787. No.119.

the formation of the decennial and permanent settlements and the judicial and administrative reforms.

We must, therefore, study the financial structure of the zamindari at two periods; before and after Cornwallis' new arrangement.

For the pre-decennial-settlement period, we shall choose a period from 1182 to 1187 B.S. (1775 to 1780 A.D.). After the complete failure of the five year settlement, the Company's government returned in 1182 B.S. the management of the Dinajpur zamindari to Maharajah Bydenaut on favorable conditions(88). The maharajah was allowed to hold his zamindari at a fixed gross jama of Sa Rs. 1,460,444 for his life time. Furthermore, a sum of Rs.184,476 was deducted from the above jama as his allowance and expenses for the zamindari establishments (Akrajat). The net jama of the Dinajpur zamindari, therefore, remained at Sa Rs. 1,275,968 until the Rājah's death in 1187 B.S.(1780). During this period, the zamindar of Dinajpur regained his local prestige within and in the vicinity of the zamindari(89) and the payment of the above revenue was made without delay until his last days. The study of the zamindari disbursement of this period would give us an idea about the financial structure of the old type zamindari.

We can classify the numerous zamindari disbursements into four main items; payment of government revenue, expenses for the maintenance of the zamindari establishments for the control of the country, established expenses for religious institutions and the Rajbari household expenses.

As we have seen, the gross assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur in 1187 B.S. were Sa Rs. 2,037,744. From this we must deduct the new impositions levied in that year (Rs.279,849). We may, thus, estimate the gross assets of the zamindari during this period at about Sa Rs. 1,750,000. After the payment of the government revenue (Sa Rs. 1,275,968), the zamindar had a fund of about Rs. 470,000 to defray other charges.

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(88) See Section 1-(2) of chap. 3.
(89) See Section 1 of chap. 4.

Next to the government revenue, the zamindar disbursed a large sum for the maintenance of his establishments for the rent-collection and control of the country. These consisted of the village expenses(gram Kharcha), & the expenses on account of the pargana offices, of the Sadar offices, of the Rajah's household and of the established religious institutions.

From the gram kharch(90), "the charges of Patwarries, Mohrers, Pikes etc. employed in making the mofussil collections... is provided."(91)

From the pargana kharch, the expenses for the maintenance of the pargana kachari to the amount of Sonaut Rs.56,997 (Sa Rs. 51,349) was defrayed. Tynaute pargana was maintained exclusively by the grant of the rent-free lands (chackeran lands) which amounted to 139,860 bighas(92). At the several out-posts, the Girdwars were stationed as the guards of the frontiers of the country at an annual cost of Rs.6,000.

The sadar kharch consisted of expenses on the sadar kachari to the sum of Sonaut Rs. 24,000 and the vakeels at Murshidabad which amounted to Sonaut Rs.9,660 : in all, Sonaut Rs.33,660 or Sa Rs.30,324. At the sadar, the zamindar maintained a naqdi troop at an annual cost of Sa Rs.21,621. Besides these, there were 562 servants at the sadar kachari who received chackeran lands to the amount of 10,398 bighas as their rewards.

The zamindar of Dinajpur, thus, spent Sa Rs.109,294 for the maintenance of his establishments for the control of the country at both the pargana and sadar level. No definite figure is available for the amount

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(90) Concerning Dinajpur, we have no evidence on the incidence of gram-kharcha during this period, but in the neighbouring Sooroopoor zamindari, several accounts of the ryots shows that it amounted to more or less 10 % on the whole sum paid by each of them. In Purnea district, we have evidence that it was 1½ annas in a rupee or 9.4 % and in Nadia, it was 1 month or 8.3 %. We may, thus, conclude that the total sum the ryots paid was more or less 10 % larger than what the choudhris of the parganas received from them.

(91) BDR-DNR Vol. I. 17th May, 1789 No.347.

(92) By the settlement of J.Lawrell in 1771, the chakeran lands in the Dinajpur zamindari was reduced from 281,070 bighas to 200,264. CCRM 25th July, 1771 Appendix No.7.

of money paid to the patwaris and other karmacharis from the village karcha at this period, but it would be a modest estimate if we suppose that 5 % of the gross collection of the villages or half of the gram karcha was applied for this. This would make Sa Rs.87,500 as the sum spent at the village level. We, thus, estimate the total disbursement for the maintenance of the zamindari establishments for rent-collection and exercising control over the country at Sa Rs. 196,794 during this period. We should not overlook that he, also granted 150,258 bighas of culturable lands to the servants as chackeran lands.

The Rajbari expenses formed the third item. In 1781, when Devy Sing farmed the whole zamindari of Dinajpur, he found that the monthly expenses of the Rajah amounted to Rs.16,016 or Rs.192,192 per annum. From this sum, we should exclude such items of disbursements as pertained to the zamindari business which we have already enumerated above. The Rajbari household expenses with this correction thus amounted to Rs.11,363 per mensem or Rs.136,356 per annum.The appended abstract statement of the rajbari expenditures would show the nature of the sum, thus disbursed by the zamindar(93).

Besides the above sum defrayed in money, he retained 2,009 servants who held chackeran lands to the amount of 50,016 bighas (94).

The fourth item of the zamindari disbursement was the established religious institutions set up throughout the zamindari and at Benares. They were Sheo-Deo karcha (Rs.16,279), Batta Birt (Rs.26,208) and Brahmin Birt (Rs.7,717), in all, Rs.50,204. These funds were separated from the zamindari jama and constituted a kind of independent funds set apart only for the use of these prescribed purposes. Even when the zamindari was

(93) See Appendix (b) to this chapter.
(94) See Appendix (c) to this chapter.

farmed out to the public farmers, these funds continued without any retrenchment. Maharajah Bydenaut founded new religious institutions through--out the zamindari and assigned a fund of Rs.23,376 for the maintenance of them(95). Thus, during this period, the zamindar of Dinajpur disbursed Rs.73,502 for the religious institutions annually.

During 1775 to 1780, the zamindar of Dinajpur disbursed Rs.406,742 besides the payment of government revenue. The first item constituted 72.9 %, the second item 11.2 %,the third item 7.8 % and the fourth item 4.2 % and he still had a surplus fund of more than Rs.60,000.

5 % of the gross collection was spent in the villages as the wages of Mandals and Patwaris, and the remaining 95 % was made over to the choudhuris of the parganas. The choudhuris, after deducting 3.2 % for their expenses, delivered 91.8 % to the Sadar office. At the Sadar office, 3.0 % was spent for its expenses and 15.9 % was retained by the zamindar for his own use, including the religious expenses. He, then, paid the rest(72.9 %) to government as land revenue of the estate.

Now let us study the financial structure of the zamindari after Cornwallis' new arrangement. For this purposes, we shall choose the period between 1786 and January, 1792, and between April, 1794 and July 1795. During these years the zamindari was put under the guardianship of Ramkant Roy and Lala Manick Chand, and the systematic embezzlement, for which their management of the zamindari provided opportunities, led to the break-up of the Dinajpur zamindari in 1799. The structure of embezzlement was maintained, even after the Rajah took over the management in January 1792, with the strong and shameless support of the Collectors and other government officers of the district(96). The financial structure of the years abovementioned

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(95) CR-P 23rd Sept. 1784.
(96) See section 4 of chap. 4.

therefore, best represented that of the whole period after Cornwallis' new arrangement in Bengal.

The revenue demand of government increased from Sa Rs.1,275,968 to Sa Rs.1,460,444 as a result of the resumption of the zamindar's allowance (Moshaira) and the charges of the zamindari (Akrajaut) in 1787. There were other minor changes due to the resumption of Sayer duties (Rs.48,874) and the separation of a talook from the zamindari (Rs.16,428) etc. The following statement was submitted by G.Hatch in his report on the conclusion of the decennial settlement of the Dinajpur zamindari in August, 1790.

Statement of the estimated Gross Assets of the Zamindary of Dinajpur with Revenue adjusted to it(97)

Gross Assets	1,860,114	
Deduct Dehuttee(97A) Charges Collection	205,739	
Amount remaining of the Gross Assets		1,654,375
Revenue		
Jumma of the zamindary	1,444,016	
Do of Talook separated	16,428	
Do of Sayer Do	48,874	
Do of Abkarry Do	1,674	1,510,992
Surplus remaining		143,383

Thus, the zamindar was, according to his plan, to receive Rs.143,383 or "nearly... the 10 Per Cent upon the Sadar Jumma and applicable to the defraying of the Expense of the Sadar Establishment and personal allowance... during the zamindar's Minority."

Hatch proposed a huge establishment for the manager (Sebrarkar) Ramkant Roy, amounting to Rs.67,896 (Rs.36,000 as commission for sebrarkar

(97) BR-P 20th August, 1790 No.7A.
(97A) Dehati : Belonging or relating to villages or a village.

and Rs.31,896 as Sebrarkar's office charges). The Board of Revenue,however, reduced it to Rs.40,956 per annum(98).

We shall now discuss each item of.the zamindari-disbursement.

The first item was the revenue payment to government. As the above statement shows, it consisted of land-revenue, sayer tax and abkary tax, amounting in all to Rs.1,510,992 or 81.2 % of the gross asset of the zamindari. Sayer tax (Rs.48,874) was soon abolished, but a new police tax which amounted to Rs.40,695 was instituted in its stead. Therefore the size of the total revenue collected from the Dinajpur zamindari remained more or less the same.

The second item also underwent an unmistakable change under new arrangement introduced by Hatch(99). The mandals and patwaris were now allowed 1 % and 3½ % respectively of the total collection from their villages. Some of the kotwal of the villages also received rewards in money. The dehuttee charges (Rs.205,739) alluded to in the above statement were thus allowed to the mandals, patwaris and kotwals as gram karcha (Rs.93,759), to the tahsildars and other pargana officers as pargana karcha (Rs.103,677) and to the Brahmins in the mofussil as Deb Karcha (Rs.8301)(100). Besides these, the manager Ramkant Roy received Rs.40,956 as his commission and charges. The second item thus amounted to Rs.246,695.

The fourth item, or the established funds for the religious institutions except for the abovementioned Deb Karcha (Rs.8301), was now resumed and annexed to the rent-roll of the zamindari. They were to be defrayed from the surplus collection left for the zamindar.

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(98) BR-P 20th August, 1790 No. 12.

(99) See section 5 of chap. 4.

(100) These figures were calculated according to the detailed statement of mofussil charges reported by J.Eliot in July, 1794 when the zamindari was under his direct superintendence. As he followed the principles laid by Hatch, our above calculation would be fairly correct.
BR-W-P 25th July, 1794, No. 3.

The third item was the Rajah's household expenses. The surplus collection, after deducting the manager's establishment, formed the fund for them. It amounted to Rs.102,427. They would be classified as follows; Table charges, buildings, oil, elephant, clothing & ca... Rs.47,862; Rajah's servants... Rs.20,453; Religious and charitable expenditures...Rs.29,293; Rajah's pocket money... Rs.400; Pensions to various persons ...Rs.10,938 and others(101).

5.0 % of the gross assets of this period was thus expended as village karcha and the remaining 95.0 % was delivered to the tahsildars. They expended 5.6% as pargana karcha and 0.4 % as deb karcha and handed over the remaining 89.0 % to the sadar office. The manager (Sebrarkar), after deducting 2.2 % as his commission and charges and 5.5 % as the Rajah's house-hold expenses(Rajbari karcha), paid the remaining 81.3 % to government as land-revenue, sayer tax and abkarry tax. This was the rough plan of the zamindari financial structure of post-decennial settlement period.

The comparison of the above figures with the former ones would reveal the changed situation which the young zamindar had to face after Hatch's reform.

Firstly, the incidence of the government demand during the pre-decennial settlement period was 72.9 %, while it now increased to 81.3 %. Thus, there was a very substantial increase in the governmental demand on the zamindari under Cornwallis's new arrangement.

Secondly, there was a considerable change in the establishments for rent-collection. At the sadar office, only 1.2 % was spent for its office-establishment before(102), but now the sadar establishment cost 2.2 %.

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(101) These data depend on Ramkant Roy's report on the actual sum spent by him. Therefore, there was a minor difference between the total calculated on the basis of Hatch's estimate and that mentioned here. BR-W-P 11th Sep. 1792. No. 7.

(102) The whole sadar karcha was 3.0 %, but it included vakils at Murshidabad (0.5 %) and a naqdi troop (1.2 %) both of which were now abolished.

Pargana karcha also increased from 3.2 % to 5.6 %. Formerly, the choudhuris of the parganas cost Rs.51,349, but now the tahsildars cost Rs.103,677. The functions of both of them were more or less the same, except that the tahsildars had no more the judicial authority in the petty cases which the choudhuris used to exercise. The gram karcha seems to have remained unchanged.

The officers at the pargana kacharis (or more correctly tahsil kacharis) and at the sadar kachari, thus, received very fat salaries. Hatch argued that by giving a liberal and handsome salary to the officers, the Company could expect their integrity(103). But the subsequent facts show that they were as corrupt as the former choudhuries(104).

Compared with the fat salary of the officers of the zamindari who were almost all the dependents of Ramkant Roy and Lala Manick Chand, the Gurdian and the Dewan, the Rajbari Kharcha and the religious expenses dwindled miserably. They fell from 15.9 % of the gross assets to only 5.9 % (5.5 % as Rajbari Kharcha and 0.4 % as deb kharcha spent in the mofussil).

The above comparative analysis of the financial structure of the Dinajpur zamindari before and after the initiation of Hatch's system clearly proved that, though the size of the zamindari income was gradually increasing, the zamindari's financial structure became rigid and lost its elasticity. This was brought about by the setting up of a built-in structure of embezzlement through the system of fat salaries. J.Eliot thus wrote : "there being many surplus and unnecessary servants of late taken into the Rajah's employ, whose allowance and wages would absorb near the whole of the Rajah's surplus assets."(105) Another cause which contributed to the change was the greatly increased governmental demand on the zamindari from 1785 onwards(106).

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(103) BR-P 29th August, 1790. No. 7
(104) See sections 2-(2) & 4 of chap. 4.
(105) BR-W-P 30th May, 1794. No. 7.
(106) See Appendix (a) to this chapter.

Section 2 : Managerial Divisions of the Zamindari of Dinajpur.

As we have seen before, almost the whole estate of the Dinajpur zamindar was covered with small local farmers called kutkinadars. We may call the structure of the agrarian society at this level as well as that below it "the basic structure of society." The zamindar of Dinajpur made the mofussil settlement with the villages collectively or with the kutkinadars[107] and did not go further than that.

The zamindar managed the country through various agents and the latter, in their turn, through the kutkinadars. The phrase "managerial divisions" means the divisions in the management of the zamindari at the level higher than the kutkinadars. In short, "the managerial divisions" stood upon the "basic structure of society." While "the basic structure" was tolerably stable,"the managerial divisions" were constantly changing during the period under review.

There were four managerial divisions in the zamindari of Dinajpur during our period. They were the Parganati Tahsil Khas[108], the Parganati Mustajiri[109], Huzuri Izarah[110], and the Bazi Talook[111].

G.Vansittart found in Dinajpur in 1770 that except for the mahals let out by him the jama of which amounted to Rs.4 lacks, the rest of the zamindari was covered by small farmers. And these small farmers, we have reason to suppose[112], were put under the superintendence of the choudhuris or naibs of the parganas, or in other words, most of the Zamindari belonged to the Khas Parganas. In 1786, Hatch wrote that "the Mahals in general are

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(107) See section 3 of chap. 3.
(108) Parganati Tahsil Khas : Parganas under the zamindar's direct management.
(109) Parganati Mustjiri : Parganas farmed out to the private sadar farmers.
(110) Huzuri Izarah : The estates farmed out to the farmers who paid their revenue at the central office of the zamindari.
(111) Bazi Talook : c.f. the foot note (80) of this chapter.
(112) "The settlement of the Caus Parganas in general made with under-farmers... " CR-P 4th Sept. 1783.

Parganati Tahsil Khas managed by officers deputed from the Sadar."(113) According to a statement in 1787, the parganati khas mahals occupied 74 % of the total revenue and the parganati mustajiri 26 %(114).

On these grounds, we may conclude that the parganati tahsil khas was the regular or dominant form of the managerial divisions and covered the main portion of the zamindari. We have already studied the method of the rent-collection in the parganati tahsil khas.

The parganati mustajiri was "let at a fixed Jumma either at the rate of last year or at an increase upon it." The management of these parganas was carried out by the Farmers who farmed the parganas at the sadar kachari. The zamindar's demands on the parganas of this description were determined in the same manner as that on the Parganati Tahsil Khas and "in general held by the head officers and their dependents.(115)

The following is an example of the Dole (116) executed by a Farmer of the Parganati Mustajiri :

"Izara in the name of Seebram Surmona and
charge of Sobaram Buxey

Names	Total Jama 1192	Perg. Surhutta.	Perg. Curryburry
Mehal	47,271	42,579	4,692
Syr	877	771	106
	48,148	43,350	4,798
Remission granted upon the present	7,700	7,000	700
	40,448	36,350	4,098

Forty thousand four hundred and forty eight Rupees -

I will pay revenue as above according to this mode to the month

(113) BDR-DNR, Vol.II 20th Novr. 1786. No.80
(114) BR-W 7th June, 1795.
(115) BDR-DNR Vol.II, 17th March, 1787. No. 125.
(116) Dole : A Form, Estimate, valuation, Statement of the particular of the gross revenue.
(117) Hastabud : A detailed statement of any lands yielding revenue.

of Assin. In the month of Cartic an ammen shall be dispatched from the Sudder to make an Hastabud(117), and whatever Jamma shall then appear I will pay exclusive of the Birtee Birtee and charges collections - The Birtee I will pay separately"(118).

The Huzuri Izarahs or Huzuri Mahals were "a portion of the most profitable lands [that] had been made Kharidge(119) from the pargana at an inferior rate of Jumma and formed into a separate Huzuri collection"(120), and "the chief Farmers pay direct to the Sadar Cutcherry."(121)

In 1190 B.S.(1783 A.D.), Redfearn on special commission to enquire into the dispute between the Rajah of Dinajpur and Christie, an European planter and revenue farmer, reported that in the pargana Apole, there were no Huzuri Mahals before 1179 B.S.(122) In 1182 B.S.(1775 A.D.) when the Rajah Bydenaut recovered the management of his zamindari, he let out various parts of the pargana Apole to his favourites and they paid their revenue at the town of Dinajpur. From 1182 B.S. the above Farms sometimes became huzuri and sometimes annexed to the pargana rent-roll and paid their revenue through the pargana kachari. According to a Dehbandi(123) of the pargana Apole in 1187 B.S. (1780 A.D.), out of 308 hassili villages (villages in cultivation) 113½ were huzuri mahals and 194½ were parganati mahals(124). The number of the huzuri izarahdars in Apole was 12 and paid the jama of Rs.16,882 (31.4 %), while the jama of the parganati mahals was Rs.36,855 (68.6 %).

From the foregoing description of the huzuri mahals in the pargana Apole we come to know that the creation of the huzuri mahals in the zamindari dated from 1182 B.S. or thereabouts and their extent fluctuated from time

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(117) Hastabud : A detailed statement of any lands yielding revenue.
(118) BR-P 15th June, 1787. No. 50.
(119) Khariji : Taxable : In the above context, it means"separated" or "alienated"
(120) BDR - DNR Vol.2, 20th Novr. 1786. No. 80.
(121) BDR - DNR Vol.2, 17th March, 1787. No. 125.
(122) CR-P 13th Feb. 1783.
(123) Dehbandi : An abstract account of an estate, according to the villages in it.
(124) Parganati mahal : The mahals constituting the assets of the pargana.

to time. In 1187 B.S., at least in the pargana of Apole, the huzuri mahals constituted about one-third of the pargana jama. Thus, within 5 or 6 years, the huzuri mahals increased rapidly under the leadership of Rajah Bydenaut who tried to re-establish his authority over his zamindari by entrusting the management of the profitable portion of the zamindari to his favourites, and to conceal the real assets of his estate by making the managerial structure of the zamindari more and more intridate. In 1194 B.S.(1787 A.D.), Hatch resumed all the huzuri mahals and re-annexed them to the original parganas from which they were separated(125). The huzuri mahals, thus, appeared in 1182 B.S. (1775 A.D.) or thereabouts and completely disappeared in 1194 B.S.

"Bazi Talook" was a general name for the lands alienated from the rent-roll of the zamindari. The management of them was secretly controlled by the Rajah and the profits therefrom had never been brought into the jama. In the pargana Apole, there was a mahal called Mohun Talook whose produce amounted to Rs.5,216(126). It was separated from the pargana in 1768 or 1769 and continued to be so till 1787 when Hatch resumed and re-annexed it to the original pargana(127). MacDowall, an officer on deputation, reported in 1783 that he discovered a mahal called Bazi Talook and that its profit (Rs.19,839) was set apart for the Rani's private expenses. He resumed this to the pargana(128). In 1786, Hatch found that there were alienated mahals called Bazi Talook which were managed by Jankiram Sing, the dewan and guardian. These mahals whose profits amounted to Rs.25,097 were resumed in the next year by him(129).

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(125) BDR - DNR Vol.2. 30th July, 1787, No.169.
(126) CR-P 13th Jany. 1783. & Ibid. 13th Feb. 1783.
(127) Ibid.
(128) CR-P 4th Sep. 1783.
(129) BDR-DNR Vol. 2. 30th July, 1787.

From the above study of the managerial divisions of the zamindari of Dinajpur, we may conclude that the formation of some particular managerial divisions and the disappearance of others were the result of the wider historical processes affecting the zamindari. When the zamindar's position in the estate was secure and he had no anxiety about the governmental interference in the zamindari affairs, the zamindar managed his estate directly through the choudhuri or naib of the pargana (parganati tahsil khas). However, once the zamindar's position became insecure and his authority over his country became weak, he was obliged to adopt other types of managerial divisions. The zamindar farmed out his estate to the private farmers (mustajirs) when he found it difficult to collect a certain amount of rent from the parganas by direct management; it was safer for him to farm out part of his estate to the farmers on good security at a certain stipulated sum than to collect it directly. Or when he found the government demand to be exacting, he had to conceal the real assets of the zamindari by creating new managerial divisions (huzuri mahals and bazi talooks).

Appendix (a) to chapter 2 : Net Jama and Net Payment (1167 to 1198 B.S.) *

Year	Net Jama (Sa Rs.)	Net Payment to Government	Balances	Reference
1135	754,453	754,453	-	1
:				
1167	1,249,816	1,249,816	-	2
1168	2,644,733	2,192,741	451,992	3
1169	2,706,019	1,032,195	773,824	4
1170				5
1171	1,782,218			6
1172	1,782,218	1,782,218	-	7
1173	1,982,218	1,345,873	636,346	8
1174	1,600,000	1,413,767	186,233	9
1175	1,500,000	1,489,878	10,121	10
1176		1,516,554		11
1177	1,663,000	1,271,563	301,012	12
1178				13
1179	1,538,671	1,405,585	87,519	14
1180	1,577,626	1,352,150	291,434	15
1181	1,275,968	1,239,236	36,731	16
1182	Do.	1,275,968	-	17
1183	Do.	Do.	-	18
1184	Do.	Do.	-	19
1185	Do.	Do.	-	20
1186	Do.	Do.	-	21
1187	Do.	Do.	-	22
1188	1,475,968	1,475,968	-	23
1189	Do.	Do.	-	24
1190	1,275,968	1,261,504	14,464	25
1191	Do.	1,275,968	-	26
1192	1,313,468	1,313,468	-	27
1193	1,385,945	1,385,945	-	28
1194	1,460,444	1,460,444	-	29
1195	Do.	Do.	-	30
1196	1,444,016	1,444,016	-	31
1197	1,443,910	1,443,910	-	32

For references see next page.

References to appendix (a)

* The present author cannot claim the above statement to be complete. Even for the same year, different figures were given according to the different source-materials and we have no means to judge which of these contradictory figures was correct. Still, we shall be able to form a general idea on the changes in the governmental demand on the zamindari and the extent of the balances from year to year.

1. Fifth Report Vol.2, p. 332.
2. Ibid. p. 327 & BR-P 13th April, 1789. No. 50
3. Fifth Report pp.121 - 123 & BDR-DNR Vol.1 29th April, 1788 No. 152.
4. Ibid. & BR-P 15th July, 1788 No. 30.
5. No definite data was available.
6. BDR-DNR Vol.1 No.152 & Fifth Report p.328 BR-P 13th April, 1789.
7. Do. Do. Do.
8. BR-P 13th April, 1789 & BDR-DNR. Vol.1 No. 152.
9. Do.
10. Do.
11. CCRM 31st Decr.1770 Appendix 1.
12. Ibid. 10th Oct. 1772 & SC-P 20th May, 1771 & BR-P 13th April, 1789.
13. CCRM 25th July, 1771 Appendix 1. It gives only the gross jama(1,866,605)
14. CC 26th Jany. 1773 Account Settlement & PCR-DNR 1st March, 1779.
15. RBCWC 29th April, 1774 & PCR-DNR 1st March, 1779 & BDR-DNR Vol.2. No.277
16. BDR-DNR Vol.2 15th Jany. 1788 No.277 & BR-P 13th April, 1789 No.50
17. Do. Do.
18. Do. Do.
19. Do. Do.
20. Do. Do.
21. Do. Do.
22. Do. Do.
23. The figure given by Hatch for this year was that of gross Jama, not the net Jama.
24. Do. Do.
25. BDR-DNR Vol.2 15th Jany, 1788. No. 277 & BR-P 13th Apri,1789. No.50.
26. Do. Do.
27. Do. Do.
28. Do. Do.
29. Do. Do.
30. Do. Do.
31. BR-P. 20th August, 1790. No. 7A.
32. Ibid. 14th August, 1793 (Enc. No. 4)

Appendix (b) to chapter 2 : Account exhibiting the Gross Establishment or Monthly Expenses of the Zamindar of Dinajpur as per account delivered by the Zamindari Officers.

Account Particulars of the Bunder Kurutch

Poojah Ramjee	400
Rajah's diet	600
Rannee's diet	301
Diet of Brahmins	150
Kedmutgars	300
Slave girls	487
Elephants, Camels, Stable &c.	1,064
Gowry Roy, nephew to Rajah's wife	60
Mother, wife &c. of Cant Naut	30
Ott....(illegible) and Rede Nater	50
Oil &c	300
Bearers	120
Iron Twine &c	100
Bamboos, Jaggry	100
Paper	30
Frash(sic)	12
Fruit	37
	4,393

Account Particulars of Diet Charges

Mother of the late Rajah's Gossayne	30
Amey Chund Roy, nephew to late Rajah	30
Ram Caunt Roy, a relation of the late Rajah	30
Seeb Naut Gose, a relation	20
Bessenaut Gose	20
Gour Mohun Gose	20
Physicians	130
Cansumahs	22
Slave girls for picking rice	43
Children born in the house from slave girls	75
Taylors	15
Moters	42
Carpenters	5
For teaching girls to dance	60
Mollye	6
Amount expended on people of his Cast	200
Gopenaut Sirma	2
Huzury Brahmins	27
	778

Account Clothing

For the Rajah	299
Rannee	122
Brahmin women, slave girls and others	225
Wicks for Lamps	10
Kedmutgar	725
	1,381

Accounts Burcundosses &c. with the Rajah (particulars omitted in the original)	3,068

Servants Establishment

Trumpeter	58
Drummer	20
Gerrial (?)	3
Coolies	282
Bamboo cutters	73
Grass cutters	99
Fraush (?)	5
Washerman	8
Tent-maker	13
Black-smith	48
Gugleet-maker (?)	14
Bricklayers	90
Manjee	243
Baildars (sic)	16
Chaibuck Senar	15
Baug Caum	6
Lollbund	2
Cutter, Elephant's teeth	13
Elephant drivers	16
Bullock drivers	7
Taylors	28
Carpenters	22
Sawmen	11
Dellee	6
Twiner	6
	997

Amlah of Calcutta (no particulars)	939

Amlah of Sadar of Dinajpur

Dewan	100
Paishkar	86
Moonsheys and Vakeels	197
Sheristah Kazanah	95
Sheristah Aumeeny	66
Bauzey Daftar	95
	640

Account Particulars of Kusbal Kurutch

Charity to the poor	53
Balnkets to the poor during winter	55
Shauls for Rannee, Rajah during winter	541
For Gossayn & Buriagheys during the Hooly ceremony observed on the anniversary of the Decease of former Rajah	1,933
Nuzzurs for Takorine &c	835
Oil for the use of the Rajah	85
	2,802

Reference : CR-P 14th Nov. 1781 Appendix.

Appendix (c) to chapter 2 : Tynaute at the Rajah's House or Servants attending the Rajah & his family.

	Persons	Bighas
Menial servants of every denomination	883	23,140
Horsemen	15	1,875
Peons	109	2,794
Pikes	389	10,125
Sikur Pikes	57	1,270
Bearers	175	2,100
Brahmins at Takoorbari	381	8,712
	2,009	50,016

Reference : CCRM 25th July, 1771 Appendix 9

CHAPTER 3

FARMING SYSTEM IN THE ZAMINDARI OF DINAJPUR

(1765 to 1800)

In this chapter, we shall examine the farming system in the zamindari of Dinajpur. Farming system was very extensively found in Bengal in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Especially in the big zamindaris like Burdwan(1), Rajshahi(2), Dinajpur and Edrackpur(3) the farming system penetrated deep into the estates.

Before going into the discussion on the farming system, it is necessary to classify its several types.

When we discuss the zamindar - state relations, the distinction between the public farming system and the private farming system is of primary importance. But when we study the zamindari system from the socio-economic view-point, we must distinguish the farming system as part of the managerial divisions from that as part of the basic structure of society(4).

Public farmers were those who farmed the mahals or estates directly from the government. On such occasions, the zamindar was deprived of the management of the zamindari and received a fixed allowance called moshaira. The size of the public farm varied from a single market place to an entire large zamindari. Private farmers were those who farmed the mahals from the land-holders (zamindars, talookdars, &ca.) on private engagements. We may include in this type those who under-farmed the mahals from the public farmers or private farmers, because in either case the contracts of the

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(1) In Burdwan, "the Rajah's whole zemindarry is let in farm to persons termed Sudder Mustagers, or farmers holding their leases immediately from the Zemindar. The Sudder Mustagers have parcelled out the greatest part, but not the whole, of their farms to under renters called Kutkenadars, some of whom have again subdivided the lands they hold, among yet smaller farms so that there are in some instance a gradation of four persons between Settlement deed, the Ryots though in general it extends only to one Kutkenadar and in some cases the Sudder Mustager collects parts of his rents from the Ryots himself." BDR-BRD-I,8th June 1793.P.51

(2) "... about 3/4 of the whole Jumma (of Bhettorea) is payable by the Kurraree and Muscooree Mehals. This class of Tenants ... give a great deal of trouble..." BR-P 4th Decr. 1787 No.29 & see also Ibid. 22nd August 1794. No. 14 to 17.

(3) CR-P 26th August 1782 Enclosure No. 10.

(4) For the definition of the managerial divisions and basic structure of society, see section 2 of chap. 2.

under-farming were made privately without the interference of the state.

Farms as part of the managerial divisions were mostly let out by the zamindar directly to the private farmers. As we have seen, there were two types: the parganati mustajiri and the huzuri izarah(5). Some of the kutkinadars should also be included in this category(6).

Farmers as part of the basic structure of society were those who took part in the production process of society by giving advances to the ryots(7) for the promotion of the cultivation. The majority of the Kutkina--dars who were differently called such as the mofussil farmers, village farmers, small farmers and under farmers belonged to this category.

Section 1 A short historical Account of the Public Farming System in the Zamindari of Dinajpur.

During the period under review, the public farming system appeared twice in the Dinajpur zamindari : firstly, from 1770 to 1774, and secondly, from 1781 to 1783. In both instances, they ended in complete failure. In fact, attempts to introduce the public farming system failed nearly everywhere in Bengal. In this short account, the causes of this failure in Dinajpur will also be examined.

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(5) For detail see section 2, chap. 2.
(6) See, section 1-(1)of chap. 1 & section 2 of chap. 2.
(7) On the necessity of giving loans to the ryots, see, chap. 5 & 6.

(1) Public Farming system from 1770 to 1774 :

In 1169 B.S. (1762 A.D.), the whole Dinajpur zamindari was farmed out to one Ramanut Bhaduri by the Nawab Kasim Ali at the Sadar Jama of Sa Rs. 2,706,091. The said Bhaduri had been employed in examining the assets of Dinajpur in the preceding year. The Sadar Jama of 1169 was more than the double of what the zamindar used to pay(8). This seems to have been the first attempt at the introduction of the public farming system into the zamindari of Dinajpur. It turned out to be complete failure. The public farmer was imprisoned by the Nawab on account of the huge arrears of Revenue (Sa Rs.773,824). After this failure, the management of the zamindari was restored to the zemindar.

In 1770, when the East India Company's government appointed the Supervisors to several districts and asked some of the senior Supervisors to make the mofussil settlements in their respective districts(9), it was implicitly understood that the settlements should be made with the highest bidders. Accordingly, G.Vansittart, the first Supervisor in Dinajpur, let out nearly one fifth of the zamindari to the highest bidders who offered to farm the parganas at a higher jama than in the preceding year(10). These were the first public farms in the Dinajpur district under the East India Company's Government. In spite of the exertion of Cottrell who succeeded Vansittart a huge arrear of Sa Rs. 301,012 remained uncleared.(11)

In the following year, J.Lawrell, a Commissioner on circuit on the special duty of making the settlement of the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur(12), made the settlement of Dinajpur by letting out the whole to

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(8) See appendix (a) to chap. 2 & Fifth Report Vol.2 Appendix 2.
(9) SC-P 21st June 1770 Letter of R.Becher, dated 18th June,1770.
(10) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770. Main report & enclosures.
(11) Ibid. 10th Octr. 1771 & Appendix (a) to chap. 2.
(12) Ibid. 2nd Novr. 1771 & CCR-P 7th May, 1771.

the public farmers. He farmed out about three fifths of the zamindari for three years, and the rest for one year(13). He argued in support of the public farming system in the following manner : "As the lands being at this time put in charge of the farmers, whose prospect of reaping advantages is from an early and encreased collection, there can be no doubt that they will exert themselves for those purposes, which are greatly forwarded by the customary advances of cash they make to the ryots called Tagavy."(14)

In January 1773, the Committee of Circuit consisting of J.Lawrell and P.M.Dacres concluded the five-year settlement of the Dinajpur zamindari. As three fifths of the zamindari had already been let out by J.Lawrell for three years in 1771, the Committee farmed out only the remaining portions of the zamindari at this time(15).

Because of the delay of nearly nine months in the settlement, of the embezzlement of the Abadgeers(16), of the cheapness of grain, the collection of the revenue in the first year of the five year settlement was very backward and the balances to the amount of Sa Rs. 87,519 remained due from the public farmers(17). In the second year, the situation further deteriorated and at the end of 1180 B.S. (1773/4 A.D.), the arrears of revenue due to government amounted to a staggering sum of Sa Rs.291,434(18). In this context, the newly set up Provincial Council of Revenue at Dinajpur, thus, wrote to W.Hastings on the 31st May 1774 : "our Dewan ... reported to us that notwithstanding ... that he has tried every method as well of severity, as lenity, to realize the outstanding balances of the Dinajpur District /for 1180 B.S./ they have proved unsuccessful, which he ascribes to the season

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(13) CCRM 25th July, 1771. Main Report & Appendix No.5
(14) CCR-P 20th May, 1771.
(15) CCRM 1st June 1772 & CC. 3rd Jany,1773.
(16) Abadgar : An Officer on deputation on various commission.
(17) PCR - DNR - P 1st March, 1779.
(18) Ibid.

being too far advanced to make further collection in the mofussil... the farmers represent that their credit has been stretched to the utmost in procuring the loans to make good the last year's engagement ... and their long confinement for their present arrears has prevented their going into their parganas or paying any attention to the encouragement of the riotts or the cultivation of the lands... they universally applied to us to be released from their engagements..."(19). Though the bankruptcy of the farming system was manifest by the end of the second year of the five-year settlement, the restoration of the management of the zamindari to the zamindar was delayed for one year due to the reluctance of the Council of Revenue to admit their failure(20).

To understand the causes of the complete failure of the five-year settlement, we must study its real nature : it was not based on a fairly contested public auction. From a "humble petition of Cunjoo Beharry Holdar, late an Izarahdar of Rangpur", recorded on the proceedings of the Controlling Council of Revenue at Murshidabad on the 8th February 1772,(21) we come to know the reality of " the public auction." In 1771, when J.Lawrell made the settlement of the Rangpur district, it was made" privately in the House at such an hour when all the people were ordered to be gone, & none could know anything of it..." Haldar continued,"Mr.Lawrell & Purling with their Banians agreed almost themselves ..... & took the whole district between them, by putting down the names of their servants..." On Bihari Haldar's protest, Bowanny Mitra, Lawrell's Banyan, told him that if he would take kutkinas(22) or make advances he would be given the farms of Bobanny Gunge,

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(19) RBWC-P 31st May, 1774.
(20) RBWC-P 29th June,1773.& 31st May,1774.
(21) CCRM 8th Feb. 1772.
(22) The meaning of this portion is unclear. It might mean that he was asked to farm other kutkinas which were not so profitable as his former ones.

Gour Gong, &ca to the amount of Rs.53,943 as heretofore. But as Haldar went on protesting against the unfair deeds, those farms were given to Christie, a European trader.

When the same Lawrell made the settlement of Dinajpur district in the same year, there were under-hand dealings between the said Bowanny Mitra, the Lawrell's Banyan, and Brijoo Mohun Bose, the Banyan of Pye, the Assistant Supervisor of Dinajpur. Brijoo Mohun Bose proposed that if the Sezwalship(23) of the Annexed Parganas (Silberris) was given to him, and if the said parganas were separated from the control of Cottrell and put under the control of his Master, Pye, he would pay Rs.5,000. Eventually, Pye was appointed to the Supervisorship of the Annexed Parganas, which was separated from the district of Dinajpur, and Brijoo Bose, in his uncle's name, was given the Sezwalship of them.(24)

The situation in the zamindari of Dinajpur also did not differ much from that of Rangpur and the Annexed Parganas (Silberris). At the time of the five-year settlement, the abovementioned Christie got the farms of the Parganas of Apole and Panjara in the name of his Banyan Attaram Puckerassy. Puckerassy deposed before the Council of Revenue when he was involved in a dispute with his Master, Christie, that "the Committee [of Circuit] neither knew me nor my brother, Mr. Christie recommended us, and got the Mahals to us.(25)

It is,thus, clear that the would-be public farmers had secretly to give salamis(26) or advances to the Banyans of the British officers to

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(23) Sezwal : An officer specially appointed to take charge of an estate, from the management of which the owner or farmer has been removed.
(24) CCRM 8th Feb. 1772.
(25) PCR-DNR-P 2nd May, 1775.
(26) Salami : a doucer, present, gratuity, offering.

secure a farm or they had to get the farms through the recommendations of some Englishmen to whom the candidates had, of course, to pay considerable rewards.

What were the profits of the public farmers from their farms? When Christie secured two parganas at the five-year settlement in the name of Attaram Puckerassy, there was an agreement between them that Christie would receive Rs.22,000 from the pargana Panjara in three years, while Attaram would get the whole profit which would arise from the pargana Apole. Christie actually gained much more from the pargana : He forcibly exacted a sum of Rs.47,427 from the under-farmers of the pargana in three years. Attaram, on his part, derived a profit of Rs. 18,324 from the pargana Apole in 1180 B.S.(27) In the pargana Burbeela which was farmed by Ramsunker Mitra at the five-year settlement, he acquired a profit of Rs.20,243 after deduc--ting all the charges of collections in 1181 B.S.(28) The public farmers, thus, derived a considerable profit from their farms.

Why then did they fail? This was partly due to the particular method of the management of the farms by the public farmers. They managed their farms through their agents (gomasthas) or sub-let them to the under-farmers. In the pargana Panjara, the public farmer (Sadar Ijarahdar) under-farmed the parganas to two under-farmers (Dar-Ijarahdars) on the condition that they would pay Rs.22,000 to him in three years. The Dar-Ijarahdars, in their turn, sub-let their under-farms to the petty renters (kutkinadars). The Dar-Ijarahdars collected the revenue from the petty renters and paid the public revenue to the Government treasury directly(29). In the pargana Apole, the public farmer sent his agent (gomasthah) to the pargana office and the latter made the mofussil settlement of the pargana with 21 petty

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(27) PCR-DNR-P 24th March,1775 & 11th April,1775 & 2nd May, 1775.
(28) Ibid. 28th March, 1775 & 2nd May, 1775.
(29) CCRM 16th April, 1772 & 25th May,1772 & PCR-DNR 2nd May, 1775.

renters(kutkinadars). These 21 petty renters agreed to pay a sum of Rs.85,063 as the mofussil jama to the public farmer. And the latter paid a sum of Rs.62,336 to the public treasury as the public revenue of the pargana in 1180 B.S.(30)

In both cases, the actual management of the country was in the hands of the kutkinadars (small under-farmers). The kutkinadars were people of substance in the parganas and were willing to undertake the under-farming. They made the tedious process of the mofussil settlement with the ryots and, even more, often advanced loans to the ryots to promote cultivation of lands(30A).

The public farmers collected the revenue from these petty renters with the assistance of the zamindari establishments(31) which were retained for this purpose, even after the zamindari was put under the management of the public farmers. The public farmers, therefore, had only to take the trouble of paying the revenue which came from the parganas to the Government treasury and bagged a large profit above described.

From the above description of the method of management of the parganas by the public farmers, it follows that they had only a superficial control over the country. Only by the use of rigour were they able to exact huge profits during the first few years of their farming. For example, Christie exacted Rs.47,427 in three years by confining the under-farmers (kutkinadars) for 18 months and by selling their private effects(32).

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(30) CCRM, 16th April, 1772 & 25th May, 1772 & PCR-DNR 2nd May, 1775.
(30A)See section 3 of this chapter.
(31) See section 1&2, chapter 1.
(32) PCR-DNR-P 14th March, 1775 & 11th April, 1775 & 2nd May, 1775.

Even in the normal years, such cruel exactions must have ruined the country by causing the under-farmers (kutkinadars) to give up their farms and the desertion of both kutkinadars and the ryots. In fact, Phipps, the Superintendent at Govind Gunge in Rangpur reported in 1774 that "many of the old kutkannadars or under-farmers had actually given up their lands in consequence of the loss they had sustained in the preceding year."(33) Because of the desertion of the kutkinadars who were in many cases, the promoters of cultivation and the suppliers of agricultural loans, the country must have suffered a great deal. It would be interesting to note that when the public farmers failed to pay their revenues, they invariably alleged that their failure resulted from the withholding of rents by the ryots and the kutkinadars(34).

There were some other circumstances which aggravated the situation.

Firstly, the effects of the great famine of 1770 persisted in the zamindari. Robertson, the first Collector of Dinajpur, wrote in June 1773 that "the great loss of the inhabitants by the famine has been severely felt and in a great measure the cause of the present clamours. For tho' the ground formerly possessed by these people thus lost remained mostly uncultivated, still the same amount has been demanded by Government, consequently many farmers have been obliged to make large over-collections from the remaining riotts. These thus harassed and seeing no end to the demands made on them have been long past in a state of total despondency...(35) The diminution of the cultivation due to famine was ascertained by Phipps who himself attended the measurement of one mahal and found that the decrease of the cultivation complained of was well-founded(36).

Secondly, the cheapness of grain aggravated the miseries of the country. Marriott, the Supervisor of Dinajpur, wrote in September 1772 that

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(33) RBWC-P 7th June, 1774.
(34) PCR-DNR-P 22nd Oct. 1774 & 4th April, 1775.
(35) RBWC-P 29th June, 1773.
(36) Ibid. 7th June, 1774.

the farmers and the revenue collectors(abadgeers) "having represented to me that the extreme cheapness of rice which in several parganas of the Province is now selling 3 to 4 Maunds for one rupee, more than double the quantity last season, prevent the Ryots from disposing of the crops in such manner as be able to pay their Malguzary."(37) In October 1772, he wrote again that owing to the cheapness of the grain, "the ryots are unable to sell their grains, & that they bring it to the Sadar Kachari of the Parganas as the only means of discharging their rents.../which will incur/ considerable prejudice & loss."(38) Similar reports came from Patna(39), Purnea(40) and Birbhum(41). This universal cheapness of grain might be ascribed to the relative superabundance of the crops in 1771, 1772 and 1773(42) as well as to "the melancholy decline of Trade and scarcity of specie" after the great famine(43).

Thirdly, the evil effects of the outcry system were there. Robertson wrote in June 1773 that "the lands being let outcry has been of bad consequences, it having given opportunity for a set of people of desperate circumstances & who before incurred large balances under false names again to become farmers."(44) As a matter of course they borrowed money from the money lenders (mahajans). In May 1774, the Provincial Council of Revenue at Dinajpur wrote to W.Hastings that "the farmers not having property... their credit has been stretched to the utmost in procuring loans to make good the last years Engagement."(45) Once the money lenders refused to give them loans they fell into arrears of revenue and interest on the former loans became an inextricable burden for them(46).

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(37) RB CWC-P 17th Novr. 1772. No.17.
(38) Ibid.
(39) Ibid..
(40) Ibid.
(41) W.H.Hunter, op. cit. Pp 23-26.
(42) Ibid.
(43) RB CWC-P 7th June, 1774.
(44) Ibid. 29th June, 1773.
(45) Ibid. 31st May, 1774.
(46) Ibid.

Lastly, the manoeuvre of the zamindar of Dinajpur seems to have played an important role in the failure of the public farming system in his zamindari. By a comparison of the two Hastabud papers (Rent-roll of the whole zamindari), one for 1179 B.S.(47) and the other for 1181 B.S.(48), we find that the Rajah of Dinajpur farmed at least 35 parganas in various fictitious names (benami) at the five-year settlement. The total Jama of them amounted to Sa Rs.843,101 in 1180 B.S. As the Jama of the zamindari of Dinajpur for the same year was Sa Rs.1,727,298, the Rajah kept in his hands nearly half of the zamindari in fictitious names (benami). The farms taken by the outsiders constantly showed arrears of revenue during the first two years of the five year settlement, while the farms held by the Rajah in fictitious names did not until the end of 1180 B.S. when "the reports of new regulations & of deductions being granted in every part"(49) spread over in the Dinajpur zamindari. At this critical juncture, the Rajah seems to have intentionally withheld the payment of the revenue from his farms and the arrears of revenue from the district of Dinajpur amounted to a huge sum of about three lacks of rupees(50). In the face of such large arrears the Company's government at last admitted a large deduction of public revenue at the end of 1181 B.S.(51) and returned the management of the estate to the zamindar at favorable conditions(52).

Thus, the short sighted exactions made by the public farmers at the outset, and the combined effects of the four circumstances described above brought about a complete failure of the first attempt at the introduction of the public farming system in the zamindari of Dinajpur.

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(47) CC, 26th Jany. 1773, Account settlement for five years.
(48) PCR-DNR-P 12th Nov. 1774.
(49) Ibid. 29th April,1774.
(50) See Appendix (a) to Chap. 2.
(51) PCR-DNR-P 12th Novr. 1774.
(52) Ibid. 17th Feb. 1775 & 14th March, 1775 & 18th April, 1775.

(2) Devy Sing's Public Farming in Dinajpur from 1781 to 1783.

In 1781, the newly set up Committee of Revenue increased the land revenue of Bengal and Behar from Sa Rs.25,971,669 to Sa Rs.28,598,456(53). It was very unfortunate for the zamindar family of Dinajpur that the Rajah Bydenaut who was allowed to hold his zamindari at a fixed jama died in the preceding year. The Committee of Revenue demanded an increase of Sa Rs.200,000 from the new zamindar, Rajah Radhanaut Roy(54). On the refusal of the zamindar to agree to the increased demand of Government, the Committee let out on the 9th May, 1781 the zamindari, together with the neighbouring zamindari of Edrackpur, to Roy Bahadur Sing, a brother of Rajah Devy Sing, at an increase of Rs. 215,000 on the previous year's jama. The Committee, at the same time, appointed Devy Sing the public Dewan of Dinajpur(55).

The second case of public farming thus began in Dinajpur in May,1781. The zamindari Dewan, Jankiram Sing, tried to put obstacles in the way of Devy Sing's rent collection by forging false accounts and by instigating the old private farmers, who were mostly the relatives and dependants of the zamindar, to relinquish their farms which amounted to 7 to 8 lacks of rupees(56). However, through the strong support given to Devy Sing by Goodlad, the Collector of Rangpur who was in a position of superintending the collection of revenue from both Dinajpur and Rangpur, he compelled Jankiram Sing to be held responsible for the realization of the revenue from the Dinajpur zamindari and, thus, terminated the obstructions by the zamindari officers(57). Devy Sing did evérything to realize the greatly increased Government's demand on the zamindari. It is well-known how his cruel methods in this regards brought about the wide-spread agrarian resistance in Rangpur from the end of 1782 to the beginning of 1783.(58) Before this great uprising

(53) CR-P 19th Nov. 1781.
(54) Ibid. 9th May,1781.
(55) Ibid.
(56) Ibid. 8th July,1782.
(57) Ibid. 28th June, 1782.
(58) For detail, See N.Kaviraj : " A peasant uprising in Bengal 1783", 1972.

in Rangpur, there occurred a some-what lesser outbreak in the pargana of Bēelgaut in the zamindari of Edrackpur in which about 14 people were killed in an affray between the ryots and the guards of the pargana office. In the zamindari of Dinajpur, no such armed outbreak occurred. However, desertion of peasants on a considerable scale took place in consequence of the Devy Sing's exactions. According to MacDowall, who was deputed to Dinajpur to make a Khas settlement(59) in May 1783, the loss caused by the desertion of the peasants during Devy Sing's public farming amounted to more than 2 lacks of rupees.

The Committee of Revenue could not afford to ignore such devastating effects of Devy Sing's farming. The Committee, thus, resolved on the 4th December, 1783 :

> "The Committee are clearly of opinion that the Revenue of Dinajpur will be more certainly realized by concluding a settlement with the zamindar than by the present mode, and that country will in general be better managed, and the cultivation be better promoted under the management of the zamindar than could be reasonably expected from the Agency of a Dewan, who from the prejudices of the Inhabitants in general, as well as from the influence of the zamindar's dependants would be liable to obstructions and difficulties.... The Committee further remark that in almost every instance when a necessity has arisen for depriving a zamindar of the charge of his district, no other method.... either by a Farmer or a Khas collection, ever succeeded to preserve the Revenue at its standard amount... and it has too often happened that discontent and dissentions have been excited among the inhabitants, and the country involved in confusion by the contending influence of the zamindar and his dependants."(60)

The Committee of Revenue, thus, decided to return the management of the zamindari of Dinajpur to the zamindar at the gross jama of Sa Rs. 1,460,444 or at the net jama of Sa Rs.1,275,968 on the same day.

The second attempt at the introduction of farming system into the Dinajpur zamindari was, thus, officially admitted to have been complete failure

(59) Khas Settlement : A mofussil settlement of an estate directly made by the government officer, the management of which was removed from its owner.
(60) CR-P 4th Decr. 1783. L.R. Nos. 20 & 21.

Now let us examine Devy Sing's methods of collection as a public farmer. When Devy Sing took over the management of the Dinajpur zamindari, he found that about one hundred persons who were the relations or dependants of the zamindar, used to farm the important mehals of the zamindari to the sum of Rs. 700,000 or 800,000(61). He allowed these persons to continue to hold their farms at the same jama as at the previous year(62). He put the rest of the zamindari under direct management (khas) and sent his people into the parganas as the sezwals. The sezwals went into the mofussil and directly demanded the rents from the ryots, and he sent the paiks(footmen) to collect the rents from the villages(62A). In the first year of his farm, the farmed parganas remained calm, but in the khas mahals he demanded 18 months' rent or an increase of 50% from the ryotts(63). His people were instructed to exact the enhanced rent by whatever means they chose to adopt(64). Many ryots were confined at the parganas offices on account of the arrears of rent and many left the country for the neighbouring districts(65). In the second year, the confusion spread to the farmed parganas. Many of the old farmers refused to renew their engagements. Devy Sing brought these relinquished parganas under his direct administration and sent his people into the parganas to make the mofussil settlement(66). But from the desolate state of the country-side, he feared that there might arise a large deficiency in the assets of the country. To prevent the probable balances from falling on himself, he forced the reluctant old farmers to renew the farms through severities(67). In many cases, the management of such parganas remained in the hands of Devy Sing's people, though the coerced farmers were held responsible for the realization of the revenue demand from the parganas(68).

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(61) CR-P 17th Decr. 1781 & 8th July, 1782 L.R. No. 9.
(62) Ibid.
(62A) CR-P 14th March, 1782. No. 12.
(63) BDR- RGPR, Vol.2, 4th Jany, 1782. Nos.248, 262 & 263.
(64) Ibid. No. 248.
(65) CR-P 14th March, 1782, & 24th April, 1782, & 4th Septr. 1783.
(66) Ibid. 8th July, 1782.
(67) Ibid. 24th July, 1783 & 18th August, 1783.
(68) Ibid.

In the zamindari of Edrackpur which Devy Sing farmed together with that of Dinajpur, the zamindar was confined and tortured by Devy Sing who asked the zamindar to under-farm the whole of his own zamindari at the jama of Sa Rs.213,722(69). The sadar jama of the zamindari in the preceding year was Sa Rs. 145,196(70), Devy Sing, therefore, demanded nearly 50% more than what the zamindar of Edrackpur used to pay. Devy Sing, then, appointed a sezwal in his capacity as the public dewan and virtually put the zamindari under his direct administration, while the responsibility of paying up the public revenue lay with the zamindar(71). When the revenue from any of the parganas remained unrealized, the sezwal deputed an officer with a party of armed men(Barkandazes) to enforce the payment of rent. This officer who was also called a sezwal, repeated the same method to force the ryots to pay their rents. They often had recourse to confine the principal ryots of the villages and attach their properties. In this zamindari, the zamindar possessed a considerable quantity of land as his private land (niz Talooks) and his servants and relation also held many mahals at reduced rents. Devy Sing resumed these lands and collected the revenue from them at the usual rate of rent. As the demand on the whole zamindari increased by nearly 50% the demands on the ryots also presumably increased considerably.

Such an unprecedented enhancement of rent could not but create sharp reactions from the ryots and the zamindar. In the pargana of Beelgaut which was a Niz Talook of the zamindar, a disturbance broke out and resulted in the killing of 14 people of both sides. As a prelude to the bigger distur--bances in Rangpur against Devy Sing, this unknown incident would be worthy of notice(72).

Pargana Beelgaut was a Niz Talook of the Rajah Gournaut, the zamindar

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(69) CR-P 11th April, 1782 LR Nos. 1 to 3, & 26th August, 1782.
(70) Ibid.
(71) Ibid.
(72) Ibid. 26th August, 1782.

of Edrackpur. In 1188 B.S., the collection of its rent went on smoothly until the arrival of one Cunteram Mustophee with a Rozbandi(73) for an increased sum. The new demand included an increase on Kam Wuzzun Batta(74) 12 months' increase of rent and the former balance of Rs.1000. The ryots refused to pay the first item of increase (Kam Wuzzun Batta). On this, the sezwal sent an officer, who was also called the sezwal, with a party of sepoys and Barkandazes to enforce the payment of the increased demands. The ryots deserted the pargana and did not appear before the sezwal for about a month. After the negotiation between them through the late thanadar of the pargana, the ryots came back to the pargana and paid Rs.1,000 and the sezwal called off a part of his Barkandazes. The sezwal demanded a further sum of Rs.775 as the expenses of the sepoys sent into the pargana, the present to the dewan of Roy Bahdur Sing (the public farmer), and Rajah Gournaut, the allowances for himself and his gomastah. Hearing this new demands, the ryots began to desert the pargana. The sezwal confined the principal ryots and attached their houses for the security of revenue. The ryots of the pargana assembled together at a place called Haut Cole and demanded of the sezwal the release of the confined ryots and his retirement from the pargana. The sezwal having refused to concede the demands of the ryots, the ryots to the number of 2,000 proceeded to the pargana office. A clash ensued and 7 ryots and 7 Barkandazes were killed in the affray. The sezwal was caught by the ryots and put in iron. Afterwards, the sezwal and the late thanadar deposed before the Court (Adalat) that there were 7 or 8 hundred people from Lalbarry (a nearby pargana) among the ryots who attacked the office. The sezwal complained that the Rajah of Edrackpur ordered the naib of Lalbarry to send the Sirdars(75) of the local Robbers with their people to assist the ryots of the pargana Beelgaut. The late thanadar deposed that "the Ryots of Lalbarry assisted the ryots of Beelgaut in this business... Sham Sirdar and

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(73) Rozbandi : A daily register.
(74) Kam Ozan Batta : A discount due to the short weight of the coin.
(75) Sirdar : A chief, headman, commander.

Outty Sirdar and other Decoyts were also with them... I asked the ryots of Lalbarry who had ordered them to behave in this manner... they replied that we Ryots are all brothers..."(76)

The direct cause of this disturbance was, thus, the increase of rent and the imposition of additional demands by the sezwal to the sum of Rs.775. Behind the scene, the zamindar of Edrackpur seems to have played a role by instigating the ryots and giving assistance to the Beelgaut ryots. The participation of the Sirdars and the Dacoits of Lalbarry gave a militant look to the disturbance. However, it was not possible for us to ascertain whether the Ryots of Lalbarry joined the disturbance because of the feeling that "we Ryots all brothers", or because they were ordered by the zamindar to do so.

The sum which Devy Sing actually extorted from the zamindari of Dinajpur is unknown. He farmed the Dinajpur zamindari at the gross jama of Sa Rs.1,660,444 or net jama of Sa Rs.1,475,968 and, according to a later record(77), paid that sum in full. But MacDowall's report tells us that the gross collection of 1188 B.S. was Sa Rs. 1,785,594 and that of 1189 B.S. fell to Sa Rs.1,424,397(78). Devy Sing's gross collection from the zamindari of Dinajpur in two years, therefore, was Sa Rs.3,209,991, while he had to pay Sa Rs. 3,320,888 to make good his farming contract with government. There was a deficiency of Rs. 110,897 to pay up the public revenue, not to speak of his profit as public farmer. It seems quite unlikely that a man like Devy Sing should have suffered a loss from his farm. The reasonable interpretation of this would be that he had collected more than Sa Rs. 3,320,888 in two years, though he did not bring into the accounts the whole of his collection. The fact that he enforced the payment of 18 months' rent or 50% increase on the ryots with the severest rigour may support

(76) CR-P 26th August, 1782. Redfearn's report.
(77) BDR-DNR, Vol.2, 15th Jany, 1788. No. 277.
(78) CR - P 17th July, 1783.

this interpretation.

In the zamindari of Edrackpur, the public revenue of which was settled at Sa Rs.160,196 in 1781, he realized Sa Rs. 213,722 from the Rajah Gournaut. He, therefore, appropriated a sum of Rs.53,526 as profit in a single year.

What was the aftermath of Devy Sing's public farming in Dinajpur?

The immediate effect was the desertion of a great number of ryots and the consequent desolation of the country. MacDowall wrote in 1783 that he "found the cultivation of this District in a most alarming state of backwardness," and the petty merchants in the mofussil suffered so much during these two years "that they were not able to supply the ryots with money as heretofore."(79) Many substantial ryots who used to have cultivated from 50 to 300 bighas reduced their cultivation to what was just enough to support their families(79A). The loss from the desertion of the ryots was estimated at Rs.203,050. As the country was in such a deplorable condition, MacDowall could only find the assets of Sa Rs. 1,387,174 for the settlement of 1190 B.S.(80).

The second effect was the perpetuation of the new impositions. The zamindar of Dinajpur levied a large sum of impositions to defray the expenses of the late Rajah's funeral ceremony in 1187 B.S.(1780 A.D.). According to the usage of the country, these impositions were temporary and should be discontinued in the next year. But Devy Sing continued them in 1188 & 1189 B.S. and levied further new ones on the ryots. These impositions amounted to Sa Rs.420,000. When MacDowall started the khas settlement of Dinajpur in 1190 B.S. (1783 A.D.), he found that the assets of the country diminished so much after Devy Sing's public farming that without retaining these unlawful impositions the level of the government revenue of the

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(79) CR - P 22nd May, 1783.
(79A) CR - P 18th July, 1783.
(80) CR - P 16th Octr. 1783. LR No. 22.

former years could not be maintained. He, therefore, continued them(81). Though his transaction was evidently inconsistent with the principles of the Company's government which prohibited the new impositions on the ryots, the Committee of Revenue approved of it. From this time, these new taxes formed part of the assets of the zamindari and in 1790, under the adminis--tration of G.Hatch, they were incorporated into the Assul Jama (original rent) of the country(82).

The third effect was the confusion in the system of the mofussil settlement. When MacDowall suffered the new impositions to continue in 1190 B.S., he allowed the ryots to take in waste lands free of rent to make up for the increased burden of rent(83). The perpetuation of the new taxes and the approval of the cultivation of waste land free of rent made the existing assul jama (original rent) and the nirkhbandi (table of rates of rents) obsolete. As no general measurement took place until Hatch's reforms, the zamindar had no means to know the actual assets of his own estate. Under such circumstances, only the Tahudi settlement (85) could be possible and the accumulation of new taxes was a natural consequence.

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(81) CR - P 4th Sept. 1783 LR Nos.4 to 7.
(82) See section 5 of Chapter 4.
(83) CR - P 4th Sept. 1783. LR Nos.4 to 7.
(84) See section 5 of Chapter 4.
(85) See section 1 of Chapter 1.

Section 2 : Farming System as Managerial Divisions.

In this type of farming will be included those farms which the zamindar let out, on certain managerial considerations, to various persons. The tenure of the farms, the rates of assessment and the mode of payment of revenue differed according to the purposes for which such farms were let out.

In a memorandum of G.Vansittart, we find the earliest description of the farming system in the zamindari of Dinajpur as he found it during his stay in Dinajpur as the first Supervisor in 1770(86). From this we come to know that the farmers in the zamindari of Dinajpur at this stage were mostly the petty renters or small ijarahdars, except those who farmed about one fifth of the zamindari from G.Vansittart as the public farmers. Most of these petty renters (kutkinadars) were closely related to the basic structure of society and, therefore, did not belong to the type of the farmers in question. It seems that at the earliest stage of the East India Company's administration in Dinajpur, the farming system as a means of the management of the zamindari had yet to appear on the scene.

In January 1773, when J.Lawrell, a member of the Committee of Circuit, farmed out the whole zamindari to public farmers for five years, the zamindar retained, at least 35 parganas in fictitious names(benami). The jama of them amounted to a sum of Sa Rs.843,101 in 1180 B.S. The public farming by the zamindar himself in benami at this time may be considered as the beginning of the farming system as the managerial divisions in Dinajpur.

In 1775, when the zamindar recovered the management of his estate from the hands of the public farmers, he started the process of alienating portions of it under various pretexts to guard his interest. The creation of the huzuri mahals in the pargana of Apole dated from this time(87).

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(86) See section 1, Chap. 1.
(87) See section 2, Chap. 2.

In 1781, when Rajah Devy Sing became the public farmer of the zamindari of Dinajpur, he found nearly one hundred persons, who were the zamindari officers, the dependants and relations of the zamindar, holding the farms throughout the zamindari yielding a Jama of about 7 or 8 lacks of rupees.

In 1783, when MacDowall made the khas settlement of the zamindari, his first object was to persuade Jankiram Sing, the zamindari Dewan, to continue the farms he had held, because the depopulated state of the country made it very difficult to find out men of substance who were willing to bid for them(88).

In 1787, under the administration of G.Hatch, such farms as were let out by the zamindar as a means of the management of the estate (huzuri mahals and bazi talooks) were re-annexed to the parganas to which they had originally belonged, and there remained only two managerial divisions vizt. the khas mahals (Sa Rs. 1,253,711) and parganati mustajiri (Sa Rs.398,064)(89)

In 1790, G.Hatch reported to the Board of Revenue that "the system of farming and under-farming is entirely abolished throughout the zamindari"(90) and now the whole zamindari was managed by the tahsildars who were appointed by the zamindar and received a certain commission on their collection(91). Despite what Hatch had said some of the most important parganas of the zamindari of Dinajpur continued to be held in farm by Lala Manick Chand, the public dewan of the district. Thus, the farming system continued in the zamindari of Dinajpur to the very end of the 18th century, when it broke into pieces(92).

During the period under review, the zamindar found it difficult to

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(88) CR - P 18th August, 1783 L.R.No.25.
(89) BR - P 28th May, 1789 No. 15 enclosure.
(90) BR - P 20th August, 1790 No. 7
(91) See section 5 of Chapter 6.
(92) See sections 4 & 6 of Chapter 6.

sustain his zamindari by direct management alone and, therefore, he took to the farming system from various considerations and under various pressures. The expansion of the farming system meant the diminution of such portions of the estate as were directly managed by the zamindari officers (naibs or choudhuris), namely, the Khas Mahals or the Parganati Tahsil Khas(93).

What were, then, the considerations and the pressures which contributed to such rapid expansion of the farming system in the zamindari of Dinajpur?

Generally speaking, the transition in the mode of estate-management from the direct method (khas collection) to the indirect one (farming system) was the result of the weakening local prestige and influence of the zamindar. During our period, such decline was brought about by the political confusion and by the retrenchment of the zamindari establishments by government(94). At the village level, such decline resulted in the transformation of the mofussil settlement from the Fussuli type to the Tahudi type(95), and in the rise of the local small leaders, especially, the wealthy ryots(96). And at the level of the managerial divisions, it resulted in the transition of the mode of the management abovementioned.

Secondly, the zamindar farmed out portions of his estate to his servants, dependants and relations at a favourable jama; the Huzuri Mahals and the Bazi Talooks(97). By this, the zamindar reduced the ostensible assets of the zamindari on which government revenue was assessed. This kind of farming also served him for other useful purposes. After the restoration of the management of the zamindari from the hands of the public farmers in 1775, it was no longer possible for him to effectually control his extensive estate by the direct management alone. Therefore, he let a considerable portion of his estate out to private farmers. But economically as well as

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(93) See section 2 of Chap. 2.
(94) See section 1 of Chap. 4.
(95) See section 1 of Chap. 1 & section 1-(2)-d, Chap. 6.
(96) See section 1-(2) of Chap. 6.
(97) See section 2 of Chap. 2.

politically it was not advisable for the zamindar to let out the important and profitable portions of the parganas to outsiders. He therefore created these managerial divisions throughout the parganas and separated them from the parganas. Then, he farmed them to his relations and servants apart from the parganas. When G.Hatch abolished the private farming system throughout the zamindari of Dinajpur, he ordered that a sum of Rs.45,792 per annum to be set aside for the pension of "male & female relations,..., servants, mostly superannuated, of his ancestors,"(98) out of the zamindar's private fund. These pensioners were hitherto allowed to hold farms for their maintenance. These farms, thus, also served as an alternative to pensions for the support of the zamindar's kinsmen and old servants.

Thirdly, the zamindar was obliged to farm out portions of his estate to his creditors at a favourable jama. G.Hatch wrote in 1787 : "the creditors (of the zamindar of Dinajpur) do not come forward with their claims, it is, I believe, because they are unwilling to forgo the advantages derived to them from certain profitable Farms, they now hold..."(99) But this was rather a recent development. When Mohun Loll, a merchant, provided Rajah Bydenaut with a loan in 1174 B.S. (1767 A.D.), the Rajah "granted me (Mohun Loll) Tuncaws(100) on several of the inferior Parganas of Dinajpur, and made the Chowdries of them give me other Bonds(101). From this, we understand that at this early stage, the creditors were given a claim upon the produce of several parganas, but were not allowed to take possession of the parganas as farmars. This shows how rapidly and deeply the farming system penetrated into the zamindari of Dinajpur during the two decades of the India Company's rule.

Fourthly, the necessity of bribing the Government officers also led to the creation of farms. In 1783, the Committee of Revenue wrote in

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(98) BR-W-P 25th July, 1794. Nos. 1 & 2
(99) BDR - DNR -II 13th May, 1787. No. 143.
(100) Tankah : An assignment of revenue of any particular locality.
(101) CCRM 23rd Septr. 1771.

their instructions to MacDowall that they had reason to believe that "the grants of lands in Farm to officers of Government at an under-rated Jumma in consequence of their influence with the zamindars"(102) had generally led to a decrease in the Hastabud (Valuation) of many districts in Bengal. Under Hatch's administration, at least, two very powerful native officers farmed the most important parganas of the zamindari. Ramkant Roy, who acted as Public Dewan of the District, Zamindari Dewan and Guardian farmed pargana Ackerabad, the Jama of which was Rs. 5,689(103). And Lala Manick Chand who also acted as Public Dewan, Zamindari Dewan and Guardian farmed the Parganas Bijanagar, Deorah & ca the Jama of which amounted to a sum of Rs.233,000(104). Pargana Bijanagar was the central pargana of the zamindari, in which the town of Dinajpur and the largest market-place (Rauje-gunge) were situated. There is no doubt that they had acquired these parganas through their influence as government officers over the zamindar.

The private farming system which was introduced into the Dinajpur zamindari by the zamindar due to the several necessities abovementioned turned out to be quite dangerous for his own landed property. We shall see how the farming system of the type in question contributed to the undermining of the zamindar's authority over his country and to the eventual break-up of his estate(105).

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(102) CR - P 14th April, 1783.
(103) BR - P 3rd Jany, 1791. No. 45.
(104) BR - P 25th April, 1794 & Ibid. 28th May, 1789 No.15 (Enclosure)
(105) See section 3 of Chap. 4.

Section 3 : Farming System at the village Level.

In the zamindari of Dinajpur, a group of people generally called kutkinadars (mofussil farmers, petty farmers, under farmers and village farmers) acted as the farmers at the lowest level(106).

They generally resided in the countryside and had a thorough knowledge of the conditions of the country and the cultivators. In both the parganas under the zamindar's direct management (Khas Mahals) and the farmed parganas (Parganati Mustajiri and Huzuri Mahals), they were the people who, in most of the cases, made the mofussil settlement with the villages. They collected the rents from the villages and made them over either to the choudhuris or to the chief farmers of the parganas or mahals.

Among them, there were, broadly speaking, two types. First, those who resided in the country and had the necessary capital to undertake small farming outside their resident villages. They usually farmed a small divisions of the pargana called Taraf which comprised a few villages(107). They "according to the custom of Dinajpur Province, relinquish their farms if they are so disposed, before the season of cultivation comes on and give a writing accordingly, otherwise they continue accountable for them as a matter of course without requiring any renewal of their leases and the increase to be levied on them is settled upon an examination of the Doles (statement of the particulars of revenue of mahals) in the months of Assin & Cautic by the resumption of deductions which had been allowed on account of waste lands, the re-annexing of Aboab which had been excused & ca."(108) But the competition for the farms (kutkinas) was not altogether lacking. Particularly when the zamindar or the chief farmers (Sadar Mustajirs) were keen on increasing the revenue from their farms, a competition occurred due to their invitation for new offers for the farms. On such occasions, old kutkinadars had to pay an increased demand on their farms, or had to

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(106) See section 1 of Chap. 1.
(107) PCR - DNR - P 30th Jany, 1776 & 31st March, 1778 & ca.
(108) CCR - P 10th May, 1772. No. 6.

give way to those who offered a larger sum for the farms. For example, one Durga Persaud farmed Taraf Haushimpore in the Pargana of Panjara in 1183 B.S. (1776 A.D.) and paid up his revenue, but in the next year, an increase of Rs.101 was demanded of him. Though he agreed to the payment of the increase, he was deprived of the farm(109). The kutkinadars on such occasions must have been obliged to pay a present besides the revenue of the mahals. To the second type belonged those who were the principal ryots of the villages which they farmed as the kutkinadars. This type was most numerous in the zamindari of Dinajpur(110). In Purnea also, the small mofussil farmers were mostly the principal ryots of the villages(111). In this case the representative of the village was at the same time the agent of the zamindar. As will be discussed later, this combination of a double capacity in one person led him to abuse the powers vested in him(112).

The kutkinadars, in most cases, were not merely revenue-contractors but played a positive role in the production process of society, hence belonged to the basic structure of society. The role of the mofussil farmers in the production process mainly derived from the fact that they supplied the cultivators with agricultural stocks. Take some examples : One Ner Narain, a farmer of Taraf Muncorah & ca. in the pargana of Surhutta advanced Taqavi to the ryots and promoted the cultivation(113). One Colley Chand Doss who farmed Tarafs Naggery & Saugerry in the pargana Panjara provided the ryots with Taqavi and greatly improved the cultivation of the Tarafs(114).In those days, the distribution of agricultural stocks in the country-side was extremely unequal, with the result that the majority of the actual cultivators

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(109) PCR-DNR-P 31st March, 1778.
(110) BDR-DNR Vol.1 12th August, 1789 No.397.
(111) PCR-DNR-P. 1st Decr. 1778 & ibid. 1st March,1779(Settlement Accounts) & ibid. 14th March, 1780.
(112) See section 1-(2) of Chap. 6.
(113) PCR-DNR-P 30th Jany. 1776.
(114) Ibid. 31st March, 1778.

lacked the necessary agricultural stock even to maintain the existing level of the cultivation(115). The loans provided to the ryots by the small farmers, therefore, had an important role to play in the production process (agricultural production) of society.

However, we should not consider them as the only suppliers of agricultural stocks to needy ryots. As we have seen, the majority of the kutkinadars in Dinajpur were the wealthy ryots, of whom the former constituted only a small portion. It was these numerous wealthy ryots who supplied the greatest part of the agricultural stocks to the needy ryots in the countryside.(116)

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(115) See section 3 of chap.5.
(116) We shall discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 4

FALL OF THE OLD ZAMINDAR - A CASE STUDY OF THE BREAK-UP OF THE ZAMINDARI OF PARGANA HAVILI PANJARA (DINAJPUR RAJ) -

In this chapter, we shall try to explore the economic, political and social circumstances which directly or indirectly brought about the fall of the Dinajpur zamindari at the end of the eighteenth century. We shall also briefly examine the nature of the new zamindars who replaced the old one.

Section 1 The declining Power and Influence of the Zamindar during early British Rule.

By 1765 when the East India Company's government acquired the Dewani of the Bengal Subah, the terror which the Maratha invaders created in Bengal [1] nearly disappeared. With the retreat of the Marathas, the fear of a combination of the Bengal zamindars and the Marathas against the Mughal and the East India Company also disappeared.[2] After the defeat of the 10,000-strong army of the Rajah of Burdwan by the Captain Martin White's party in January 1761,[3] there was no armed resistance by Bengal zamindars against the Company's army, except at the frontiers. We may suppose that the Company's government was not any longer afraid of an armed resistance of zamindars against its authority in Bengal.

Therefore, in 1769 when the East India Company's government decided to take into their hands the actual control of the country by deputing the European officers called Supervisors to the several districts of Bengal,

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(1) See R. Guha's Introduction to "West Bengal District Records - new series, Burdwan Letters Issued, 1788 - 1800". 1956

(2) J.Long. "Selections from Unpublished Records of Government - For the Years 1748 to 1767 Inclusive". Reprint 1973. Nos. 501, 507, 519 & 537.

(3) Ibid. No. 558.

their main purpose was the maximization of revenue from the country. For that purpose, they were instructed to investigate the real assets of the country and, in some districts, to let out the zamindaris in ijaras to the highest bidders.(4) In the district of Dinajpur, G. Vansittart, the first Supervisor, farmed out about one-fifth of the zamindari to public farmers. In his report to the Council of Revenue at Murshidabad in 1770, he referred to the devices of the zamindari officers of the parganas (choudhuris) to reduce the ostensible assets of the zamindari and recommended "the system of farming for a term of years" as the "only method of putting a final stop to the abuses of the officers of Parganas".(5)

In 1771, Cottrell, the second Supervisor, reported : "I mean, here, to point out to you the undue influence he [the zamindar] has and must still maintain in spite of all my endeavours to the contrary, so long as his officers continue to make the collections ... for the man who has power enough to levy a contribution like this be able to conceal the frauds his officers commit for his private benefit beyond all possibility of recovery".(6)

The zamindar's local influence was, thus, regarded as the greatest obstacle in the way of the maximization of revenue from the country. To undermine the zamindar's "undue influence" and to maximize the revenue from the country, the Council of Revenue at Murshidabad unanimously agreed on the introduction of the farming system on a greater scale and on the reduction of the elaborate bureaucracy of the zamindari.(7)

Under the supervision of Vansittart, the process of reduction started : The amount paid to servants at the zamindar's central office at Dinajpur was reduced from Sonaut Rs. 24,000 to St. Rs. 20,328 and his servants in the parganas from Sonaut Rs. 56,964 to Sonaut Rs. 36,012. He further made a reduction of the service lands (chakeran lands) as shown in the following abstract.

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(4) LCB-RDM 1st Oct. 1770 No. 32 & SC-P 21st June 1770.
(5) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770
(6) Ibid. 21st Jany. 1771
(7) CCR-P 7th May 1771 & CCRM 2nd Novr. 1771.

An Abstract showing the Reduction of the Service Land recommended by G. Vansittart

	Zamindar's Establishment before the retrenchment		Establishment recommended by him	
	Persons	bignas	Persons	bighas
Dawks[8] & Paiks	6,743	115,485	3,200	80,000
Barkandazes & Peons	551	14,710	400	12,000
Horsemen (Swar)	266	26,478	20	2,000
	7,560	156,673	3,620	94,000

He, however, did not make any reduction in the service lands (chakeran lands) held by the lower zamindari officers immediately employed in the rent-collection (karmacharis). Besides these, the Rajah maintained a troop of 77 horsemen and 464 barkandazes at the annual cost of Rs. 20,000. Vansittart argued in favour of reducing them to 10 horsemen and 222 barkandazes costing annually Rs. 10,000.[9]

Considering the importance of cavalries in the warfare of those days, the zamindar's military strength must have been greatly diminished by the above reduction effected by Vansittart. Also it must have lowered the zamindar's prestige in the eye's of the local people.

In the next year, J. Lawrell who was deputed to make the settlement of the districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur, farmed out the whole zamindari of Dinajpur to public farmers. He took a drastic measure toward undermining the zamindar's "undue influence" by dismissing all the zamindari officers in the mofussil. He thus argued : "The lands this year being let out to farm in parganas, there was no occasion for continuing Chowdries in the Government service ; they have, therefore, been all dismissed ..."[10]

He reduced the chakeran servants from 18,378 persons holding the rent-free lands amounting to 281,070 bighas to 13,925 persons holding rent-free

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(8) Dawk : a man who conveyed the letters and travellers.
(9) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770.
(10) Ibid. 25th July 1771

lands of 200,264 bighas. The annual expenditure on account of the zamindari officers in the parganas offices was further reduced from Rs. 36,012 in 1770 to Rs. 31,752.

Another step taken by Lawrell to undermine the local influence of the zamindar was the establishment of zillahdari. He divided the Dinajpur zamindari into 14 zillahs and appointed a zillahdar in each at an annual cost of St. Rs. 5,814. They were to exercise the judicial authority within their jurisdictions because the choudhuris who used to exercise this were all dismissed and "the farmers are not allowed to do it". The zillahdars were placed under the direct control of the supervisor and were "authorized to enquire and settle disputes for debt, theft and quarrels. Any decree that they passed above 5 Rs may be appealed to the Sudder Adawlut at Dinajpur. The fines that they levy are not to exceed three Rs., nor are they allowed to inflicit punishment, exceeding 10 Rattans on any person". They were allowed to receive "fines and Etlac[11] (sic. in original) they collect" as their allowances.[12]

Had this scheme been successful, the zamindar's local influence must have been greatly undermined. But the zillahdari system was to be abolished soon after its formation when the Committee of Circuit made the five-year settlement and established Dewani and Foujdari Adalats[13] in each district in 1772 & 1773. The establishment of the local police system under the direct control of government in the countryside occurred on a large scale all over Bengal under the administration of Cornwallis 20 years later.

The dismissal of the pargana choudhuris was also far from effective because the major portion of the zamindari remained in the possession of the zamindar under fictitious names (benami). The zamindar in his capacity as a public farmer could, of course, appoint his dependants in the parganas.

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(11) Ilhak, corruptly Ellaak : A fee exacted from the parties to a suit.
(12) CCRM 25th July 1771 Main Report & Appendix no. 14
(13) Dewani Adalat : civil court
Foujdari Adalat : criminal court.

In 1775, the zamindar of Dinajpur entered into an engagement with government for the management of his estate during his life-time at an easy and fixed gross sum of Sa Rs. 1,460,444. As a result of this, till the death of Rajah Bydenaut in 1780, the zamindar's local influence increased considerably. During this period, he was looked upon with fear by his smaller neighbouring zamindars.(14) This short period of five or six years was the last phase of the diminishing glory of the old zamindar of Dinajpur. No arrears of revenue occurred during these years. Thanks to the easy assessment of revenue, he could afford to restore a considerable portion of the establishments which were reduced by the Company.

After the death of Rajah Bydenaut, the zamindari was farmed out to public farmer Rajah Devy Sing for two years. He, in cooperation with Gooldlad,the collector of Rangpur, reduced the zamindari charge at the Sadar office from Rs. 192,192 to Rs. 72,000 per annum.(15)

Between 1783 and 1786, the management of the zamindari was in the hands of the young Rajah Radhanaut under the guardianship of Jankiram Sing. Though the revenue was paid regularly during this period, the zamindar was increassingly becoming involved in debts. In spite of the deteriorating financial conditions of the zamindari, expenditure on the religious and charitable purposes tended to increase. The other dangerous development under the guardianship of Jankiram Sing was the combination of the orfice of the zamindari, especially that of choudhuris with the private farming system. These points will be discussed later in detail.

From 1786 to 1797, under the strong administration of the successive Collectors of Dinajpur, no arrears of revenue occurred. But during this period, especially after the expulsion of Jankiram Sing on a dubious ground from the office of the zamindari dewan and guardian in October 1786,(16) the zamindar's influence over his officers and the country completely disappeared. The zamindari was managed by Ramkant Roy, the new

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(14) PCR-DNR 18th May 1779.
(15) CR-P 14th Novr. 1781
(16) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 6th Novr. 1786 No. 22

zamindari dewan, who was nothing but a puppet of G. Hatch, the first Collector (1786 to 1793). He forcibly carried into effect the so called "Hatch's Reform" through Ramkant Roy. The management of the Dinajpur zamindari during Hatch's administration was, in fact, a kind of Khas management, though it was transacted by the zamindari dewans.

Even when the zamindar attained his majority and took the management in his hands in 1792, he was prohibited from appointing or dismissing his own zamindari officers by the Governor General in Council's special order which was issued at the request of the Collector of the district.(17) Though the zamindar of Dinajpur had the nominal management of the estate, he was thus deprived of the authority of changing the system of rent collection which was established by G. Hatch as well as of appointment and removal of his own officers. Under such conditions, his authority and influence over his officers and the country was negligible. Many instances of embezzlement by his officers were mentioned in his repeated petitions to the Board of Revenue, but the latter, of which G. Hatch was a member, would not listen to his complaints. The Tahsildari system which was introduced into the zamindari in the place of the private farming system by Hatch was as corrupt as the former system.

The new rural police system set up by Cornwallis seems to have been a serious blow to the local influence of the zamindar. The first article of "Regulations for the police of the Collectorships in Bengal, Behar and Orissa" passed on the 7th December 1792 reads : "The police of the country is in future to be considered under the exclusive charge of officers of Government, who may be specially appointed to that trust. The landholders and farmers of land, who keep up establishments of Tannadars and police officers for the preservations of peace, are accordingly required to discharge them and all landholders and farmers of land are prohibited entertaining such establishments

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(17) BR-P 24th Sepr. 1793 No. 46-52 & Ibid. 1st Oct. 1793. No. 1

in future."(18) The zamindar's thanadari system was, thus, taken over by the Company's government and the public police officers (Daroghas) were stationed in the interior of the zamindari. In the zamindari of Dinajpur, 25 police jurisdictions (thanas) were established and a Darogha equipped with an establishment consisting of a writer, a Jamadar (an officer second to the Darogha) and a party of Barkandazes was stationed in each. Besides these, all descriptions of the village watchmen (Nigabans, Haris, Pausbans, Paiks and chokidars) were declared to be subject to the orders of the Darogha. However, the authority of the appointment and dismissal of these village-watchmen remained in the hands of the zamindar.(19)

Apart from the thanas, the district of Dinajpur was divided into 34 divisions and a Kazi was appointed in each division. He prepared and attested deeds of transfer and other law papers and legalized the ceremonies of marriage, funeral &ca among the Muslim inhabitants.(20) In the case of attachment of the property of the defaulting renters or ryots, he played an important role.(21)

Thus, all the transactions of the zamindar in the countryside were placed under the inspection of the District Magistrate. The ryots could now take advantage of the new judicial set up and regulations and prefer their complaints against the zamindar more easily than before. The separation of the office of the Judge from that of the Collector was also beneficial to the ryots. Before this separation, the decree passed by the Collector in his capacity as the Judge of the district was liable to be affected by the consideration of security of revenue which it was his primary duty to ensure.

In June 1799, the new zamindars of Dinajpur presented a petition to the Collector in which they complained of their difficulties in the collection of rent under the new regulations. As it reflects the changing circumstances

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(18) W.R. Gourlay, "A Contribution Towards a History of the Police in Bengal" 1916, PP.29-30

(19) Op.cit., P. 31

(20) Regulation 39 of 1793 (passed 1st May).

(21) See Chapter 7.

in the countryside after the enactment of the new regulations by Cornwallis, it will be worthwhile to reproduce it here ;

> "The Governor General in Council knowing that the former system of collecting the revenue in this country was attended with the great hardship to the ryots, they have thought proper to abolish it, and instituted the present regulations, in which it is directed that the zamindars can through the Cauzee attach and sell the crops of their ryots for the recovery of the arrears of rent due from them, after the necessary advertisement is published ... The ryots being acquainted with those rules, pay a small portion of their rent for two or three months after the Poonea, and then absconded at the season of their crops, they sell them to other persons. If the zamindars agreeably to the regulations attach the crops, they are opposed by these persons who claim them as their property by purchase. Should the officers on the part of the zamindars actually distrain the crops, they are immediately complained against by the purchasers in the court, and obliged to pay the amount thereof with the costs. It was the custom of the collections in this country in former times, that if a defaulting ryots absconded, leaving his crops behind, the same were taken possession of by the zamindar. At present, the zamindars can get nothing from such a ryot except his cottage which does not fetch more than 4 or 5 Annas by Sale. The zamindars are, therefore, unable to realize the large balances due to them from the ryots... Owing to this, that extensive Estate of the Rajah of Dinajpur as well as those many other zamindars have been ruined."(22)
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> (Emphasis added)

Until the enactment of the Regulation 7 of 1799 (Haftam), the zamindars of Bengal were continuously losing their grip over their country(23) and, as mentioned in the above extract, many of the old zamindars were ruined between 1796 and 1799 by the public sales(24) which were held when arrears were due at the end of every kist (instalment of revenue). The zamindari of Dinajpur also disintegrated as a result of public sales in 1798 & 1799.(25)

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(22) BR-P 2nd July 1799 No. 80
(23) See chapter 7
(24) See Appendix (c) to this chapter
(25) See Section 6 of this chapter

Section 2 The deteriorating financial Condition of the Zamindar of Dinajpur

(1) The Indebtedness of the Zamindar

We shall, at first, trace the growing indebtedness of the zamindar of Dinajpur and then, analyze it from various aspects.

The earliest recorded loan to the Zamindar of Dinajpur was given by a merchant of Dinajpur, Mohun Loll Coppeor in 1767. Rajah Bydenaut borrowed from him a sum of Rs 46,396 for the payment of revenue and in return for it granted him Tankahs(26) on the 43 parganas of his zamindari. The choudhuris of these parganas were thus obliged to execute bonds for the assigned sums on their respective parganas and to pay the same to Mohun Loll Coppoor from their gross collections.(27)

In 1768, one European called Bolmer lent a sum of Rs 128,771 to the Rajah at an annual interest of 10 %, the immediate need here also being the payment of revenue.(28)

In 1770, Vansittart reported that the Rajah borrowed Rs 31,602 in 1769 and Rs 15,751 in 1770 towards payment of revenue.(29)

In 1771, the Rajah borrowed a sum of Rs 28,001 from one Myaram. The Rajah distributed the above sum among the ryots who had badly suffered from the famine of 1770, since without these loans (taqavis) it was impossible for them to commence cultivation for the ensuing season. The loan was payable at the time of the next harvest when the ryots would, on their part, pay back the taqavi loans to the zamindar.(30)

It has been alleged, though without corroborative evidence, that the zamindar of Dinajpur paid Rs. 200,000 to Lawrell who made the five year settlement in Dinajpur to secure the parganas in his hands in benami.(31) If so, it must have emptied the zamindar's private fund.

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(26) Tankah : An assignment upon the revenue of any particular locality in payment of wages, pay, gratuity, pension or any charge.
(27) CCRM-P 23rd Sept. 1771
(28) CR-P 18th May 1781
(29) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770 Appendix No.1
(30) Ibid 21st Jany 1771 LR. 25 & LS. 44
(31) Ratnalekha Ray, "The Bengal Zamindars" in IESHR Vol.12 No.3 1975 p. 287

In 1778, Dhen Sing accused the zamindar of nonpayment of the Bond executed by him with his brother Dena Sing. The Rajah, however, answered that the sum had already been repaid.(32)

In 1781, the new Zamindar of Dinajpur, Rajah Radhanaut, incurred debts of Rs. 156,000 from the following persons :

From Baranasi Ghosh	53,000
Gunnes Dass	22,000
Tankahs due to Sepoys in his employ	18,000
Balance of revenue of 1780 due to Government	63,000
	156,000

For the repayment of these debts, he proposed to government the following plan : Out of his moshaira for two years amounting to Rs. 300,000 he would receive only a sum of Rs 144,000 for his maintenance, and the rest (Rs 156,000) was to be applied towards the repayment of the debts. Rajah Devy Sing, the then public dewan and public farmer of Dinajpur, was nominated as the security for his faithful execution of this plan. Rajah Radhanaut actually mortgaged the whole sum of his moshaira to Rajah Devy Sing, and the latter was to pay back the debts to the creditors from the gross collection.(33) In 1783, the Rajah of Dinajpur complained that Devy Sing did not give him the stipulated moshaira and there was an arrear due from him on this account to the amount of Rs 47,000 and that he also withheld the other customary charges on religion and charity amounting to Rs 52,641. For this reason, he said, he was obliged to borrow money from the Mahajans.(34)

In May 1787, G. Hatch, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote to the Board of Revenue : "I find that exclusive of the large bond debt incurred by Rajah Bidenaut, his predecessor, that loans on account of Revenue to the amount of three lacks and upwards have been made since the management of the

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(32) PCR-DNR 15th Sept. 1778
(33) CR-P 10th Sept. 1781 & BDR-RGPR Vol.4 9th Novr. 1781 No. 162
(34) Cr-P 24th July 1783 & Ibid. 13rd Novr. 1783

zamindari was confided (to) Jankiram Sing : the principal claimants are Gunnes Doss, Ruttunchund, Onnupchund, Jaggat Seat and Banarrassee Ghose, Durpnarain &ca merchants of Calcutta ... the ostensible punctuality of the payments from the district for these three years past, has been preserved by Jankiram Sing at the expense of the Inheritance entrusted to his management during the Rajah's Minority, for if the rest of the creditors do not come forward with their claims, it is, as I believe, because they are unwilling to forgo the advantages derived to them from certain profitable Farms they now hold and by which Jankiram Sing has purchased their forbearance."(35)

The Acting President of the Board of Revenue, thus, informed its members on the 15th June 1787 : "I am informed by Mr. Hatch that the other sums to the amount of nearly 130,000 Sa Rs have been stated to him by several persons resident at Calcutta as having been borrowed by Jankiram Sing of which the zamindary of Dinajpur has been rendered responsible or in other words that Bonds have been granted for the repayment of such sums in the name of young Rajah Radhanaut."(36)

In July 1787, Baranasi Ghosh deposed before the Board that he lent money jointly to Jankiram Sing and Sadanand (an authorized vakeel of the zamindar of Dinajpur stationed in Calcutta) and that they executed a Bond in judgement for Rs 80,000. Afterwards, he produced before the Board a Bond for Rs 160,300 dated the 6th June 1787. He added that this sum was paid directly into the Khalsa (government treasury) by himself on account of the public revenue of the Dinajpur zamindari.(37) The difference of the sums of the two bonds amounting to Rs 80,300 seems to have been the interest on the loan. At this time, Jankiram Sing was hard pressed with the payment of a sum of Rs 113,064 which he disbursed on various unauthorized items

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(35) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 13th May 1787 No. 143
(36) BR-P 15th June 1787
(37) Ibid. 6th July 1787

during his guardianship. The above exorbitant rate of interest notwithstanding, he could not but take the loan from Baranasi Ghosh.(38)

In 1788, Gopeenaut Dass complained against the Dinajpur zamindar for the nonpayment of a sum of Rs 51,000 which Sadanand borrowed from him in the name of Rajah Radhanaut.(39)

In the same year, when the House of Sumbonaut & Gunnes Dass failed to make clear the bills of exchange for an amount of Rs 75,000 to government, they preferred several bonds from eight zamindars.worth Rs 442,549 as the collateral securities for the payment of this balance. These bonds included the ones of the zamindar of Dinajpur amounting to a huge sum of Rs 329,049.(40)

In an account of the receipts and disbursements of the Dinajpur zamindari for the year 1197 B.S. (1790 A.D.), we find an article "Balance in account with the Sebrarcar"(41) amounting to a sum of Rs 48,868. This was repaid in the next year.(42) The Sarbarkar in question was Ramkant Roy.

In 1796 & 1797 Ulimohammed, the nazir(43) of the Collector's office lent at an exorbitant interest Rs 25,000 to the Rajah of Dinajpur through Lala Manickchand, the public dewan. The zamindar had to pay an exorbitant interest to him, because he could not find any others who were willing to lend money to the Rajah.(44)

In 1798 Manickjee Parsee got a decree at the Court of Appeal at Murshidabad for a sum of Rs 168,512 against Rajah Radhanaut.(45)

In 1799, we find that a mahal of Khochbari and pargana Shagunah were mortgaged to Kurauch Sing and Bidenaut Mandal, both of whom were merchants, for a debts amounting to Rs 55,975.(46)

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(38) BR-P 13th July 1787
(39) BDR-DNR Vol.1 n.d. No. 160
(40) BR-P 5th August 1788
(41) Sabrarkar : A manager of an estate for minors, females, idiots &ca.
(42) BR-W 12th June 1792 Enclosure
(43) Nazir : An inspector, a supervisor
(44) BR-P 10th Decr. 1805 Nos. 1 & 2 & Ibid 4th Novr. 1800.
(45) Ibid. 21st August 1798 No. 14 - 15.
(46) Ibid. 19th March 1799 & Ibid. 3rd May 1799 No. 11

It would be worthwhile to examine the nature of these debts. The above study shows that the zamindar of Dinajpur was always burdened with the debts varying from Rs 15,000 to 300,000 during the period under review. As the gross surplus collection (gross collection minus net public revenue) was more or less 5 lacks of rupees,(47) the indebtedness of the zamindari ranged from 3 % to 60 % of its total annual fund. If we estimate the net surplus collection (gross surplus collection minus every charge of the zamindari) at Rs 60,000 to 100,000(48) the incidence of the indebtedness will range from 15-25 % to 300-500 %. As the net surplus collection indicates the zamindari's capacity of annual repayment, we find that the zamindar was, in his worst days, encumbered with debts which exceeded by three to five times his capacity of repayment. We also find from the above study that during our period the indebtedness of the zamindar was constantly on the increase. Until 1787 when Jankiram Sing started his desperate struggle with Ramkant Roy and G. Hatch, such debts were incurred mainly for the payment of revenue.

Why did the zamindar borrow from year to year to pay the revenue ? The main reasons were the zamindar's difficult financial conditions due to the high revenue demand, the ruinous effects of the public farming system, the enormous bribes demanded by the government officers both native and European, and the decreasing assets of the zamindari itself due to the collusive activities of the ryots and the inferior collectors of rent.(49) There was another reason which merits our notice, that is, the seasonal gap of income and disbursement in the zamindari finance.

J. Eliot, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote : "the Kists of Jehanguirpore [in the district of Dinajpur] for the months of Bysack [April/May], Jait [May/June] & Assar [June/July] have always been paid

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(47) See section 1 - (3), chap. 2
(48) Do.
(49) These points will be examined presently in this chapter.

by loans from the merchants ... [The ryots universally declared that] demands were actually made on them about 25th of Assar, though they were never pressed for payment until the month of Sawun [July/August]... As the zamindars of Jahanguirpore withheld their demands from the ryots during the months of Bysack, Jait & Assar, I thought they were fully merited the same exemption without obliged to borrow from the merchants ... with a heavy interest". This was also the case in the Dinajpur zamindari. He continued, "in Dinajpur, no collection are made during the months of Bysack and Jait, at least, to the end of Jait, and it is only since the time of my predecessor's [Hatch's] Khas management of this district that ever any collections were made before Sawun."(50)

This state of rent payment is quite understandable when we consider that the cultivation of the main crop (Aman paddy) started in Assar, and the harvest of the second crop (Aus paddy) began in late Assar and, therefore, during the months of Bysack, Joyshtha and early Assar, the ryots were least able to pay any rent to the zamindar. The spring crop (Boro paddy) was harvested in Bysack & Joyshtha. However, the extent of its cultivation was negligible.(51) Any compulsion in this regard during the first three months of a year was bound to injure the ensuing cultivation and to cause desertion of ryots from the zamindari.

The zamindars of Bengal, therefore, had to pay their first three kists (instalments) of revenue from their own funds or from the loans given to them by money lenders. In the zamindari of Dinajpur, the total sum of the first three kists of the year amounted to Sa Rs 121,701 or one twelfth of the whole revenue.(52) This would largely explain why the zamindar of Dinajpur had to borrow money from year to year to make up for the seasonal deficiency in the zamindari treasury to pay the kists in due time. The debts of this nature did not necessarily indicate any financial crisis of the zamindari.

(50) BR-P. 20th February 1795 No. 53
(51) Ibid. 22nd March 1790 Enclosure No 5 Fuslbandi. & Ibid. n.d. Appendix to April 1788 Fuslbandi of Dinajpur.
(52) Ibid. 15th July 1788. No. 28 (Kistbandi for the District of Dinajpur).

The close connection of the zamindar with the mahajans seems to have started because of the need to remit revenue to the government treasury at Murshidabad or at Calcutta. In the town of Dinajpur, there were several Kutis (branches of the established banking houses of Calcutta and Murshidabad.) Among them, the Houses of Gonnes Dass and Jagat Seat had long and close business transactions with the zamindar of Dinajpur.(53) Jagat Seat opened their Kuti at the town of Dinajpur at the end of the 17th century. The Rajah of Dinajpur gave them a piece of land free of rent for their residences, granaries (golahs) and other necessary buildings.(54) The Dewan of the Dinajpur zamindari paid the kists of revenue by bills of these banking houses payable at Murshidabad or Calcutta.(55) They had dealings in grains that were produced in Dinajpur and, therefore, required specie s in the countryside for their purchase.(56) Therefore it was for their mutual advantage to pay the revenue by the bills of these banking houses. After the collection of rent, the zamindar cleared the balances due to the banking houses. The latter used the amount thus made over to them by the zamindar in making advances of loans to ryots, who were to repay them in kind at the ensuing harvest, and in purchasing grain etc. in ready money in the rural markets. As long as the bankers did not question the financial stability of the zamindar, they seldom hesitated to lend money to the zamindar to enable him to pay up the revenue during the months of Bysack, Joyshtha and Assar or at any other occasional financial difficulties of the zamindar.

In view of such a relationship between the zamindar and the mahajans or banking houses, G. Hatch's assertion that "the ostensible punctuality of the payments from the district for these three years past" under the management of Jankiram Sing was maintained "at the expense of the Inheritance" of the young Rajah seems to be of doubtful validity. The debts incurred by

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(53) PCR-DNR 13th June 1775
(54) BDR-DNR Vol.1 16th Decr. 1789 No. 496
(55) BR-P 30th Jany 1787 No. 37 to 40 & BDR-DNR Vol.2 27th July 1787 No.165
(56) BDR-DNR Vol.1 16th Decr. 1789 No. 496

Jankiram Sing during his management of the zamindari affairs as the Guardian of the young Rajah Radhanaut were no doubt enormous. An examination of the five bonds to the amount of Sa Rs 297,500 presented to the Board of Revenue by the Acting President as evidence of the debts incurred by Jankiram Sing, however, reveals that these bonds covered the debts of the past six or seven years,(57) not of "these three years past" as asserted by G. Hatch.(58) Such loans were probably unavoidable and incurred on the occasion of the funeral ceremony of the late Rajah Bydenaut in 1780 and also to maintain the zamindar's household in the following two years when the management of the zamindari was in the hands of Devy Sing who reduced the zamindari charges to the minimum and refused to pay some of the established expenses on account of religion and charity. And again the zamindar was obliged to borrow a large amount in 1786 when the Board of Revenue all of a sudden struck off the zamindar's moshaira (Rs 150,000), Batta Birti (Rs 50,204) and the zamindari charges (Rs 34,444), in all, an amount of Rs 234,648 per annum, from the items of the deductions that used to have been allowed from the gross revenue collection of the zamindari. It may not be wrong to conclude that a large amount of debts incurred during this period cannot be blamed on any mismanagement by Jankiram Sing. It was the abrupt abolition of the long established zamindari charges that necessitated the large borrowings from the bankers.

In October 1786, Jankiram Sing was deprived of the guardianship and dewanship of the Dinajpur Zamindari and, in March 1787, he was sent to Calcutta under the guard of peons to answer for the balance of Rs 113,064 during his management.(59) Rani Saraswati the mother-in-law of the young Rajah and Jankiram Sing started a desperate struggle against G. Hutch and Ramkant Roy. In their attempt to recover the management of the zamindari, they incurred a large debts from the banking houses and some other persons in Calcutta in the

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(57) BR-P 5th July 1787 No.6
(58) Ibid. 30th Jany 1787. No. 39
(59) BDR-DNR-II, 30th March 1787. No. 129 & BR-P. 13th July 1787.

name of the young Rajah Radhanaut. The available data show that a total sum of Rs 181,000 was borrowed by them for the purposes other than the payment of revenue.(60) This was probably spent in their struggle.

From the above analysis of the zamindar's debts, it would be evident that the loans before 1786 did not necessarily indicate any deteriorating finances of the zamindari. In fact, as noted earlier, before 1786 the zamindar could expect a net surplus collection from Rs 60,000 to 100,000, if his zamindari was managed efficiently.(61) But after the structural changes brought about by Cornwallis' new arrangement in the zamindari finance, including Hatch's Reform, the zamindari's financial conditions greatly deteriorated. This was due largely to the resumption of the moshaira and other customary deductions amounting to Rs 234,648 and to the set up of the structure of the embezzlement(62) in the name of Hatch's Reform.

After 1786, we notice some new developments in the nature of the loans given to the zamindar. Firstly, the appearance of debts for purposes other than the payment of revenue. Secondly, the borrowing from the zamindari officers. For example, Ramkant Roy, the then guardian and the zamindari dewan lent a sum of Rs 48,868 in 1790 to make up the deficiency in the payment of revenue. Thirdly, the practice of mortgaging parganas to the creditors, In 1767, mortgage of part of the gross collection from the 45 parganas was made in the form of Tankan (assignment of income). In 1781, the Rajah mortgaged his moshaira to Devy Sing who stood as a security for the Rajah's debts. Yet, the mortgage of the pargana itself was a new development, at least, in the zamindari of Dinajpur. In 1798, the Rajah mortgaged 13 parganas the total jama of which amounted to about Rs 300,000 to both Lala Manick Chand, the then zamindari dewan, and Ramkant Roy who became the securities in the suit against Manickjee Parsee.(63) In the same year, in the midst of

(60) BDR-DNR-II 13th May 1787 No. 143 & Ibid-I, n.d. No.160, & Ibid. 2nd July 1788 No. 169.
(61) Section-1-(3), Chap. 2
(62) Do.
(63) BR-P 21st August 1798 Nos. 14 & 15.

auction sales of portions of his zamindari, he mortgaged two mahals to his creditors. Khurruck Sing, a money lender of Raujegange, gave the Rajah a loan of Rs 24,974 and in return for it, the zillah Khochbari was mortgaged to him, the jama of which was Rs 24,974. Bidenaut Mandal, a merchant, similarly gave a loan of Rs 31,001 to the Rajah and pargana Shaguna, whose jama was Rs 31,001, was mortgaged to him. These mortgages were registered at the Court. The zamindar was so distressed with the successive auction sales that he could find no means of saving his zamindari. Under such hopeless condition, he tried this strange form of mortgage in order to sell them privately. But this transaction was considered illegal and these two mahals were sold by the order of the Board of Revenue, as part of the zamindari at the public auction.(64)

The fall of the zamindar of Dinajpur became inevitable when a suit against the Rajah was instituted by Baranassi Ghose, a big banker at Calcutta, in 1797,(65) though the actual sale of the zamindari started in April 1798. One great disadvantage for the Rajah was that in the years 1798 & 1799, the loan market of Bengal was extremely tight and it was nearly impossible to get any loans in these years even at an exorbitant rate of interest.(66) The storm of public auctions which raged throughout Bengal in these years(67) would largely explain this extremely tight loan market at this time. Once a zamindar in a difficult financial condition was abandoned by the bankers, he was sure to fall into default in the payment of revenue during the months of Bysack, Joyshtha and Assar. Under the severe "Sunset Law", an arrear of revenue of a kist meant an immediate public sale. Once even a portion of his estate was sold, no banker would lend him money on any condition. His estate would break into pieces before long. This was what happened in the zamindari of Dinajpur at the end of the 18th century.

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(64) BR-P 19th March 1799 No. 29 & 3rd May 1799 No.11
(65) BR-P 28th March 1800 Nos. 11 & 12
(66) BR-P 10th August 1798 No. 36
(67) See Appendix (c) of this chapter.

(2) The Decrease in the Assets of the Zamindari of Dinajpur

Along with the indebtedness, the decrease of the assets had much to do with the deteriorating financial conditions of the zamindari, and had an important role to play in the fall of the zamindari.

Of the factors in this decrease the following are of importance : the high revenue demands of government between 1761 (under Mir Kasim) and 1774[68] ; the great famine of 1770 ; the exactions of the public farmers who almost ruined the country twice (1771 to 1774 & 1781 to 1782) ; the heavy imposition of Mathotes (occasional levies) for the funeral ceremony and worship of the late Rajah Bydenaut in 1780 & 1797, both of which caused a large scale desertion of ryots[69] ; and the closure of the influx of the Tista River in 1787, which resulted in the decline of the grain-trade in that part of the country because of the loss of the means of transportation.[70] . These causes were, however, rather incidental to the zamindari system itself. The primary causes of the decrease in the assets must be sought in the inner contradictions of the zamindari and the incidents mentioned above should be regarded as the circumstances that had only accelerated the process of this decrease and not as the primary causes.

What were the inner contradictions of the zamindari system ? We argued before[71] that the zamindari system in the second half of the 18th century was primarily a system of rent collection from actual cultivators, that there always was tension between the ryots and the zamindar over the rent question, that it was essential for the zamindar to maintain a large establishments for rent collection including the coercive one, and that such establishments enabled him to keep up his local prestige which was indispensable to the smooth realization of rent. Another notable aspect of the

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(68) See appendix (a) to chap. 2.
(69) BDR-RGPR-II. 16th Jany 1782. No. 254 & JD-CV-P 5th Jany 1798 No.19
(70) BR-P 9th Novr. 1787 No. 17
(71) See Section 3 of Chap. 1.

zamindari system was its position in the state-power-structure. Under the powerful governments of the Mughals and the East India Company, the zamindars could exist only when they agreed to the revenue demand by the state and paid it punctually. The state, on the other hand, almost entirely depended on the revenue from each zamindari for its subsistence. The whole system, therefore, became unworkable when the zamindars failed to enforce the payment of rent, in part or whole. Such a failure could happen only when the zamindar's local influence tended to decline. When the zamindar's local influence declined, his rent difficulties increased : Open resistance of the ryots against the payment of rent was rather rare. The zamindar's rent difficulty was more due to the collusion between the ryots and the inferior revenue officers including the village patwaris. Gradually but steadily their activities eroded the assets of the zamindari and weakened its finances. The difficulty of the zamindar's revenue payment, thus, increased.

Let us study the situation in Bengal, especially in the zamindari of Dinajpur in this respect.

The earliest report about the collusive methods of the ryots which tended to decrease the assets of the zamindari was the one prepared by the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records in 1776. In it, he wrote that "The variations in the articles of assessment throughout the province [of Burdwan] may be ascribed to many reasons,..., connivances between the Putwarries and Ryots to lower their Awsil, conceal the number of Aboab or give in false accounts of the quantity of land they hold."(72)

From the Purnea district, came many reports regarding the collusive measures of the ryots such as obtaining false pottahs and reducing the rate of rent of the village (Durbandi) by several devices, at least, from 1778 onwards.(73)

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(72) SKR-P 26th July 1776 L R No. 134
(73) PCR-DNR 1st March 1779 (concerning a letter dated 12th Oct.1778).

It is notable that the attempts of the ryots at reducing the rent-rates were not particularly mentioned in a number of official reports on assets of the Dinajpur zamindari such as the settlement reports of the zamindari by G. Vansittart in 1770,(74) and the same by J. Lawrell in 1771,(75) Robertson's report on the balance of the zamindari in 1773,(76) and Phipps' report in 1774 on the decline of the assets of the zamindari of Edrackpore, 7 annas division (7/16th) of which belonged to the zamindari of Dinajpur.(77) There were numerous records on complaints of the public farmers about the refusal of rents by their under-farmers or kutkinadars in 1773 & 1774, on the refusal by the pahikasht ryots to pay their rents, on the desertion and embezzlement by the ryots, and even on the open resistance of a ryot against chokidars of the zamindar who were ordered to distrain the crops of the ryot in 1774.(78) These incidents notwithstanding, the European local officers stationed in Dinajpur did not recognize them as the cause of the decreasing assets of the zamindari. It was in the report of D.H. MacDowall who was deputed to Dinajpur to make the Khas settlement for the year 1190 B.S. (1783 A.D.) that the ryots' collusion with the zamindari amlah was, for the first time, mentioned as a cause of the deficiency of the assets.(79)

Thus, at least, from the early 1780's, the collusive means of the ryots began to be acknowledged by the British administrators as one of the main causes of the decrease in the assets of the zamindaris. And by the end of the 1780's this view seems to have been an firmly established one. From the districts of Rajshahi,(80) Purnea,(81) Rangpur,(82) Murshidabad,(83) Dinajpur,(84) Birbhum,(85) Nadia(86) and Jessore(87) came a series of

(74) CCRM 31st Decr. 1770
(75) Ibid. 25th July 1771
(76) RBCWC-P 29th June 1778. No.14
(77) Ibid. 7th June 1774. No. 16 (Enclosure)
(78) PCR-DNR 29th Decr. 1774.
(79) CR-P 8th Septr. 1783. (80) BR-P 13th April 1787. No.88 & 89.
(81) Ibid. 1st Feb.1790 No.16 (A letter from the Collector,dated 31.12.1789).
(82) Ibid. 9th May 1988 No.29 & 1st July 1788 No.22
(83) Ibid. 16th May 1789. No.11
(84) BDR-DNR-II 15th Jany 1788 No. 277
(85) CTGC-RD-P 10th Feb 1790. No. 49
(86) BR-P 10th April 1787 No. 4.
(87) Ibid. 11th July 1788 No. 14.

reports on the various forms of collusions and evasions of ryots.

The following were the methods commonly used by the ryots of different districts in reducing their rents.

(1) To take in more land than the pottah entitled the ryot to do.

(2) To hold the land at an inferior rate of rent which he obtained through various devices.

(3) To enter into a collusion with the farmer or the zamindari officers and obtain a deduction in the Assal Jama (original rent) by forging the village accounts.

The reduction of assets in the Khas Talooks of Murshidabad due to these collusive practices amounted to nearly one half of their true value in 1795.(88)

In the zamindari of Sooroopoor in the district of Rangpur, J.H. Harington, the Commissioner, found in 1790 that in the three villages which he got measured under his immediate inspection the actual quantity of land held by the villagers turned out to be twice as large as those recorded in the zamindari accounts.(89)

The Collector of Nadia acknowledged in 1787 that the "ryots in general have more lands than they are supposed to possess, and from these secret resources alone they have been in some degree enabled to pay these new taxes."(90)

A very similar opinion was expressed to the Board of Revenue by the Collector of Jessore in 1788. He estimated that the actual quantity of the ryots' holdings would be, on an average, three times larger than what was specified in their pottahs.(91)

Thus, the concealed holdings and the low rates of rents obtained through collusive means widely prevailed in many parts of Bengal and they inceasingly drew the attention of the Company's administration as one of the

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(88) BR-P 12th May 1795 No.51
(89) Ibid. 22nd March 1790 Main Report
(90) Ibid. 10th April 1787 No. 4
(91) Ibid. 11th July 1788 No.14

main problems of the land-revenue administration in Bengal.(92)

What was the condition, in this respect, in the zamindari of Dinajpur ? In 1788, G. Hatch wrote in his report on the decennial settlement of the Dinajpur district that "The original Jumma or Rent-Roll has decreased from several causes, the chief of which is the manoeuvre that has been in practice for many years by the Mundulls, Paramanicks and principal inhabitants of the villages who under the plea of real or fictitious desertions of the Riauts have got into their possession considerable tracts of ground at an under-rated assessment upon Moocta Pottah(93) and the original established rate or Nirkh has become almost obsolete."(94) Ramkant Roy, the dewan of the zamindari of Dinajpur, further explained the collusive means of the ryots in the following way : "the Assul Jumma uniformly of the mahals of Pargana Havillee Punjerah &ca has been considerably reduced owing to fixed grants commonly called Mooctar - under-valued lands or Rieatee Jogt, Nirkh Cummee,(95) and Delassa Cummee,(96) to the Mundulls, Poramanics and others."(97) They obtained these pottahs at reduced rates from "the Mustopahees(98) and the Mofussil Omla." He continued, "in lieu of the reduced rate of the assil Jumma, the Maungyan,(99) and deficiency from desertions , Abwabs have annually been encreased ... this is the cause of the decrease of the Assil Jumma and the Increase of the Abwabs and Mathots."

In addition to such collusive means of the principal ryots, the middle and poor ryots also had a role in the decrease of the zamindari assets. In 1787, G. Hatch wrote : "their chief grievance is for over exaction ; and they invariably have produced a Cheet Furruck or general release granted by their Putwarrees or mundulls for the preceding year to support the charge.

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(92) See chapter 7
(93) MAKTA : A fixed rate of assessment
(94) BDR-DNR-II 15th Jany. 1788 No. 277
(95) Nirk kami : Land held at a reduced nirkh
(96) Delassa kami : not known
(97) BR-P 11th April 1788. No. 58.0 (Enclosure-c)
(98) Mustaufi : An auditor of accounts, also an officer deputed to get information on the spot where any transaction has occurred.
(99) Mangan : A cess, an impost

The universal practice by the putwarrees of conniving at the reduction of the Moffussil Jumma is created from the strong inducement such a manoeuvre affords of secreting a part of the receipts, and the riauts from the rivetted and fixed idea they are impressed with, that a fair and open disclosure of the whole of their payments would subject them to further demands, chearfully enter into a compact, the method of reducing the Jumma evidently show that the immediate Collectors connive at the practice".(100) Hatch, in the same letter, referred to another method of obtaining the collusive pottahs and chit faracks (general releases) practised by the ryots. At the beginning of the year, the ryots refused to enter into engagement for the cultivation of lands for the ensuing harvest and threatened the kutkinadars, Farmers and superior collectors with desertion in order to persuade them to issue pottahs at a rate lower than that of the preceding year. As the harvest drew near, "the crop is attached, generally, at the instance of the Mundull or Putwarree", and the ryots were forced to pay the former rents at which they held the lands in the preceding year. The pottahs issued at the beginning of the year were the standard on which the chit faracks were released at the end of the year and the chit farack, thus, issued was considered as the standard for the ensuing year. The ryots, therefore, could lower the apparent jama of their lands, though they were, in fact, obliged to pay more than the pottahs specified by the attachment of their crop. This practice was most injurious when the estate was farmed out to numerous farmers. The farmers granted the pottahs at reduced rates to the ryots at the expiration of their lease.(101) They must have received a sum of money from the ryots in so doing.

Continual decrease in the assets of the estate and the accumulating impositions of new taxes to make up the consequent deficiency were common phenomena in many districts such as Rajshahy,(102) Dinajpur, Purnea,(103)

(100) BDR-DNR-II. 9th March 1787 No.121
(101) GGC-RD 10th Feb 1790. No. 49
(102) BR-P 24th June 1788 No. 20
(103) BR-P 18th June 1790 No. 12 & 13

Birbhum,(104) and Nadia.(105) The accumulation of the new impositions had much to do with the transformation of the mode of the mofussil settlement from the Fussli type to the Tahudi type. And both of these phenomena indicate the declining local influence of the old zamindars.(106)

The decrease in the assets of the zamindari of Dinajpur also resulted from the malpractices of the zamindari officers.

G. Hatch made a drastic change in the system of the zamindari. He abolished the private farming system and established the khas management through the tahsildars throughout the country. Hatch's main argument for so doing was the eradication of the corruption and embezzlement of the private farmers. But the newly set up tahsildari system completely failed to eradicate such evils. In 1794, Rajan Radhanaut submitted a number of petitions to the Board of Revenue in which he accused the tahsildars of embezzling the assets of the zamindari. The sadar and mofussil amlan (officers) collusively worked out a false statement of deduction of assessment amounting to Rs. 34,000 and embezzled the same amount. In the parganas Kurdah & Panjara, the mofussil amlah in collusion with the sadar amlah separated a considerable quantity of lands from the accounts and also exacted unauthorized impositions from the ryots, and the amount of embezzlement on both accounts was about Rs 5,000. The tahsildar of pargana Collygong falsified the accounts and separated the lands (3419 bighas) from the pargana. He, thus, appropriated the collection from the above alienated lands to the amount of Rs 6,496. The Rajah asserted that this man was protected by Ramkant Roy, the zamindari dewan. The tahsildar of pargana Lalbari embezzled a sum of Rs 3,342 from the receipts of the pargana between 1198 B.S. and 1200 B.S., besides extorting contributions from the ryots. In the pargana Killabari, the tahsildar unjustly created

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(104) GGC-RDP 10th Feb. 1788 No. 49
(105) BR-P 10th April 1787 No. 4
(106) See Section 1 of Chapter 1 & Section 1-(2)-d of Chapter 6.

110 bighas of Brahmottar.land[107] and inserted it in the accounts of rent-free lands (bazi zamin) in the name of Bowanny Talookdar, one of the sadar officers. The tahsildar of pargana Mollygong falsely reported the desertion of 765 ryots. On enquiry by the Collector it turned out that only 196 ryots had absconded. Out of 765 ryots, 129 were fictitious names on fabricated pottahs and the rent due from them was realized by an unjust mathot imposed on the other ryots and the lands of these fictitious ryots were appropriated by him. This tahsildar further exacted illegal taxes under the names of Mandalan,[108] and Bandobusti,[109] etc. to the amount of Rs 2,000.[110]

Most of these accusations were confirmed by the investigation of J. Elliot, the Collector.[111] But no disciplinary measures were taken against the sadar officers who connived at these malpractices. It would be interesting to note here that the two abovementioned sadar officers e.g. Ramkant Roy and Bowanny Talookdar were among the biggest purchasers of the zamindari at the public auctions in 1798 & 1799.

(3) The changing financial Structure of the Dinajpur Zamindari

We have already studied how the financial structure of the zamindari changed under Cornwallis' new arrangement.[112] Our analysis established that G. Hatch built up a structure of embezzlement through his tahsildari arrangement and the major portions of the gross surplus collection were misappropriated by the zamindari officers who were allowed to draw very fat salaries, while the zamindar himself was reduced to a mere pensioner receiving as his "private pocket money" only Rs 1,000 per month.[113]

The Rajah could do nothing to remedy the evils, as he was deprived by the Governor General in Council's special order of the authority of changing the system of rent collection and his own personnel.

(107) Brahmottara : Land granted rent-free to the Brahmans.
(108) Mandalan : a contribution collected from the village-heads
(109) Bandobusti : a present given to the officer at the time of settlement of revenue.
(110) BR-P 3rd Jany 1794 No. 43 & BR-W-P 3rd June 1794 No.6
(111) BR-W-P 3rd June 1794 No. 6
(112) See section 1-(3), chap. 2
(113) BR-W-P 25th July 1794 No.2

Thus, under Hatch's khas arrangement, the elasticity of the zamindari finance was completely lost and the major portion of the profit from the zamindari constantly flowed into the hands of the senior officers of the zamindari who were almost all the nominees of Ramkant Roy and Hatch.

Section 3 Evils of the Farming System

Both the public and private farming system admittedly contributed to the break-up of the zamindari of Dinajpur.

It will not be out of place to point out that the farming system from its very nature had for long been incompatible with the zamindari system. In the Mughal period, under the strong administration of Murshid Kuli Khan (1700 to 1727), many of the old zamindaris were confiscated and farmed out to public farmers. With time, these public farmers consolidated their positions within and outside their farms and gradually acquired the status of zamindars through Royal Sanads.(114) The smaller and more refractory zamindars of old standing were superseded by the new and loyal zamindars who had extended their estates rapidly through farming, conquest &ca under the support of the Mughal government. During early British rule, had the five year settlement been successful, the public farmers could have superseded the old ones. Replacement of the old, inefficient and large zamindaris by the smaller and relatively more efficient ones occurred about 20 years after the complete failure of the public farming system (the five-year settlement). In this process of replacement, the farming system again played a role, especially in undermining the financial basis of the old ones. The farming system and the zamindari system could co-exist as long as the zamindar's grip over his country could be efficiently maintained or when the strong state authority backed him. But when the zamindar's local

(114) History of Bengal, Vol. 2, ed. by J.N.Sarkar, 2nd impression, Dacca, 1972 PP 408 to 413.

influence declined and the state authority did not interfere, the contradiction between the two systems came to the surface.

We have already studied the evil effects of the public farming on the zamindari system.(115)

The evils of the private farming may be studied from the following aspects : Firstly, the farming by the zamindari officers, secondly, the farming by the creditors of the zamindar, thirdly, the farming by the government officers, and lastly, the zamindari was turned into a kind of an interest-complex through the farming system.

The origin of the farming by the zamindari officers on a considerable scale could be traced to the defensive measures of the zamindar of Dinajpur at the time of the five-year settlement (1772 & 1773).(116) In 1775 when the management of the zamindari was restored to the zamindar, he started to farm out many mahals in different parganas to his faithful servants. This was probably an attempt at re-establishing his authority over his country. He seems to have retained his control over such private farms (Huzuri Mahals and Parganati Mustajiri), as he could freely create and abolish the Huzuri Mahals from year to year at his pleasure.(117)

But once the farming system was initiated, it was quite difficult for the zamindar to keep it under his strict control. In March 1778, one mofussil farmer petitioned to the Provincial Council of Revenue that the amlah of pargana Panjara "dismissed me from the farm and have taken it themselves".(118) Thus, as early as in 1778, the zamindari amlah began to farm mahals for their private gains. Ten years later, Hatch pointed out : "The practice of every mofussil officers becoming a Farmers in his own right or by under hand means".(119)

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(115) See Section 1 of Chap. 3
(116) See Section 2 of Chap. 3
(117) CR-P 13th Jany 1783 LR Nos. 11 to 13
(118) PCR-DNR 31st March 1778
(119) BDR-DNR Vol.2 17th March 1787 No. 125

In 1787, G. Hatch reported that Sadoo Majumdar, one of the principal officers of the zamindari, held the farm of pargana Bazeedpuor and three other mahals.(120) He also came to know that Soboo Baxi, the Naib of the parganas Surhatta, Carrybari & Pyraband himself took them in ijara, thus, exercising his control over the parganas in the double capacity of a zamindari officer and a revenue farmer.(121) This combination immensely strengthened his power & control. The Naib or choudhuri of the parganas was normally supposed to check the conduct of farmers in it, and once these two authorities were combined in one person, he virtually got a free-hand in the management of the pargana. J. Elliot, thus, remarked on such a dangerous development of the farming system in the Dinajpur zamindari : "the baneful effect of farming the lands to a set of needy dependents who being at once Farmer and Amlah ... [they] were without checks upon their conducts and thought only benefitting themselves to the ruin of the ryotts and the destruction of the country. Taxes without number had been levied, the rents were varied as occasion served, and the ryotts uncertain what he was to pay ever absconding, the country was in a ruined state and heavy in balance."(122)

Due to the deteriorating financial conditions of the zamindari, Jankiram Sing, the guardian of the young Rajah, was obliged to borrow a considerable amount of money from the merchants of Calcutta and, in return, he gave them profitable farms. Thus began the second evil of the farming system. This was rather a recent development under the guardianship of Jankiram Sing.(123)

At the last stage of the zamindar's struggle for survival, it was revealed that pargana Bijanagar and others which were the central and most lucrative ones in the zamindari, were held in farm by Lala Manick Chand,

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(119) BDR-DNR Vol.2 17th March 1787 No. 125
(120) BR-P 5th Oct. 1787 No. 40
(121) Ibid 15th June 1787 No. 48
(122) Ibid 24th Sepr 1793 No. 46
(123) See Section 2-(1) of this chapter

the public dewan, even after the avowed abolition of the private farming system by Hatch. The jama of these parganas amounted to near three lacks of rupees. This could only be possible at the connivance of Hatch, the Collector of the District. This farming by Lala Manick Chand symbolized the situation of the Dinajpur zamindari, as the Raja had thus lost his control over the pargana in which his own residence and the largest market-place were (Rajegange) situated.

The increasing domination by the several interested groups, thus, reduced the influence of the zamindar himself to insignificance. Such groups acquired their dominance in the zamindari through the provision of credit and the farming system. As noted above, the zamindari officers farmed their master's estate and reaped private gains. Local government officers also did so by utilizing their influence over the zamindar. So did the creditors. The zamindari was, thus, turned into a kind of interest-complex through the private farming system. The management of the zamindari was divided between the several interested groups whose claims over their farms were evidently much stronger than those of the mere private farmers. Under such a situation, the zamindari no longer was a united body controlled by one authority, but a collection of such interested groups. Such a disintegration of the zamindari from within was no doubt accelerated by Hatch's Reform and the Governor General in Council's special order abovementioned. The break-up of the zamindari was in a sense a natural consequence of the conflict of interests of these groups and the lack of an effectual management which was impracticable under such circumstances.

Section 4 Under-hand Activities of the Government Officers

In this section, we shall examine briefly the under-hand activities of the government officers. Needless to say, they did their best to conceal their own unjust and illegal activities, and it is difficult to form a complete idea of their misdeeds. The following description shows only a part of their malpractices.

The government officers including the Collector himself gained much, through various means, at the cost of the zamindar. During early British rule, the British officers and their banians openly took money from the zamindars at the time of settlement of their zamindaris as well as from the applicants for the public farms.(124) They monopolized the trade under their respective jurisdictions and obtained rent-free lands from the zamindars as bribes in the name of gifts. To use W. Hastings' own words : "They [Supervisors] monopolize the trade of the Country ... These perquisites I believe to be an oppression on the people and an obstruction of the Revenue. They are most of them the agents of their own banyans, and they are devils... the collectorships are more lucrative than any posts ... [they] could get a lack or three lacks ..."(125)

Under Cornwallis' administration, such open profiteering by the government officers could no longer be exercised, but they continued to resort to under-hand means in a more implicit and subtle way. The following were the malpractices done in the Dinajpur Zamindari : Taking advantage of the difference of the local Batta and the standard Batta at Khalsa (central government treasury), they appropriated a considerable sum of money.(126) They held profitable farms under fictitious names, lent money to needy zamindars at an exorbitant interest,(127) and by using their great influence over the zamindar, secured the offices of the zamindari for their relations and dependents.(128)

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(124) See section 1-(1) of chap. 3
(125) M. Jones, op. cit., pp. 258-259
(126) BDR-DNR-II 27th July 1787 No. 165 & BR-W-P 7th July 1795
(127) BR-P 10th Decr. 1705 Nos. 1 to 3
(128) BR-W-P 25th April 1794 No.6 & 4th Nov. 1800 No.24

Among the numerous under-hand transactions,the unfair and inequitable assessment of the zamindari at the second quinquennial registration, which was prepared under the close superintendence of Hatch, deserves our special notice. In this registration, some of the mahals were underassessed, and some others over-valued.(129) Some of the mahals, thus, became very profitable, while others became losing concerns. Of course, the government officers who superintended the preparation of the registration knew very well which mahals were profitable and which not.

There is much truth in the following accusation by Rajah Radhanaut about the misdeeds of the zamindari and government officers ;

> "These officers ... from the wicked and treacherous views, were so negligent and inattentive in collecting the rents of the Mofussil and in paying the Revenue to the Collector that in the space of 3 years [1202 to 1205 B.S.], they suffered the balances to the amount of 8 lacks of rupees to accrue in the mofussil, and out of the amount of the collections, they themselves appropriated nearly 5 lacks leaving me 4 lacks of arrears to Government. In consequence of this, my zamindary was sold at public sale ... Phoolchund, Dewan to the Collector and the grandson of the dewan of my zamindary, by name, Manickchund abovementioned, and Wullee Mohammed, Nazir to the Collector &ca officers belonging to the collectorship and the officers of the Adawlut of Zillah Dinajpur, as also those of my zamindary, Manickchund &ca having fraudulently concerted and leagued with each other, contrived by means of their collusion to depreciate the value of several fertile and productive mahals, ..., for instance, Phoolchund ... has purchased lands to the amount of nearly one lack of rupees, and Wullee Mohammed, Nazir to the amount of almost 80,000 Rs under the fictitious names, and in the same under hand manners officers belonging to the Collectorship and the Adawlut &ca have purchased the whole of my zamindary ..."(130)

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(129) BR-P 7th Nov. 1800 No. 24
F. Buchanan, "A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of the District, or Zila Dinajpur, in The Province or Soubah of Bengal", Calcutta 1833 p. 250

(130) BR-P 11th Nov.1800, No.14.

Section 5 Hatch's Reforms

George Hatch was appointed the Collector of Dinajpur in 1786 and worked in that capacity till 1793. During these seven or eight years, he acted with shrewdness, caution and precision.(131) His promotion as a member of the Board of Revenue in 1793 amply shows that he was regarded as an able administrator by government:

He, in co-operation with the public dewan of the district, Lala Manick Chand, and the zamindari dewan, Ramkant Roy, over whom he had great influence, carried out drastic reforms in the system of collection of rent.

We shall examine now his reforms in detail with special reference to their bearing on the break up of the zamindari of Dinajpur and on the structure of the agrarian society.

(1) The basic Problem of Hatch's Reforms

Hatch held the zamindari of Dinajpur in Khas management after removing the zamindari dewan, Jankiram Sing in October 1786 on a dubious ground. He soon found that "the prevailing system of collusively obtaining annual Pottahs at underrated value of the lands will ever operate to defeat to make a fair adjustment of accounts between the collector and the renter."(132) He further observed : "The universal practice by the Putwarrees of conniving at the reduction of the Mufussil Jumma is created from the strong inducement, such as a manoeuvre affords, of secreting a part of the receipt, and the Riauts from the rivetted and fixed idea they are impressed with, that a fair and open disclosure of the whole of their payments would subjects them further demands, chearfully enter into a compact. The method of reducing the Jumma evidently show that the immediate collectors connive at the practice."(133)

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(131) BDR-DNR Vol.1 8th Sept. 1788. No. 208. It reads, "In these days of suspicion and serutiny, a man can not act with too much caution, ... this maximum which I know no man follows with greater precision than yourself, or is more regular in all his business". /Hatch/

(132) Ibid. Vol. 2 22nd Feb. 1787 No. 112

(133) Ibid. Vol. 2 9th March 1787 No. 121

It was, however, the superior ryots whom he blamed more for the decrease of the zamindari assets. He argued that the chief cause of the decrease of the original jama or rent-roll was the manoeuvre "by the Mundulls, Paramanicks and the principal Inhabitants of the villages who under the plea of real or fictitious desertion of the Riauts got into their possession considerable tracts of ground at an under rated assessment upon Moocta Patta."(134)

He thought that these manoeuvres of the ryots resulted in the reduction of rates of rents (Nirkh) and the decrease of the original rent (Assal Jama), and that "the Abwabs have been multiplied in proportion as the Nirkh has diminished" to make good the demands of government.

He thought that nothing short of a complete reform in the system of rent-collection would remedy the evils resulting from the manoeuvres of the ryots. He, therefore, recommended the introduction of a regular mode of mofussil settlement and of a new method of rent-collection.

He, thus, explained the principles of his reforms : "the easiest mode of introducing a regular system of fixing and levying the rents with a prospect of permanency" must be adopted, and that "to convince the Riauts that the land he hold or shall hereafter rent, shall be assessed at a specific rate and the tenure between him and the receiver, be so clear and explicit, as to /leave no room for/ all doubt or deception, to ascertain to the zamindar, Farmer, or others, the fair rent they have to demand, and establish such rules as shall prevent all possibility of their receiving more, to revive and introduce the original Nirkh for the different qualities of land, to ascertain to the Riaut the nett amount including abwabs, and fix the rate of Batta upon the specie of Rupee he is to pay."(135)

(2-a) New Method of Rent Collection - Tahsildari System -

The most outstanding feature of Hatch's reforms in this regard

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(134) BDR-DNR Vol.2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277
(135) Ibid.

was the introduction of the tahsildari system which was accompanied by the entire abolition of the private farming system at all levels.

J. Elliot, the Collector of Dinajpur, explained the tahsildari system of Hatch : "Mr. Hatch ... observed the baneful effects of farming the Lands to a set of needy dependents who being at once Farmer and Amlah, of course, were without checks upon their conduct and thought only of benefitting themselves to the ruin of the Ryots and the destruction of the country". To remedy these evils, Hatch "arranged the zamindari of Dinajpur into 64 Zillahs over which he appointed Tehsildars ... A Jumma Noveese(136) under each Tehsildar with such power as the one became a check on the other [was placed]". To "ward off all embezzlement" and to induce "the tehsildars to be honest and exert their zeal," he allowed the tahsildars "a commission on the amount of their realization."(137)

The collection of rent from the ryots was made in the following way : Each ryot paid his stipulated jama to the patwari of the village. The patwari paid the jama of the village directly to the mofussil officers who were deputed to the villages by the Tahsildar of the Zillah. The patwari was assisted in the collection of rent by the Mandal and the Kotwal of the village.

The tahsildar(138) was given a fixed salary according to the size and importance of the zillah as well as a commission, in all, amounting to 5 % on the realization of rent. The total salary of the tahsildar amounted to Rs 86,220 and their commission to Rs 20,874. The patwari was allowed a commission of 3½ % on the village remittance to the sadar, and the mandal 1 % on the collection of the village. The total sum received by the patwaris of the Dinajpur zamindari amounted to Rs 68,912 and that by the mandals to Rs. 18,950. Some of the village kotwals received wages instead of chackeran lands. The sum received by such kotwals amounted to Rs 8,988.

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(136) Navis : A writer, clerk.
(137) BR-P 24th Sepr. 1793 No. 46
(138) The following description of the Tahsildari system is based on the following : BR-W-P 6th Jany 1795 No.16.

Besides these officials who were paid in cash, there were 11,611 land-servants such as Daftaris,(139) Kotwals, Sirdars, Mirdhas,(140) Paiks, Peons, Jemadars, Swars and Bearers who held chackeran lands and were called the Jagirdars. They held their chackeran lands free of rent. The total quantity of the service lands thus held by them is, however, unknown.

The following statement shows the establishments of the paid servants in the pargana of Bijanagar.

Bijanagar			
Ryoti Jama			118,296
Deduct Village Sarinjam(141)	Patwaris Salaries	4,146	
	Kotwals Do	1,289	5,429
Remaining Jama to be remitted to the Pargana Kachari			112,867
Deduct Pargana Sarinjami as particularized under A			1,692
Remaining Zamindari Jama			111,175
Rasum(142) of 5 % on the above is			5,558
Deduct the undermentioned charges paid monthly			
Tahsildar		360	
Jama Navis		180	
Jama Mohrirs(143)		504	
Shomar Navis		180	
Padar		96	
Paper, Ink, Oil &ca		120	1,692
Remains			3,866
As Rasum to be divided between the Tahsildar and Shomar Navis			
Tahsildar	3/4th share	2,900	
Jama Navis	1/4th Do.	966	3,866

The tahsildar of the pargana Bijanagar, thus, received a fat salary of Rs 3,260 (as a salary Rs 360 and as a commission Rs 2,900) per annum, which was nearly equal to the gross surplus collection of a zamindar of an estate which paid Rs 30,000 as public revenue.

The total cost of the new establishment for rent collection in the zamindari of Dinajpur was Rs 211,416 exclusive of pargana Deb Karcha amounting to Rs. 8,301. To this is to be added the rent free service-lands (chackeran lands) granted to 11,611 servants called Jagirdars.

In spite of the high praise of the new system by J. Elliot, it was

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(139) Deftari : An inferior servants in the office
(140) Mirdha : The head peon, or messenger of a Zamindar. The inspector of a village.
(141) Sarinjami : The charges and expenses of collecting the revenue, deducted from the gross collection.
(142) Rasum : Fees, Perquisites, customary gratuities, allowances commission
(143) Shomar Navis : a clerk who keeps a revenue account showing the daily-receipts of every kind, and a rough statement of the day's transaction.

scarcely less corrupt than the private farming system.(144) Two top men of the zamindari management and the collectorate, Ramkant Roy and Lala Manickchand continued to hold the profitable parganas in farm.

For the zamindar, the introduction of the tahsildari system meant the entire loss of his control over the country, as he could change neither the system of rent collection nor the officers employed in it, due to the Governor General in Council's special order.(145)

The tahsildari system was far from an innovation in terms of its actual functions which were more or less the same as those of the choudhuri or naib of the pargana, especially of the khas pargana. The difference lay in the mode of rent-collection. The former collected rent from the village patwaris, while the latter collected it mostly from the under-farmers (kutkinadars). But considering that most of the kutkinadars were the village-farmers-cum-village headmen, the actual work did not differ so much as it may be considered.

Hatch's policy of generously rewarding the officers in order to ensure their honesty made the tahsildari system more expensive than the old establishment of choudhuris. The latter cost only Rs 56,998 in 1769, while the former cost Rs 107,094 in 1794.

To sum up, the introduction of the tahsildari system by Hatch was a vital blow for the zamindar of Dinajpur : firstly, it actually destroyed the authority of the zamindar over his country, secondly, it was made the tool of embezzlement of the zamindari resources by his own officers.(146)

(2-b) Reform of the mofussil Settlement - Grant of the Pottah on the Hari Assessment - .

The introduction of the pottah system on the principle of Hari

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(144) See section 2 -(2) of this chapter
(145) See section 2 -(3) of this chapter
(146) See section 1 -(3) of Chap. 3.

(general and equitable rates of rents), which was the main pillar of Hatch's Reforms, was, in fact, one of the most important objects set forth and earnestly pursued by Cornwallis.(147) All the Collectors of Bengal and Bihar were ordered to carry into effect the "pottah regulations" with severe penalty in case of any negligence on their part.(148) Hatch's reforms in Dinajpur were highly rated by the Board of Revenue and were made the model for the remaining districts where the execution of the pottahs had yet to be made. In fact, Hatch's reports on the fraudulent practices by the mandals, patwaris and other ryots in February and March of 1787(149) were amongst the earliest ones of the sort. We may suppose that Board of Revenue's proposal for the establishment of the regulations for the grant of consolidated pottah on the 14th October 1788 was largely depended on the experiences in Dinajpur.(150) But it would be wrong to assume that the Hari assessment in Dinajpur was Hatch's innovation.

F. Buchanan in his report on Dinajpur in 1807 referred to the Hatch's Hari assessment : "When the settlement of the Company's revenue was made, Mr. Hatch who valued the greater part of the district, seems to have proceeded on a general estimate of the lands of each pargana, and for that purpose he seems to have divided them into two kinds, one that produced two crops, and the other which produced only one, and the rent of one was usually considered as double that of the other".(151)

It is surprising to find that in only 16 or 17 years, Hatch's settlement was completely misunderstood even by Buchanan.

Answering the Hatch's reports on the fraudulent activities of the ryots abovementioned, the Board of Revenue, thus, instructed Hatch in June 1787 : "the lands in the district of Dinajpur by the mode hitherto pursued

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(147) See chapter 7
(148) BR-P 12th June 1793. No.16 (concerning BR's Secretary's letter to the Collectors, dated 7th Dec. 1792).
(149) BDR-DNR Vol.2 Nos. 112, 114, 121 (its enclosure will be seen in BR-P 17th July 1788, No. 25) & 125
(150) BR-P 14th Oct. 1788
(151) F. Buchanan. op.cit. PP. 237 to 238

in forming the mofussil settlement are very unequally and arbitrarily assessed, we would recommend that you do as far as possible introduce and establish the Harree Assessment, by which tho' an increase will take place in the Jumma of some of the ryots and a decrease upon others, yet the principle will be fair for the whole."(152) Hatch, thus, at the instruction of the Board of Revenue, started his experimental effort for the introduction of Hari assessment in his district. It had for its object the equalization of assessment, not only of the parganas and villages, but also of the individual ryots. It was also designed as a check upon the ryots' malpractices which, it was believed, tended to diminish the rate of rent (nirkh) and the original rent (assal jama).

G. Hatch explained his plan of the new pottah system as follows :

> "To introduce the pottahs upon the principle recommended in the Board's letter, ... it may probably [be] the easiest and best mode to commence by ascertaining the exact amount of rents to be levied by the zamindars ; to divide it under three specific heads. Revenue the nett sum to be paid Government, Charges Collection and the sum requisite for the support and maintenance of the zamindar. The gross sum, thus, being ascertained, the sum received from the District for the last year should be brought forward & compared with it, and if deficient, the difference should be annexed to the general assessment to be laid upon each Pargana or Talook according to the gross receipts from each respectively for the present year, from that to graduate by the same rule to the Riaut - The assessment when arrived to this gradation to be apportioned to the land at a fixed rate per Bega & the Potta according to the Form... to be executed to the Riaut. The assessment then become Harree or equalized, the poor pay at the same rate for his lands as the rich and the complicated and almost unintelligible system of Nirkh-Abwab, and every specie of unlawful exaction levied under whatever titles or pretences, be done away."(153)

The following is the Form of the Pottah proposed by Hatch and actually granted by Ramkant Roy, the zamindari dewan to the ryots.

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(152) BDR-DNR Vol.1 19th June 1787 No. 73
(153) Ibid. Vol.2 15th Jany 1788 No. 277

Form of Proposed Pottah(154)

AB, Riaut of the village of _____ in the Sircar _____ belonging to the Zillah of Dinajpur.

Articles :

Particulars of Ground Conformably to the account Cheeta & Patta	Deduct Catcha for ground to rear the seed upon, and throwing up for Beetle Cultivation	Ground Remaining	The average upon the Bega assessed proportioned to the gross demand from the village	Total Revenue for the year

Amount of the Jumma :

Kistbundee :

This quantity of Begas of ground, with the deduction for Catcha &ca Articles for years at such a rate is given you upon Patta to cultivate in security, and according to Kistbundee you shall pay monthly, and yearly, the Revenue to Government, and your own benefit and exclusive of the Patta, not a single Dham (155) for Dhurree(156), Maanghan(157), Patta Salamee(158) &ca articles shall be demanded. - The benefit arising from cultivation or otherwise of the land thus granted, as also, all losses from inundation, or drought, to remain and be with you. Upon these terms this Patta is granted.

G. Hatch
Collector of Dinajpur

The grant of pottahs was rigorously carried out by Hatch in 1791.(159) It was an enormous task involving the assessment of "the quantity of land each respective Riaut should occupy." The rent to be paid by each ryot was revised "according to the rates (newly) established in the parganas respectively",(160) and on the adjusted rent, pottahs were granted to the ryots by the Tahsildars.

It was really a hardship for the superior ryots who used to enjoy the privileged low rates of rents permissible under local customs or through

(154) BR-P 11th April 1788 No. 58 Enclsoure (b) & GGC-RD-P 10th Feb.1790 No.49
(155) Dam : a coin. 40 dams make a rupee.
(156) Dhari : a measure of 5 sers. It seems to have been used as denomination of an impost.
(157) Mangan : a cess, impost
(158) Patta Salami : a gift or contribution given by the Ryot at the time of granting a Pattah.
(159) See Appendix (a) to this chapter. "Regulations for issuing grants of land to Riauts".
(160) BR-P 31st Octr. 1791 No. 35.

collusion. Hatch was determined to put an end to such privileged rents. He wrote : "exclusive of the spots upon which their dwellings were erected, no Riauit of whatever description should be permitted to cultivate land till they should have previously taken out a grant for the same".(161)

Naturally strong opposition came from the interested parties. He wrote in 1791 : "I was aware that some of the cultivators and inhabitants might, from interested and very sinister view, be averse to come under its operation, and that I should have to combat some opposition, for it strikes at the root of the fraudulent custom of holding lands surreptiously obtained and studiously secreted and also at the pernicious and destructive tenure of Kutkeena and Etmam."(162)

The strongest opposition came from the weavers and pykars who were working under the Commercial Resident of the Company. They, by utilizing their privileged position, held a considerable quantity of lands at low rents. They could count on the support of the Commercial Resident in their attempt to avoid the application of the Hari assessment on their holdings. Udny, the Resident at Maldah Factory, argued in protest against the rigorous measures taken by Hatch that "A man who rented a quantity of land at Rs 50 annually must now pay for the same land 100 Rs., 150 Rs. ... If this rent is collected a very heavy burden will be imposed on the weavers, and they will be put upon a different footing from what they have been upon. I see many effects likely to ensue for which in a measure I will be responsible less of Balances, delay in completing the present year's Investment and ultimately enhancement of the price of Goods, for if the weavers is made to pay so much more rent for his land, it is natural to suppose that he will demand the Company a proportional increase of his cloths".(163) Mason, the Resident at Rangpur, also protested against the measures taken by Hatch,

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(161) BR-P 31st Oct 1791 No. 35
(162) Ibid.
(163) Ibid. No. 34

saying that some of the Pykars working under him held lands in Dinajpur and that they were complaining against the enhancement of their rents. According to him, a Pykar named Moideen, an Inhabitant of pargana Burbeela in Dinajpur held 377 bighas of land, including 79 bighas of waste lands at a fixed rate of F.A. Rs 73 per annum. The land in question had been held by his family for many generations. Now the naib of the pargana demanded from him as rent a sum of Rs 441 and distrained his property.(164)

In spite of the repeated protests from the Residents of Maldah and Rangpur, Hatch did not relent, and thus argued in favour of his new Pottah system : "with the exception of the weavers who you write me are dissatisfied, [the system] has been universally adopted. To admit of an exemption in the case of weavers would be doing injury to the proprietor in whose lands they reside, and be a dereliction of my duty".(165)

By October 1791, the number of the pottahs distributed in the district of Dinajpur amounted to 150,000,(166) and in 1793 he wrote to the Board of Revenue of the completion of his scheme of pottahs. The pottahs eventually enforced by him in the zamindari of Dinajpur numbered 338,766.(167)

What exactly was the nature of Hatch's pottah system ? Both F. Buchanan(168) and T. Sisson,(169) Hatch's near contemporaries, contended that Hatch's assessment was based on a survey of the qualities of lands of each pargana. This is of doubtful validity. Hatch, as noted earlier, at first fixed the total sum to be levied on the whole district, and then distributed it among the parganas proportionately to the rent-collection from them in the previous year. In the same way, the assigned sum on a pargana was distributed among its villages, and Hatch was careful to remove inequalities in regard to

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(164) BR-P 25th July 1791 No. 3
(165) Ibid 31st Oct 1791 No.35
(166) Ibid
(167) Ibid 17th Decr. 1793 No. 7
(168) F. Buchanan, op.cit. P. 238
(169) F.O. Bell. "Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Dinajpur 1934-1940" 1942. P. 70

rent between different villages. The lump sum thus fixed for a village was distributed among the villagers according to the quality and quantity of their holdings. He classified the quality of lands as follows : Pali(170) 1st and Pali 2nd : Khyar(171) 1st, and Khyar 2nd : Bhor or land liable to be inundated : Sunnat Purtee or land waste in the year 1196 B.S. (1789 A.D.) : Palateecka or land deserted in the year 1197 B.S. (1790 A.D.). From the table of rates for the zamindari of Dinajpur for the year 1198 B.S.,(172) we come to know that in most parganas (27 out of 41 parganas mentioned in the table), land consisted only of Pali 1st, Khyar 1st & Sunnat Purtee. He calculated the quantity of the land of each description in the village and parganas and so fixed the rate of rent of each kind of land as to yield the sum which Hatch assigned on the respective ones. To use his own words, "The average upon the Bega assessed [was] proportioned to the gross demand from the village."(173) It sometimes happened, on the measurement of lands or from any other causes, that the rent now apportioned to some ryots was more than what their actual holdings ought to pay according to the newly established nirkhbandi. On these occasions, no abatement of rent was admitted, but such quantity of lands known as Bhirna were delivered up to them as to make up the difference between "the Jumma paid for the past year & the Rates now fixed". Hatch thus kept up the predetermined total amount of revenue which was to be collected from the country.(173A)

From the above explanation, it is clear that Hatch's table of rates of rents (nirkhbandi) was made out by distributing the predetermined government demand on the zamindari among the parganas and villages. Though at the village level it was apportioned according to the quality and quantity of the lands held by the ryots, it had only very remote relation to the productivity of the soils of the country.

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(170) Pali : Land yielding two crops a year. For detail See Appendix to chapter 6
(171) Khyar : Land yielding one crop a year. For detail see the above App.
(172) See Appendix (b) to this chapter
(173) BR-P. 11th April 1788 No.58 Enclosure (b)
(173A) See Appendix (a) to this chapter.

(3 - a) Effects of the Hari Assessment on the Land-tenures.

The introduction of the Hari assessment adversely affected the Adhi tenure in Dinajpur. When Hatch started his preliminary efforts in this regard in 1787, he ordered that those who used to pay rent in kind should hereafter pay in cash. He argued that "the custom, for time immemorial has established the privilege of a choice to the Government. The Riaut in return may when he finds it beneficial from Grain being in Demand... pay in money with this further advantage ; that a deduction of ¼ from the price, Grain is valued at in the Pargana, is granted to him. The Aodee Revenue is cessed at the average rate of about 1 Rupee per Bega in the Pargana Suntose, of course, the Riauts according to the present mode of collection have to pay 12 annas per Bega." He had adopted "this expedient" universally throughout the District.(174) Under the Hari assessment in 1791, enforcement of the payment in money must have occurred on a larger scale.

Pahikasht tenure also was affected by the introduction of the Hari assessment. The Pahi kasht ryots used to cultivate their lands at a lower rent than the Khudkasht ryots did, but this advantage was abolished by the introduction of a general rate of rent under the Hari assessment. For example, the pahikasht ryots who used to come from Murshidabad district and cultivate lands in the pargana Suntose in the Dinajpur zamindari were officially asked to pay the same rents "as the ryots inhabiting the village to which the lands belong, or to relinquish the lands they had cultivated".(175) And in 1792, "lands leased out to Pahikasht ryots at a low rent to the amount of Rs 19,053"(176) were resumed in consequence of the equalization of the rates of rent throughout the parganas.

The greatest effect of the Hari assessment on the land-tenures in Dinajpur was, though short-lived it was, the abolition of the various types of privileged tenures. The wealthy ryots often possessed a considerable area of

(174) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 28th Feb. 1787 No. 114
(175) Ibid. Vol. 1 23rd Novr. 1789 No. 474
(176) BR-P 3rd Jany 1794 No. 45

lands at a lower rent and had them cultivated by the agricultural labourers (krishans) and the under-ryots (pirjas). The equalization of the rates of rents by the Hari assessment severely hit the economic foundations of such large and privileged holdings (we may call them the privileged ryoti-holdings).(177) Our source materials do not throw much light on the matter. However, one stray instance from the pargana Surjapur which was transferred from Purnea to Dinajpur shows that the Hari assessment had actually destroyed the Gatchbandi tenure (a kind of privileged ryoti-holdings).(178) As we shall see presently, such effect of the Hari assessment did not last long and the privileged ryoti-holdings revived soon.

(3 - b) Effects on the Zamindar Ryot Relations.

Though Hatch's Hari assessment and new Nirkhbandi were not based on the actual productivity of the soils, the latter appreciably affected the zamindar-ryot relations, as observed by F. Buchanan during his survey in Dinajpur in 1807. He said that "[Hatch's Hari assessment] answered his purpose sufficiently well ... in fixing a maximum of rent beyond which the persons who occupied the land could not be desired to pay... his mode of valuing estates by a general average has been followed by the proprietors, and both they and the farmers pretend that they are bound to let their estates at no higher rate."(179) Though everyone concerned was sensible that Hatch's valuation or rates of rents was "a great absurdity",(180) the zamindars adopted it as "a means of checking fraud in their servants and agents, for few of them manage their own estates. The usual plan, therefore, employed by the agents, is to state a certain portion of each farm as land producing two crops (Poli), and certain parts as land producing one crop (Khyar), so as

(177) For more full discussion, see section 2 of chap. 6
(178) BR-W-P · 4th July 1794 No.12
(179) F. Buchanan, op.cit., P. 238
(180) Buchanan wrote that Hatch considered the Pali lands as twice productive as the Khyar lands, and fixed the rents accordingly. Buchanan, however, criticized Hatch's principle, because, in many cases, Khyar lands were more productive than the Pali lands. So, he called the Hatch's Nirkhbandi "a great absurdity". Buchanan, op.cit. P. 238

to make the amount, at valuation which Mr. Hatch took, equal to the rent which the farmer[181] is to pay."[182]

In such a peculiar way, Hatch's Nirkhbandi survived the Hari assessment which vanished soon and provided a maximum rate beyond which no zamindar could demand rents from the ryots.

(3 - c) Short-lived Effects of the Hari Assessment

As we have just seen, Hatch's reforms, especially, the Hari assessment had, at least, temporarily extinguished the privileged ryoti-tenures in the countryside. But considering their essential role in the production process of the agrarian society,[183] it is not surprising that they revived in less than a decade after its introduction. The revival of the privileged tenures, which resulted from the manoeuvres and local influence of the wealthy ryots, will be clearly seen in the following extract of a petition presented by the new zamindars of Dinajpur in June 1799 :[184]

> "The Jotedars[185] who cultivate large portions of lands are very refractory, and know that the zamindars have no power over them pay only a few rupees on account of their revenue ... they hold more lands than they are entitled to by their pottahs ... It was the custom in Mr. Hatch's time, that should any ryots found to cultivate more land than what is specified in his Pottahs, he was obliged to pay three times the amount of the rent of such surplus land to the zamindars and vice versa. Now the ryots take as much land as they please, and enjoy the same with impunity", and they "instigated the petty ryots not to pay their revenue."

The Hari assessment which accompanied such a drastic change in the land-tenure system could only be effective when the Collector of a district could cope with the malpractices and intrigues of the wealthy ryots. Without an extraordinarily strong administration like Hatch's, the execution of the

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(181) By "the farmer", Buchanan meant the ryot.
(182) Buchanan, op.cit., p. 238.
(183) See section 1 & 2 of chap. 6
(184) BR-P 2nd July 1799 No. 80
(185) Jotdar : Jot means ryot's holding of any size, but it often means that of a considerable size.

equalization of the rates of rents or the introduction of a general rate of rent was nearly impossible. The failure of Sherburne, the Collector of Birbhum, who tried to introduce the Hari assessment there in 1788,(186) amply showed the strong and persistent resistance of the superior and wealthy ryots against any measure which was likely to curtail their privileged position in the countryside.(187)

Section 6 New Purchasers

After Hatch's reforms, the zamindari management was run by Ramkant Roy and Lal Manickchand under their joint-dewanship of the zamindari.(188)

In April 1797 or at the end of 1203 B.S., a considerable balance (Rs 133,424) remained due from the zamindari, but it was somehow cleared.(189)

The first instalment (kist) of 1204 B.S. again could not be realized, and C. Bird, the then Collector, put up the pargana Barbila, the revenue of which was Rs 60,915, for sale at the public auction without a prior confirmation of the sale from the Board of Revenue. It was purchased by Lala Manickchand, the then zamindari dewan, at Rs 31,100. As it was an illegal sale, the Board of Revenue intervened and cancelled it.(190) Toward the end of 1204 B.S., the arrears of revenue accumulated and by the end of Maug 1204 B.S. (the middle of February 1798 A.D.), the balance of revenue amounted to Rs 451,691.(191) In spite of the zamindar's petition that, due to the severe drought the ryots could not pay their rents,(192) the Governor General in Council did not relent and authorized the sale of part of the zamindari of Dinajpur. In April 1798, the first public sale of the zamindari was made. At this sale, 41 lots the total revenue of which was Rs 283,586, were sold at Rs 281,660.(193)

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(186) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790 No. 49 & BR-P 5th Novr. 1792 No. 31
(187) See section 1-(2) of chap. 6
(188) .BR-P 25th Oct. 1796 No.23.
(189) Ibid 7th July 1797 No.24.
(190) Ibid 1st August 1797 No. 36 & 15th August 1797 No. 58A.
(191) Ibid 23rd March 1798 No. 43 & 47
(192) Ibid 13th March 1798 No. 23 & 24th April 1798 No. 25
(193) Ibid 11th May 1798 No. 35 & BR-M-AC-INR

By September 1799, there remained (in the hands of Rajah Radhanaut) no more property that could be sold. His residences, movable property and even the Thakurbaris were attached for the arrears of revenue.(194) Until his death in 1801, the Rajah was encumbered with public and private debts. C. Smith, the then Collector, reported his death to the Board of Revenue with the following words :

> "What his circumstances were, but a very short time back is well known to you, especially, to two of you, Mr. Harington & Mr. Hatch. He died in such a state of poverty as to be kept a prisoner in his house by his creditors who were bent upon seizing him and throwing him into the common Jail, while such was this wretched man's end, two Dewans & I fear I may add the grandson of one of them (I allude to Phoolchund, the Late Dewan of this Collectorship) are rich and fat & flourishing and are proprietors of some of the finest parts of what was their poor Lord's very fine Estate."(195)

(1) Analysis of the New Purchasers

Here we shall analyze the nature of the purchasers of lots of the Dinajpur zamindari at the public auctions between April 1798 and December 1799.

The available accounts of such sales cover more than eighty per cent of the total revenue demand of the zamindari.(196) The analysis of these data would, therefore, give us a fairly correct idea about the people who purchased the lots at the public sales. Our data contain the accounts of 13 public auctions held during the abovementioned period. In these auctions, 239 lots, the revenue (sadar jama) of which amounted to Rs. 1,195,919, were auctioned to more than 160 persons at the total purchase money of Rs. 837,359. All the original sales were held at the office of the Collector. Once, several lots were sold in Calcutta after the unsuccessful auction at Dinajpur, but the prices offered there were as low as about one third of the revenue of the lots so that the public sale in Calcutta was abandoned once for all.(197)

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(194) BR-P 6th Septr. 1799 No. 26 & 36
(195) BR-P 3rd Feb 1801 No. 7
(196) BR-M-AC-DNR
(197) BR-M-AC-DNR dated 2nd July 1798

As the accounts of sale give only the names and places of residence of the purchasers, the identification of the purchasers can not be very correct and remains tentative. For example, one Parbutty Churn purchased two lots at Rs 16,525. In the Board of Revenue's proceedings, we find two Parbutty Churn, one Merchant, and the other an officer of the zamindari. We have no means to ascertain which of the two was the purchaser at the auction. The analysis given below must be taken with this reservation.

The following Table - 1 shows the names, places of residence, number of lots purchased, the revenue (sadar jama) of such lots and the amount of the purchase money of the purchasers whose sadar jama exceeded Rs 20,000.

Table - 1 : The big purchasers the sadar jama of whose lots exceeded Rs 20,000.

Names	Residence	Number of Lots	Sadar Jama	Amount of Purchase
1. Narainchand Roy	DNR	27	100,252	41,875
2. Motter Mohun Sein	CAL	8	56,614	18,120
3. Bidenaut Dutt Mandal	Andulgong	8	53,594	53,200
4. Nandis (Takurdas, Jaideb, & Kashinaut)	CAL	6	42,789	15,200
5. Kishenkant Roy	DNR	8.53	39,190	30,136
6. Uli Mohammed Nazir	DNR	7	38,602	35,400
7. Roy Nitanand	MRD	6	30,392	29,125
8. Manickchand	Patna	4½	28,812	26,375
9. Rani Tripuri Sundari	DNR	5	24,933	29,050
10. Rani Sursutty Anondmoy	DNR	3	21,579	15,260
11. Utamchand	DNR	5	20,121	17,225

(Reference) DNR : Dinajpur, CAL : Calcutta, MRD : Mudshidabad.
Prepared from the relevant statements in BR-M-AC-DNR.

Narainchand Roy, the biggest purchaser, was a small child. He doubtlessly was the benami or fictitious name of Ramkant Roy, the late zamindari dewan and a faithful agent of G. Hatch during his collectorship in Dinajpur. He acted as the zamindari dewan till the break-up of the zamindari.(198)

(198) BR-P 10th Decr. 1805 Nos. 1 to 3

The second purchaser, Motter Mohun Sein purchased these lots at a very low price at a public auction held in Calcutta. His occupation could not be traced. He afterwards privately sold a portion of his purchase to six Persons.(199)

Bidenaut Dutt Mandal, the third purchaser, was a big merchant at Raujegunge, the commercial centre of Dinajpur district, His son Juddonaut Dutt also purchased 5 lots (sadar jama Rs 15,404 : purchase money Rs 14,565). Bidenaut Mandal lent money to Rajan Radhanaut and took one pargana as mortgage in 1798.(200)

One of the Nandis, the fourth purchaser, Thakur Nandi was recorded as one of the leading merchants of Raujegunge.(201) According to Buchanan, he resided at Kulna near Calcutta and used to send large cargoes of rice for Calcutta and Murshidabad markets.(202) Other two Nandis, Jaideb and Kashinaut, were most probably the relations of Thakurdas Nandi, because they acquired the lots at the same auction held in Calcutta. Rajikishore Nandi who was a considerable mahajan of Murshidabad and had branches both in Dinajpur and Calcutta was probably their relative.(203) Parbutty Nandi, a big banker in Dinajpur having commercial transactions with some of the senior officers of the collectorate might be identified with Parbuttychurn, the 18th purchaser who purchased 2 lots (sadar jama Rs 14,381 : purchase money Rs 16,525).(204) It is probable that he also was a relative of Thakurdas Nandi.

Kishenkant Roy, the fifth purchaser, was a brother of Ramkant Roy. He purchased several lots in Dinajpur and Rangpur the total sadar jama of which amounted to Rs 50,000.(205)

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(199) BR-P 31st July 1801 No.10
(200) Ibid. 19th June 1801 No.30. F. Buchanan op.cit, P.317. F.O.Bell, op.cit. P.74
(201) JD-G-P 29th May 1795. Nos. 13 to 15.
(202) F. Buchanan, op.cit., P. 317
(203) BR-P 23rd Decr. 1800 No.25
(204) BR-P 3rd Jany 1806. No. 8
(205) Ibid. 8th August 1801, No.31

Uli Mahommed, the sixth purchaser, was the Nazir of the collectorate. He at first tried to purchase these lots in his own name. But J. Elliot, the then Collector, advised him to use a fictitious name and put off the sale. He accordingly purchased these lots in his two sons' names. He lent money to Rajah Radhanaut through the public dewan, Lala Manickchand, at an exorbitant rate of interest in 1796 & 1797.(206)

Roy Nitanand, the seventh purchaser, resided at Murshidabad, but his occupation could not be ascertained.

Lala Manickchand, the eighth purchaser, was a very powerful man in Dinajpur. He had for many years officiated as the public dewan and the zamindari dewan. His grandson Phoolchand was the public dewan of Dinajpur when the zamindari was sold. His nephew Kirtichand and Sungum Loll also purchased some lots. The accounts of sale show that the former purchased one lot (sadar jama Rs 6,082 : purchase money Rs 400) & the latter one lot (sadar jama Rs 8,427 : purchase money Rs 5,275). According to the deposition of Phoolchand, Kirtichand purchased 4 lots and one Mitter Loll, one of Manickchand's nephew, 2 lots.(207) The number of the lots purchased by Manickchand and his relatives would, therefore, be much greater than what the above Table-1 suggests. Rajah Radhanaut alleged in one of his petitions that Phoolchand, the public dewan, purchased many lots to the amount of one lack rupees, but the truth of it cannot be ascertained.

Rani Tripuri Sundari, the ninth purchaser, was the wife of the young Rajah Radhanaut.

Rani Sursutty Anondmoy, the tenth purchaser, was the wife of the late Rajah Bydenaut and the mother-in-law of Rajah Radhanaut.

Utamchand, the eleventh purchaser, was the son of Khurruc Sing, a big merchant of Raujegunge.(208) Khurruc Sing himself purchased 2 lots (sadar jama Rs 11,377 : purchase money Rs 17,350) in his own name. He also was one of the creditors of Rajah Radhanaut.

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(206) BR-P 10th Decr. 1805 Nos. 1 to 3
(207) Ibid. 4th Nov. 1800
(208) JD-G-P 29th May 1795 No. 14 & F.O. Bell. op.cit., P. 94.

The following table shows the five main groups of the new purchasers :

Table-2 : A table showing the number, sadar jama and purchase money of the lots purchased by the five main groups of people who composed the purchasers of the Dinajpur zamindari at the public auction

Names	Number of lots	Sadar Jama	Purchase money
1. Zamindari Officers			
Ramkant Roy, Late zamindari dewan (including his relations)	37.53	150,482	74,736
Munnalal &ca, old family servants	2	12,298	7,850
Chytun Churn Neiogi, Tahsildar	2.33	11,101	4,308
Sutchinandan, Do.	1	7,160	7,700
Binnoderam, late Naib of Pargana	1	6,935	6,700
Rajeb Alli, Do.	1	6,464	2,905
Santiram, Do.	1	4,525	2,658
Ganganarain Chowdry, Do.	1	4,301	630
Rajkishore & Rajkissen, old family servants	0.67	4,178	1,228
Ramchunder Roy, Tahsildar	1	3,528	800
Deen Dyal, Do	0.5	2,572	745
	49.03	213,544	110,260
2. Government Officers			
Manickchand, late public dewan (including his relations)	7.5	43,321	32,050
Uli Mohammed, Nazir	7	38,602	35,400
Bowanny Talookdar, Sheristadar Mookey (in benami)(209)	7.5	33,878	21,160
Fernandez, writer	3	14,251	14,450
Bidenaut Chowdry, Sheristadar of Abkari(210)	3	12,630	9,275
Sheebchand, collector of police-tax	2.5	11,075	12,725
Mohammend Ali, Munshi(211)	2	9,813	1,000
Syed Mohammed, Kazi of Murshidabad Court of Circuit & Appeal	1	7,882	5,100

(continued)

(209) Sheristadar Mookey : a chief record-keeper who has the general superintendence of the establisnment and charge of public records.

(210) Akbari : Revenue derived from duties levied on the manufacture and sale of inebriating leguers, and on intoxicating drug.

(211) Munshi : an interpreter of Persian and Hindustani.

Jaggernaut Sein, collector's private servant	1	6,876	4,000
Musshitullah, Munshi	1.5	4,653	3,288
Luckykant, collector of police tax	1.5	4,548	1,573
Radhakant Dass, Mohrir of Abkari	0.83	4,303	797
Ganganarain Sein, Record Keeper	0.5	2,572	745
Myaram Shah, collector of Police tax	0.5	2,412	1,652
Rajmohun, Mohrir	0.33	2,148	308
	39.67	198,964	143,523
3. Merchants			
Bidenaut Mandal (including his relation)	14	75,462	70,670
Nandis (Thakurdas, Jaideb & Kashinaut)	6	42,789	15,200
Khurruc Sing (including his relation)	7	31,498	34,575
Parbuttychurn Nandi	2	14,381	16,525
Rajeb Lochun	1	6,464	2,905
	30	170,594	139,875
4. Rajah's close relations			
Rani Tripuri	5	24,933	29,050
Rani Sursutty	3	21,579	15,260
Jankinaut Sing	1	11,106	7,650
Gourmohun Sing	0.33	1,894	456
	9.33	59,512	52,416
5. Neighbouring Zamindars			
Dhirnarain Chowdry, zamindar of pargana Kholorah	5	32,788	24,260
Shamsunder & Hursunder, zamindar of Kholorah	2	9,307	2,500
Rajmony Chowdrain & Kishenchand, zamindar in Purnea	2	7,452	1,930
	9	49,547	28,690
Grand Total	137.03	692,161	474,764

(concluded)

(Errors expected)

(Reference)
Prepared from the relevant statements in BR-M-AC-DNR and the relevant Proceedings of BR, BR-W, JD-Cv, JD-Cr &c.
For the identification of the new purchasers, the following were most useful :

BR-P :	20-6-1800,	No. 9 to 13	:	29-7-1800, Nos. 2 to 3
	14-10-1800,	No. 6	:	4-11-1800, Nos. 23 to 27
	11-11-1800,	No. 13	:	12-6-1801, Nos. 45 to 46
	19-6-1801,	Nos. 27A to 31	:	7-7-1801, No. 54
	17-7-1801,	Nos. 9 to 16	:	24-7-1801, No. 9
	8-8-1801,	Nos. 31 & 39	:	1-5-1804, Nos. 37 to 39
	7-8-1804,	Nos. 16 to 17	:	10-12-1805, Nos. 1 to 3
	3-1-1806,	Nos. 6 to 8	:	26-12-1806, No. 19

Besides the above primary sources, "Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the District of Dinajpur, 1934 - 1940" By F.O. Bell, 1942 was also quite useful.

Our data relate to 13 public auctions in which 239 lots (sadar jama Rs 1,195,919 : purchase money Rs 837,359) were auctioned. Out of them the purchasers of the lots amounting to Rs 771,089 could be identified, and the persons belonging to the five groups abovementioned constituted about 90 % of the identified purchasers. These five groups, thus, nearly monopolized the lots that were sold at the public auctions.

From the above Table-2, it is also clear that the government officers, zamindari officers and merchant-cum-bankers who had been the chief agents in bringing about the fall of the zamindari of Dinajpur figured prominently among the new purchasers.

F.O.Bell, the settlement officer of the district of Dinajpur, wrote, "Stories circulate that servants of the Rajah did well by buying up lots ; but there is little trace of purchase by such men : unless we count Ram Kanta and his brother." He further argued that "Government servants figured among the purchasers to a small extent:"(212) But the above Table-2 clearly shows,

(212) F.O.Bell, op.cit., P. 74.

contrary to the Bell's contention that the government officers and the zamindari officers were the main purchasers.

The reasons for the concentration of the lots in the hands of the above five groups would be, at least, two-fold. Firstly, the public auction was conducted by the interested officers and, therefore, people unknown to or unacquainted with the government officers could have scarcely any chance of acquiring the lots at the auction.(213) Secondly, the size of the lots on sale was too large for the local people to purchase. It was the strict order of the Board of Revenue that the Jama of each lot put up for sale should be kept up at about Rs 5,000.(214) They did not allow the land to be divided into smaller lots. In 1804, T. Graham, the Collector, argued that if the Board would approve of sales of estates in smaller lots, it would "from admitting the Mundulls of the pargana to come forward, occasion a greater competition amongst the Bidders at the time of Sale, and consequently increase the probable amount purchase."(215) Had the Board allowed to sell the zamindari in smaller lots, the composition of the purchasers might have been different.

In this connection, the frequent private sales immediately after the auction would be worthy of our notice. Those who were well acquainted with the Collector and his officers purchased the lots at the public auction in their names but the purchase money was paid by others who wished to secure them for themselves. The latter got possession of the lots after the public sale through a formal private sale.(216) Of course, the former received a handsome sum as a reward. In other case, several persons who wished to purchase a share in a lot united and purchased it jointly. Sometimes they continued to hold the lot jointly, and sometimes, they divided it among themselves by a public or private partition (Batwara).(217)

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(213) BR-P 10th Decr. 1805 Nos. 1 to 3. See also Raja Rammohun Roy's answers on the Revenue system of India, in "The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy", Part III, 1947. Answers : 26 & 27. P. 44.
(214) BR-P 17th April, 1801. No.3
(215) BR-P 6th Novr. 1804 No.16
(216) Ibid. 12th June 1801, Nos 46 & 24th Feb 1801 No.2
(217) Ibid 14th August 1804 No.20 & 30th Jany 1801. No. 26

When we look at the accounts of sale, we cannot but be struck with the low price at which the Dinajpur zamindari was sold in 1799. The tight money market in 1798 & 1799 must have contributed much to the low price. But more destructive to the zamindar of Dinajpur was the malpractices of the government officers. The Board of Revenue observed in their letter to Wellesley, the Governor General in Council, in 1804 that "We have every reason to suppose that the low price at which the lands in Dinajpur sold at that period [1799] was occasioned in a great measure by the improper influence of the Amlah attached to the Collector's office", and recommended the sale of the lands which were purchased in fictitious name (benami) by Radhakant, the late Mohrir of the Abkari Establishment. The sale of the lands which Radhakant purchased at Rs 250 in 1799 yielded a huge sum of Rs 12,335 in 1804.(218) This will suggest the extent of the corruption exercised at the time of the public sale in 1799.

(2) The Estate-management by the new Purchasers

In 1194 B.S. (1787/8 A.D.), the district of Dinajpur consisted of 28 estates, but after the break-up of the zamindari of Dinajpur, it was owned by no less than 400 smaller zamindars.(219) The old zamindar, thus, fell, and numerous new and smaller zamindars came into existence.

As noted earlier, the new purchasers were mostly the government officers, zamindari officers and merchants. Many of them had their professions to look after, and trusted the management of their estates to the agents. The absentee landlordism seems to have opened a wide scope for illegal exaction by their agents in the countryside. Buchanan, however, observed that the estates of the new purchasers were, generally speaking, better managed than those of the old families. He, thus, explained : "The agents manage

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(218) BR-P 7th August 1804 No. 16 & 17
(219) "A statistical account of Bengal" Vol.7 p. 422

every thing in their own way ; but are under the necessity of being very cautious, as their masters are, in general, men of business, and those who were formerly agents themselves understand country affairs, so that their estates are improving and are comparatively well managed".(220)

Another circumstance which made the estate-management much easier for the zamindars was the enactment of Regulation 7 of 1799 (Haftam). By this regulation, the zamindars acquired extraordinary power over their ryots.(221) The collusion of the ryots with the lower rent-collectors persisted,(222) but the zamindars were, doubtlessly, well-equipped against such collusions under the strong support of government, especially the new judicial set-up.

Uli Mohammed, the nazir of the collectorate, purchased three lots in the pargana of Dehutta.(223) After the purchase, he himself went to the countryside, and proclaimed that he was the new proprietor. He fixed a bamboo at the market-place(hat), which was the symbol of the proprietor of lands, "satisfied the ryots", perhaps by confirming their old pottahs and promising the grant of the taqavi, appointed the tahsildar of the lot, and allowed the kotwals and paiks to continue their possession of the rent-free service lands (chackeran lands) when they agreed to serve under him. On some occasions, he resumed the chackeran lands and asked the possessor of them to pay the rent. He sent a party of diggers into the mofussil to clear the jungle and repair the road, and tried to employ a party of barkandazes to destroy the wild animals. He appointed a mandal at every Rs. 1000 of rent. The rent of the ryots was collected by the mandals and, then, made over to the lower rent collectors called karamacharis. The latter delivered the same to the tahsildar of the lot and the tahsildar to the zamindar (Uli Mohammed). When the ryots were dissatisfied with the tahsildars, they complained of it to Uli Mohammed

(220) F. Buchanan, op.cit., P. 251
(221) See chapter 7
(222) F. Buchanan, op.cit., P. 240
(223) The following description about Uli Mohammed depends on the following:
BR- P 10th Decr. 1805 Nos. 1 to 3 & 3rd Jany 1806 Nos. 6 to 9

who resided at Raujegunge. Though he was absent from his estate, he kept watch over its management. It seems that through the frequent mofussil correspondence, he could minutely supervise the country affairs. Under his indirect but vigilant control of the estate; it must have been well-managed.

Buchanan mentioned one Guruprosad of Surahor Mankoyi who also showed keen interest in the management of his estate : " [he] not only investigates his accounts with care, but when he suspects fraud, takes the measuring rope in his own hand, and examines on the spot the veracity of his agents. Everything about him is decent and respectable and the estate is like a garden."(224)

Such personal exertion was rather rare among the old zamindars and, even if they had will to do so, the extensiveness of their estates precluded such a personal supervision.

Buchanan gives us a good idea about the establishments kept up by the smaller zamindars in the early 19th century.

The following establishments were kept up by the Rajah of Dinajpur "in its fallen condition" for the management of the 8 lots purchased by his mother-in-law in benami.(225)

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(224) F. Buchanan, op.cit., p. 251

(225) F. Buchanan, op.cit., pp. 247 to 248. It seems that Rani Sursutty and Ramkant Roy had entered into a compromise after the death of Rajah Radhanaut. Rani adopted a son who was a close relation of Ramkant Roy, and Ramkant, in return, made over his purchase to the new Rajah and he himself became the Dewan of the zamindari. These 8 lots must have been originally purchased by Ramkant Roy.

Table - 3 : The establishment maintained by the Rajah for the management of the 8 lots purchased by his mother-in-law in benami.

		bighas	rupees
1	Dewan who superintends the whole		1,200
8	Tahsildars or assistants, at 25 per month		2,400
40	Writers (Mohurrers), at 8 per month		3,840
24	Sirdars or officers of the old militia at 50 bighas	1,200	
16	Mirdhas or inferior officers of the same at 30 Do.	480	
200	Paiks or soldiers of the same at 20 Do.	4,000	
8	Dufdars or officers of a more recent militia		384
24	Barkandazes, the soldiers under these		864
16	Daftaris or keepers of papers	192	
200	Kotwals or messengers	2,000	
537		7,872	8,688

The rental of these 8 lots was Rs. 110,000 from which the land revenue (Rs 79,000), cost of establishments paid in money (Rs 8,688) and commission to the ijaradars or renters at 4 % on the whole rental (Rs 4,400), in all, Rs. 92,088 should be deducted. The clear income left for the zamindar, therefore, was Rs 17,912 or 16.3 % of the whole rental.

The following was the establishments kept by the Rajah of Dinajpur in the Pargana "that has not been sold".

Table - 4 : The Establishments maintained by the Rajah of Dinajpur for his unsold pargana

1	Deputy of the Dewan		280
1	Jama Navis, or Accountant		360
7	Mohrirs, or writers		840
1	Dafadar, or officer of the more recent militia		48
7	Barkandazes, or armed men of the same		252
3	Daftaris, or keepers of papers	36	
4	Sirdars, or officers of old militia	200	
100	Paiks, or soldiers of the same	2,000	
150	Kotwals, or messengers	1,500	
274		3,736	1,780

The total rental of this pargana was Rs 96,582 from which the land-revenue (Rs 81,591), cost of establishments paid in money (Rs 1,780) and commission to the ijaradars (Rs 3,863), in all, Rs 87,234 should be deducted. The clear income remained in the hands of the Rajah was Rs 9,756 or 10.1 % of the total rental.

Adit Choudhuri, a merchant, purchased a small lot in the Pargana of Dehutta and maintained the following establishments for its management.(226)

Table - 5 : The establishments maintained by Adit Choudhuri

		bighas	rupees
1	Tahsildar, or agent		120
1	Jama Navis, or head accountant		84
1	Mohrrir, or writer		36
1	Potdar, or money-changer		24
2	Barkandazes, or armed men		51
1	Sirdar, or chief of paiks	20	
10	Paiks	120	
7	Kotwals, or messengers	56	
24		196	315

The whole rental of this lot was Rs 6,300 from which the land revenue (Rs 4,500), cost of establishments paid in money (Rs 315) and commission to the ijaradars at 4 % on the whole rental (Rs 252), in all Rs 5,067 should be deducted. The clear income left for the zamindar was Rs 1,233 or 19.6 % on the whole rental.

In these estates also, the rent of the ryots was collected by the patwari and the mandal of the village. The patwari received 3 %, and the mandal 1 % on the whole collection of the village as their commission.

(226) F. Buchanan, op. cit., p. 248.

The zamindar, sometimes, managed their estates directly through their agents (tahsildars), but more often they seem to have leased their estates to the private farmers (ijaradars) for three to nine years. Such farmers received as their commission 4 to 6 % on the whole rental. Even when the whole zamindari was farmed out to the ijaradars, the zamindar retained his establishments and the farmers were assisted in their rent collection by them.(227)

Let us examine the financial structure of the above three instances.

The financial structure of the 8 lots possessed by the Rajah of Dinajpur was as follows. Supposing the gross produce as 100, 4 of this was given to the mandals & patwaris as their commission and the remaining 96 was made over to the karamacharis & tahsildars. The latter, after deducting the expenses at the pargana and sadar offices which amounted to 7.6, delivered the remaining 88.4 to the ijaradars. The ijaradars appropriated 3.8 as their commission and paid the rest (84.6) to the zamindar. The zamindar retained 15.6 as his clear income from which all his house-hold & religious expenses should be defrayed, and paid 68.9 as revenue to government.

The financial structure of the unsold pargana of the Rajah of Dinajpur was as follows : The mandals & patwaris received 4 as their commission and handed over 96 to the zamindari officers in the mofussil. The latter took 1.8 as their expenses and delivered the rest (94.2) to the ijaradars who appropriated 3.8 as their commission and paid the remaining 90.4 to the zamindar. The zamindar retained 9.7 and paid 80.7 as revenue to government. In spite of the very small charges of collection, the zamindar's profit from this pargana was less than 10 per cent of the gross produce, because of the very high assessment of revenue on it.

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(227) F. Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 251 & 252

The financial structure of Adit Choudhuri's small estate was as follows : The mandals & patwaris got 4 as their commission and made over the remaining 96 to the karamacharis & tahsildar. The latter, after deducting 4.8 as their expenses, delivered 91.2 to the ijaradars. The ijaradars appropriated 3.8 as their commission and paid the remaining 87.4 to the zamindar. The zamindar retained 18.8 as his profit and paid the rest (68.6) to government as land-revenue.

These instances show that the zamindars still retained fairly large semi-military establishments. It suggests that the nature of the zamindar's control over his ryots did not change much before and after the permanent settlement.

The zamindar's financial condition seems to have been improving thanks to the fixed assessment of revenue and the gradually increasing assets of their estates. If the zamindar managed his estates directly, he could expect the profit of more or less 20 % of the gross produce of the country. But in some instances, as the above second one shows, where the assessment of revenue was disproportionately high, he could hardly secure a profit of 10 %. This uneven assessment largely explains why many of the new purchasers failed to pay up their revenue and their estates had to be sold at the public auction : Between 1800 and 1805, at least, 83 lots or parts of lots with the Sadar Jama of Rs 189,131 were sold at the public auction, the purchase money of which amounted to Rs 279,396.(228)

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(228) BR-M-AC-DNR

Appendix (a) to chapter 4

Regulations for issuing Grants of Land to Riauts in Pargana Batasun &ca. Zamindary of Dinajpur

1. No abatement of Jumma will be admitted. Land under the denomination of Bhirna will be delivered up to make up any difference between the Jumma paid for the past year & the Rates now fixed. Upon this principle the Assessment has been adjusted - Upon these conditions Riauts will pay their Rents - and Pottahs be granted them, the Grants shall be issued in the name of the actual holders of the land only.

2. Two Cottahs will be remitted to the Riaut for Cacha(1) from every bigha of Kyar land granted as Bhirna - No deductions under the title of Cacha will be allowed from the Bhirna Pullee land.

3. The standard measure for the Bega Eighty Seven Cuvids, the whole of the string to be applied to the Ground, and no deduction to be taken for the Haatah or lift.

4. No grants but shall be signed by the Naib will be valid.

5. The Joats and habitation of absconding Riauts that shall have been legally granted to other Riauts will not be restored to the former occupants, but only when the new incumbents of their own free will consent to the same.

6. If on measurement, the quantity of land shall prove to be less than that specified in the Grant, Bhirna land will be given to make up the difference - if more, the surplus to pay according to the fixed Rates.

(reference)

BR-P 31st Oct. 1791 No. 37

(1) Cacha : It was the custom of Dinajpur to remit one to two cottahs of land under the head of 'Cutucha bad' in each bigha for the purpose of sowing the seed for transplanting.

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Appendix (b) to chapter 4

Table of Rates for the Zamindary of Dinajpur established for the year 1198 B.S.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Pallee 1st sort yielding crops of every Description	Do. 2nd sort not yielding crops of Betel leaf & Sugarcane	Kyar 1st sort cultivation of Cotton & Paddy including spots for Riauts' House	Do. 2nd sort yielding only paddy	Bhor or land liable to be inundated	Sunnat Purtee	
						Land waste in the year 1196 and in the years preceeding	Land waste in the year 1196
1. Batasun	2- 0		1- 4			0- 4	0- 2
2. Phulbarry	2- 0		1- 8			0- 4	0- 2
3. Sarhutta	2- 0		1- 4			0- 4	0- 2
4. Beerbeelah	2- 0		1- 4			0- 3	
5. Coorybarree	2- 0		1- 4			0- 3	
6. Futty Jungpore	2- 0		1- 4			0- 3	
7. Pyrabund	1-12				0-12	0- 4	
8. Andooah	2- 0				0-12	0- 4	
9. Amdehur	2- 0	1- 9	1- 0			0- 4	
10. Goragaut	2- 0		1- 0	0- 6		0- 2	
11. Tulsegaut	1- 9				0-10	0- 2	
12. Paladassy	2- 0		1- 0			0- 4	
13. Bazeedpore	2- 0		1- 0			0- 4	
14. Ketnall	2- 0		3- 0	0-10		0- 4	
15. Apole	2- 0		3- 0	1- 0		0- 4	
16. Mahassunpore	2- 0		0-12			0- 3	
17. Shogonah	2- 0		1- 0			0- 4	
18. Cangoo	2- 0		1- 0			0- 4	
19. Culsee	2- 0		0-14			0- 3	
20. Cuttah	2- 0		2- 0	0-10		0- 3	
21. Santose	2- 0			0-10		0- 2	
22. Sultanpore	2- 0			0-10		0- 2	
23. Gellabarree	2- 0			0-11		0- 4	
24. Kurdah	1-12		0-12			0- 4	
25. Korayel	2- 0		0-10			0- 3	
26. Saalbarry	1- 0		0- 9			0- 2	
27. Dehutta	1- 0		0- 9			0- 2	
28. Boorgong	1- 4		0- 9			0- 2	
29. Bazeedpore	1- 0		0-12			0- 3	
30. Panjerah	1- 8		0-14			0- 4	
31. Noorpore	1- 8		0-14			0- 4	
32. Jampertullah	1- 8		0-12			0- 4	
33. Shusbeer	1-12		0-12			0- 4	
34. Behenagur	1- 8		0-12			0- 4	
35. Dabeecote	1- 8		0-12			0- 4	
36. Dhunjore	1- 8		0-12			0- 4	
37. Jund Goproll	1- 8		0-12			0- 4	
38. Mudnabuttee	1- 4		1- 0			0- 4	
39. Ajore	2- 0		1- 0			0- 2	
40. Raujenagur	2- 0		0-12			0- 2	
41. Shekarpore	2- 0		0-12			0- 2	

There was one more kind of Land called Palateecka or Lands deserted by the Riauts in the year 1197. These lands were all assessed "at the rate for land in cultivation".

Source: BR-P 31st Oct. 1791 No. 36

Appendix (c) to chapter 4

A table showing the Jamma of Lands sold on account of Revenue Arrears

Year	Jama
1794/5	758,200
1795/6	350,400
1796/7	1,108,700
1797/8	2,097,800
1798/9	3,685,400
1799/0	392,800
1800/1	1,825,800
1801/2	905,500
1802/3	393,600
1803/4	249,000
1804/5	203,500
1805/6	100,200
1806/7	153,200
1807/8	18,300
1808/9	62,100
1809/0	68,700
1810/1	7,900
1811/2	24,500
1812/3	22,800
1813/4	139,300
1814/5	32,500
1815/6	28,800
1816/7	17,100
1817/8	31,900
1818/9	36,900
Sicca Rupees	13,014,800

Source:

Quoted from Sirajul Islam, "Changes in Land Control in Bengal under the early operation of the Permanent Settlement" in Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1972.

PART 2

STRUCTURE OF PEASANT SOCIETY IN NORTHERN BENGAL IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

CHAPTER 5

THE BASIC CONDITIONS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN NORTHERN BENGAL

- An introductory Note : theoretical reflections -

The economy of Bengal in the late 18th century being predominantly an agricultural one, a study of the basic conditions of agricultural production would provide a clue to the understanding of the agrarian social structure of the period under review.

The fundamental conditions of agricultural production were land, labour and agricultural stocks. Since the economy of rural Bengal in the late 18th century was not any longer self-sufficient, we should add market-relations to the above three basic elements(1).

Though land, labour and agricultural stocks were of essential importance for agricultural production in the sense that without any of them agriculture was impossible, they were not necessarily equally valued. Until, at least, the end of the 18th century, there was more cultivable land than the existing agricultural population could cultivate. Under this condition, labour had a more important role to play than land. As for agricultural stocks, it had presumably a more vital role to play. And in rural Bengal, its role was particularly notable, largely because of its extremely unequal distribution and of the concentration of the largest portion of it in the hands of a few wealthy ryots. Those who possessed abundant agricultural stocks could, thus, control the labour of the poorer ryots who did not have any or had very little, and had to depend on the owners of them for much of their needs. They also eventually acquired, on the strength of their control over agricultural stocks and a considerable labour force, a good bargaining power in relation to the zamindars. They were thus in a position to organize reclamation of waste

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(1) Not to speak of the external trade of Bengal, the internal market relations became, by our time, an essential factor of the agrarian structure. For example, the rent was paid by the ryots in cash and it was only possible where the market-relations had been established all over the country.

lands and also to hold lands at lower and privileged rates of rents. The various types of tenures such as gatch, bitwari, hari & jote, thus, came into existence. The comparative position of three basic elements, therefore, had much to do with the structure of the agrarian society.

The growth of market-relations also affected the structure of the agrarian society. It promoted division of labour on a wider scale and regional specialization of agricultural production.

As long as these four factors remained more or less evenly balanced, no significant changes in the structure of society were likely to occur. Such changes tended to occur once this balance began to be disturbed.

The Great famine of 1770 was one of such occasions which severely affected the relative position among land, labour and stock and caused consi-derable changes in the agrarian social structure. It disturbed the existing regular mofussil settlement and led to a more loose mode of mofussil settlement(2).

After the great famine of 1770 till the end of our period, no such drastic change occurred and the basic conditions of agricultural production remained more or less static.

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(2) For more discussion, see section 1-(2)-d of Chap. 6.

Section 1 : Land :

(1) The size of Cultivation in the late 18th century Bengal.

The available data about the extent of cultivation during our period are very poor and unreliable. In many estates, Rakbahbandi (a statement of estate showing its total area, quantity of the cultivated land, waste land, fallow land &c) were prepared at the time of the permanent settlement on the basis of the zamindari accounts. Though the reliability of these statements was quite questionable, it could have furnished us with invaluable statistical data covering the whole of Bengal.

The following three tables would give us some idea about the size of cultivation in various parts of Bengal. Table-1 is mainly based on the available Rakbahbandi of several estates. Table-2 is based on the rough estimates of several district officers in 1802. Not being supported by any actual measurements nor by the survey of land-records, some of these figures are quite doubtful. For instance, it is hardly conceivable that the cultivated area in the districts such as Tipperah and Rangpur was as high as nearly 90% . Table-3 is based on Buchanan's statistical data prepared between 1807 and 1810. In his original tables, thana-wise statistics were given. As he did not make any actual measure-ment, these data must have been compiled from the rakbahbandi abovementioned, and corrected according to the information he obtained during his circuit survey.

As Table-1 shows, the size of cultivation widely varied from place to place even in the same district. Such regional variation resulted from various causes. The mismanagement of the zamindar of Atteah caused a great decrease in the cultivation there(3). The wide-spread inundation of 1787 A.D. reduced the cultivation in many districts. In the zamindari of Futtypore ($3\frac{1}{2}$ anna-division) in Rangpur, half of its cultivation was lost by this calamity(4).

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(3) BR-P 6th Jany, 1792, No. 17.
(4) BR-W-P 6th Novr, 1792, No. 3.

Table-1 : A Statement showing the Size of Cultivation in several Estates.

Estates	Total area.	Waste land.	%	Rent-free land.	%	Ryoti land	%	Refe-rence.
	bighas	bighas		bighas		bighas		
Dinajpur District								
Zamindari of Dinajpur(whole)	3,974,826	1,209,999	30.4	354,245	8.9	2,410,582	60.6	1
Estates not belonging to Dinajpur Raj -								
Boglabari	1,229	86	7.0	186	15.1	957	77.9	2
Dhattea Jehangirpur	1,204	260	21.6	116	9.6	789	65.5	3
Barbuchpore(2 anna)	9,775	3,723	38.1	1,858	19.0	4,191	42.9	4
Chowrah	14,432	8,163	56.6	2,227	15.4	4,026	27.9	5
Kismat Koodah	206	16	7.8	56	27.2	122	59.2	6
Eklauspore	906	637	70.3	21	2.3	248	27.4	7
Rangpur District								
Zamindari of Sooroopoor(whole) measuredby Amin	107,793	33,644	31.2	17,616	16.3	56,466	52.4	8
estimated by Harington	129,971	15,612	12.0	20,054	15.4	94,302	72.6	9
Village Radhanagar	5,041	982	19.5	1,121	22.2	2,937	58.3	10
Do. Maheiskol	342	78	22.8	63	18.4	201	58.8	11
Do. Rogonatpore	452	34	7.5	150	33.2	269	59.5	12
Futtypore($3\frac{1}{2}$ anna)		10/16ths				6/16ths		13
Parg.Muntennah		6/16ths				10/16ths		14
Do. Tepah		5/16ths				11/16ths		15
Do. Palasbari($8\frac{1}{2}$ anna)		4/16ths				12/16ths		16
Do. Do. 3 As 17 Gs		3/16ths				13/16ths		17
Birbhum District								
Village Gonooteah	550	238	43.3			312	56.7	18
Sylhet District								
Parg.Bansicoorah	6,503*	6,193	95.2			310	4.8	19
Mymensing District								
Zamindari of Atteah		900 villages out of 1,400 were desolate						20
Purnea District								
Pargs. Kasimpur & Siltanpur	67,732	33,654	49.7	5,611	8.3	28,465	42.0	21
Do. Sirreepore	124,045	58,658	47.3			65,387	52.7	22

Sources :

(1) BR-W-P 7th July,1795.
(2) Ibid. 4th Sept,1795
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid.
(5) Ibid.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Ibid.
(8) BR-P 22nd March,1790.
(9) Ibid.
(10) Ibid.
(11) Ibid.
(12) Ibid.
(13) BR-W-P 6th Nov.1792
(14) Ibid.
(15) Ibid.
(16) Ibid.
(17) Ibid.
(18) CR-P 28th August,1783
(19) BR-P 13th Oct. 1797.
(20) Ibid. 6th Jany. 1792.
(21) Ibid. 20th Feb. 1795.
(22) Ibid. 18th June, 1790.

* The unit of measurement used here seems to have been Beesee : 1 Besee = 256 Bighas.

Table-2 : A Statement showing the Size of Cultivation in various District in Bengal (1801)

Districts		Waste land	Cultivated land.	Extension of cultivation since the Decennial Settlement (1790)
Dinajpur	On the whole district	3/5	2/5	20% increase
	On culturable area	2/5	3/5	
Rangpur		1/8	7/8	
Rajshahi		1/3	2/3	Increase equal to 2 lacks Rs.
Murshidabad		1/5	4/5	
Burdwan		1/9	8/9	2 annas increase
Nadia		1/2	1/2	2 annas increase
Jessore	(Exclusive of Sunderband)	1/8	7/8	1 anna increase
Dacca	Southward	1/4	3/4	2 annas increase
	Northward	5/8	3/8	No extension
	Eastward	1/8	7/8	
	Westward	3/8	5/8	
Mymensing		1/5	4/5	2 annas increase
Sylhet		2/3	1/3	33% increase
Tipperah		1/9	8/9	25% increase
Purnea		1/4	3/4	

Source : JD-Cv-P 8th July 1802 Nos. 19 to 124.

Table-3 : A Statement showing the Size of Cultivation in three Northern Bengal Districts (1807 to 1810)

(Square miles)

Districts	Uncultivated Land					Under Cultivation	Total Area
	Unfit for cultivation	Good Soil					
		Inundated	Uninundated	Fallow	Total		
Dinajpur	658* (12.2)	261 (4.9)	221 (4.1)	649 (12.0)	1131 (21.0)	3585 (66.7)	5374 (99.9)
Rangpur	1645 (22.2)	884 (11.9)	1175 (15.9)	498 (6.7)	2557 (34.6)	3198 (43.2)	7400 (100.0)
Purnea	781 (12.3)	482 (7.6)	560 (8.8)	404 (6.4)	1446 (22.8)	4113 (64.9)	6340 (100.0)
Total	3084 (16.1)	1627 (8.5)	1956 (10.2)	1551 (8.1)	5143 (26.9)	10896 (57.6)	19114 (100.0)

* Miscalculation in original. This is a corrected figure.

Sources : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Appendix 1.

Eastern India, edited by M.Martin, Reprint, 1976, Volume 5, pp. 698 & 707

Ravages by wild animals such as elephants, boars, and tigers obstructed the cultivation in some parganas in Purnea(5), Rangpur(6) and Birbhum(7). The inferior quality of the soil prevented its continuous cultivation for more than three years in Nadia, so that after every three years the land had to be laid fallow for the same length of time. This meant that a considerable quantity of the culturable land in Nadia always lay uncultivated(8). Its hilly situation and the inferior quality of soil accounted for the small cultivated area in Ramghur. The unstable political situation and the consequent insecurity made the ryots desert from the frontiers between Morung and Purnea. Loss of the means of transportation due to the change of the course of the Tista river inevitably reacted on the cultivation in several parganas in Dinajpur and Rangpur(9). The shift of the center of commerce and government of Bengal from Murshidabad to Calcutta deprived the ryots of Purnea of a big market for their grains, and brought about the decay of cultivation there(10). The high state of cultivation in Burdwan and Murshidabad was due to the existence of big markets of Calcutta & Murshidabad nearby as well as to their fertile soil(11).

Buchanan's statistics (Table 3) show that in these three districts, on an average, 57% of the total area was under cultivation and there was still ample cultivable waste and fallow land (26.9%).

From the Tables 1, 2 & 3, we may roughly estimate that about one half to two thirds of the total area were under cultivation and that still nearly one quarter of the total area was cultivable waste land at the end of the 18th century. Except for some highly cultivated area like Burdwan and Murshidabad, culturable waste land abounded all over Bengal. Table-2 shows that within a decade after the introduction of the decennial settlement in 1790, the cultivation considerably

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(5) BR-P 29th August 1794 No.8
(6) BR-W-P. 6th Nov. 1792 No.5
(7) W.W.Hunter, op.cit pp. 41 to 43
(8) BR-P. 10th April 1787. No.4
(9) BDR-DNR. Vol.1. 26th June,1789, No.376 & RD-Grain-P, 31st Oct.1794, No.29
(10) RBCWC-P. 19th April 1774.
(11) BR-P. 10th April 1787, No.4

increased. However, the increase of cultivation was not so great as to affect the relative position between land and labour, and land continued to be less precious than labour throughout the period under review. This was true of some localities in north Bengal till even the end of the 1870's[12].

(2) The Reclamation of waste Land in the late 18th century

There were at least three types of reclamation undertaken by three different social groups : the ordinary ryots, persons with a considerable amount of capital (including the wealthy ryots) and the land-holders[12a].

The size of the individual reclamation of the first type was naturally very small, though the total quantity of reclaimed lands of this description seems to have been enormous. The size of the second type of reclamation was considerable, so also was its total quantity. The size of the third type was not so large as that of the second and this type was often combined with the former two.

The small self-sufficient ryots and even the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency seems to have undertaken the reclamation of the waste lands near his residential village when he saw it profitable or when there was un-utilized labour in the family or when he had no other alternative to cultivating additional land in order to pay up the exorbitant rent imposed on his rented land. On such occasions, he took up land with or without the permission of the land-holder.

Lands reclaimed by the ordinary ryots without the land-holder's permission were probably quite extensive. P.Speke, the Collector of Rajshahi, reported in 1787 that "under-renters [he meant by this word the ryots in general] breaking up

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(12) Selections from the correspondence on the preparation of Tables of Rent Rates of Selected Tracts in the districts of Durbhanga, Jessore, Shahabad, Moorshedabad, Bogra and Hooghly, Calcutta. 1883. pp. 199-244.

(12a) The Zamindars, talukdars, holders of lakhiraj (revenue-free) lands, &c.

new land without any Pottah and when the rent is demanded calling it Chackeran, Birmooter, or other Lackerage lands ... It is effected by bribes to the Patwarries, Halshana[13] & Cutwal of the village"[14]. That this practice was universal in Rajshahi is evident from his following words : "it would require a length of time to prevent it, as the greater part, if not all, of the Pottahs must be changed and complete measurement would be necessary"[15]. In fact, we have similar reports from the districts of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Murshidabad, Jessore and Birbhum[16].

Reclamation by the ryots with the permission of the landholders was also extensive. Pahikasht cultivation and cultivation on annual engagements belonged to this type. The nature of cultivation on annual engagements will be discussed later.

Chackeran lands granted by zamindars to their servants were generally waste lands, which the grantees brought into cultivation[17]. The jagir lands given to the invalid sepoys who had been in the Company's service were also waste lands. As both of them were, in most cases, rent-free, the holders could offer them to cultivators at much lower rates of rents than usual and the movement of labour from the usual rented lands (Mal lands) to the rent-free lands (Milik lands) created serious problems in the district such as Purnea where rent-free lands abounded[18].

In Tipperah, we find that many ryots annually quitted their cultivated lands to take up waste lands elsewhere at advantageous rates[19]. In Nadia, where as noted earlier, because of the unavoidable practice of fallowing a considerable quantity of lands, annual reclamation of the fallow lands to a considerable amount had to be made by all the ryots only to keep up the existing area of cultivation. Such a condition led to the formation of a particular type

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(13) Halshana : A low village officer whose special duty was to prevent the ryots from reclaiming waste lands without the zamindar's permission.
(14) BR-P. 13th April 1787. Nos. 88 & 89
(15) Ibid
(16) See Section 2-(2), Chap.4
(17) BR-W-P. 6th Jany.,1795. Nos. 16 & 19
(18) PCR-DNR-P. 21st March 1780 & BR-P. 1st Feb.,1790. No.44
(19) BR-P. 7th May 1789. No.35

of tenure known as utbandi in the later years. Hari tenure in this district[20] also seems to have had much to do with the above circumstance.

The ryots of Burdwan increased their cultivation when they saw that the prices of grain justified it. Some instances of such temporary reclamation in Burdwan show that many ryots used to cultivate a few more bighas, if the market was favourable[21].

The small scale reclamation by ryots could be carried out from year to year where culturable waste lands were available in the vicinity of their villages and when the market conditions were continuously favourable. As far as the cultivable waste lands were concerned, our study showed that there was ample room for the extension of cultivation during our period. Hatch, the Collector of Dinajpur, also observed in 1787 that there were plenty of them in every pargana in his district[22].

The smallness of the individual reclamation of this type, and the secrecy and disguise under which the greater part of this was done account for the paucity of information about it. However, on the strength of the evidence mentioned above, we may conclude that the total quantity of this type of reclamation must have been quite considerable.

The reclamation by persons who possessed sufficient capital for large-scale reclamation had some notable features. They had to provide a considerable sum of money toward the initial cost of making lands ready for cultivation. The collector of Jessore estimated such cost at about one rupee per bigha[23]. Pagan, a European planter in Purnea estimated this cost at about 12 annas per bigha[24]. The entrepreneur had also to provide the cultivators with the usual loans or taqavis to commence the cultivation, which cost him a few more annas per bigha. However, after the initial investment, he could

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(20) BR-P 10th April, 1787. No.4 & Ibid. 5th August, 1794. Nos.10 to 16.
(21) GGC-RD-Khalsa. 24th Decr. 1777.
(22) BDR-DNR. Vol. 2. 22nd Jany. 1787. No. 104.
(23) BR-P 22nd March, 1790. No. 10.
(24) BR-P 9th Jany, 1789.

expect a considerable return from his land. According to the usage of the country, the person who cleared waste lands and brought them under cultivation held them at a low privileged rates of rent(25), and this privilege made such large scale reclamation highly profitable. The following case may be taken as an illustration.

One Neelkant Roy acquired a lease from the zamindar for a tract of fallow lands and woods in the village of Dyasmohunpur in the pargana of Serabad in the Rocunpore zamindari in Murshidabad in 1180 B.S. (1773 A.D.). The tract thus leased out to him consisted of :

	bighas cottahs
Land overrun with Wood	301-14
Do. newly left by the River	309
Do. very waste	314
Do. covered with sand & water	7
Do. under cultivation	82-16
Bighas -	1,014-10

The rental of this tract called Chuck Chunacolly was fixed at Rs.165. He brought this tract of waste land into a high state of cultivation by settling ryots, to whom he probably provided both the initial cost of clearing the waste lands and the agricultural loans(taqavis). The initial cost towards bringing them into cultivation during the first few years must have exceeded Rs.1,000. Besides this, he had to pay the fixed rental of Rs.165. For the first few years, the lease-holder's net income from this chuck was obviously small, perhaps, not even enough for covering the rental. However, the cultivation increased rapidly and in about 10 years, the mahal came to "a high state of cultivation." If we suppose that 70% of the above tract was brought into cultivation and that the rate of rent paid by his under-ryots to him was rupee 1 per bigha, his net income would have been Rs.550 after the payment of the rental. When the mahal reached this stage, the lease-holder could recover his initial cost in a few years. After this, he could expect to get an annual income of Rs.550 or more for many years to come(26).

In localities such as the Sunderbans and the borders of Morung and Purnea where a large tract of lands remained waste only such persons who had

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(25) CR-P 9th Sep. 1784. No. 42.
(26) Ibid.

means to provide the settlers with the necessary agricultural stocks and to protect them from the ravages of the destructive animals and the robbers (dacoits) could undertake the reclamation. In other words, in such areas, only the large scale reclamation of the second type was possible unless the ordinary ryots combined together and settled collectively or the zamindars themselves organized such reclamation. The following extract of a petition from "the ancient Izaradars representing the hereditary ryots of the different 24 parganas" vividly illustrates the needs of large scale reclamation in such areas :

> "That the principal part of your petitioners are the ancient farmers of the Company's newly acquired lands, and have, with great labour and care, as well as a great expense, cleared the same from jungles, removing the savage inhabitants of woods, in order to people the lands with human species, and by an indefatigable, unwearied industry of a period of years, have had happiness to see their labours rewarded and the land flourish; for the still greater encouraging and promoting of which, their ancestors removed themselves in the hearts of their new farmed lands, where they built their habitation, and by their presence and gentle treatment had the pleasure to see their tenants daily increase, who they looked upon and treated as part of their family, and who were ready on the least call to assist on any emergency, by which means all dacoits, thieves &ca. have ever been kept out of these lands;..."(27)

Sometimes, the land-holder granted the entrepreneurs of reclamation the lease of a tract of land at a low and fixed rent under the names of the Pahikasht or Ayma (religious endowment) lands.

> In Burdwan, one Premchand Bannerjee acquired a grant from "the Rajah of Burdwan of a quantity of Ayma land" in Curra Tullah at a fixed rental of Rs.5000 per annum. The grantee spent "upwards of Rs.18,500 besides the sums since paid for quit rent, expense in erecting Pools(28) & Bunds(29)

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(27) J.Long : "Unpublished Records (1748 to 1767). Reprint 1973.No.441 Pp274 to 275
(28) Pool : An embankment.
(29) Bund : A dam, a dike, a causeway.

&c. in order to put the land into a proper state of cultivation."(30) The Rajah explained the nature of this lease as follows, "waste and jungle lands yielding no Revenue, I dispose of to the Ryots in Pykaust Pottahs or Imah Sunnuds at small assessments to encourage cultivation. The Company sustain no loss by them whereas the country is improved and the Ryots made happy. This is the reason why I have granted Sunnuds for jungle and other uncultivated lands."(31)

Though the social status of the promoters of reclamation in the above mentioned three cases is not clearly known, they seem to have been residents of towns and belonged to higher castes. In other words they were not peasants, but entrepreneurs commanding a considerable amount of capital.

The wealthy people residing in the countryside also undertook reclamation. The reclamation by the well-to-do ryots was a remarkable phenomenon. Buchanan observed in Dinajpur that "about one farmer in 16 may rent from 30 to 100 acres." They kept many ploughs and had dependent labourers (either their relations or hired men). They were men of substance and possessed considerable capital. Whenever they were discontented with the zamindars, they gave up their farms and retired with all his dependents to some other estates where there were waste lands which their stocks enabled them to clear. The villages which they left remained for some years unoccupied until the zamindar could find a fugitive of the same kind(32). Such wealthy ryots with considerable stocks were found all over Bengal. They had under-ryots under them and acquired a considerable quantity of holdings through reclamation and acquisition of the lands of the absconded ryots whom they forced to desert through dishonest means.(33)

European planters also undertook reclamations. J.Christie, a distiller of liquor in Dinajpur acquired a permanent lease for 10,000 bighas of waste lands in the Pargana of Apole at an annual rent of Rs.1,000 from the zamindar and brought his farm into a high state of cultivation. When he acquired

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(30) BDR-BRD-R 14th March 1791 p. 164.
(31) BDR-BRD-I 20th April 1789 p. 10.
(32) F.Buchanan. op.cit. p.235.
(33) See section 1-(2) of Chap. 6.

the large tract of land in 1774, it contained only 120 bighas of cultivated land[34], but in 1783 Redfearn who was deputed to make a survey on the spot reported that Christie possessed 10,536 bighas of land and 5868 bighas of it was under cultivation[35]. He, thus, brought 5,748 bighas into cultivation in about 10 years. He sometimes used even the labour of prisoners in the jails of Rangpur for this purpose[36]. J.Frushard, a mulberry planter and silk manufacturer in Birbhum held 2191 bighas of lands[37] at the low rate of Pahikasht land including 499 bighas of cultivable waste lands which he had the option of reclaiming whenever he liked. He brought down "4 or 500 people from the Hills who... now become the useful member of the Community[38]..." J.Pagan was permitted by Government to occupy a large tract of waste lands (17,000 bighas) in the northern frontiers of Purnea, which the zamindars failed to bring into cultivation due to the unstable political situation, on the condition that "he is to pay 100 Rupees for every 1,000 bighas brought into cultivation by him." This grant had a highly political purpose behind it. His farm was expected to form "a barrier between the Morung and the zamindary ryots [of Purnea]... and by standing between them and the ravages of the wild Elephant &c., it has enabled them to cultivate their grounds... & induced them to reclaim the Waste lands up to the very Border of the Grant."[39] He persuaded the Gatchdars of Morung to undertake the reclamation of his farm and advanced "money, Seed, Cattle, ploughs and every Implement necessary for clearing the Jungle." He, thus, settled 83 gatchdars with their under-ryots (Adiahs) amounting to 1,000 persons and advanced about Rs.7,500 (or 12 annas per bigha on estimate). These gatchdars were allowed to hold land at very low rate of rent, many of them, however, left his farm "from the threatening hostilities of the Goorkallies, "in spite of his effort to give protection to

(34) CR-P 22nd August, 1785 No. 4 to 6.
(35) Ibid. 17th March, 1783 LR. 17 ibid.
(36) PCR-DNR-P 9th Nov. 1774 & ibid. 2nd May, 1775.
(37) BDR-BRM Pp.16, 20, 75, 76.
(38) Ibid. p.75.
(39) On Pagan's farm, the following are useful. BR-P 9/1/1789 & Ibid. 9/7/1790, Nos. 25 to 26 & Ibid. 29/6/1792. No.19B.

them.

The second type of reclamation had thus, some notable features. Before starting the work of reclamation, the promoter had to acquire a lease from the zamindar for a certain quantity of waste lands at a fixed rental with or without the limitation of time. Usually being a man of considerable capital, he had to invest capital toward the initial cost of reclamation, which was mainly used for the purpose of encouraging the settlement of peasants, and of ensuring the continuity of cultivation thereafter. Within a few years, rented tract began to yield a profit to him and he could recover all the initial cost before long. After this, the farm became very profitable due to the fixed low rates of rents which were allowed to the clearer of waste lands according to the usage of the country, and he continued to derive a considerable annual profit for many years to come as a kind of an intermediary between the cultivators and the land-holder.

The third type of reclamation was made by land-holders. Due to occasional inundations or other natural and man-made calamities, a portion or whole of the estate sometimes turned waste. On such occasions, the land-holders tried to re-people the deserted lands by allowing liberal rates of rents to would-be settlers or inviting the ryots of neighbouring estates to come and cultivate the lands on a pahikasht lease(40). The ryots, on such occasions, often demanded grants of taqavi loans to commence the cultivation, and the latter had to provide these from his own fund or from borrowed funds(41). The present author could not find even one recorded instance of large-scale reclamation undertaken by the Bengal zamindars themselves during the period under review. During the Mughal period, government encouraged the extension of cultivation by granting zamindari sanads to those who brought the waste lands into cultivation and such zamindars were called the junglebari zamindars(42).

(40) See Appendix (b) to chap. 1.
(41) BR-W-P 6th Novr. 1792. Nos. 10A & 10B, & BR-P. 20th Feb. 1793. No. 34.
(42) N. Hasan, "Three Studies of Zamindari System" in Medieval India, Vol.1, 1969.

But during the early years of British rule, the Bengal zamindars were disabled from undertaking the large reclamations due to financial crisis and preferred to trust them to persons of enterprise(43). In the early 19th century some of the new zamindars who superseded the old ones had a different attitude towards the management of their new estates. Their estates were, comparatively speaking, small and that made it possible for them to minutely supervise their business. As most of them were previously zamindari officers, government officers or merchants, they were capable of financing and supervising the works of improvement. This partly explains why some of the new zamindars could undertake reclamation and improvement works in their estates in the 19th century(44).

Let us examine the relation between rates of rents and growth of cultivation. The zamindars usually allowed the clearers of waste and fallow lands to hold them at a privileged rate of rent. Such privileges differed from place to place. In the district of Dinajpur, the custom was as follows. Those who wished to cultivate waste lands took out an annual pottah for a certain quantity of land at a certain low rate from the naib of the pargana. "By the tenor of the Pottah, [it] was leased out to them... for one year only. And according to the established custom of the District liable to be assessed according to the state of cultivation of it at the expiration of the lease; and that assessment final and to become the Jama fixed for the future"(45). The incidence of rent of this description was considerably lower than that of ordinary lands. In one case, the weavers paid Rs.92-4-6 for the lands of more than 500 bighas for the first year and they were asked to pay Rs.133 for the second and ensuing years; 3 annas per bigha for the first year and 4 annas 5 gandas for the ensuing years(46).

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(43) B.B.Chaudhuri, "Agricultural growth in Bengal and Bihar, 1770-1860" in Bengal Past and Present. Jany - June 1976. pp.314 to 319 & Section 1 & 2 of Chap.4.
(44) Section 6-(2) of Chap.4 & N.Muknerjee, "A Bengal Zamindar",1975, pp.226-232.
(45) BDR-DNR. Vol.2. 31st Oct. 1786, No.67
(46) Ibid Vol.1. 13th Oct. 1786, No.18 & Ibid Vol.2. n.d. No.72

According to J.L. Sherwill who surveyed the Dinajpur district in the middle of the 19th century, the zamindars generally took 4 to 12 annas per bigha for the newly reclaimed land and 4 to 16 annas for the fallow lands reclaimed again(47). In Baldacaul in the district of Tipperah, "the new cultivation is assessed at scarce $\frac{1}{2}$ of the full jama"(48). And in 1790 it was reported that in Birbhum, where "the fallow land for two years" was reclaimed, the cultivator paid only the Assal Jama for the first year and where the land had been laid fallow for many years, he paid no rent for the first year, paid only the Assal Jama for the second year and the full rate of Assal and Abwab for the third year(49). A quite different usage was reported by the Collector of the same district in 1795. According to him, for the reclaimed land which turned fallow recently, " 5 annas to be paid the first year, the second year 10 annas, which is to be Mokurrery(50) Jama for a term of 15 or 20 or for the life of the Grantee", and for the long-standing fallow land, " 3 annas to be paid the first year, the second year 5 annas and the third year 8 annas, which is to be Mokurrery for terms of years or for life"(51). According to the former report of 1790, the clearer of the fallow land had to pay the full rate of rent 2 or 3 years after the commencement of the cultivation, while the latter report of 1795 said that the clearer of such land could hold them at a low fixed rent for many years or even for life. It is difficult to conclude whether this was so because of different local customs within the district of Birbhum or whether a change in the custom took place during the period of five years covered by the two reports. The custom of Dinajpur beforementioned was similar to the latter instance of Birbhum as rent was fixed at a rather low level for years to come. We may suppose that the relative position of land, labour and stock in each locality largely accounted for such local variations.

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(47) J.L.Sherwill, "Geographical and Statistical Report of the Dinagepore District", 1863. p. 19
(48) BR-P. 7th May 1789. No.35
(49) GGC-RD-P. 10th Feb.,1790. No.49
(50) Mokarary : A tenure held at a fixed and permanent rate of rent.
(51) BR-P. 25th Sept.,1795. No.32

It is notable that high rates of rents adversely affected the progress of reclamation. In 1790, the collector of Jessore thus attributed the low state of cultivation in the pargana of Mohammedshahi to the high rate of rent payable by reclaimer.

> "The high rate at which the Dereeabad or land nearly(sic) cultivated is fixed [by the former collector] vizt., 12 annas per bigha exclusive of charges which raises the malguzary [rent] to 1 rupee... The expense of cultivation may be fairly put down at 1 rupee more per bigha making 2-1, whilst the produce of this crop will not sell for 2 rupees perhaps... Here the ryot plainly sustains a loss..."(52)

A similar report came from the pargana Futtehpore Singhia in the district of Purnea(53). Hatch's Hari settlement in Dinajpur must have the similar obstructive effect on the extension of the cultivation as it assessed the new fallow lands at a full rate, though some concession was given for the long-standing fallow lands(54).

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(52) BR-P. 22nd March 1790. No.10
(53) Ibid 18th June 1790. No.18
(54) See Section 5 of Chap.4 & Appendix (b) to Chap. 4.

Section 2 : Labour.

In this section, we shall briefly examine the problems arising from the scarcity of labour in the late 18th century. Various types of agricultural labourers and the conditions under which they were employed are also discussed here.

We have plenty of evidence that labour was scarce at the time. For the zamindars, it was of crucial importance to have an adequate supply of labour. The following instance would show how far the zamindars went to secure the labour for their estates :

> "They [Zamindars of the pargana Mymensing in Mymensing district] cause to be carried away Ryots & all & forced the Ryots to settle in Chuckla Bhuttan & ca. dependent on Mommun Sing in his own zamindary. He then took Cabooleats(55) from them to become Ryots of his pargana & Muchelkas(56) that they should not cultivate the lands in Singdah & placed in every village Negabaunds [watchmen] to see this measure inforced. From these proceedings, the harvests of Boorooh, Ally Chunah & Congnee & ca. in the pargana Singdah have not been cultivated & the lands have fallen waste(57).

This was more or less true of almost all over north Bengal. The weaker zamindars were not unfrequently deprived of their ryots by the powerful neighbours(58).

In the zamindari of Futtehpore ($3\frac{1}{2}$ anna-division) in Rangpur, many ryots died and deserted due to the inundation of 1194 B.S. (1787 A.D.) and about 50% of its cultivation was lost because of this. "A few are induced to come from other districts, and settle them as Pycusht Ryots,"(59) but most of the lands remained uncultivated in spite of every effort of the manager of the estate to acquire cultivators. In the parganas Chowrah & Barbuck-pore in the district of Dinajpur, culturable waste lands remained uncultivated because "there are but few ryots in that part of the country" and the

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(55) Kabuliyat : A written agreement.
(56) Muchalka : A written obligation. A deed.
(57) BR-P 7th May, 1789 No. 35.
(58) PCR-DNR-P 10th Octr. 1774 & Ibid. 15th Decr. 1778.
(59) BR-W-P 6th Novr. 1792. No.3.

managers could not get the ryots even by offering easy terms in regard to rent(60).

Under the condition of scarcity of labour, it was possible for the ryots to bargain for an easier rate of rent with the zamindars by a threat of relinquishing the lands at the commencement of the cultivation season, though they were not always successful in this(61). The usage in the Dinajpur district that "those ryots who had quitted their lands should be brought back by fair means, and no man has a right to force them back"(62) was due to the scarcity of labour at the time. The zamindars had to call back their deserted ryots by granting them loans or reducing their rent-rates.

Another important consequence of the scarcity of labour during our period was the ryots' weak attachment to their lands. F.Buchanan observed that "the perpetual possession which is so eagerly sought after, is almost nominal; for, so far as I could learn, not one tenant in four resides seven years on the same spot, and the bulk of them are constantly changing from one estate to another."(63). His observation at the early 19th century was also true of the late 18th century. We have numerous evidence regarding the desertion of the ryots. An enquiry by the Collector of Nadia reveals that some old villages were deserted, while new ones were erected in his district(64). Such was only possible when the ryots could easily get new lands in the countryside. Exaction of arbitrary rents and levies, natural calamities, political disorder, evasion of rent-payment by the ryots &c largely accounted for the desertion. Sometimes, the constant migration was inevitable due to the inferior quality of the soil(65). The proneness of the ryots to desertion impeded the technological development of agriculture and resulted in the low level of land-utilization(66). However,

(60) BR-W-P. 4th Septr. 1793. No. 27. Enclosure No. 5.
(61) BDR-DNR Vol. 2 9th March, 1787. No. 121.
(62) PCR- DNR-P 6th Decr. 1774.
(63) F. Buchanan, op. cit. p. 239.
(64) BR-P 18th Feb. 1793 No. 30 & 31.
(65) BR-P 8th Feb. 1792. No. 20.
(66) We should not, of course, overlook a more crucial aspect of this. The majority of the ryots simply could not afford to undertake any improvement due to known lack of capital.

every ryot was not necessarily constantly moving from place to place. In Dinajpur, Rangpur and Nadia, we have evidence that the principal ryots of the villages mostly resided at the same place for generations(67). This is also inferable from the fact that the well-to-do ryots usually held the best lands in the villages at privileged rents, which they most probably would not like to abandon unless some urgency forced them to do so(68). We may, thus, conclude that the frequency of migration was greater among the poorer ryots, while the wealthy ryots preferred more or less permanent settlement.

Labourers who usually had no land of their own or had not enough for their subsistence, were of various kinds, such as annual & seasonal agricultural labourers, wage labourers for any kinds of manual labour, bonded labourers, slaves, hill men and prisoners. Agricultural labourers who were known as Krishans and had no agricultural stocks, were employed in agriculture and paid in money and goods. In Dinajpur, such krishans as were employed in the Pali lands which yielded crops all the year round, were permanent or annual servants, while such krishans as were employed in the khyar lands which lay uncultivated for half an year, were engaged only during the seasons of cultivation and harvest. Buchanan observed : "This, however, makes little difference, as in the months when the agriculture is at a stop there [in khyar lands], the demand for workmen is great and they can make rather more than in the season of cultivation"(69). During off-season, they were employed in transporting the grains from the interior of the country to the markets and ports or some of them traded in grain on a very small scale(70). Agricultural labourers usually received "8 annas a month with food and clothing which the farmers estimate at

(67) PCR-DNR-P 1st Decr. 1778 : CR-P 3rd April, 1786. Nos. 43 to 49 : BR-P 18th Feb. 1793. No. 31.
(68) Harington Report : Main Report.
(69) F. Buchanan : op. cit. p. 244.
(70) Ibid. p. 320.

one rupee a month, but in fact does not exceed 12 annas."[71] Wage labourers who were engaged in any manual labour were called Coolies. They were not easily available in the countryside. Travellers who passed through the district of Dinajpur had to ask the naibs of the parganas to supply them with coollies to carry their goods[72]. Buchanan also experienced the difficulty in procuring the necessary coolies who carried his goods during his circuit survey in Dinajpur and Purnea[73]. Bonded labourers were those who "usually in order to defray the expense of his marriage, bound himself to a master for from 16 to 24 months, and receives in advance the whole of his wages..."[74] Very often necessity obliged him to anticipate his wages again and the family "always continued in debt, and extremity of wretchedness." There were, though rare, male and female slaves who were bought by their masters. Female slaves were considered dearer than male slaves, as their children were regarded as slaves of their masters[75]. 400 to 500 hillmen were used by J.Frushard, a European planter, in his plantation of mulberry in Birbhum. This would perhaps, be one of the earliest instances of the employment of hill labour in the agriculture in the plains. Prisoners' labour was used by J.Christie, a European Planter and distiller, for the cultivation of his extensive farms (10,000 bighas) in Dinajpur.

We find an interesting information on Coolies from the correspondence relating to the work of the re-opening of the blocked Tista river in 1788 & 1789, which Cornwallis, the Governor General in Council, instructed the Collectors of Dinajpur & Rangpur to finish at an estimated cost of Rs. 221,388[76]. For this work, 9,000 collies and 3,000 Bildars[77] were to be furnished for six

(71) Ibid. p. 244.
(72) CCRM-P 31st Decr. 1770, Appendix No. 14.
(73) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 245 & F.Buchanan, Purnea, p. 158.
(74) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 245.
(75) Ibid. p. 246.
(76) BDR-DNR Vol. I, 23rd Septr. 1789. No. 421.
(77) Bildar : A digger, a miner.

months to Mason who took charge of the work. The Collector of Dinajpur had to furnish him with 6,000 men with the necessary tools &c. G.Hatch, the Collector, ordered the zamindari dewan, Ramkant Roy, to provide labourers by carefully distributing the total number among different parganas. For this purpose, the Collector advanced one month's salary to the zamindari dewan who, in his turn, distributed the same to the pargana officers. One Dafadar(78) was appointed for each pargana, who was held responsible for the attendance of the allotted number of labourers on his pargana and their general conduct. Hatch observed in one of his letters to the Board of Revenue :

> "All the inhabitants in general... are settled cultivators and house-holders, have families, and never have been accustomed to quit the district in search of maintenance... I much doubt if any number could be collected and put in motion without coercive measures being taken to oblige them... the season for reaping the harvest will intervene and the care of their own crops, together with the profits annually gained by assisting in the reaping of the harvest will become a powerful inducement to them to abscond."(79)

Some Dafadars, indeed, absconded with their people and the paiks had to be posted to prevent them from deserting the work. The collection of the necessary labourers was, however, nearly attained in time by the mode above explained. The coolies received a monthly wage of Rs.2-8 and the bildars Rs.3. These wages were considered to be high enough to induce the people to quit their homes with their families and work in a distant place(80).

Despite the scarcity of labour during our time, the labourers were not living in comfort. Even the condition of the adhiyars (share-croppers) who constituted the lowest gradation of the peasant "was everywhere represented as better than that of a common labourer."(81) An adhiyar differed from a common labourer in that the former possessed some agricultural stock to enable

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(78) Dafadar : A person heading a number of people, whether labourers or soldiers.
(79) BDR-DNR. Vol. I n.d. No. 427.
(80) Ibid. Vol. I 10th Oct. 1789. No. 436.
(81) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur Report, p. 244.

him to undertake cultivation on his own account, while the latter had not. This shows that agricultural stock was more precious than labour in the late 18th century.

Section 3 : Agricultural Stocks.

By 'Agricultural Stock' is meant every material necessary for the agricultural production, excluding land and labour; ploughs, other agricultural implements, bullocks, seeds & other physical capital.

Why, in spite of the existence of vast culturable waste lands and of the acute shortage of labour, were the Bengal ryots labouring under conditions of extreme poverty, as the keen contemporary observers of the rural society like F.Buchanan and W.Carey(82) pointed out, and why was there a vast number of submissive peasants and under-ryots such as adhiyars, pirjas and kolait ryots? The cause of this paradoxical phenomenon, namely, the co-existence of an acute shortage of labour and the abject poverty of the great majority of the population, was either the inadequacy of existing agricultural stocks in general or their extremely unequal distribution among the peasantry.

According to Buchanan, agricultural stocks of a few of the wealthy ryots who constituted only one-sixteenth of the peasant population "carries out at least one half of the whole cultivation of the country," in the district of Dinajpur(83). Forster, the Collector of Tipperah, observed that about two-thirds of the cultivation in Bengal proper were carried out by the under-ryots who were in abject poverty and were completely dominated by their masters (the wealthy ryots)(83A). J.D.Paterson, the Commissioner at Baldacaul in Tipperah, found that "the greatest number of the Riatts are those who have no oxen & who are obliged to hire a plough either by money or work," and that "the lower Riatts who live from had to mouth without Taccavi or advances cannot afford to cultivate a piece of ground."(84) Colebrooke, Assistant to the Collector of Purnea, also observed similar conditions among the poorer strata of the ryots(85).

(82) W.Carey, "Remarks on the State of Agriculture, in the District of Dinajpur" in Asiatic Researches, Vol. 10, 1811.
(83) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 235.
(83A) BR-P 28th Feb. 1794. No. 32.
(84) BR-P 17th May, 1789. No. 35.
(85) BR-P 18th June, 1790. No. 8.

It was, thus, unequal distribution, not an absolute shortage of agricultural stocks in the country-side that accounted for the existence of a vast number of impoverished under-ryots and agricultural labourers. Agricultural stocks, therefore, were the most important of the three fundamental elements of the agricultural production under the given conditions of society in the late 18th century.

The unequal distribution of agricultural stocks in an agrarian society meant that the few who possessed capital acquired an overwhelmingly strong command over the mass of the needy ryots who could not even commence their cultivation without the grant of the taqavi loans from the wealthy few. The possession of the largest portion of agricultural stocks by a few wealthy ryots vitally affected the land-tenure system and the structure of the agrarian society in Bengal(86).

The extreme poverty of the majority of the peasants must have adversely affected the technological development in agriculture and resulted in the low productivity of land, which in its turn made the agricultural production stagnant and precarious.

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(86) We shall examine these problems in the next chapter.

Section 4 : The Market Relations

Here we shall discuss the main features of the market-relation and its effect on the structure of the agrarian society in Bengal[87].

When the East India Company acquired the Dewani of the Bengal presidency in 1765, they found that rent was paid by the ryots almost exclusively in money in Bengal proper and that in Bihar districts, particularly in Purnea, the transformation from product-rent to money-rent was going on[88]. The payment of rent in money was possible because of the operation of a money economy or market-relation on a considerable scale, which linked the countryside with the towns.

The circulation of money resulted from the two-fold activities of the big & small merchants : the remittance of revenue from the countryside to the cities and the purchase of agricultural products, chiefly grains, in the countryside to supply the city-population with food and other necessaries of life.

The merchants went to the local markets "with their boats to purchase grain". And by the beginning of the 1790's, we come to learn in Rajshahi that "in every pargana and village, there are established Bazars, Gunges and Hauts. Several of the villagers keep shops in them, while others hold them at their own houses"[89]. In Dinajpur, the number of the big and small, resident and non-resident (itinerant) merchants amounted to 38,440 who operated all over the district[90]. This huge number[91] would suggest the extent of the penetration of market-relations and money-economy into the countryside. However, market-relations did not equally involve all the gradations of ryots. As noted earlier, a big portion of the rural population was employed by the wealthy ryots as share-croppers(adhiyars) and permanent or temporary agricultural

(87) A more concrete study of the market-system will be made in the next chapter.
(88) See Appendix (C) to Chapter 1.
(89) BR-P. 28th May 1790. No.8
(90) JD-cv-P. 8th May 1795. No.8
(91) The total population of Dinajpur was estimated at one million. The traders, therefore, formed nearly 10% of the working male population. A considerable portion of them, however, was part-time traders.

labourers (krishans). It was chiefly the well-to-do ryots who dealt with the grain merchants. The adhiyars paid their rent to their masters in kind and retained, after various deductions, about one-third of the gross produce[92] which could barely sustain them. The krishans received two-thirds of their wages in kind (food and cloths) and only the remaining one-third was paid in money. The lower strata of the rural population were, thus, only marginally involved in the market-relations.

The big merchants of Calcutta and Murshidabad had their branches at the principal towns of the districts and transacted their business there. Their main functions were to act as bankers for the zamindars and the revenue farmers, providing loans to them where they required them and remitting their revenue to Calcutta and Murshidabad, and to purchase grains in the countryside. Purchase of grain was a more complicated business. They sent their agents into the interior of the country, providing them with enough capital so that they might advance money to the ryots for the ensuing harvest. They built store-houses (golahs) at the towns and market-places and during the rainy season when the rivers became navigable sent grains to the cities and to the localities where food-grains were scarce. They also purchased grains in cash at the local markets from ryots and beoparis (small itinerant grain dealers). At the time of scarcity, the government sometimes intervened and fixed the grain prices and, though rarely, forced open their store houses and sold the hoarded grain at these low

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(92) See section2, chap.6.

prices(93).

In 1794, the then Governor General in Council, John Shore, established public granaries in some selected districts as a reserve in case of emergency and instructed the Collectors to purchase and store, in total 14 lakhs of maunds of grains which were thought sufficient to support 1,200,000 people for three months(94). The main centers for such public stores were Backergunge (357,578 maunds of rice), Burdwan (220,387 maunds Do.), Rajshahi (190,405 maunds Do.), Rangpur (150,019 maunds Do.) and Benares (128,364 maunds Do.). The purchase in Dinajpur was 25,000 maunds or rice(95). Hatch estimated the annual total purchase of rice in his district at 400,000 maunds(96), which, however, seems to have been a gross under-estimation, simply because it was impossible for the ryots of Dinajpur to pay up their rent which was supposed to be Rs.1,800,000 to 1,900,000 with the sale of such a small quantity of grain. Buchanan estimated it at Rs.3,179,600(97).

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(93) The grain merchants made use of the unfavourable seasons to make their fortunes. During the scarcity of grain in 1787 & 1788, their hoarding caused great hardship for the inhabitants of the cities and others who used to purchase grain in the markets for their subsistence such as weavers and manufacturers. In the Dinajpur city, the hoarding by the Calcutta and Murshidabad merchants amounted to 50,000 maunds in February in 1788. Seeing the distress of the inhabitants, the Collector was obliged to lay an embargo on the exportation of rice and put peons on every store-house where more than 3,000 maunds of rice was laid up. In Purnea, whereas the harvest was as usual in 1788, the price of rice became twice as high as the previous years due to the enormous purchase by merchants from outside, especially from Murshidabad. In Nadia, the collector estimated that 4/16ths of the present year's harvest and 2/16ths of the last year's were hoarded by the grain merchants.

The merchants, however, were not free from miscalculation. In Purnea, a large quantity of rice purchased and hoarded by the Murshidabad merchants in 1788 had to remain there because they lost opportunity to sell it when the price was still high, expecting higher price. The Collector of Rangpur wrote that many thousands of maunds of rice rotted in the Golahs in 1788, because many merchants did not sell their hoards in expectation of their bringing a still higher profit till the new crop was reaped and there were no longer demands for them.

BDR-DNR. Vol.1. No.124 : Vol.2. 295 & 337 :
BR-P. 14th March 1788. Nos. 34 & 35; 27th Jany. 1789 : 8th June 1791 : 4th Nov. 1791. No.3.

(94) RD-Grain-P, 31st Oct. 1794 No.1 : He seems to have worked out this quantity on the supposition that a man consumed 0.5 seer a day, rather an under-estimation.

(95) RD-Grain-P. 31st Oct. 1794. No.30

(96) BDR-DNR. Vol.1. 27th Decr. 1788

(97) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur; General statistics, Table-9.

In Dinajpur, the public purchase, therefore, only marginally affected to normal activities of the grain merchants. Our estimate which is given below shows that the total grain purchase in Bengal was about 300 lakhs of maunds of rice and the public purchase, therefore, formed less than 5% of it.

Considering that the demand for rice which was by far the greatest single item of trade in Bengal was largely determined by the size of the urban population who did not produce the food themselves, it would be relevant to estimate the total population of Bengal in the late 18th century, and also the total urban population. The following tables were based on the answers of the district officers to a circular from Wellesley's government in 1801. Though some of the figures were quite doubtful, the three tables below give on the whole, a fairly good idea about the size of the total population as well as that of the urban population.

Table-4 : An Estimation of the Population of the Bengal Districts at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Districts.	Total Population	Urban population of Big Cities.
Dinajpur	1,000,000	
Rangpur	1,000,000	
Rajshahi	1,500,000	
Murshidabad	1,000,000	350,000 (Murshidabad)
Burdwan	2,200,000	
Birbhum	700,000	
Midnapore	1,500,000	
Nadia	800,000	
Houghly	1,000,000	
24 Parganas	2,230,000	600,000 (Calcutta)
Dacca, consisting of Sylhet, Chittagong, Mymensing, Tipperah, Backergunge & Jelolpore	5,000,000	200,000 (Dacca)
Total :	19,130,000	1,150,000

Sources : JD-Cv-P, 8th July 1802 Nos. 19 to 124

Table-5 : The Population of Big Cities in Bengal and Bihar.

Cities	Population
Calcutta	600,000
Murshidabad	350,000
Dacca	200,000
Benares	500,000
Patna	250,000
	1,900,000

Sources : JD-Cv-P, 8th July 1802 Nos. 19 to 124

Table-6 : An Estimation of the Population residing at the Cities and Towns(Kasbas) in the Districts of Bengal.

Cities & Towns	Population
Three big cities(Calcutta, Murshidabad and Dacca)	1,150,000
Towns or Kasbas in the different districts in Bengal	2,190,000*
Total urban population ...	3,340,000

Sources : As indicated above.

* This figure was computed by the present author on the following basis. The Collectors of Purnea and Sylhet mentioned in their answers the population of the large towns or Kasbas. In Purnea, it amounted to about 11.0 % of the total population, and in Sylhet to 13.2 %. The present author, therefore, assumed 12.0 % as an average proportion of the urban population in the different districts.

The three tables show that there were about 33 lakhs of urban population who presumably had to depend upon the supply of grains from the countryside. According to J.D.Paterson, one adult annually consumed about 9 maunds of rice (or 1 seer of rice per diem)(98). It means that 33 lakhs of people consumed about 300 lakhs of maunds of rice, the value of which would amount to about 150 lakhs of Rupees at the local market-prices of the time. The rice of Bengal was exported to Benares and some other minor towns of Bihar. Therefore, the total of the sale of rice must have amounted to more than what the above figure shows. Grain trade, thus, played a vital role in the return flow of money from the cities and towns to the countryside.

Sugar, tobacco, betel-leaf, opium, indigo, silk and cotton were other cash agricultural products of importance(99).

Besides the native merchants, the Company and European free-traders also made considerable purchases in the countryside. W.W.Hunter calculated that a sum of £ 45,000 to £ 65,000 was annually spent by the Commercial Resident of Birbhum alone in the late 18th century(100). The following statement shows the total amount of the Company's Investment for the year 1792.

Table-7 : A statement of the Company's Investment for 1792

(Company's Rupee)

Articles.	Whole Bengal Presidency.	Maldah & Buddaul Residency.	Rangpur Residency.
Raw Silk	3,636,622	178,271	329,804
Piece Goods	7,206,661	669,706	66,610
Sugar	367,472	-	128,676
Saltpetre	309,585	-	-
Others	26,203	-	-
Total :	11,546,543	847,977	525,090

Sources : BT-Cml-P 30th May 1793.

(98) BR-P 7th May,1789. No.35
(99) We shall study some of them in the next chapter.
(100) W.W.Hunter, op. cit., p. 182

The Company, thus, spent Co. Rs. 11,546,543 for its public investment in 1792, and Co. Rs.1,373,067 (11.9%) of them was purchased by the Commercial Residents at Maldah and Rangpur (Dinajpur district was included in both residencies).

From the above rough estimate of the size of the demand for the agricul--tural products in Bengal, we may safely conclude that through various channels of commerce, both internal and foreign, a sufficient amount of currency annually returned to the countryside, which enabled the ryots and zamindars to pay up their revenues in money, amounting to Rs.21,743,327 at the time of the decennial settlement in 1790(101).

The consequences of the development of such market-relations for the agrarian society of Bengal will now be examined.

(1) As the market-relation penetrated deep into the agrarian society, at least a part of the agricultural production tended to be merket-oriented. P.Speke, the Collector of Rajshahi, wrote in 1789 that the mulberry cultivation in his district was at its height in 1778/1779, but in 1784 fell to one fourth of what it was in 1778 partly due to the heavy rains in 1779 and mainly because of the decrease in silk investment since 1780, while the prices of grain were continuously high because of the inundations of 1779 and the scarcity of grain in 1783. This led to a considerable change-over from mulberry lands to paddy lands. But "the great demand ... for mulberry since November, 1787 and which continues, is operating fast to throw more and more land into its cultivation." He concluded the paragraph by saying that "No encouragement from government can do so much good as will be done by a great probability of a good sale for the produce. This must always be the essential circumstance altho' collateral assistance may be given [for the extension of the mulberry cultivation]." (102)

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(101) N.K.Sinha "The Economic History of Bengal" Vol. II. p. 150
(102) BR-P. 25th June, 1789, No. 68.

J.Lumsden, the Collector of Rangpur, similarly wrote of the good effects of high price of a produce on the growth of its cultivation. He said : "the present high price to which the sugar has risen" would induce the ryots to extend its cultivation "as far as the soil and the prejudices of the natives will allow(103)". In fact, the ryots of Burdwan responded eagerly to the market and adjusted the size of their cultivation according to the state of market prices(104).

Some ryots seems to have gone further than the temporary adjustment of the size of the cultivation according to the situation of the market. For example, one Rammohun Ghose, a very small ryot in Nadia district, diminished his paddy lands from 3-2 bighas to 1-15 bighas for which he paid the rent of 10 annas 10 gandas only, and concentrated his labour on the orchard of 2-8 bighas where he planted 5 mangoes, 5 Jack trees, 150 Betelnut, 10 Cocoanut and 1 Tamarind, for which he paid the rent of Rs.5-7-17-2(105). Compared with the holdings of other ryots in Nadia, his orchard was disproportionately big for his quite small holding. He must have been obliged to purchase paddy for his subsistence from the local market in consequence of his concentration on garden cultivation.

(2) It required a considerable capital to cultivate the marketable products such as sugar-cane, mulberry and tobacco. D.H.MacDowall, the Collector of Rangpur, wrote that "To clear and prepare such lands as [are] proper for the cultivation of mulberry... a greater expense must be incurred than it is in the power of the ryots to bear." He estimated that an advance of Rs.2-8 per bighas would be necessary for increasing its cultivation(106). J.Spottiswoode the acting Collector of Nadia, observed that the native sugar merchants made

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(103) Ibid. 26th Decr. 1792. No. 18.
(104) GGC-RD-Khalsa 24th Decr. 1777.
(105) BR-P 5th August, 1794. No. 14.
(106) BR-P 25th June, 1789. No. 70.

advances to the ryots at the rate of Rs.10 to 12 per bigha(107). Advances made by the grain merchants to the ryots were a well-known fact. J.Eliot, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote that in the trade of the Aghani rice which was the main crop of the year, "ready money Trade bears but a small proportion to that already engaged for by the Resident Merchants."(108) In the case of indigo and opium cultivation where the European planters played the major role, it was generally acknowledged that without the advances at comparatively lower rates of interest, no ryots would cultivate these articles(109).

Thus, with the growth of market-relations and commercial agriculture, the system of such advances inevitably widened and deepened. The zamindars generally sided with the merchants and allowed them to use coercive methods in realizing their loans from the ryots(110), as without such loans the ryots could not punctually pay their rents to the zamindars. Under such circumstances, disputes between the merchants and the ryots were unavoidable.

(3) The rapid growth of market-relations and the great demand for marketable products led to an increased volume of money circulation and thus to increased agricultural prices, particularly when the supply could not be adjusted to a sudden increase in the demand. The prices of sugar jumped up from Rs.5 per maund to Rs.13 in the district of Dinajpur in the early 1790's because the East India Company wanted to largely increase its export to Europe. The prices of many other articles of cultivation also went up gradually, while the rent-rates remained rather static, at least, till the middle of the 19th century(111). Such increased profit from the cultivation of marketable products, including grain, enabled the wealthy ryots to accumulate agricultural stocks in their

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(107) Ibid. 8th April, 1793. No. 7.
(108) RD - Grain-P 31st Oct. 1794. No. 29.
(109) See section 3 of chap. 6.
(110) BR-P 11th Octr. 1790. No. 14.
(111) J.L.Sherwill. op.cit. Pp. 18-19.

hands. The needy ryots could probably have made their financial conditions more secure, if they had also taken to their cultivation. However, all the ryots could not equally respond to the market stimulus and the wealthy ryots possessing adequate agricultural stocks responded more to them than the poorer ones. The following extract from a letter of P.Speke corroborates this point: "the land employed in it [mulberry cultivation] require much labour, time and expense to fit them for the purpose. That the poor labourer who live from hand to mouth... can seldom afford either. The increase of cultivation, therefore, to be expected, chiefly... from inducements to be given to the better and middling class of people... in contradiction to the mere ryott."(112)

(4) The penetration of market-relations into the villages would have brought about changes in the so-called self-sufficient local community still existant in the frontiers of Bengal. According to Paterson, the ryots of Balcadaul in Tipperah could supply themselves with all the necessaries of life, mainly through a barter system within the local community except salt(113) which had to be purchased from outside in cash(114). In Purnea, Colebrooke reported that each Gatch had its own blacksmith whose wage was defrayed from the common fund paid by the gatchdar and the adhiyars as a body(115). With the intrusion of broader market-relations and money economy into the rural society, such old self-sufficient economy must have considerably weakened and the local community began to be connected with the wider world through a cash-nexus(116).

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(112) BR-P 25th June, 1789. No. 68.
(113) Lower people used ashes as substitute for salt.
(114) BR-P 17th May, 1789. No. 35.
(115) BR-P 18th June, 1790. No. 13.
(116) This term was borrowed from I.Habib's "Agrarian system of Mughal India". 1963.

CHAPTER 6

PEASANT SOCIETY AND ITS ECONOMY.

Section 1 : The Peasantry of northern Bengal.

Section 1-(1) : The Composition of the Peasantry - Analysis of some village Statements -

(a) The Criterion for the Classification of the Peasantry -

Before studying the village statements, we must fix the criterion according to which they should be analyzed. During our period, lands were abundant, while the distribution of agricultural stocks was quite uneven. The size of the holdings held by the ryots, therefore, was mainly determined by the size of agricultural stocks possessed by them. The size of the stock, therefore, provides us with the criterion according to which we can classify the ryots' holdings. This criterion will most meaningfully be adopted for the classification of the ryots' holdings when it is related to self-sufficiency (or the minimum size of the holding the produce of which enables a ryot and his family to subsist). We, therefore, use these two criteria for our analysis.

The rural population would be classified as follows : (1) Those who had no agricultural stock. They could not undertake the cultivation of any size on their own account and, therefore, hired themselves out as wage labourers. Though their works were mainly related to agriculture, they had no rights to the lands, and, therefore, cannot be considered as ryots. (2) Those who had small agricultural stock, but it was too small for them to undertake the cultivation of even the minimum size of lands the produce of which could sustain them and their families. They had to supplement the deficient produce from their holdings either by cultivating the lands of wealthy neighbours who provided them with the necessary loans for the cultivation or by working as the hired labourers. We may call them 'the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency'. (3) Those who had just enough agricultural stock to undertake on their own account the cultivation of the minimum size of the lands for their subsistence. They may be called 'the small self-sufficient ryots'. (4) Those who had ample agricultural stock which was more than enough for them to undertake, the

cultivation of the minimum size of the lands for their maintenance. Using their ample stock, they undertook extensive cultivation by subletting the lands to their under-ryots or by hiring the wage-labourers. We may call them 'the well-to-do ryots' or 'the wealthy ryots'.

The peasantry would, thus, be calssified into the three gradations : (1) the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency, (2) the small self-sufficient ryots, (3) the well-to-do ryots.

We must now work out a specific number of bighas which show the minimum size of the self-sufficient holdings. There are two modes of calculation; in terms of produce and in terms of money(1).

Let us take a small self-sufficient ryot with an average size of family of five members; father, mother and three children (or two children and one old dependent relation). We may suppose that one male adult consumed three quarters of a seer of rice per diem and the other members $\frac{1}{2}$ seer each(2). The annual consumption of grain of this family would be 25 maunds of rice or about 33 maunds of paddy(3). Other necessary items of their diet (oil, pulses, vegetables and ash which was used as a substitute for the salt by the poorer people) were supplied from their small gardens around the residence. Even a small quantity of cotton and tobacco was grown for their home-consumption(4). For the replacement cost of the agricultural impelements and the future purchase of cattle &ca., at least, Rs.2 or 8 maunds of paddy had to be set aside(5). For the seed, it usually required 20 seers per bigha.(6) Besides these, the ryot had to

(1) The following calculation is mainly based on the data collected from the north Bengal districts. The fertility of the lands, prices of articles and rates of rents considerably differed from locality to locality. The calculation made here, therefore, is valid for the north Bengal only.
(2) Buchanan estimated the daily consumption of a male adult at $\frac{1}{2}$ seer, while Paterson estimated it at 1 seer. We may take three quarters of a seer as fair estimate. Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp. 115-132 & BR-P 7th May, 1789, No. 35.
(3) 1 maund of paddy equals to 30 seers of rice. Buchanan, op. cit., p. 180.
(4) Buchanan, op. cit., p. 232. & BR-P 15th June, 1789. No. 86.
(5) Calculated from the data collected by Buchanan. op. cit. Pp 215, 216 & 237.
(6) Buchanan, op. cit., p. 237.

pay original rent, abwabs and village expenses (gram karcha) in money. A fair estimate of these would be Rs.1-8 or 6 maunds of paddy per local bigha. His income was derived entirely from the cultivation of his holding. According to J.H.Harington, the average produce of paddy per local bigha (or 1.78 calcutta bigha) was 10 maunds 29 seers for the clay land (khyar land) and 7 maunds 12 seers for the loam land (pali land)(7). Considering that pali land was capable of double-cropping, 10 maunds per local bigha for both sorts of paddy land would be a reasonable estimate. To sum up, out of the produce of one bigha of paddy land, he had to set aside $6\frac{1}{2}$ maunds for rent, abwabs, village expenses and seed and he retained $3\frac{1}{2}$ maunds for his use. To obtain the necessary 41 maunds of paddy (33 maunds for food and 8 maunds as the replacement cost of agricultural implements &c), he had to cultivate 12 local bighas of land. However, this evidently is an over-estimation, since a peasant of Dinajpur could hardly cultivate more than 8 local bighas (15 Calcutta bighas) in a year(7A). The above calculation presupposed that all his holding was duly assessed at the usual rates of rents as fixed in the nirkhbandi. This, however, was hardly the case. As noted earlier(8), the bulk of the ryots possessed more lands than what the zamindari records showed, and this point was established, beyond doubt, by the survey of J.H.Harington in 1790. This circumstance would reduce the actual burden of rent and village expenses to a little less than one rupee per local bigha(9). On this supposition, we may estimate the minimum size of the self-sufficient holding at 12 Calcutta bighas.

Now let us briefly calculate the same in terms of money. 41 maunds of paddy which were necessary for the home-consumption and replacement of

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(7) BR-P 22nd March, 1790. No. 15 Main Report.
(7A) Buchanan, Dinajpur, P. 234 & Harington Report, Main Report.
(8) See section 2, chap. 4.
(9) Br-P 22nd March, 1790 No. 15 Main Report & see Table-6 of this section.

agricultural implements, cost about Rs.10 at the market price of those days. The rent &c cost 14 annas and the seed 2 annas per local bigha. The gross produce of one bigha of paddy land was Rs.2-8 from which the abovementioned Rs.1-0 should be deducted. The ryot, therefore, retained Rs.1-8 per local bigha as his gross income. To obtain the necessary Rs.10, he had to cultivate about 7 local bighas of paddy land or about 12 Calcutta Bighas(10).

From the foregoing two calculations, we may set the minimum size of a self-sufficient holding at 12 Calcutta bighas.

The demarcation line between the first gradation (below the level of self-sufficiency) and the second one (small self-sufficient) would, thus, be the possession of the minimum size of the self-sufficient holding (12 Calcutta bighas).

The demarcation line between the second gradation and the third one can not be so clearly drawn as in the former case. It varied according to the size of the family. As one ryot could cultivate about 15 Calcutta bighas of land, this may be considered as the demarcation line. But considering that as the economic condition of a family became better, its size tended to become larger, it would have frequently happened that the upper portion of the small self-sufficient ryot had two adult workers in his family, for example, a father and a grown-up son or an unmarried male relation. This family could take up 30 Calcutta bighas of land without depending on any hired labourer. We may tentatively set the demarcation line between the second and the third gradations at 30 Calcutta bighas. Buchanan's observation that small farmers "have 1 or 2 ploughs and seldom employ servants" would support our supposition.

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(10) Buchanan estimated an income of Rs.22-11 as the expense of a family of the lowest order, it, however, seems to have been over-estimation. To earn this sum, he had to cultivate 15 local bighas or 27 Calcutta bighas which was much larger than a man could cultivate in a year. He also overlooked in his calculation that the ryots of this gradation produced almost the whole necessaries of life and that they ate coarse rice which was much cheaper than the rice for exportation or for sale. The Collector of Jessore observed in 1788 that a profit of Rs.8-4-2 would be "fully adequate for his (ryot's) necessities."

Buchanan, op. cit, p. 245 & BR-P 11th July, 1788. No. 14.

(b) Analysis of some Village Statements

Here we shall analyze four village statements and try to find out the characteristics of the composition of the peasantry in north Bengal in the late 18th century.

(CASE-A) Village Ryampore

In the middle of 1770, J.Grose, the Superintendent of Rangpur, sent his assistant, G.Robertson, to Govind Gunge in the zamindari of 9-anna division of Edrackpore to enquire into the real assets of the country. Robertson acquired the patwari papers of Talook Ryampore and prepared a "Statement of collections made from Ryampore village in Talook of the Aumil"(11). This statement shows the names of the villagers, quantity of land held by each, their sadar jamas, abwabs and actual sum realized by the aumil in the preceding year.

Despite the great value of these data, we cannot use them without reservation : Firstly, Robertson did not mention the size of the local bigha in use in that locality; secondly, Robertson hardly had any means to check the authenticity of the patwari papers, whereas it was clearly established by J.H.Harington that forgery of village accounts by the patwaris in collusion with the ryots was a common practice in the countryside.

Fortunately, we have a detailed account of the local bighas in use in different parganas of Sircar Ghoraghat, of which Edrackpore constituted major part : According to it, in the Pargana Edrackpore & ca (9-anna division of Ghoraghat) the current unit of measure (Gaz) was 34¼ inches and "52 Guz constitute the Begah Cord in the Pullee Mahals, and 48 Guz in the Khear Mahals". From this, we may conclude that one local bigha used in Robertson's statement was 1.5 Calcutta bigha approximately(12).

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(11) LCB-RDM 23rd June 1770 No.8, Enclosures.
(12) BR-P 22nd March 1790 No. 15 Main Report.

Concerning the second point, we have no other means but to tentatively adopt J.H.Harington's finding that, on an average, the ryots of the pargana Sooroopoor, which also belonged to the same Sircar Ghoraghat, possessed twice as large lands as those recorded in the village accounts(13).

The following abstract statement is based on Robertson's statement after the abovementioned two adjustments, and arranged according to the criteria set forth earlier.

Table-1 : An abstract Statement showing the Composition of the Peasantry in the Village Ryampore

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Gradation	Persons	Quantity of land in Calcutta bigha	Rent	
			Rent in Rupee	Rent per bigha
				As Gs
1. 0 - 12 bighas	93 (69 %)	279 (20 %)	157 (23 %)	9 - 0
2. 12 - 30 bighas	30 (22 %)	587 (42 %)	281 (40 %)	7 -14
3. 30 - bighas	12 (9 %)	548 (39 %)	257 (37 %)	7 -10
	135	1,414	695	7 -17

Source : LCB-RDM 23rd June 1770 No.8 enclosures.

Bigha used in the statement is Calcutta Bigha, which is about 0.33 acre.

Out of 93 persons belonging to 'below the level of self-sufficiency', 80 persons possessed the holdings smaller than 3 bighas. They must have worked as the under-ryots or the hired labourers under the well-to-do ryots.

The following three abstract statements are based on the data collected by J.H.Harington during his survey in the zamindari of Sooroopoor in 1790. He selected three villages and had them measured under his direct inspection.

(13) BR-P 22nd March 1790 No. 15 Main Report.

We may, therefore, regard his data far more accurate and consider them as showing the actual condition of the three villages[14].

(CASE-B) Village Radhanagar

Radhanagar was a fairly big village with 50 registered ryots and five Huzuri Jotedars[15]. The total village area was 5,041 local bighas[16]. Out of it, 846 bighas (16.8 %) were waste land and the remaining 4,195 bighas were the cultivated lands and the site for the habitation. 1,121 bighas of the cultivated lands were rent-free lands(Bazi Zemin), 282 bighas rent-paying service lands(Jama Chackeran lands) and 3,073 bighas the ryoti lands. Five huzuri jotedars possessed 2,741 bighas of rent-paying lands and the lands under the jurisdiction of the village amin[17] were only 605 bighas. As J.H.Harington did not investigate the internal conditions of the huzuri jotes nor did the zamindari records indicate them, the following abstract was only concerned with the lands under the jurisdiction of the village amin.

Table-2 : An abstract Statement showing the Composition of the Peasantry in the Village Radhanagar

(1) Gradation	(2) Persons	(3) Quantity of land in local bigha	(4) Rent	(5)
			Rent in rupee.	Rent per bigha
				As Gs
1. 0- 7 local bigha	35 (70 %)	107 (18 %)	78 (26 %)	11 -13
2. 7-17 Do	7 (14 %)	83 (14 %)	46 (15 %)	8 -17
3.17- Do	8 (16 %)	415 (69 %)	176 (59 %)	6 -16
	•50	605	300	7 -19

Source : BR-P 22nd March 1790 No. 17 Enclosures No. 2 & 21

Bigha used in the statement is local bigha. 1 local bigha was equal to 1.78 Calcutta Bigha.

(14) The following description depends on Harington's report and its enclosures and appendixes. BR-P 22nd March 1790

(15) See section 2 of this chapter.

(16) 1 local bigha was equal to 1.78 Calcutta bigha in Sooroopoor

(17) See section 1 of Chap.1

In this village, 5 huzuri jotedars held 2,741 bighas and the holders of the bazi zamin 1,121 bighas. Such lands must have been mostly cultivated by their under-ryots(Pirjas) and the agricultural labourers(Krishans). As one cultivator could cultivate 15 Calcutta bighas or about 8 local bighas, there must have been, at least, 400 to 450 pirjas and krishans working in such lands. Their names never appeared in the zamindari records. Some portion of such lands might be cultivated by the Pahikasht ryots of the neighbouring villages, but its extent must have been negligible as Harington nowhere referred to the pahikasht cultivation in this zamindari. Therefore, by far the greatest portion of the population of this village seems to have been the pirjas and the krishans.

(CASE-C) Village Maheiskol

Maheiskol was a small village with 14 villagers whose names were registered in the zamindari records. There were no huzuri jotedars in the village. The total village area was 342 local bighas of which 65 bighas were waste land and 277 bighas cultivated lands and house-site. Out of 277 bighas of the cultivated lands, 48 bighas were rent-free lands(Bazi Zamin), and 224 bighas rent-paying lands[18].

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Gradation	Persons	Quantity of land in local bigha	Rent	
			Rent in rupees	Rent per bigha
				As Gs.
1. 0 - 7 local bigha	7 (50 %)	17 (8 %)	13 (13 %)	12 - 5
2. 7 -17 Do	2 (14 %)	28 (13%)	10 (10 %)	5 -14
3. 17 - Do	5 (36 %)	179 (80%)	81 (78 %)	7 - 5
	14	224	104	7 - 8

Source : As indicated above.

(18) The difference of 5 bighas is due to the miscalculation in the original.

The cultivated land per villager was 16 local bigha or 28-10 Calcutta bighas. This was considerably bigger than a cultivator could cultivate and suggests the existence of more than 10 pirjas and krishans in the village.

(CASE-D) Village Ragonatpoor

Ragonatpoor was apparently a very small village with only 9 villagers whose names appeared on the zamindari accounts. Its total area was 452 local bighas of which 31 bighas were waste land and 421 bighas cultivated lands and homesteads. 127 bighas of the cultivated lands were rent-free lands (Bazi Zamin) and 286 bighas rent-paying service lands(Jama Chakeran lands) and ryoti lands.

Table-4 : An abstract Statement showing the Composition of the Peasantry in the village Ragonatpoor

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Gradation	Persons	Quantity of land in local bigha	Rent	
			Rent in rupees	Rent per bigha
				As Gs.
1. 0- 7 local bigha	3 (33 %)	14 (5 %)	13 (7 %)	14 - 17
2. 7-17 Do	3 (33 %)	38 (13 %)	26 (14 %)	11 - 0
3. 17- Do	3 (33 %)	235 (82 %)	145 (79 %)	9 - 17
	9	287	184	12 - 3

Source : As indicated above.

The cultivated land in this village per villager was 32 local bighas or 57 Calcutta bighas which far exceeded the size a cultivator could cultivate. Another interesting feature of the composition of the peasantry in this village was the high concentration of lands in the hands of three well-to-do ryots who possessed 82 % of the cultivated lands. This suggests that there was

a considerable number of the pirjas and the krishans working under the well-to-do ryots, though we have no corroborating evidence on this point.

The following two abstracts show the grand total of the Cases A,B,C & D and of the Cases B, C & D.

Table-5 : The Grand Total of Cases A, B, C & D (In Calcutta bigha)

(1) Gradation		(2) Persons		(3) Quantity of land in Calcutta bigha.		(4) Rent: Rent in rupee		(5) Rent: Per bigha.
								As - Gs
1. 0 - 12	Calcutta bighas.	188	(66%)	525	(15%)	261	(20%)	7- 19
2. 12 - 30	Do	42	(21%)	855	(25%)	363	(28%)	6- 16
3. 30 -	Do	28	(13%)	2024	(59%)	659	(51%)	5- 4
		208		3404		1283		6- 1

Table-6 : The Grand Total of the Cases B,C & D

(in Calcutta bighas)

Gradation.		Persons		Quantity of land in Calcutta bigha		Rent: Rent in rupees		Rent: Per bigha
								As - Gs.
1. 0 - 12	Calcutta bighas.	45	(62 %)	246	(12 %)	104	(17 %)	6 - 15
2. 12 - 30	Do.	12	(16 %)	265	(13 %)	82	(14 %)	4 - 19
3. 30 -	Do.	16	(22 %)	1456	(73 %)	402	(67 %)	4 - 8
		73		1987		598		4 - 16

(c) The Composition of the Peasantry of north Bengal - a critical study of F.Buchanan's Description of this Composition -

Here we shall describe the various gradations of the peasantry, depending, mostly, on the data collected by F.Buchanan in Dinajpur in 1807 & 1808[19]. Though his description of the agrarian society is invaluable for the student of the socio-economic history of north Bengal, his statistical data are rather misleading and should be used cautiously.

Buchanan divided the cultivators (or the people engaged in the agricultural production) into five main gradations; Krishans (agricultural labourers), Adhiyars (share-croppers), small-farmers[20], middling-farmers and large farmers.

The Krishans were those who had no agricultural stock to enable them to take up and cultivate lands on their own account. They usually hired themselves out to the middling and wealthy farmers on a daily, monthly, half-yearly or annual basis. There was plenty of work for them. They received 8 annas in money and food and cloths which cost 12 annas to 1 rupee per month. Their monthly income, therefore, did not exceed Rs.$1\frac{1}{2}$. Unlike the adhiyars who held a small quantity of land and grew vegetables and other necessaries of life (even a small quantity of cotton), the krishans had to buy them all. The sum of money required for the maintenance of a krishan family was, therefore, larger than that of an adhiyar family. A krishan's standard of life was lower than that of an adhiyar. Buchanan estimated the number of the krishans in the Dinajpur district at 80,000.

The Adhiyars were those who "cultivate land for a share of produce." As "they have not stock sufficient to enable them to cultivate without the assistance," they could not take up land to the full capacity of their family labour on their own account. They had "in general 2 or 3 bighas, for which they

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(19) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp. 234 to 246.
(20) Buchanan used the word "farmer" in the sense of peasant.

pay rent and employ their leisure time in cultivating land for their neighbours for one-half of the produce." The adhiyars generally used their own stocks (ploughs & bullocks) in cultivating the lands on adhi[21] engagement. The seeds were often furnished by the well-to-do farmers who employed them. Though the adhiyars possessed the agricultural implements and bullocks, their stock of grain was so small that they "for six months in the year would starve, did not the wealthy farmers advance them grain to eat." Many of the adhiyars were indebted to their employers for more than the "whole value of their stock." Such adhiyars were called "the under-ryots" by Colebrooke in his Purnea Report in 1790[22]. There was another type of adhiyars who rented lands from the agents of the zamindar like other ryots under the regular mofussil settlement, but paid their rent in kind. These adhiyars were not the under-ryots of the well-to-do farmers, but cultivated the lands on their own account. The khamar lands[23] of the zamindar were often cultivated in this way[24]. The adhi engagement was preferred on such lands where the soil was inferior or the harvest precarious, since the loss from the unfavourable seasons was borne both by the adhiyars and the zamindars[25]. Buchanan wrote that "the number of the adhiyars [under-ryots] is very considerable... it is probable that there are above 1,50,000 families."

The peasants who constituted "about half of the farmers... [they] have 1 or 2 ploughs and seldom employ servants. If the farm is not quite large enough to employ their ploughs the whole year, they cultivate somewhat additional for a share of the produce." They roughly are identical with our second gradation (small self-sufficient ryots). They paid higher rates of rents for their holdings than the well-to-do ryots. Many of them were obliged to borrow money or stock from their richer neighbours, and not unfrequently fell to the rank of

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(21) Adhi : half, hence sharing of net produce on fifty-fifty basis.
(22) BR-P · 18th June, 1790. No. 8.
(23) Khamar land : Land retained by the zamindar for his own use.
(24) See Appendix (c) to chap. 1.
(25) Do.

under-ryots.

The middling farmers who had "3 or 4 or 5 ploughs, form perhaps 7/16ths of the whole : these are not exempt from holding the ploughs, but hire servants to make up for the deficiency in the number of labourers." We may consider them as the lower portion of our third gradation (the well-to-do ryots).

The wealthy farmers[26] were thus described :

> "About one farmer in 16 may rent from 30 to 100 acres [or 90 to 300 Calcutta bighs]. These seldom labour with their own hands, but keep as many ploughs as they have dependent relations, or hire 2 or 3 additional men. The remainder of their lands, they give to people who cultivate for a share. These men have, in general, large capitals and advance money or grain both to those who cultivate for a share and to their own necessitous neighbours to enable them to live while the cultivation is going forward... It may indeed be said that their stocks carried on at least one half of the whole cultivation of the country, most of the adhiyars and small farmers are more indebted to them than the whole value of their stock."

The great influence of the wealthy ryots derived, as Buchanan rightly remarked, from their possession of agricultural stocks which were in great demand in the countryside. The possession of such stocks enabled them to play a crucial role in the production process of the rural society.

Now let us examine Buchanan's statistical data relating to the composition of the peasantry. He gave the following abstract statement.

6,600	principal farmers	at 165 bighas	on an average	10,89,000 bighas
8,800	great farmers	at 75 bighas	Do.	6,60,000
11,000	comfortable farmers	at 45 bighas	Do.	6,60,000
19,800	easy farmers	at 45 bighas	Do.	8,91,000
55,000	poor farmers	at 30 bighas	Do.	16,50,000
1,11,000	needy farmers	at 15 bighas	Do.	16,50,000
2,12,200				66,00,000

(26) They were also called the principal farmers and great farmers.

In addition to the above, he mentioned the following :

1,50,000 Adhiyars

80,000 Krishans

4,42,000 ... The total strength of labour in the Dinajpur district as estimated by Buchanan.

He, thus, used two different classifications in his Dinajpur report; the five gradations explained earlier and the above eight gradations. As he did not indicate the criterion on which he classified the above eight gradations, we could re-arrange the above plan into his five gradations about which he provided an adequate explanation. The following is the re-grouping of Buchanan's above abstract into his own five gradations and into our three gradations.

Table-7 : Composition of the peasantry re-arranged according to Buchanan's five gradations.

Krishans	80,000	18 %	
Adhiyars	150,000	34	
Small farmers	138,500	31	(27)
Middling farmers	62,700	14	(28)
Wealthy farmers	11,000	2	(29)
	442,000	99	

Table-8 : Composition of the peasantry re-arranged according to our three gradations :

Below self-sufficient Ryots	150,000	41 %	
Small self-sufficient	138,500	38	
Well-to-do	73,700	20	(30)
	362,200	99	

(27) Needy farmers plus lower half of the poor farmers.
(28) Middling farmers possessed 3 to 5 ploughs. Therefore, upper half of the poor ryots plus easy farmers plus comfortable farmers plus lower half of great farmers would constitute the middling farmers.
(29) The upper half of great farmers plus principal farmers.
(30) Middling farmers plus wealthy farmers of Table-7.

In the Table-8, the krishans have been ommitted, as our criterion does not apply to landless labourers. It will be relevant to note here that Harington's village accounts (Tables 2, 3, 4 & 6) also did not include the krishans.

Table-7 refutes the Buchanan's own assertion that the middling farmers constituted 7/16ths of the whole farmers. And if we count the adhiyars as part of the farmers, another assertion of Buchanan that small farmers constituted half of the farmers also becomes quite doubtful. However, his statistics reveal a pattern of the composition of the peasantry similar to that of Harington; both Buchanan(Table-8) and Harington(Table-6) agree in that the first gradation (below self-sufficient) constituted nearly half of the peasant population.

(d) Conclusions

From the foregoing study of Harington's survey report and Buchanan's statistical data, we can confidently say that the agrarian society of north Bengal in the late 18th century was a highly stratified one. Their data show that more than half of the peasantry, or if we include the krishans, nearly two-thirds of the rural population were lacking in sufficient agricultural stock to cultivate the minimum size of self-sufficient holding. Such people had to depend on the loans in money and in kind only to keep the body and soul together. The majority of the rural population, thus, was under-ryots (Pirjas) and agricultural labourers(Krishans) who were in abject subjugation to the well-to-do ryots(the suppliers of agricultural stocks).

Secondly, we should note the smallness of the second gradation or the small self-sufficient ryots. Harington's village accounts show that in the zamindari of Sooroopoor in the Rangpur district they constituted only one sixth of the 'registered' ryots. Buchanan's statistical data show that they formed one third of the ryots. As we have noted, the reliability of

Harington's data is much greater than that of Buchanan. We have reason to say that the size of this gradation was steadily decreasing during our period(31).

Thirdly, our analysis of the four village statements corroborates the well known assertion that the rates of rents paid by the upper class of the ryots were considerably lower than those of the common and the lower ryots. As Table-5 shows, the average rent of the first gradation was As 7-19, that of the second one As 6-16 and that of the third one As 5-4 per Calcutta bigha.

Section 1-(2) The small local Leaders

(a) The small local Leaders - their wealth & position in the agrarian society -

The local small leaders consisted of the wealthy or well-to-do and the principal ryots(mandals, paramanicks and pradhans), small mofussil farmers and the holders of lakhiraj lands.

Among them by far the most numerous and important were the well-to-do ryots and the principal ryots. They very widely existed all over Bengal and, at least, in the Purnea district of Bihar.

In Dinajpur, such people held 90 to 300 bighas of lands and possessed a considerable capital "of from Rs.5,000 to Rs.20,000, but perhaps 5,000 may be about the average"(32). It was their stock that "carries on at least one half of the whole cultivation of the country"(33).

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(31) See section 1-(2)-d of this chapter.
(32) F.Buchanan, op. cit., pp. 235 & 237
(33) F.Buchanan, op. cit., p. 235

In Rangpur, these people often acted as the paramanicks, pradhans or Bosneahs (village heads)[34]. One Habshee Mandal of Culleah[35] Nuderam in the pargana Coondy had been the farmer of his village for the previous ten years and paid a sum of Rs.325 as the rent of the land and of a market-place (hat) held by him. "/ He / has the reputation of a man of great influence over the ryots throughout the district and one whom the zamindars particularly respect on account of that influence."[36] Shaik Caubil of pargana Coondy was a paramanick of his Calleah[37] for the prior ten years and was held responsible for the payment of Rs.1,600 to 1,900 as the rent of his "zillah."[38] Shaik Bauker was a hereditary paramanick and paid a sum of Rs.105 as his rent[39]. In the pargana Coondy, there were 8 to 10 principal ryots who kept other ryots under their control[40].

In the pargana of Sooroopoor in Rangpur, we find the principal ryots of a similar type. Mohammed Shuffeck Paramanick called himself the pradhan of the village Rampoorah. He was also a huzuri jotedar (holder of a tract of land separate from the village). He held 317 bighas of lands and paid a sum of Rs.221 as his Tahud Jama (an engaged sum of rent). Khider Paramanick of village Rogonatpore held 60 bighas of lands with the village and 450 bighas separate from the village as a huzuri jote. His rent for these 510 bighas of land was Rs.537. Kirmool Paramanick of village Kalakapoor held 90 bighas of land as huzuri jote and paid a sum of Rs.88 for it. In village Radhanagar, there were five huzuri jotedars who held 3,348 bighas of lands and paid, separate from the village, a total sum of Rs.1,549. The sizes of their respective jotes were 1,014 bighas, 810 bighas, 623 bighas, 231 bighas and 61 bighas.[41]

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(34) On their role, see section 1-(5)-c of chap. 1
(35) Culleah : Probably from Kali or arable land in general
(36) CR-P 10th June 1784 No. 17
(37) Calleah : see foot note (35)
(38) CR-P 10th June 1784 No. 19
(39) Ibid No. 21
(40) CR-P 5th June 1784 No. 42 to 50
(41) Information on this pargana is derived from Harington's report.

In the district of Rajshahi also we find that the wealthy ryots held large holdings and exercised a great influence in the countryside. The collector of Rajshahi, Peter Speke, observed that "Head Mundles are become the real masters of the land & that the first object with the zamindar should be to effect a gradual reduction of their power"(42). He remarked in another letter that "Such of the wealthy ryots of Rajshahi as holding lands in Khosh bass (residing at pleasure) were men of some subsistence" and took "large tracts of lands and who both from the respectability and from their being obliged to hire labourers are allowed easier terms and to pay in one sum... this valuable class of tenants, it would be one certain means of bringing much the waste land into cultivation and turning money to that mode of engagement"(43).

In Birbhum, the influence of the principal ryots and the mandals was most remarkable. The following pieces of information give an idea about the size of their wealth. Modun Mandal was a mandal of his village Cotoolgossah and held 54 bighas of land at a jama of Rs. 52-9. His property was attached by the gomastha of the village for a balance due from the village amounting to Rs.250. It was reported that his property consisted of 150 maunds of paddy stored in his own house and 150 maunds more which were deposited in the House of Binood Chakerbutty, 2 Jars of rice (about 12 maunds), 15 maunds of Jaggery or Gur, 2 maunds of cotton, 2 brass plates & a brass pot, 12 maunds of paddy for seeds, 7 cawns of straw and fish from his tank. All these were worth, at the market prices of those days(44), about Rs.127 exclusive of fish, straw and brass utensils(45). His several bullocks and ploughs being added to the list, the total would amount to nearly Rs.150. Considering that his holding as an principal ryots was rather small, and that he must have concealed some of his valuable articles such as silver, ornaments &c., before they were

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(42) BR-P 24th June 1788 No. 20
(43) Ibid 13th April 1787 No. 88 & 89
(44) For rice,paddy & gur, see "Price current" of Birbhum & Bishenpur from May to October. BDR-BRM. pp. 19 & 23
For cotton, 5 Rs/Md. would be a fair price. cf. Buchanan,Dinajpur p.200
(45) CR-P. 11th August 1783 No. 6

attached, this sum would probably be smaller than what an average principal ryot possessed. Cossinaut Surma was once the patwari of his village Aditpore. He held 49 bighas of land for which he paid Rs.63-6. Lackeen Samant held 121 bighas of land at the rent of Rs.108-12. He was one of the ring-leaders of the disturbance in 1783(46). Ruttun Mandal of village Bongang held 118-11 bighas of land at the rent of Rs.133-6. He was one of the principal ryots of a Hoodah (a smaller unit of the estate consisting of a few villages, and similar to kutkina in Dinajpur). Kabil Mohammed was a mandal of his village Sonseel. He formerly held 436 bighas of land "which being more than he could cultivate, he let it to some other ryots who paid their rents to him". He paid Rs.213-9 for the above land(47). As the jama of the village was Rs.481, he occupied nearly half of it.

In the district of Purnea also, we come across such wealthy ryots. They often farmed villages and accumulated lands in their hands through various artifices. The following examples would illustrate the size of their holdings and their relation to the poorer population. In the pargana of Dhurrumpore, a big village, the jama of which was Rs.6,800, was ruled by a handful of wealthy ryots (15 to 20 in number) and about 400 people were toiling under them as their bonded labourers and under-ryots(48). In the pargana of Usjah, one Seramun Raiot almost doubled his holdings in less than ten years (from 432 bighas in 1188 Moolkey Year(49) to 720 bighas in 1196 M.Y.) and had them cultivated through Kolait labourers and Adhiyar ryots(50).

The above description of the wealth of the well-to-do ryots, which ranged from Rs.150 to 5,000, would largely explain why they could exercise the great local influence and act as the local small leaders(mandals, paramanicks, pradhans and bosneahs). Being the small local leaders, they were, by utilizing their position, able to accumulate the wealth and lands in their hands.

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(46) CR-P 11th August 1786, No.6 & Ibid, 15th Septr. 1783 Nos. 23 to 31
(47) Do & Do
(48) BR-P 1st Feb. 1790 No. 36
(49) Mulki : An era current in Purnea. 1188 B.S. = 1187 B.S. = 1780/1781 A.D.
(50) See section 2-(4) of this chapter.

We shall now examine the role the well-to-do ryots played in the agrarian society. In the districts of Dinajpur, Purnea and Birbhum they acted as the village farmers of their resident villages and were known as the kutkinadars. In the zamindaris of Sooroopoor, Goondy and Bitterband, the zamindars employed their own people in the villages in connection with the assessment of rent and its collection(51). They were known as the village amins or village gomasthas and worked in collaboration with the mandals, paramanicks and pradhans of the villages, who were selected from the principal ryots(52) and acted as the representative of the village in various business. The office of the mandals tended to become hereditary in the most influential family of the village, who often represented the oldest inhabitants of the village and presumably the descendants of its founder(53). As far as the revenue matters were concerned, their authority in the village was nearly absolute. In answering the question of the Collector of the district, the naib canungoe of Rangpur, Hurram, observed that "Should ten ryots out [of] a hundred come and prefer a complaint without previously acquainting either of... the Kurrumcharries and Principal ryots, and get any cause settled and sign the settlement themselves, the Kurrumcharries and the Principal ryots can and have the aurhority to set aside their signature"(54). Such an authority might have derived from the fact that it was the principal ryots who were held responsible for the collection of rent from the village. They, however, could not distribute among the villagers the rent of the village which was often a lump sum. This authority could only be exercised by the village amins or by the village farmers. The great profit derivable from the exercise of this authority would account for the eagerness of the

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(51) See section 1-(1) of chap. 1
(52) BR-P 30th Decr., 1788 No. 9
(53) PCR-DNR-P 1st Decr., 1778 & CR-P, 3rd April 1786 Nos. 43 to 49.
(54) CR-P 10th June 1784 No. 26

principal reyots to become the farmer of the village as reported by the Collector of Birbhum(55). In Purnea, this authority in the hands of the village farmer-cum-principal ryot led to the ruin of the common ryots(56). Thus, the zamindars tried to control the village through the wealthy ryots who were the natural leaders in the villages. They, in their turn, further strengthened their position in the village by exploiting the authority made over to them in regard to the revenue matters.

The sources of the wealthy ryots' great influence over the poorer ryots who constituted by far the majority of the rural population, originated in their possession of a considerable stocks. Buchanan described the important role of the wealthy ryots as the suppliers of the agricultural stocks in the district of Dinajpur as follows :

> "It may indeed be said that their stock carried out at least half of the whole cultivation of the country, most of the adhiyars and small farmers are more indebted to them than the whole value of their stock, ... the wealthy farmers advance them grain to eat. It is they who even furnish the seed... the land-lords do not like this class of men, but it is evident that they are absolutely necessary unless the land-lords themselves advance the money to their necessitous tenantry, but it is only practicable in very small estates." He further observed that "a rich man, in place of a capital which can be realized, acquires a number of necessitous dependents, to whose wants he must administer, in order to procure a share of their labour in place of interest and these dependents are reduced to perhaps one of the worst kinds of slavery, that of insolvent debtors."(57)

Heatly & Colebrooke found a similar situation in the district of Purnea:

> "The ryots are in general very poor & the aid of government absolutely requisite towards enabling them to enter upon cultivation. In cases this is withheld, they are under the necessity of borrowing at a heavy rate or engaging themselves to others in more affluent circumstances," and "their readiness to assist the poorer ryots with loans is the cause which had hitherto retained them in subjection to the principal ryots(58)."

(55) BR-P 8th July, 1788. No. 17.
(56) Ibid. 1st Feb. 1790. No. 36.
(57) F. Buchanan, op. cit., p. 235.
(58) BR-P 24th April, 1787 No. 48 & Ibid. 18th June, 1790. No. 8.

Such a situation was extensively seen in many parts of Bengal. The reports of the Collectors and the Commissioners from the districts of Rajshahi[59], Rangpur[60], Nadia[61], Jessore[62] and Tipperah[63] tell the same story explicitly or implicitly.

Such loans to the needy ryots were also provided by the mofussil revenue farmers (kutkinadars). One Colley Chand Doss was a mofussil farmer of village Gurkadom in the pargana Panjara in the Dinajpur zamindari and "advanced Taccavy and greatly improved the village."[64] In the pargana Surjapore in Purnea, Mahommed Warris held in farm the village Paunkuy where he himself resided. He "paid the malguzary without balance, and advanced money to the ryots, and supplied them with seed for cultivation."[65]

Thus, the wealthy ryots supplied loans to the needy ryots as their rich neighbours in the village, or to their under-ryots as their masters, or to the villagers in general as the mofussil farmers. The provision of such loans which the poorer ryots badly needed was a source of their great influence over the needy and poorer ryots who constituted the majority of the rural population and enabled them to act as the small local leaders.

We have already seen the important role played by them inthe reclama-tion of the waste lands[66].

Another important aspect of the wealthy ryots' role in the agricultural production was that they were the main channels of the flow of grain from the village to the town. They held considerable holdings and had them cultivated

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(59) BR-P 29th June, 1792. No. 15.
(60) Harington Report. Main Report
(61) BR-P 10th April, 1787, No. 4 & Ibid. 18th Feb. 1793. No. 31.
(62) BR-P 11th July, 1788. No. 14 & Ibid. 19th June, 1793. No. 7.
(63) BR-P 7th May, 1789. No. 35.
(64) PCR-DNR-P 31st March, 1778.
(65) PCR-DNR-P 14th March, 1780.
(66) See section 1-(2) of chapter 5.

by krishans and pirjas. They received a considerable quantity of grain from them and kept it in their store-houses (Golahs). They moreover purchased grain from their neighbours and sold it to the grain merchants at the most convenient time. The Collector of Dinajpur wrote that the principal ryots were the main suppliers of grain to the grain merchants. They hoarded grain for years in their golahs which might have served as a stock in the case of a scarcity(67).

(b) The Agrarian Disturbances and the small local Leaders.

From the above study of the role of the local leaders, above all, of the wealthy ryots in the countryside, it is inferable that they were the persons who dominated the village-level-politics

We have many records of the agrarian disturbances in the late 18th century. We shall, here, try to find out their general characteristics. The resistance by the ryots of the pargana Surjapore in the district of Purnea represents the most common and simple form of them. The ryots of that pargana annually left their homes "at the time when they are to pay their rents," and "they assemble in a body and repair to the Sudder where they prefer false complaints of oppression... this is done with a view of putting off time, hoping by this means to avoid paying their rents."(68) Such disturbances took place in January successively, at least, for four years (1776 to 1779). In 1779, they went as far as to Calcutta to complain of the oppression of the zamindar and obtained an order in their favour. They "paraded through the pargana with the above letter."(69) The ryots who led these disturbances were the under-farmers of the pargana who were mostly the principal ryots of the villages. A similar disturbance was seen in the district of Birbhum. The Collector reported that

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(67) See section 3 of this chapter.
(68) PCR-DNR 16th Jany, 1776.
(69) Ibid. 1st March, 1779.

such disturbances "become almost [an] annual custom for the ryots headed & excited by those Mundoles / in whom they cannot discover the latent cause of every imposition/ to assemble in arms, in the month of Augran & Poose [November, December & January] and put a stop to the collection till they have brought the farmers to terms. And the revenue... can never be realized without the presence, at this time, of a military force to check such commotions."(70) These two instances show that the principal ryots or mandals often organized the disturbances at the time of the heaviest collection (December and January) by assembling the inferior ryots and bargained for better conditions for themselves. The inferior ryots, as suggested by the Collector of Birbhum, scarcely gained anything by their participation in the commotion.

The ryots of the pargana Kajirhaut (Carjeehat) in the district of Rangpur "have long been famous for their turbulence of their dispositions."(71) In 1761, they rose in arms against the exaction of Nawab Mir Kasim(72). In the great uprising of the ryots of Rangpur against the exaction of the public farmer Devy Sing in 1783, Kajirhaut was one of the centres of the rebellious ryots(73). Again from 1786 to 1788, they raised disturbances three times(74). In April 1788, "the ryots of the district of Soobaugunge [in the zamindari of Kajirhaut] had assembled in a tumultuous manner and setting all authority at defiance, had attacked the Cutchery of that place and declar[ed] that they would pay no more revenue." On examination, the Collector found that the cause of the disturbance was "the intrigues of the Busneahs [head ryots] who were not satisfied with the deductions" which were granted to them on account of the inundation of 1787.

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(70) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790. No. 49.
(71) BR-P 24th Oct. 1786. No. 15.
(72) Fifth Report. Vol. 2 . P. 16. Para 62.
(73) N. Kaviraj. "A Peasant Uprising in Bengal, 1783", pp. 20, 21 & 34.
(74) BR-P .9th May, 1788. No. 27.

He argued that "the [ordinary] ryots had no cause of complaints whatever, but that they were betrayed into their present excess by the intrigues of the Busneahs"(75). In this case, one Dewannoo was the ringleader and 7 or 8 Busneahs with a large body of their ryots had participated in the action at the instigation of "the Civil Council of Dewannoo". The Collector of Rangpur wrote in another letter that the gomasthas of the zamindar often entered into "intrigues with the Head Ryots, who have the lower class entirely at their devotion" to achieve his personal objectives(76). Here again the leadership of the agrarian disturbance was in the hands of the principal ryots who used their great influence over the lower ryots in order to urge them into the disturbances to obtain their own objectives.

In the following three instances, we can see similar general characteristics of the agrarian disturbances of those days, though they differed in their particular objectives.

In 1788, the ryots of the pargana Bangong in the district of Rajshahi started a disturbance demanding a deduction of Rs.4,000 from their rents, which was granted in the preceding year on account of the disastrous season of 1787. They, at the instigation of "the munduls, have dispossessed the Farmer now full ten days & yet cannot be brought to obedience". The Collector, however, did not apply for the assistance of a military force, knowing from the past experience that "the Munduls will keep themselves out of danger", while they would "urge on the mob to compell them [Sepoys] to it [firing]". And "if the arms are used, & some people killed, the pargana is deserted, the crops are carried away, the loss of the lives makes that of revenue only of no consideration : Enquiry ceases, the leaders escape, & their end is obtained...The object is to lower the Jumma & as long as a Tahud Millannee Hastabud (assessment on the agreement of the both parties) continues, when once lowered, it is

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(75) Ibid.
(76) Ibid. 24th Oct. 1786. No.15.

extremely difficult to raise it."[77] Such disturbances frequently occurred in many parts of Rajshahi since 1781 when Lieutenant Kinlock's party of Sepoys fired at the armed ryots and many lives were lost. At that time the ryots rose against the exaction of the public farmer, Nundlol Roy. This incident seems to have shown them their potential power which led to the quitting of the prestigeous public farmer despite the fact that he had the full support of the Company's government. Since then, ryots of Rajshahi employed barkandazes who were paid either from the voluntary contributions of the ryots or from forcible collections by the mandals[78].

In 1788, J. Sherburne, the Collector of Birbhum, tried to introduce a new jamabandi (rent-roll) which was designed to lessen the rent burden of the inferior ryots, which, of course, involved an increase of the rent of "mundules & superior orders" because of the equalization of rates of rents. The mandals and the 'superior orders' formed a powerful combination and set the whole of the district in arms.[79] This disturbance had a complicated feature in that the officers of the zamindari, who were dismissed from their offices by the new zamindari dewan Lala Ramnaut supported the rebels. The mandals summoned the ryots of the district and selected their representatives who were authorized by a Bond (Mooktayar Nama) signed by 200 mandals to plead the ryots' point of of view with government. The Board of Revenue was, at last, obliged to remove Sherburne, the Collector, from the district and appointed C.Keating as his successor to pacify the country. The new jamabandi established by Sherburne remained in force only for a short while and was totally ineffective, largely because of the intrigues of the mandals and the 'superior orders'[80].

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(77) BR-P 24th Decr. 1788. No. 27.
(78) Ibid.
(79) Ibid. 17th Feb. 1789. Nos. 43 to 48.
(80) BR-P 25th July, 1791. No. 12 & Ibid. 25th Sepr. 1795. No. 32 & BDR-BRM 22nd August, 1795. Pp. 108-9

The zamindari of Baharband in the district of Rangpur was granted to Lockenaut Nandi (alias Cantoo Baboo) at a very low jama in 1774. The 'ancient ryots' who claimed to be the descendants of the original cultivators of the locality started an agitation against the zamindar in 1786. They entertained 400 to 500 armed men and expelled the zamindari officers from the pargana. Its cause was the attempted general measurement of the country by the zamindar. The ryots asserted that their rent on the lands which they held as Khud Kasht Ryots had been fixed for many years and was not liable to any alteration through measurement of lands. They went as far as to claim a kind of the talookdari right over their lands. The zamindar argued that he had the right of measuring the land at any time he pleased and rejected the claim of the ryots to the talookdari right in their lands, saying that the ryots could never acquire the talookdari right according to the custom of the country. He further added that the poorer ryots were welcoming the measurement and that it was only such wealthy ryots as had been enjoying the privileged rent that opposed it. Though it was evident that the measurement of land and the re-assessment of the rates of rents were beneficial to the inferior ryots, they could not foil the attempt of the wealthy ryots to prevent it and, indeed, participated in the violent action against the zamindari officers(81). This incident suggests that the economic interests of the superior ryots and those of the inferior ryots were not unfrequently antagonistic and that even then the wealthy ryots could influence the inferior ryots and use them to achieve their own interests.

The following instance of the disturbance in the pargana Shupore inthe zamindari of Rocunpore in the Murshidabad district was the most striking among the agrarian disturbances indicated above. Soupan Sha, an inhabitant of Mouza Pardan, pargana Shupore had, with several other ryots, for several years past, collected 200 to 300 barkandazes and paiks and been "constantly throwing

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(81) CR-P 3rd April, 1786 Nos. 43 to 49 & BR-P 16th June, 1786.Nos. 30 to 31.

obstructions in the way of the collections." In 1784, he assembled a large force and dispossessed the naib of the zamindari of his office and turned him out of the pargana. Soupan Sing fought a battle with a party sent for him under the direction of Peraun Mudgemdar, a zamindari officer, in which 3 or 4 men were killed and the pargana was desolated as a result. For five months, he defied the authority of the zamindar by force. Due to his obstructions there was a balance of Rs.22,200 due from the pargana from 1779 to 1783. He himself held Mouzas Parasan, Chuckgong &ca in farm, for which Rs. 2,000 were due from him. In the pargana, he assumed the authority of holding a Ponnea (annual ceremony for the settlement of the new year's rent and the commencement of the cultivation) and reinstated a former naib in the office and appropriated Rs. 4,100 which he collected from the ryots of the pargana. The Committee of Revenue having decided to assist the zamindar in taking possession of the pargana, the Collector of Silberris sent a party of Sepoys and put an end to this pretended local authority(82). This agrarian disturbance was headed by the ryots who formed a combination in this pargana and entertained several hundred of the armed men. They successfully defied the authority of the zamindar of Rocunpore who was by no means a small or weak zamindar and controlled the locality for five months or more. All these show that there existed a will and ability in the superior ryots to supersede the authority of the zamindar, though for a short period.

The agrarian disturbances in the late 18th century were, without exception, led by the small local leaders, especially the wealthy ryots, mainly for the purpose of protecting or increasing their own economic interests at the cost of both the zamindar and the inferior ryots. The principal ryots by excercising their influence over the inferior ryots persuaded them to take arms with the sole purpose of promoting their own

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(82) CR-P 16th August 1784 Nos. 7 to 8 & Ibid 9th Decr., 1784.

narrow economic interests. They, thus, secured better conditions for holding their lands and increased or consolidated their privileged holdings in the zamindaris in many parts of Bengal. Any attempts made by the zamindar or government at undermining their privileged holdings were furiously resisted by them, and in this they made a full use of their nearly absolute command over the inferior ryots.

The frequent agrarian disturbances in the late 18th century were, as we shall see presently, part of a wider historical process : the increase of the wealthy ryots' privileged holdings and the differentiation among the small self-sufficient ryots.

(c) The economic Relationship between the well-to-do Ryots and the poorer Ryots

What was the economic relationship between the well-to-do ryots who constituted about 20 % of the peasant population and the poorer small self-sufficient ryots and the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency who constituted about 80 % of the peasant population ?

Contemporaries were nearly unanimous in accusing the well-to-do or wealthy ryots of exploiting the poverty of the poorer ryots for their gains. The following extract from a letter of the Collector of Nadia in 1787 might be taken as representative :

> "The high class of ryots now find it their interest to be employed by the renters as the instrument of their oppressions, who living at ease, and enjoying particular indulgences upon the great body of the indigent and industrious ryots whose general poverty and the abject subjection they are kept in by their oppressors are insuperable obstacles to their extricating themselves from their present unhappy condition"(83).

Manipulation of the rent-rates by the wealthy ryots could involve an extortionate burden for the poorer ryots. Discriminatory rent-rates in favour

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(83) BR-P 10th April 1787 No. 4

of the wealthy ryots and 'the superior orders' were not necessarily a product of such manipulation. As the collector of Murshidabad observed, the practice of giving the Brahmins some rent-free lands were regarded by the people "far from criminal"(84), and it was also not an unpopular practice that the ryots of the high caste Hindu were exempted from payment of abwabs & mathots(85). This was necessary, the high caste Hindu ryots and 'the superior orders' asserted, because of the caste ban on their holding the ploughs and their respectability, they had to hire labourers to cultivate their lands(86).

However, the poorer ryots suffered as a consequence of such privileges, where these were secured through dishonest practices.

The Collector of Birbhum observed in 1787 that on the inspection of the detailed accounts of the villages "it will be found that the Mundoles with their connextions, and the wealthy ryots have collusively sunk one half of their Jumma and that they are too frequently exempted from the payment of the local charges of collection which are consequently ammulated(sic.) on those who are least able to support them... this extensive abuse... has been gradually increasing for many years probably from the Company's accession to the Dewanny"(87). The Collector of Murshidabad wrote in 1793 that on comparing the jama of each ryot, "so great a difference appeared in the rates of assessment owing to the higher class of ryots being entirely exempted from all abwabs"(88). The Commissioner at Rajshahi reported in 1792 that "from the known influence of the Munduls and other principal ryots the general rate of the rents paid by them is reputed to be much lower than that paid by the inferior ryots"(89). F.Buchanan found the same situation in 1808 in Dinajpur : The zamindar won over the wealthy ryots by special favours in order to impose

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(84) BR-P 12th May 1795 No. 51
(85) See section 1-(3) of chap. 1
(86) BR-P 25th July 1791 No. 12 & Ibid 17th Decr., 1793 No. 28
(87) BR-P 28th August 1787
(88) Ibid 17th Decr., 1793 No. 28
(89) Ibid 28th Novr., 1792 No. 17

abwabs on the poorer tenantry. The wealthy ryots persuaded the poorer ones to accept the zamindar's terms, and the latter seldom protested because of their unavoidable dependence on the former for loans(90). In view of the fact that abwabs and mathots formed about $\frac{1}{2}$ to 5/6ths of the total rent obligation(91), we can see how striking the difference could be between the total rent obligation of the higher ryots who were wholly or partly exempted from the payment of abwabs and that of the poorer ryots who were not.

The wealthy ryots sometimes had recourse to more objectionable practices. The Collector of Rajshahi observed in 1790 :

> "Many ryots in this district through collusions with the Mofussil Currumcharries have caused a considerable part of their Jumma lands to set down in the accounts as Pallateeka or forsaken and fresh leases at the lowest rate of assessment to be granted for those lands to their own dependents... several individuals of substance have by collusive means obtained remissions of revenue which the lower class of ryots are obliged to make up for by contribution"(92).

Colebrooke wrote of a similar practice in Purnea : In the pargana Sirreepore, the principal ryots succeeded in reducing their rent through dishonest means and to make up for the deficiency thus created, levied an imposition of $4\frac{1}{2}$ annas in a rupee on the assil jama of the ryots in the pargana. Since because of the artifices of the principal ryots the assil jama of the poorer ryots had already become disproportionately high, the burden of the mathots of some of the poorer ryots became intolerably high. This caused desertion of the poorer ryots and a consequent diminution of the assets of the pargana(93).

The zamindars often exacted abwabs by threatening the ryots with measurement of their lands. It is notable that the wealthy ryots could even take advantage of such a situation to promote their own gains. Colebrooke reported that the principal ryots of the pargana Sultanpore made a compromise (Bonaup) with the farmer whenever he tried to measure the pargana by accepting

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(90) F.Buchanan, op. cit., p. 236
(91) Harington Report, Main Report & Appendix D : SKR-P 26th July 1776 No. 134
(92) BR-P 28th May 1790 No. 8
(93) Ibid 18th June 1790 No. 18

a special additional rate for the whole village. The majority of the ryots agreed to this imposition mainly because of the threats and persuasions of the principal ryots. As the rates of rents of the inferior ryots were normally higher than those of the superior ryots, and the extent of their concealed lands was not so large as those of the superior ryots, the burden of the new imposition was presumably more severely felt by the poorer ryots. Some of the needy ryots were consequently compelled to desert the village(94). In the district of Birbhum also we have a similar instance:

> "In 1187 B.S. (1780 A.D.), a measurement was made by Mohammed Wooly, the zamindar's dewan, as the basis of an equal & general assessment, but this the Mundoles & superior ryots evaded by a contribution & new taxes of Ootubundee Nerick Beshee(95) which were made to fall on to the lower class of ryots were substituted."(96)

The farming system, where the wealthy ryots figured prominently as the village farmers, also became another source of misery for the poorer ryots. Sherburne, the Collector of Birbhum observed in 1788 that the mandals and the superior ryots of the district tried to nullify the effects of the new jamabandi (revenue settlement) which he was about to introduce by becoming the farmers of the villages : "The mundoles have proposed to be responsible for the jama of the respective villages, provided they were permitted to regulate the assessment."(97) Heatly, the Collector of Purnea, was more candid in saying that "a wealthy ryots taking a village in farm, by oppression, forced the poorer cultivators to desert their grounds which were suffered to be waste one or two years, and then by a bribe obtained, on low rates, pottahs."(98) Lokhbhara (revenue settlement with the ryots collectively) in the same district also adversely affected the poorer ryots. Lokhbhara was made when the zamindar

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(94) BR- P 7th July, 1790. No. 30.
(95) Utbandi nirk beshi : Probably an enhancement of rates of rents on the lands under cultivation.
(96) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790. No. 49.
(97) BR-P 8th July, 1788. No. 17.
(98) Ibid. 1st Feb/ 1790 No. 36.

failed to find suitable persons who would farm the parganas or mahals, so the ryots were collectively held responsible for the payment of the amoun from such parganas or mahals. The wealthy ryots, pretending to make an eq distribution of the assessment, measured the lands and overrated the land resources of the poorer ryots and underestimated theirs. Thus, the wealth ryots gained, while the poorer ryots lost by the Lokhbhara.(99)

Now let us examine the consequences of such an economic relations between the well-to-do or wealthy ryots and the poorer ryots.

Sherburne's brief remark concerning the situation in the district Birbhum that "the lands collusively held by the Mundoles, belonging to th they have excited to desert... such lands are held under the mofussil ten Benamy, or Pyecast, with the usual indulgence to such ryots,"(100) underl the most crucial aspect of the problem. Colebrooke explained the same mor elaborately : In the parganas of Dhurrumpore, Usjah, Sultanpore and Cutti the wealthy ryots through various means caused the poorer ryots to desert rented lands. Such deserted lands were eagerly taken in by "the fortunate neighbours" at the low rates of rents usual for such forsaken lands. This done, the expelled ryots were recalled by them to cultivate their former not any longer as the Pattahdars (the ryots who possessed pattahs or 'the registered ryots'), but as the under-ryots (adhiyars and Colait ryots) of wealthy ryots. The wealthy ryots, thus, elevated themselves from the stat of actual cultivators to that of an "intermediary tenantry." Colebrooke, concluded : "the accumulation of the land in the hands of a few wealthy r made a rapid progress through their such artifices(101).

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(99) BR-P 18th June, 1790. No. 18.
(100) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb. 1790. No. 49.
(101) BR-P 7th July, 1790. No. 30.

The following list of the holdings of several ryots in Purnea would show how rapidly their holdings expanded during a period of 20 years[102].

Table-9 : Comparison of the Jama paid by the sundry Ryots in 1179 M.Y (1771 A.D) and 1198 M.Y. (1790 A.D.)

Names	Land held in 1179.	Jama of 1179.	Land held in 1198*	Jama of 1198.	Jama which would be due from the ryots agreeably to the assul jama of 1179.
	Bighas	Rupees	Bighas	Rupees	Rupees.
Munbodh, son of Kenoo ryot of Urora.	205	95	360	58	119
Deer Sing Rai, son of Anop, Ryot of Pirwa Cooree	55	31	366	65	126
Dhola, ryot of Mohunpore.	244	94	273	33	93
Shankeer Ullah, Do.	49	14	248	52	85
Saduck, ryot of Dehta	222	20	291	28	76
Sydlal, Do.	113	65	484	47	119
Manullah, ryot of Buttorbaree	38	26	55	17	24
Durkakee, son of Cala Mundle, Do.	20	16	138	41	56

*In original, it is written as 1179, but evidently a mis-copying.

The above statement shows that the total quantity of lands held by these 8 ryots increased 2.3 times within 20 years, while their total jama slightly decreased. In 1179, they paid, on an average, rent of 6 annas 2 gandas per bigha, but in 1198 they paid only 2 annas 9 gandas.

(102) BR-P 7th July, 1790. No. 32.

The accumulation of lands in the hands of a few wealthy ryots, thus, accompanied a diminution of the number of the small self-sufficient ryots (our second gradation) and the increase of the size of the under-ryots and the agricultural labourers who were held in abject subjection to their masters (the well-to-do ryots). Such a decrease in the number of the small self-sufficient ryots was inevitable in the context of an actute shortage of labour. Mere accumulation of lands did not mean much, without the labour necessary for the cultivation of such lands. And the only source of labour that could be utilized for this was the small self-sufficient ryots. This would largely explain the need of the wealthy ryots to cause the poorer ryots to fall from the rank of the small independent peasants to that of the under-ryots and the agricultural labourers. The wealthy ryots organized such fallen peasants under them and carried on the cultivation of their accumulated privileged holdings through their labour. Colebrooke thus wrote :

"they [the wealthy ryots] have been annually adding to their quantity of land, taking in Waste lands, as they have been able to encrease the number of their under-Raiots, or by various arts compelling the poorer Raiots to resign their own Pottahs & cultivate for their benefit" He further observed; "A combination of a few raiots whose union and wealth give them great power & influence in the pargana has completely established this system within no very distant period. The consequence of which is that the cultivator instead of paying the moderate & equitable Rates which Government would exact either pays to an intermediate tenant, half the produce as his Addyadar, or a high Nuckdee Rent [money rent] as his Colait Raiots..."(103)

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(103) BR-P 18th June, 1790. No. 8.

Section 1-(2)-d The Differentiation among the small self-sufficient Ryots

- A brief historical Retrospect -

Our foregoing study shows that there was an unmistakable trend in agrarian society of north Bengal towards the polarization of the peasantry during the second half of the eighteenth century. This process of polarization was closely associated with the transformation of the form of the mofussil settlement, and the study of the latter would, therefore, provide us with an insight into the historical process of the former, which could not be directly examined due to the lack of sufficient source-materials.

Leading scholars on the agrarian system of Mughal India(104) are unanimous in pointing out the high pitch of the government demand; "The conditions of life of the peasant generally approximated to the lowest possible levels of subsis--tence," and owing to the high pitch of the state "the peasants cannot earn more than their subsistence."(105) There can be no doubt that during the hey day of the Mughal government, the mode of the mofussil settlement was more specific and particular as to the assessment of rent than what we found during the second half of the eighteenth century. The government officers kept a vigilant watch over the conduct of the ryots to prevent their misappropriation of the King's share in the produce and the stronger section of the ryots from becoming the oppressors of the weaker villagers. The kamungo system rendered a useful service in this regard.(106) Though there was a tendency towards economic disparity among the villagers in as early as Akbar's time,(107) a strong and efficient statemechanism seems to have been able to suppress the misconduct of "the dominant men of oppressive bent" of the village and the inequalities among

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(104) W.H.Moreland, "The agrarian System of Moslem India" 1929
I. Habib, "The Agrarian System of Mughal India" 1963.
(105) I. Habib, op. cit., p. 190.
(106) See J.Shore's minute of the 18th June, 1789, epitomized in chap. 7.
(107) I. Habib, op. cit., Pp. 128 to 129. Foot-note (37)

the villagers do not seem to have grown to any alarming height during the best days of the Mughals. The high pitch of the state demand also seems to have set a limitation on the growth of economic stratification among the peasantry. It was thus argued;

> "The heavy incidence of State demand must have also checked the growth of large inequalities of property and incomes amongst the members of the village community... Since every inch of cultivated land was subject to assessment in accordance with its area and yield and not much was left to the community beyond bare subsistence, no large inequalities could arise as a result of unequal and inequitable taxation. There were no large disparities in holdings of land as well"(108).

In short, due to the very high demand of the government and strict discipline in realizing it, the peasantry was in general poverty and there was little room for a small section of "dominant men of oppressive bent" to amass fortunes at the cost of the government and fellow-villagers. Under these conditions, the economic stratification among the peasants tended to be minimal and the burden of rent was more or less equitably borne by them. The majority of the peasantry, therefore, must have belonged to the class of small self-sufficient ryots.

As we shall see presently, this was more or less the case in north Bengal districts, also. The discriminating assessment of rent among the fellow-villagers, which was evidently the case during our period, had been much less in the best days of the Mughals, barring the privileges given to the Hindu high castes.

The political confusion before and immediately after the Company's accession to the Diwani(1765), the great famine of 1770, the ruinous effects of the public farming system at several different times and the resultant weakening of the zamindar's control over his estate were mainly accountable for the development of economic discrepancies among the villagers.

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(108) S. C. Gupta, "Agrarian Relations and early British Rule in India". 1963, p. 58

In the zamindari of Dinajpur the regular mofussil settlement of specific nature (fussili settlement) disappeared earlier than in the neighbouring zamindaris of Rangpur and Purnea. The answer of the kanungos of Dinajpur in 1790 to the question of J.H.Harington reads;

> "For a period of near twenty five years, the Assil and Abwab of this Pargana have not been fixed on Fussulwaree nirkhs[table of rates of rents arranged according to the kinds of crop]. The Assil and Abwab consolidated have constituted the assets of the collection...each village has a separate rate...If [the assets of the zamindari was] reduced by desertions or want of cultivation, the deficiency has been made good from the assets of the actual cultivation, by allotment thereto in order to provide the Malgoozaree[revenue] which thus been supplied".(109)

Thus the fussili settlement disappeared from the zamindari of Dinajpur at nearly the same time when the Company acquired the Dewani. This most probably resulted from the excessive exaction by the Nawab Mir Kasim and the public farmer(thikadar) who leased out the whole zamindari at a sum which was more than double what the estate used to pay in 1761 & 1762(110). The severities exercised at this time caused a great desertion. From 1761 to 1775, the state-demand continued to be exorbitantly high(111) and such an unprecedentedly high demand could only be realized by drastically altering the existing mode of regular mofussil settlement. Though annual survey was still continued, it was no longer a minute survey of the actual capacity of the lands, but a kind of rough inspection(112). The rent was fixed by annual negotiations between the zamindar and the small local farmers(kutkindars). Under such loose mofussil settlement(tahudi settlement), the ryots reduced the nirkhs(rates of rents) and assil jama in collusion with the zamindari officers and ijaradars, and new taxes were imposed to make up for the deficiency in the assets thus created(113). Until Hatch's reforms(1788 to 1791), the irregularity in the

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(109) Harington Report, Enclosure No.24
(110) See section 1-(1)-b of chap. 2.
(111) See Appendix (a) to chap. 2
(112) CCR-P 10th May 1772 No.6 & BDR-DNR. Vol. 2, 17th March 1787 No. 125
(113) See Section 1 (2) & (3) of chap. 1 & Section 5 of chap. 4.

mofussil settlement continued. The implications of this transformation in the mofussil settlement and its irregularity for the differentiation among the peasantry will be studied later.

Concerning the zamindari of Sboroopoor, we have fairly sufficient information to trace the changes in the mode of the mofussil settlement. In 1790, Ram Surrun Serma who had acted as the village amin of nine villages for many years related the changes in the mode of the mofussil settlement of the villages under his jurisdiction. In these villages, the regular mofussil settlement of the fussili type with annual survey & adjustment was practised until 1183 B.S. (1776 A.D.). In 1183 B.S., the zamindari was put under the khas management of government and a sezwal was sent to take charge of the estate. He made an actual survey of the state of cultivation (hast-o-bud) and granted considerable abatements of rents to the ryots. In the next year when the zamindar regained the management of the pargana, he sent his naib to the pargana and disapproved of the previous year's abatement, and made the settlement of the pargana Tahudi Milani [114] for the first time. The naib worked out the tahudi jama by tripling the assil jama of the pargana without making any investigation into its actual assets. Next year (1185 B.S.), the zamindar sent another naib into the pargana and adopted the same method in fixing his demand on the pargana as in the previous year, but the assil jama was multiplied $4\frac{1}{2}$ times this year. Another innovation was introduced this year : A levy called Andazi Beshi (estimated increase of assets due to new cultivation) was exacted from the ryots. In 1186 & 1187, the same system was continued. In 1188 the zamindari was farmed out to a public farmer named Nandlal who deputed his naib to the pargana. The naib demanded an exorbitant increase. The ryots of the pargana resisted him by force and at length turned him out before the collection of the

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(114) Tahudi Milani : Assessment on the agreement of the both parties.

heaviest instalment began. The naib then returned the pargana with 100 Telinga soldiers and all the ryots absconded. He took whatever he could lay his hands on but no regular collection of rent was made in this year. In 1189, the pargana became khas, and a government officer (sezwal) was sent to the pargana. He granted deductions according to the depopulated condition of the pargana and adjusted the jama by calculating the abwabs at large and making up the difference below the tahudi jama by an increase of andazi beshi. The same was continued in 1190. In 1191, the zamindar recovered the management of the pargana and sent a naib. He was instructed by his master to restore as far as possible the jama of 1187. For this purpose, the naib imposed a considerable increase "both in the assil jumma and under the head of andazee Beyshee." In 1192 & 1193, the same was continued. In 1194, two more levies under the names of Nazir salami(115) and Gram Thaki(116) were added to the former year's jama. The ryots protested against these new impositions but were forced to pay them. In 1195, a conside-rable increase was demanded in the name of Deriabad (new cultivation), "tho' in truth, it was not an increase account new cultivation... but a general cess on the ryots levied in proportion to their former Jumma." The ryots resisted and tried to make this new imposition a temporary one which they agreed to pay. But the zamindar wanted it included in the jama of the pargana and collected annually. After negotiations were made, the ryots at last submitted to the zamindar and signed a tahud for the same and were held responsible for the payment thereof.

The following table shows how the jama of these nine villages fluctuated between 1186 B.S. (1779 A.D.) and 1195 B.S. (1788 A.D.)

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(115) Nazir Salami : A present, a gift.
(116) Gram Thaki : A village contribution to Chanda Thakur (Hindu priest)

Total of Tahudi Milani of 9 villages under Ram Surrun Serma from 1186 to 1195 B.S.

Year	Total jama Sa Rs.	Indices.
1186 B.S.	2,697	100
1187	2,697	100
1188	not available	-
1189	2,378	88
1190	2,540	94
1191	2,982	111
1192	2,982	111
1193	2,982	111
1194	3,156	117
1195	3,443	128

Source : Harington Report Appendix (D)

Thus the transformation of the mode of mofussil settlement from the fussili type to the tahudi type took place in 1777 in the zamindari of Boroopoor. Since then the ryots cultivated whatever kinds of crop according to their inclination and "pay the former Assil Jumma with their proportion of the Tahood Jumma of the village, whatever it may be."

Under the tahudi settlement, the annual rent of the villages as well as the amount of the new imposts were determined through negotiations between the zamindar and the principal ryots. It is beyond doubt that the paramanicks and principal ryots were won over by the zamindar from time to time through the grants of privileged holdings and exemptions from the new impositions. The wealthy ryots, on their part, bribed the village amins and had their assil jama reduced. The assil jama thus became "unequal beyond measure, altogether void of

proportion to the produce." The economic disparities between the wealthy ryots and the poorer ones thus widened under the loose system of mofussil settlement (tahudi settlement) which was done without the annual adjustment of assil jama on the basis of an annual investigation into the actual condition of the cultivation(117).

Colebrooke's reports on the rates of rents in the several parganas of Purnea district in 1790 furnish us with the most useful information on the topic in question(118).

In Purnea, the "ancient durbandi (rates of rents)" was more or less "uniform throughout each Moza and equal in villages similarly circumstanced." Under it, "none but a few Brahmins and Rajepoots... enjoyed privileges or exemptions" and the rates were regulated according to "the soil & produce." Though the ancient durbandi was equitable as to the distribution of revenue among the peasantry, it was, as repeatedly remarked by Colebrooke, quite heavy.

Such regular and equitable durbandi began to be distorted by the successive impositions of new taxes (gandah, behry, mamool & ca.) in the 1760's and the total amount of the new taxes exceeded the assil jama in many parganas in the 1770's. However, the great famine of 1770, the subsequent "excessive cheapness of grains" and the oppression of the public farmers in 1772 were the decisive and immediate factors in the transformation of the mode of mofussil settlement from "the ancient durbandi" system to a looser one. The introduction of a system of imposing the deficiency of rent, which was created by the desertion and deaths, on the remaining ryots immediately after the great famine, further aggravated the situation. Imposition of levies led to desertions and the desertions necessitated the further enhancement of the rent of the remaining

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(117) Harington Report Appendix D.
(118) BR-P 18th June, 1790 Nos. 7 to 23. & Ibid. 7th July, 1790. Nos. 26 to 38 & Ibid. 20th Oct. 1790. Nos. 39 to 40 & Ibid. 22nd Oct. 1790 Nos. 50 to 52.

ryots who were this increasingly compelled to desert their habitations. Under such an alarming circumstance, the zamindars were obliged to grant large concessions to the ryots in order to call back the absconding ones to their former habitations. In the pargana of Usjah, the amil (officer) introduced a great innovation in the mode of the mofussil settlement in 1774, because "the pargana had been much depopulated by the mortality which followed the great famine. The rents with the abwabs & behry were too high to encourage the industry of the ryots & to invite the new settlers." Under the new system, "all lands of whatever description" were let out at "beghatee / or a number of Begas per Rupee /. "The rate formally adopted by the amil was 4 bighas per rupee, but actually more indulgences were given with the result that the rates varied from 4 to 12 bighas per rupee. In the pargana of Beernagar, the zamindar, instead of changing the mode of settlement as was the case in Usjah, reduced the rates of rents (durbandi) "to invite their (ryots') return" in 1772. Another method adopted by some of the zamindars to restore the former level of cultivation was as follows; "To raise the rents of the ryots 2 annas in the rupee & assessing the Jumma so increased at the reduced & consolidated rate of a rupee for every Begah, to measure off to the ryots as much waste & fallow land as would correspond with his Jumma at that rate of assessment." For example, a ryot who held 7 bighas of land at the jama of Rs.12 including the abwabs had now to pay Rs.13-8, he, on the other hand, received 6 bighas 10 cottahs of waste land without any increase in his jama.

In many parganas of Purnea, the "ancient durbandi" thus disappeared and various loose modes of mofussil settlement were introduced in its place in the early 1770's.

The ryots, especially the wealthy ryots, did everything in their power to reduce the rates of rents of their respective holdings by taking advantage of the relaxed control of the zamindar over his estate and the loose mode of the mofussil settlement. They did so at the cost of both the zamindar and the

poorer ryots. In Purnea the following methods were adopted by the ryots in order to attain the abovementioned objective.

(1) The ryots very often obtained reduction in the rates of rents through collusion. For example, the principal Ryots of Sultanpore agreed "to pay him [the zamindari officer] an anna Mungnee [impost] as a recompence for the deduction he had granted them in the ground rent at the beginning of the season."(119) Such reductions in Rates were quite generally granted in many parganas. The important point in this is that it was "mostly confined to the leading Ryots."

(2) The practice of obtaining privileged pottahs through false means also was widely observed. Abusive grants of Khasht Pottahs (leases at low rates of assessment to persons of some consideration) were the common method. The abusive grants of pottahs at low rates in the disguise of Kami Kefayet Pottah (lease given at privileged rate for encouraging the cultivation of waste land), pahi kasht pottah and those given to the new settlers were also often practised. Most of these abusive grants were made after the Company's accession to the Dewani. In the parganas of Cudwa, Haveli Purnea and Sultanpore, they occupied nearly 10% of the malguzari (rent-paying) lands.

(3) The ryots changed the measure of land in collusion with the under-renters. The standard measure was altered and even the ryots of the same village had different measures of land. This was a new practice which became prevalent in Purnea in the 1770's & the 1780's.

(4) The rates of rents were multiplied so much so that now in some villages, such number went upto 34 to 60. Such complicated distinctions were "introduced for the purpose of lowering the Rents by transfering land from the first sort to a lower denomination of the same produce."

(5) The ryots possessed several holdings of lands in fictitious names and by showing fictitious desertions and deaths, obtained lower rates for the same.

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(119) PCR-DNR-P 1st Feb. 1780. Other instances were taken from Colebrooke's reports. cf. foot-note (118).

(6) The ryots received indulgence in the rates of rents from the zamindar in the name of Kamdhara. If the formal rate of rice land was Rs.2, the Kamdhara ryots received the land at the rate of Rs.1-8. This practice was so widely practiced in Purnea that only a very few and poorest ryots paid their rent at full rate (Purdhara).

The regular mofussil settlement of fussili type which was the prevalent mode during the best days of the Mughals was thus transformed into a mode which was less regular or into one having less connection with the productivity of the soils (tahudi type). Under the latter mode, the amount of the village-jama was determined mainly through negotiations between the zamindar and the represen--tatives of the villages (paramanicks, mandals, pradhan ryots etc) and it was greatly influenced by the relative position of the zamindar and the ryots in each locality. Where the scarcity of labour was acute and the zamindar's control over his estate was weak or ineffectual, the ryots could obtain better conditions.

As we have seen, the ryots of Purnea, Rangpur and Dinajpur tried their best to lessen the rent-burden through various means, and the wealthier ones consequently acquired better conditions than the poorer ones by making use of their local influence and means. But so far, the ryots reaped their gains at the cost of the zamindar's assets and, therefore, such manoeuvres were "supported by the rest [of the ryots] as if it were a common cause"(120). The participation of the poorer ryots in the agrarian disturbances led by the wealthy ryots mostly for the sake of the latters' rather narrow interests should be explained in this context as well as by the wealthy ryots' overwhelming influence over the poorer ones through the supply of vital agricultural loans(121).

The wealthy ryots sought to increase their share in the produce of the country not merely at the cost of the zamindars. They, taking advantage of the weakened local control of the zamindar and the loose mode of the mofussil

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(120) BR-P 7th July, 1790. No. 30.
(121) See section 3 of chap. 5.

settlement, eventually brought about the ruin of the many of the poorer ryots (small self sufficient ryots).[122]

It would be wrong to attribute the fall of many small self-sufficient ryots to the manoeuvre of the wealthy ryots alone. However, when we study the cases of the fall of the poorer ryots it becomes clear that their role in bringing about the pauperization of the small self sufficient ryots and their consequent fall was of material importance. Let us take some instances which illustrate this.

(1) As noted above, in the pargana of Usjah in Purnea, the zamindar adopted the bighati system to encourage the cultivation of the country and restore its former population. Consequently, the ryots who possessed better land benefited from its uniform rates. And "as carried into effect it has been attended with greater inequalities & the rates vary from 4 to 12 bighas without any assignable cause but that the ryots have been treated with unequal degree of favour"[123]. It would be superfluous to say who were treated with favour and who were not. The jumma thus unequally assessed became the standard on which the subsequent numerous cesses were distributed.

(2) The Imposition of new taxes was very extensively practised in our period and it formed the major portion of the jama paid by the ryots. In Dinajpur, Purnea, Rangpur, Birbhum, Rajshahi[123A] and Murshidabad we have evidence that high caste Hindus, maldals, paramanicks, jotedars and the other holders of privileged holdings were partly or wholly exempted from the new taxes. Thus the new taxes which were apparently levied uniformaly on the country were in fact borne by the poorer ryots who were least able to bear it. The principal ryots of Birbhum and Purnea thus easily accepted the payment of a contribution when the zamindar tried to make measurement of the pargana and they threatened the majority of the ryots into consenting to it.

(3) We have already described how the zamindars adopted the tahudi type of mofussil settlements in many districts to ensure the minimal amount of revenue from their estates the assets of which were continuously decreasing on account of the manoeuvres of the ryots. In Purnea, a

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(122) See section 1-(2)-c of this chapter.
(123) BR-P 18th June 1790 No. 8
(123A) BR-P 28th May 1790 No. 8

peculiar type of tenure known as Kam Khasht was introduced in many parganas. The Kam kasht tenure stipulated "that the ryot shall make good his Jumma of the preceeding year, whether he cultivates to that amount or not, and shall pay separately for any surplus cultivation"(124). By the introduction of this tenure, the durbandi became obsolete and "the Rents have been in many places adjusted... without a measurement" and "while some ryots are under-rated, others over-rated by the adjustment"(125). Furthermore, the additional demands as calculated on the pottah's rate "raises the rents beyond what is equitable to require from the poor ryots, whose rates have not been considerably reduced, while it only serves to enable the wealthy ryots who holds leases at very low rates to increase their cultivation, and possess themselves of more lands without any addition to their rents"(126).

Under the loose system the wealthy ryots thus much benefited at the cost of the poorer ryots directly or indirectly.

Now let us examine the relation between the types of village settlement and the economic differentiation of the peasantry. In the zamindari of Bitterbund in Rangpur where the fussili settlement was still prevalent, the village jama fluctuated according to the state of the cultivation, and its distribution amongst the villagers was less liable to frauds and abuses by the principal ryots, because the zamindar could check it in the annual survey.

In the zamindari of Sboroopoor where the tahudi settlement was prevalent and the village amins were appointed by the zamindar, the village jama had lost its close relation with the real resources of the village. However, the distribution of the village jama was made by the zamindari officers and the zamindar could check the abuses of the principal ryots to some degree. He sometimes actually ordered the redistribution of the village jama amongst the villagers to equalize the rent-burden. By the 1790, the stratification amongst the ryots had already reached a remarkable level mainly through the collusions

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(124) BR-P 28th May 1790 No. 8
(125) BR-P 22nd Oct. 1790 No. 50
(126) BR-P 22nd Oct. 1790 No. 50

between the wealthy ryots and the village amins(127).

In the zamindaris of Birbhum, Dinajpur and Purnea, the tahudi settlement was prevalent and the villages were very often farmed out to the mandals and wealthy ryots. On such occasions, the distribution of the village jama and the additional imposts was trusted to the village-farmers-cum-principal ryots. The zamindars had no longer any means to check the unequal distributions of the village jamas and the ordinary and poorer ryots were forced to bear the disproportionally heavy rates of rents, while the wealthy ryots enjoyed the low rates. The village as the unit of rent collection could thus easily be reduced to an instrument of exploitation of the poorer ryots by the wealthy ones under this type of settlement(128).

The small self sufficient ryots who had presumably constituted the majority of the peasantry during the hey day of the Mughal government, thus rapidly disintegrated during our period through the various factors enumerated above. Many of them fell to the ranks of under-ryots or agricultural labourers, while a few of very fortunate ones elevated themselves to the level of the well-to-do ryots. This process, though we could not examine it fully due to scarcity of the relevant information, proceeded sided by side with the transformation of the mode of the mofussil settlement. This was the process of economic differentiation within the peasantry, which was quite different from the traditional social stratification. The wealthy ryots thus accumulated their privileged holdings and organized the fallen small self-sufficient ryots as their under-ryots(129). By 1790, the number of the small self-sufficient ryots was reduced to one sixth of the population of the ryots, and the well-to-do ryots who formed about one fifth of the peasant population acquired 60 to 70 % of the malguzari land(130).

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(127) See section 1-(1) of chap. 1 & section 1-(1) of this chapter.
(128) See section 1-(2)-c of this chapter
(129) Do
(130) See section 1-(1)-b of this chapter

Section 2 : The Management of the Ryoti-holdings.

As noted earlier, there were three economic gradations in the peasantry of northern Bengal in the late 18th century. Each of the three gradations had different ways of managing their holdings in relation to the three fundamental elements of the agricultural production (land, labour and stock).

For the sake of convenience, we study first the management of the ryoti-holdings of the second gradation.

(1) The Management of the Ryoti-holdings of the second Gradation

The second gradation consisted of the small self-sufficient ryots, and constituted about one sixth of the peasant population(131). Most of the holdings of this gradation were under the regular mofussil settlement and formed part of village. They had to pay the full rent and impositions. In some localities, the mode of assessment was Fussli (according to the articles of cultivation, and the quantity and quality of the soil), in others it was Tahudi or Thika or Hari or Chukani (according to the quantity and quality of the soil only). In the former case, the ryots had to pay the difference in the rates of rents, if he changed the article of the cultivation(132). In the latter, the ryots could cultivate any crops they chose without being subject to the payment of the difference on this account. Not unfrequently, both types of assessment co-existed in the same village and the ryots possessed both at a time(133).

The cultivation of the holdings of this gradation was, as a rule, done by the family labour alone.

The owners of such holdings possessed the minimum agricultural stock and could do without loans from the rich neighbours or from the merchants.

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(131) See section 1-(1)-b of this chapter
(132) BR-W-P 6th Novr. 1792 No. 10A.
(133) In Sooroopoor, we find the co-existence of ordinary ryoti-lands and chukani lands(fixed assessment) BR-P, 22nd March 1790.
In Nadia also, a ryot possessed both the ordinary fussli land and hari land(fixed assessment), BR-P, 5th August,1794 Nos. 10 to 16.

What was the minimum agricultural stock required of a ryot of this gradation to carry on the cultivation of his holding on his own account ? To answer this, two different calculations should be made; firstly, when a ryot started the cultivation as a new settler, and secondly, when he had already established himself as a settled ryot and possessed the house and the agricultural implements. The latter required only such stock as had to be supplemented annually.

Buchanan observed that a ryot of the first type should have the following stock : Agricultural implements... Rs.2-12, two plough-oxen... Rs.6, seed for 15 bighas... Rs.3-6, house... Rs.5, furniture...Rs.3-4, clothing and ornaments... Rs.4-0,food for six months until his first crops are for use...Rs.15, rent for six months at 10 annas a year... Rs.4-11, total Rs.47-1(134). This seems to be an over-estimation. Buchanan wrote in another place that a humble house could be built at 9 annas if the ryot himself made it(135). Similarly, the expenses on the ornaments, furnitures & clothing could be reduced to Rs.3-11. The expense of food for six months would be put at Rs.8-5 according to his own calculation of the diet for a family of a common labourer(136). Upon this modest estimation, the above sum is reduced to Rs.29-6 or about Rs.30.

If we consider that the annual wage of a common labourer was Rs.18 (Rs.6 in money and the rest in the food and cloths), the difficulty for a common labourer to climb up to the status of an independent small ryot. would be understood.

The ryots of the second type required only those stocks which had to be supplemented or replaced annually. The annual replacement cost of the

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(134) F.Buchanan, 'Dinajpur' p. 237.
(135) See Appendix (b) to this section.
(136) Do.

perishable and durable implements would be estimated at about one rupee. Most of the implements of the perishable nature must have been supplemented by the produce of his holdings and only those which required a skill in manufacturing them were purchased. For the future replacement of the plough-oxen, he should have saved a rupee a year. Seed was available from the previous year's paddy of his holding. For the repair and replacement of the house, furniture, ornament & clothing, Rs.3 would be enough. Generally, a ryot owned both the khyar land and the pali land and the latter was capable of producing the early crops like spring rice (boro), summer rice (aus), and cotton (kapas). The sale of these crops would have made it possible for him to pay the rent during the early part of the year. The various produces of the pali land would furnish the family with the required food until the winter rice, which was the main crop, was reaped in November, December and January. The necessary stock for the second type of the ryot at the beginning of the year, would, thus cost less than Rs.6 (half of the replacement cost, half of clothing and seed). A settled ryot, therefore, could continue his cultivation from year to year with a small fund of Rs.6 (including the seed) or Rs.2-10 (excluding the seed) at the beginning of the year.

Now let us examine how the holdings of the ryots of this gradation were utilized. The following examples taken from Harington's report on the zamindari of Sooroopoor throw light on the utilization of the holdings.

Munsoor, a ryot of Hurrupoor held 5-10 local bighas (9-15 Calcutta bighas) of land and cultivated Bhadai rice (aus rice) and Mustard. Kaloo of the same village held 6 local bighas (13 Calcutta bighas) of land and cultivated Bhadai rice and Mustard(137).

Dyaram, a ryot of Roganatpoor, was a fairly big cultivator possessing 32 Calcutta bighas. His Tahud Jama was Rs.32, but, in fact, paid Rs.50 in 1195 B.S. (1788 A.D.). The main products of his land were rice, mustard, kalae(138).

(137) Harington Report. Main Report.
(138) Kalae : A kind of pulse.

He grew pan (betel-nut), sugar-cane, mulberry, cotton and tobacco but to a very small degree. He stood on the border-line of the second gradation and the third gradation (well-to-do ryots).

Harington prepared the following statement showing a typical holding with the standard varieties and quantities of the several articles of the cultivation on the basis of the information collected during his survey in the Sooroopoor zamindari in 1790.

Table-10 : A Statement showing a typical Holding in Sooroopoor.

(local bighas)

Articles of cultivation.	Quantity of land.	Value of produce per bigha	Total value
	Bighas	Rs. As.	Rs. As.
Shalee-do (Aghani Dhan & Bhadai Dhan)	2	4	8
Shalee-lal (Aghani Dhan only)	6	3- 8	21
Bhadai Dhan	1	1- 8	1- 8
Serree-do (Mustard & Bhadai Dhan)	1	2	2
Serree-lal (Mustard only)	1	1	1
Takuri-do(Takuri kalae & Bhadai Dhan)	1	2- 1	2- 1
Takuri-lal (Takuri kalae only)	1	1- 1	1- 1
Wehur	1	1- 4	1- 4
Mussor-do(Mussor[139] & Bhadai Dhan)	1	1-12	1-12
Mussor-lal (Mussor only)	1	0-12	0-12
Total :	16 local bighas		40- 6
Deduct seed			2- 6
Remaining produce, or 2 Rs. 6 As. per bigha		Sa Rs.	38- 0

Source : BR-P 22nd March 1790 No. 14 to 15, Main Report.

The above statement shows that the total cultivation of this typical

(139) Masur : A kind of pulse.

holding was 21 bighas, considering the double cropped land. Out of 21 bighas, 14 bighas were applied for the production of rice (aghani dhan 8 bighas & bhadai dhan 6 bighas), 2 bighas for mustard, 2 bighas for masoor, 2 bighas for thakuri kalae and 1 bigha for wehur.

The Bhadai rice was of inferior quality and mainly used for home-consumption. Most of the aghani rice must have been sold, as it was of fine quality and fetched a good price. After the deduction for home-consumption, the surplus portion of various produces were sold locally. The following statement shows the average produce per bigha and price of several articles in the zamindari of Sooroopoor.

Table-11 : A Statement showing the average Produce and Prices of several Articles of Cultivation in Sooroopoor in 1790.

Articles	Average produce per local bighas	Quantity of produces per rupee	Average value of produce per bigha.
	Mds Srs	Mds Srs	Rs. As.
Shalee (aman rice)	10-29	3- 0	3- 9
Bhadai (aus rice)	7-12	4-30	1- 9
Mustard	1-35	1-30	1- 1
Takuri kalae	1-39	1-30	1- 2
Wehur	1-20	1- 5	1- 5
Masoor	1-39	2-25	0-12

(reference)
Source : BR-P 22nd March 1790 Main Report.

The above typical holding did not contain such articles as sugar-cane, tobacco, cotton and pat (jute), but it is probable that a holding of this size (16 local bighas or 28.5 Calcutta bighas) contained cultivation of these articles chiefly for home-consumption. Similarly, almost all kinds of vegetables were produced in garden around the residence. Buchanan found that "a man who

has a plough cultivates a certain extent of land, in which he has a proportion of many of the different grains abovementioned [viz., rice, barley, pulses, oil-seed, cotton etc. in rotation]." (140)

The ryots of this gradation, thus, produced almost all the necessaries of life in their own holdings. They, therefore, did not need much money for their living. Iron implements, salt and the cattle were the articles to be purchased with cash. In their budgets, rent payment was the largest disbursement in money. Let us suppose that they paid 1 Re. per local bigha as their rent including every charge. The holder of the above typical holding paid Rs.16. The sale of the aghani rice (8 bighas) would have brought him Rs.28 and this was more than sufficient to pay up his rent and all other house-hold expenditures. The 6 bighas of bhadai land produced, on an average, about 44 maunds of paddy or about 32 maunds of rice which was enough for the annual home-consumption of his family.(141) Besides the income from the sale of the aghani rice, he could expect a certain amount of money from the sale of the surplus portion of the oil-seed, pulses, vegetables, tobacco, cotton &ca produced in his holding.

Thus, a ryot with the holding of 28 Calcutta bighas could get along with ease. It was not difficult for him to accumulate a certain amount of capital if he was cautious in his expenditure, and to take up more lands using additional labour.

We have no materials which directly show the management by the average ryot of this gradation with 12 to 15 Calcutta bighas. Let us suppose a holding of 8 local bighas (14 Calcutta bighas) with the same proportion of the articles of cultivation as those of the abovementioned one.

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(140) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur. p. 185.
(141) This family presumably contained two male adult, because its holding required two ploughs for cultivation. Therefore, 32 maunds of rice was just enough for the home-consumption.

In this case, the sale of the aghani rice would have brought him Rs.14, out of which Rs.8 were paid as rent and about Rs.3 were set aside for the expenses of the cultivation of the ensuing year. The produce of the bhadai rice (16 maunds of rice) was insufficient for his home-consumption. He, therefore, either consumed part of his aghani rice or purchased the coarse rice from the local market. He must have preferred selling all his aghani rice and purchasing bhadai rice to consuming his aghani rice for home-use. To purchase the necessary 9 maunds of bhadai rice (13 maunds of paddy), he required Rs.2-12, while by selling the same quantity of aghani rice he could obtain Rs.4-5. All other necessaries of life, he could supply from his own holding. He could save money by using ashes in stead of salt. He, thus, was not in such an easy condition as the foregoing one, but could pay up his rent and get along without difficulty. He could even expect a small surplus at the end of the year, besides the necessary stocks for the ensuing year.

(2) The Management of the Ryoti-holdings of the first Gradation :

The first gradation of the ryots consisted of the needy ones below the level of self-sufficiency, and constituted more than half of the peasant population. They, generally, possessed the minimum agricultural stock sufficient to keep a plough and held a few bighas of rented lands where they built their houses and grew Bhadai rice, mustard, pulses, vegetables, pat &ca. The agricultural stock in their possession was so insufficient that they had to depend for their bare subsistence on loans from their neighbours. This circumstance prevented them from taking up more lands on their own account. In order to support their families, they had to work as hired labourers or cultivate lands of other people on share-cropping (adhi). When working as share-croppers (adhiyars), they almost always borrowed the seed and repaid it with interest at the rate of 100 %[142]. They were known as adhiyars and pirjas.

(142) F.Buchanan, Purnea, p. 443.

The following description, taken from Paterson's report on Baldacaul gives us a vivid idea of the way the people of this gradation managed to get along ;

> "During the time he can spare from his own little field, he hired himself out as a labourer, whilst his wife employs herself at home in spinning of cotton. A Riatt of this description can not afford to pay above 2 cannies(143) of land at furthest, & to do that he must be allowed Tuccavi. The produce of his land without the above occasional resources could not maintain him, especially if he has a family."(144)

We have good reason to believe that the above description of a ryot of a pargana which was included in the district of Tipperah was also applicable to northern Bengal. Buchanan also observed that the income of the wives as cleaners of rice and spinners of cotton was indispensable for the subsistence of their families(145).

Let us examine the income and disbursement of the ryots of this gradation. In this calculation, we cannot depend on Buchanan's data, as he entirely ignored the produce from their small rented land and his supposition that the adhiyars could get half of the gross produce of their land was unrealistic.

For our estimate, we may choose a ryot possessing 2 local bighas (3-12 Calcutta bighas) of rented land and 6 local bighas (10-14 Calcutta bighas) of the adhi land. On the rented land, he would cultivate Bhadai rice as the first crop and various kinds of pulses, oil-seed, vegetables, pat(jute) & ca. as the second crop. On the adhi land he would exclusively cultivate paddy. Two bighas of Shalee-lal(aghani dhan only), two bighas of Shalee-do(aghani dhan & bhadai dhan) and two bighas of Bhadai-lal(bhadai dhan only) would be a fair composition of the adhi land. From the rented land, he would get all the

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(143) One canny im Baldacaul was 130 square yards smaller than one Calcutta bigha which was 1,600 square yards.
(144) BR-P 7th May, 1789. No. 35.
(145) F. Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 244.

necessary pulses, gree vegetables, jute & oil-seed for home consumption and about 14½ maunds of bhadai paddy. From the adhi land, he would receive one third of the gross produce; about 14 maunds of aghani paddy and 10 maunds of bhadai paddy. He would sell the aghani paddy and obtain Rs.4-11. 24½ maunds of bhadai paddy he would get from both rented and adhi land was inadequate for home-consumption. He, therefore, had to purchase 11½ maunds from the local market at about Rs.2-7. He would pay Rs.2½ as rent for his rented land, pay 1 rupee for seed for rented land,(146) and set aside Rs.2 for supplementing and replacing the worn-out implements and for the future replacement of his plough-oxen. For clothing, repairment of house, ornaments &ca. Rs.3 would be sufficient(147). To sum up, his total expenditure would amount to about Rs.10, while his income amounted only to Rs.4-11. His deficiency had to be made good by the earning of his wife who, if she laboured very hard throughout the year, earned Rs.7-12 from cleaning of rice and Rs.2-8 from spinning. This family, thus, could get along with the income of husband and wife without difficulty. This was, however, a very precarious subsistence. His wife would become pregnant every few years and, on such occasions, the husband's income alone was far from adequate to their needs, and he had to borrow from the rich neighbours. The repayment of such loans with the known exorbitant interest(148) would involve him in recurring debts. Buchanan, thus, observed : "Most of the adhiyars and small farmers are more indebted to them than the whole value of their stock, and for six months in the year starve, did not the wealthy farmers advance them grain to eat."(149)

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(146) For adhi land, he received seed from his employer and repaid it in kind with interest at the rate of 100%.
(147) See Appendix (b) to this chapter.
(148) See section 3-(3) of this chapter.
(149) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 235.

Below the adhiyars, there were agricultural labourers (krishans) whose economic condition was still worse. According to Buchanan's statistics[150] they formed 18 % of the rural population. They had not the stock even to keep a pair of plough-oxen, and, thus, unable to rent any land on their own account. They wholly depended on the income derived from wage-labour. The following is the expense and income of a krishan's family as calculated by Buchanan[151].

Income		
Man's wage	6- 0- 0	
Woman's earning from beating rice	7-12- 0	
Do from spinning	2- 8- 0	Rs. 16- 4- 0
Expense of a family of the lowest order	22-11- 0	
Deduct man's clothing	0-10- 0	
Do food	5- 8- 9	Rs. 16- 8- 3

As the krishans received their wages both in money and in kind (food & clothing), expense of food and clothing of a male adult was deducted in the above statement.

A krishan could, thus, earn just enough for his subsistence. Here again the earning of wife formed an indispensable source of income. All his food and other necessaries of life had to be purchased, and the slightest rise in the prices of grains affected him greatly. It would have been almost impossible for him to get along without loans from his rich neighbours who were often their employers.

(3) The Management of the Ryoti-holdings of the third Gradation :

The ryots of the third gradation were well-to-do and constituted about 20 % of the peasant population. They held 60 to 76 % of the ryoti lands, and had them cultivated by agricultural labourers (krishan) and share-croppers (adhiyars).

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(150) See Table-7 Section 1-(1)-c, chap. 6.
(151) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 245.

They often possessed different types of tenures at a time. The huzuri jotedars in the zamindari of Boroopoor owned both lands under the regular mofussil settlement and lands separated from the villages and assessed at privileged rates of rents. The following abstract statement of the holding of a well-to-do ryot in Burdwan clearly illustrates this.

Table-12 : An Abstract of Account of Kishen Mandal, Ryot of the village Culana in the Pargana of Ranahutty in the district of Burdwan for 1180 B.S.

Kinds of Tenures.	Quantity	Assil Jama	Do.per bigha	Abwab	Do.per bigha	Total Jama	Do.per bigha
Khodkasht Jama	9- 5	9- 3	1- 0	21- 2	2- 4	30- 5	3- 4
Tika Jama	17- 0	12-12	0-12	25- 6	1- 8	38-33	2- 4
Patkur or Pahikasht	15- 0	14-15	1- 0	13- 4	0-14	28- 3	1-14
Kharij Cossipoor or land cultivated in another village	6- 0	3- 1	0- 8	5-14	1- 0	8-15	1- 8
	47- 5	40- 0	0-14	65-10	1- 6	105-12	2- 4

Source : SKR-P 26th July 1776 No. 134 Enclosures.

Kishen Mandal, thus, held lands under four kinds of tenures. The khodkasht Jama land must have been under the regular mofussil settlement and paid the full abwabs. Other lands were under different privileged tenures and paid much less. The apparently high rate of rent was deceptive. It was a common practice for ryots to hold more lands than were registered in the zamindari records, thus enabling them to pay up such a high rate of rent. He held 9-5 bighas under the regular mofussil settlement and 38 bighas under the privileged assessment of various natures. This would have been the result of his effort to evade payment of the full rent.

The wealthy ryots usually possessed the best land in the locality(152) and were, thus, in an advantageous position in respect of cultivation of their

(152) Harington Report, Main Report

lands. For example, the Shalee land of the first quality produced, according to the survey of J.H.Harington(153), 15 maunds 2 seers per local bigha, the second quality, 10 maunds 6 seers and the third quality, 7 maunds. The possession of one bigha of the first quality Shalee land, thus, was more valuable than that of two bighas of the Shalee land of the third quality. The best Shalee land produced 15 maunds of aman rice which were sold at Rs. 5, while the third quality Bhadai land produced 4 maunds 36 seers of bhadai rice which were sold at Re 1-1 only. Moreover, the good Shalee-do land could yield the highly profitable crops like sugar-cane, mulberry & ca.

The well-to-do ryots held more lands than what they could cultivate by their family labour. They, therefore, employed agricultural labourers (krishans) and sublet the surplus lands to needy ryots on adhi contracts. The well-to-do ryots advanced loans to the krishans and adhiyars who were badly in need of them, and such loans enabled the former to procure labour at a rate much lower than what they otherwise could get.

The possession of the best land at a low rate of rent and the availability of labour at a cheaper price were the economic foundations of their large privileged holdings.

Now let us examine the nature of land-utilizations by the wealthy ryots. F.Buchanan quoted three statements which he had selected one from each kind of land among the many statements submitted to him by the ryots. The following Table-13 will provide a summary of the data. His data, though invaluable for our study, can not be accepted at their face value. Buchanan deducted one half of the gross produce as the expenses of cultivation. It could not have been as large. According to the present author's calculation, it hardly exceeded one third of the gross value of the produce. Secondly, the rates of rents mentioned by him were those noted by the ryots themselves and Buchanan himself doubted their

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(153) Harington Report, Main Report.

authenticity. As we have seen earlier, the wealthy ryots generally possessed land at a lower rate than the ordinary ryots did. Another shortcoming of his data for our study, though it was not Buchanan's fault, is that the prices of the agricultural products during his survey (1807 to 1808) were considerably higher than those of our period, perhaps by more than 20 %, so that the wealthy ryots derived from their holdings a much higher profit than in our period.

Table-13 however suggests how the management of the wealthy ryots' holdings was done during our period.

Firstly, the Table establishes beyond doubt the importance of the cultivation of rice in the management of the ryoti-holdings. It occupied 65 to 90 % of the cropped area of each holding and constituted 67 to 95 % of the total value of their produces. Its proportion in the holding was higher where the proportion of the khyar land in it was larger. It is noteworthy that good rice land (Shalee land of the first quality) yielded profit as high as that from the same quantity of tobacco land.

Table-13 : An Abstract Statement showing Land-utilization & Management of the Holdings of some wealthy Ryots in Dinajpur (1807 - 1808)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ryots.	kinds of Land	Utilization of Land — Rice				
		Area	%	Value	%	Value per bigha
(A) A ryot with 55 local bigha	Khyar	24	30	120	42	5- 0
	Pali	28	35	112	39	4- 0
	Total	52	65	232	81	4- 7
(B) A ryot with 40 local bigha	Khyar	30	75	140	81	4-11
	Pali	6	15	24	14	4- 0
	Total	36	90	164	95	4- 9
(C) A ryot with 30 local bigha	Khyar	8	22	24- 8	15	3- 1
	Pali	19	53	85	52	4- 8
	Total	27	75	109- 8	67	4- 1

(To be continued)

(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
		Utilization		Of		Land			
	Sarisha					Khesari			
Area	%	Value	%	Value per bigha	Area	%	Value	%	Value per bigha
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	25	40	14	2- 0	7	9	10- 8	4	1- 9
20	25	40	14	2- 0	7	9	10- 8	4	1- 9
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
$1\frac{1}{2}$ (1)	4	3 (2)	2	2- 0	$3\frac{1}{2}$	9	5	3	1- 7
$1\frac{1}{2}$	4	3	2	2- 0	$3\frac{1}{2}$	9	5	3	1- 7
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	17	12	7	2- 0	1	3	1	1	1- 0
6	17	12	7	2- 0	1	3	1	1 (2)	1- 0

(18)	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
		Utilisation		of		Land			
	Tobacco					Sugar-cane			
Area	%	Value	%	Value per bigha	Area	%	Value	%	Value per bigha
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	5	2	5- 0	-	-	-	-	-
1	1	5	2	5- 0	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1	3	5	3	5- 0	1	3	36	22	36- 0
1	3	5	3	5- 0	1	3	36	22	36- 0

(To be continued)

(28)	(29)	(30)	(31)	(32)	(33)	(34)	(35)
Utilization of land			Labour			Cost	
Total			Kind of labour			Expense of cultivation	Rent
Cropped Area	Gross produce	Gross produce per bigha.	Family	hired	Gross produce per man		
24	120	5- 0					
56	167- 8	3- 0					
80	287- 8	3-10	2	3	57- 8	153-12	78-12
30	140	4-11					
10	32	3- 3					
40	172	4- 7	2	2	43- 0	89- 0	60- 0
8	24- 8	3- 0					
28	139	5- 0					
36	163- 8	4- 9	2(1)	1(1)	54- 8	81-12	52

(36)	(37)	(38)	(39)	(40)	(41)
Profit					
Net Income			Corrected net income(3)		
Total	Per cropped bigha	Per Plough	Total	Per cropped bigha	Per Plough
55	0-11	11-0	119-12	1- 8	23-14
29	0-12	9-15	84	2- 2	21- 0
29-12	0-13	9-11	76- 4	2- 2	25- 7

Source : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp. 241 to 243.

(1) Buchanan was not clear on this point, it, therefore, supplemented by the present author.

(2) Buchanan's miscalculation in the text. Corrected according to the present author's calculation.

(3) Buchanan deducted mechanically half of the gross produce as the expense of production, but it seems to have been an over-estimation.

Secondly, the quality of land had distinctive effects on the utilization and management of the holding. In the holding(A), the khyar and pali land occupied nearly the same proportion. As the double-cropping was extensively done on the khyar land, the proportion of the double cropped land of the whole holding was 63.6% This high utilization of the land had a good effect on the management of this holding. The value of the produce per labourer was the largest among the three, though the value of the produce per cropped bigha was the lowest. In the holding(B), the kyar land constituted three-fourths of the holding and, therefore, the proportion of the double cropped land of the entire holding was nil. The produce was almost entirely rice and the management of the holding depended wholly on rice. Though its management was monocultural, it did not mean that the management of this type of the holdings was disadvantageous. Thanks to the shorter period of cultivation, the cost of cultivation was much lower than the other two and the profit per man-labour was, if we take a monthly average, almost twice as high as the others. In the holdings (C), the cultivation of only one bigha of sugar-cane increased the profitability of the entire holding. Both the profit per cropped area and that per plough were the highest among the three, irrespective of the low proportion of the double-cropping (20 %). The value of the produce from one bigha of the sugar-cane land constituted 22 % of that from the entire holding of 30 bighas.

Thirdly, we can not but be surprised to find how ill-paid the agricultural labourers were. In the holding (A), one hired labourer produced Rs.57-8 per annum, while he received only Rs.18 in the same period. In the holding(B), one hired labourer produced Rs.43-8 in six months, and received Rs.9 for his labour. In the holding (C), one hired labourer produced Rs.54-8 and received Rs.18 in a year. Considering that Rs.18 were the highest estimate of their wage and Buchanan inclined to estimate it at Rs.15(154), the labourers received 17 to 28 % of their produces.

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(154) F.Buchanan, 'Dinajpur' P. 244.

The krishans were, thus, paid less than the adhiyars who received one-third of their produce.

Fourthly, the above table clearly shows the importance of Sarisha(mustard). It was mostly grown for home-consumption and provided the ryots with mustard-oil which was indispensable for cooking and for lamp.

(4) Some Instances of the Management of the privileged Ryoti-holdings :

Considering that the well-to-do ryots who constituted about 20 % of the peasant population owned 60 to 76 % of the cultivated land in the country-side, it was natural that the well-to-do ryots had necessarily to depend on under-ryots in order to cultivate their holdings. The following instances show the relation--ship between the holders of the privileged ryoti-holdings (gatchadars, huzuri jotedars &c.) and their under-ryots (pirjas and addiadars) in the districts of Rangpur and Purnea. Such relationship was not confined to these few instances alone. In Dinajpur(155), Birbhum(156) and Jessore(157), we have evidence that similar kind of relations existed. Such relationship was a universal phenomenon throughout Bengal wherever the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency formed the majority of the population. H.P.Foster, the Collector of Tipperah, thus remarked, "I must... observe (I confine my remarks entirely to the province of Bengal) that near two-thirds of the land is cultivated by under-ryots"(158)

J.H.Harington's report on Boroopoor gives us a detailed account of the relationship between the head ryots (huzuri jotedars) and their under-ryots (pirjas).

It was a general usage that "the Pirja or inferior ryot" cultivated "lands rented from the zamindar by Head Ryots on condition of giving a proportion

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(155) BR-P 11th April, 1788 No. 58C
(156) GGC-RD-P 10th Feb,1790 No. 49
(157) BR-P 19th June,1793 No. 7
(158) Ibid. 28th Feb. 1794 No. 32.

of the produce in kind." The head ryots advanced "as much grain as may be necessary to the Pirja for seed and receives from him double the quantity when rice is cut, the former takes the Bissoree or a certain number of Done[159] per Bessee[160], varying from 2 to 5 according to agreement on the whole remaining crop (Bissorree itself excepted). After which the surplus is equally divided between both. Thus supposing the produce of a Bega of Ground to be 10 Bessee, 10 Done given account Seed & 3 Done taken for the Bissorree, the Division would be :-

		Bessee Done
Total produce		10- 0
Receivable by Head Ryot		
Double quantity of Seed	1- 0	
Bissorree at 3 Done per Bessee on 8 Bessee (1 Bessee deducted account Bissorree)	1- 4	
Half of Surplus	3-18	6- 2
Receivable by Pirja		3-18[161]"

Though the under-ryots were sometimes called "Addea"(Half), they in fact received only one third of the gross produce. Harington observed that "a considerable proportion of grain lands in Sooroopoor is cultivated on these terms." The pirjas "in general had small spots of land from the zamindar, on which they reside and cultivate Pulse, the Castor Oil, Shrub, and other articles at a rent payable in money." The poorer ryots thus held small spots of lands under the regular mofussil settlement and cultivated a greater quantity as under-ryots on the share-cropping basis.

What was the profit of the head ryots under this system?

We may take 8 annas per local bigha (or 4 annas 8 gandas per Calcutta bigha) as the average rate of rent paid by the head ryots in Sooroopoor[162].

		Bessee	Done
Gross income of head ryot in grain		6-	2
Deduct the rent payable to the zamindar at 8 anna per bigha at the rate of 3 Bessees per rupee	1-10		
Deduct the seed returned with interest	1- 0	2-10	
Remains...		3-12	

(159) Done : One-twentieth of Bessee.
(160) Bessee : Equal to 1 Maund.
(161) Harington Report, Main Report.
(162) See Table-4, Section 1-(1)-b, chap. 6.

The head ryot, thus, obtained a clear profit of 3 bessee 12 done and the interest on the advanced seed at 10 done (100 %), in all, 4 bessee 2 done in the capacity both of the intermediary and the supplier of the seed. The paddy of 4 bessee 2 done was equal to Re 1-6 at the rate of 3 bessee per rupee. The adhiyar, on the other hand, received paddy equivalent to Re 1-2. But he had to deduct from this replacement costs of his implement and bullocks, which would have amounted to 4 annas per bigha. Only 14 annas were thus his net income from the cultivation of one bigha of adhi land. If the zamindar demanded more rent, the number of the bissorree would be raised proportionately to it so that the burden of the enhanced rent should fall equally on the head ryot and the under-ryot.

It would be relevant to remark here that an independent ryot could expect from the cultivation of the same quantity of land a net income of 7 Bessee 9 Done or Rs.2-8 after deducting the rent and the charges of cultivation(163).

Colebrooke's reports on Purnea district show us a similar relationship between a head-ryot and an under-ryot.

In a thinly populated area, especially at the foot-hills, a tenure called gatchdari system extensively prevailed. The gatchdar rented a tract of land from the zamindar at a fixed sum. Under the gatchdar, there were many under-ryots called "Addia Raiots, who pay in kind to the Gutchdar". The addiadars cultivated their lands on a verbal agreement with the gatchdar. The payment of rent to the gatchdar was made "not by an estimation of the crop valued at the market price, but by actual division of the grain". Some customary deductions were made for the disbursement of common expenses before the division of the crop between the

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(163)

		Bessee	Done
Total produce		10	0
Deduct the rent at 10 annas per local bigha(Ordinary ryot had to pay higher rent than head ryot) at the rate of 3 Bessee per rupee	1-17		
Do. Seed	0-10		
Do. other expenses of cultivation & replacement costs..	0- 4	2	11
Remains...		7	9

gatchdar and his addiadars took place. The following deductions as found in the pargana Surjapore would serve as an example.

1. The quantity of seed sown repaid two fold to the person who furnished it.
2. Two Cottahs[164] per Bessee on the quantity remained (after the above deduction) to Etamamkar or person employed to watch the crop.
3. Thirteen Gottahs to the blacksmith who repaired the plough.
4. ¼ Cottah per bessee to Kyal who measured off the crop.
5. Niaze & Pajeh, expenses of sacrifices. Two Cottahs per plough at each harvest.
6. One Cottah per plough for Dhaumee, fee for the Conjurer for protecting the crop.

After the above deductions were made, the "remainder of the crop is equally divided between the Gutchdar & Addi Raiot"[165].

If we suppose that one bigha of land produced 10 bessee of paddy, the share of the gatchdar and addidars would be 3 bessee 19 cottahs each[166]. The rent to the zamindar was paid out of the share of the gatchdar, while the expenses of the community, the repayment of the advanced seed and the repair of the agricultural implements fell equally on the gatchdar and the addiadar. Therefore, the addidars under the gatchdar enjoyed better conditions than the pirjas under the well-to-do ryots in the zamindari of Soroopoor.

In spite of the easier terms of the agreement, the addiadars in Purnea were " obliged to borrow in the early months of the year for the maintenance of his family and receiving the loans in kind at usurious rates". It was one

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(164) Cottah : One-twentieth of a Bessee.
(165) BR-P 18th June 1790 No. 13
(166) Total produce from 1 bigha of land

			Bessee	Cottah
			10	- 0
Deduct 1. Repayment of seed		1- 0		
2. Etamamkar 2 Cottahs/bessee		0-18		
3. Kyal ¼ Cottah/bessee		0- 2½		
4. Blacksmith 13 Cottahs/ plough	18 Cottahs per plough or 18/15 per bigha			
5. Niazeh & Pajah 4 Cottahs/ plough				
6. Dhaumee 1 Cottah/plough				
		0- 1.2	2-	1.45
Remains...			7-	18.5
When divided equally between the gatchdar and addiadar, each share would be..			3-	19

of the objects of the special enquiry by Colebrooke to depress the high rates of interest on the loans given to the addiadars by the gatchdar. The usage was as follows ; in some pargana, the debtors had to pay "half of the original loans if repaid from the Buddye (bhadai rice) & a quarter if from the Augohee(rice)", and in others "the loan repaid twofold". He observed that "the Addidar's share of the produce is seldom adequate to liquidate his Debt which thus annually accumulating, he becomes enslaved to his Creditor, the Gutchdar"(167).

In Purnea, there was another type of under-ryots called Kolait ryots. This was seen in the plains and more densely populated areas. To quote from Colebrooke's report :

> "I found that the Rents received by the zamindar and under-renters are not drawn immediately from the actual cultivators of the soil, but from a few principal Raiots who cultivate a small portion with their own ploughs & the remainder by Colait & by Addee Raiots. By the first are understood in this pargana(Usjah), the Raiots to whom the land is under-leased by the Pottah-holders on Neckdee Terms (or payment in cash). The Addyadars pay half the produce to the Raiots, who employ them"(168).

Thus, many of the wealthy ryots had their extensive privileged holdings cultivated by the labour of Kolait ryots and Addia ryots. The following instance of Seromon Raiot givesus a clear idea on the management of the privileged ryoti-holding in the district of Purnea :

> "Seromon Raiot had a Pottah in 1188 Molky for 432 Begas at 8 Begas per Rupee...He had a Pottah in 1196 for 720 Begas 6 Cottahs at the same rate, which with the Abwabs & the Julkur & Phulkur...amounts to the Jumma of Rs.115-4. From his acknowledgement, it appears that he keeps only two ploughs with which he cannot cultivate more than 80 Begas(169), the remaining 640 are cultivated by Colait & Addyar..."(170).

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(167) BR-P 18th June 1790 No. 13
(168) Ibid No. 8
(169) In Purnea, a plough was drawn by 4 to 6 oxen, and cultivated 32 to 38 bighas. F.Buchanan, Purnea pp 432 to 434
(170) BR-P 18th June 1790 No. 8.

Colebrooke observed that the Kolait ryots & Addia ryots were indebted to the wealthy ryots and this was the cause "which has hitherto retained them in subjection to the principal ryots... the Colait slavery"(171).

To sum up. The foregoing study of the management of the well-to-do ryots' privileged ryoti-holdings showed that the under-ryots were always indebted to their masters and the holders of the privileged ryoti-holdings were enabled to use the labour of their under-ryots at a smaller cost than the usual market one on the strength of their position as creditors. Such holders were powerful enough to compel the zamindars to lease to them certain tracts of land at lower rates of rents. They thus accumulated cheap labour and cheap lands in their hands by making use of their agricultural stocks and of the imperfect control of the zamindars over their estates during the period under review.

Besides the low rate of rent and the cheap labour, they had several economic advantages which rendered the management of their ryoti-holdings profitable. They possessed the best land in the locality and had enough capital to embark on the cultivation of valuable crops. They could even manipulate the prices of grains in the markets by holding up their sales(172).

As far as the given agrarian conditions continued, the rise of the well-to-do ryots and the extension of their privileged ryoti-holdings was not likely to be checked, while the prospect for uplift of the poorer ryots, especially the under-ryots, was almost nil.

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(171) BR-P 18th June, 1790. No. 8.
(172) RD-Grain-P 31st Oct. 1794. No. 29.

Appendix (a) to Section 2 Chapter 6

- A brief Account of the various kinds of Soils in north Bengal -

The Soils of north Bengal may roughly be divided into five kinds : clay land, loam land, sandy land, high land and low land. The following statement shows the different kinds of soils under cultivation in the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea on the basis of Buchanan's statistical data, 1807 to 1810.

A Table showing the different Kinds of Soils under Cultivation in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea, 1807 to 1810.

(square miles)

Districts		Cultivated				Total	
		Clay		Loam			
Dinajpur	High	1970		1615		3585	100.0
	Inundated	Nil		Nil		Nil	
	Total	1970	55.0 %	1615	45.0 %	3585	100.0 %
Rangpur	High	110.5		1882		1992.5	62.5
	Inundated	31		1165		1196	37.5
	Total	141.5	4.4	3047	95.6	3188.5	100.0
Purnea	High	234		1809		2043	49.7
	Inundated	805		1265		2070	50.3
	Total	1039.5	25.3	3074	74.7	4113	100.0

Sources : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, General Statistical Table-1, p. 331
Eastern India, ed. by M.Martin, reprint 1976 vol.5, Appendix of Statistical Tables, Book-1, B, p. 698 & Book-2, p. 707.

The clay land was called Khyar. In Dinajpur, it "in dry weather becomes exceedingly hard and impenetrable, and retains very little moisture, so that in the heats of spring it is entirely destitute of vegetation. In wet weather again, it changes into a soft sticky mud"[1]. It, therefore, allowed only one crop of rice (aman or aghani rice) which was transplanted in the middle of the rainy

(1) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 2

season when the mud was moist and soft. It constituted 55 % of the cultivated land in Dinajpur, 4.4 % in Rangpur and 25.3 % in Purnea.

The loam land was known as Pali. It "contains a much larger proportion of sand, on which account it is said to be mixed (do-angsh). This is much more retentive of moisture than pure clay, and in the dry season produces more vegetation...even the wretched implements and cattle of the native are able to penetrate it in the dry season, so that it produces a crop with the early rains of Spring...(It) produces either two crops of that grain, or a great variety of valuable articles, that grow in the dry season"(2). It occupied 45 % of the cultivated land in Dinajpur, 95.6 % in Rangpur and 74.7 % in Purnea.

The high land was known as Danga. It produced a bumper harvest of paddy in one year, but it might totally fail to produce any in the next year if the rains were insufficient. Sugar-cane, cotton, &ca could be produced on it.

The low land was variously called Nina, Khil and Chuar. They were fertile soils, but very vulnerable to inundation. Boro rice (spring rice) was extensively sown on them by broad cast, and many pahikasht ryots were employed in its cultivation. Sometimes, Dams were constructed to protect the crop from inundation(3).

The sandy land was called Baliya. It could not be continuously cultivated for many years and had to be laid fallow after the production of several crops. In Rangpur, this caused frequent migration of the ryots and in Nadia it created a type of tenure known as Utabandi.

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(2) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 2
(3) PCR-DNR-P, 7th March 1775

Appendix (b) to Section 2,. Chapter 6

Estimate of the expense of a common labourer, his family, consisting of his wife and two children. If there are more children, as is often the case, the elder ones are supported by tending cattle.

House and Lodging

One hut, 8 cubits by 6 - the man purchases bambus and cuts the roots of coarse rice straw for thatch and hurdles, which he puts on at liesure hours,	0- 9- 0	
One-third of annual expense		0- 3- 0
Ground rent		0- 4- 0
Total		0- 7- 0

Furniture

durable		
2 stone plates	0- 4- 0	
1 kashtya or sickle	0- 2- 0	
1 da or bill	0- 2- 0	
Earthen or bambu pots for drinking water	0- 0- 6	
1 hooka for smoking tobacco	0- 0- 6	
	0- 9- 0	
To one-third for annual charge		0- 3- 0
perishable, renewed yearly		
3 pieces of gunny or sackcloth for bedding	0- 6- 0	
3 rags made by themselves of their old clothes		
Mats and straw, pillows for sleeping on	0- 1- 0	0- 7- 0
		0-10- 0

Ornaments

Brass rings for the arms of the woman	0- 2- 0	
1 Do. for the nose, 2 for the ears of Do.	0- 1- 0	
1 string of wooden or stone beads for the man	0- 1- 0	
2 string of stone beads for the children	0- 1- 0	
	0- 5- 0	
One-third of annual expense		0- 1- 8

Clothing

For woman		
1 large red-bordered cotton wrapper(sari)	0- 8- 0	
3 small wrappers	0- 8- 0	1- 0- 0
For the man		
1 cotton cloth wrapper(dhuti)	0- 5- 0	
2 kappin	0- 1- 0	
1 sheet for his shoulders in cold weather	0- 4- 0	0-10- 0
For children		
4 waist cloth(kappin), and 2 sheets		0-12- 0
		2- 6- 0

(To be continued)

Food		
$1\frac{1}{2}$ seer of 96 Sa. Wt. of coarse rice daily is 13 maunds $27\frac{1}{2}$ seers a year, at 12 annas	10- 4- 3	
1 seer oil a month at 2 annas	1- 8- 0	
6 seers a month of pulse (khesari) or lentils at 2 annas	1- 8- 0	
1 seer salt 2 annas (many however use ashes)	1- 8- 0	
Pots, baskets, seasoning	0- 6- 0	
They use no fuel, fish, nor vegetables, but they collect.		
Tobacco and betel	1- 8- 0	16-10- 3
Holidays, Guru, Purohit, and other religious expenses.	2- 0- 0	
Barber once a month	0- 8- 0	2- 8- 0
Total :		22-10-11

Source : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Appendix to Book-2, Pp.115 to 132.

Section 3 : The Market Relation and the Peasant Economy.

(1) The production of valuable Crops in north Bengal in the late 18th century - a general view -

We shall study the general features of the market-relations in the peasant economy in north Bengal on the basis of Harington's report on Sooroopoor and Buchanan's statistical data on the districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea.

During his survey in 1790, Harington prepared three detailed accounts of the articles of cultivation in the villages of Radhanagar, Maheiskol and Ragonautpoor, using the data obtained by an actual measurement made under his direct inspection. The following Table-14 is based on these data.

Table-14 : A Statement showing the total cropped Area and the value of the Articles which were grown in the three villages in the zamindari of Sooroopoor in 1789 A.D.

Articles	Cropped Area (Local bigha)	%	Gross Produce (Sicca Rupees)	%	Value of Produce per bigha.
Aman rice 1824		53.9	6536	69.1	3- 9
Aus rice 1010		29.9	1552	16.4	1- 9
Total of rice	2834	83.8	8088	85.6	2-14
Ook (Sugar-cane)	27-13	0.8	626	6.6	22- 8
Sarisha (Mustard)	276	8.2	299	3.2	1- 1
Tut (Mulberry)	16- 8	0.5	110	1.2	6- 8
Jow(Barley)	59- 6	1.8	106	1.1	1-13
Wahur(Pulse)	64- 8	1.9	86	0.9	1- 7
Takuri Kalae(Pulse)	66-19	2.0	76	0.8	1- 4
Gom (Wheat)	10-12	0.3	19	0.2	1-13
Tomako (Tobacco)	4-17	0.1	18	0.2	3-12
Massor (Lentil)	14-14	0.4	11	0.1	0-12
Kapas (Cotton)	7- 8	0.2	8	0.1	1- 0
Teel (Oil-seed)	4-15	0.1	5	0.1	1- 1
Neel (Indigo)	1- 4	nil	3	0.1	2- 8
Total	3381-14		9454		

Sources : BR-P 22nd March 1790 Harington's report. Enclosure No. 2.

For the price of Mulberry, N.K.Sinha, The Economic History of Bengal, Vol. 1, Pp 198-199. Foot note (14).

Do of Barley, Buchanan, Dinajpur.

Do of Wheat, Ibid.

Do of Tobacco Ibid.

Do of Cotton, BR-P 15th June, 1789. No. 86.

For the prices of Sugar-cane & Indigo, see later subsections.

The above statement shows that the aman rice (aghani rice) was the most important article of cultivation in these villages in point of both quality and value. The aus rice (bhadai rice) occupied about 30 % of the cropped area but its value amounted to no more than 16.4 %. The profitability of aus rice was low (Re 1-9/bigha). However, it was a very important crop for the ryots as the main food of their diet. Most of the aman rice was probably sold by the ryots to the grain merchants, while most of the aus rice was consumed locally. Harington mentioned 15 variations of aman rice (aghani rice) and 8 variations of aus rice. He observed that the worst kinds of aghani rice (5 variations) were nearly equal in value to the aus rice. These coarsest kinds of aman rice must have been used for home-consumption and thus made up for the apparent deficient supply of aus rice(173).

Among the thirteen articles of cultivation in the above statement, aman rice, sugar-cane, mulberry, tobacco and indigo would be called valuable crops. The gross income derivable from the cultivation of these articles were Rs.3-9, Rs.22-8, Rs.6-8, Rs.3-12 and Rs.2-8 respectively. These five articles occupied 55.4 % of the total cropped area and formed 77.2 % of the total value of the produces. But if we exclude the aman rice, the remaining four articles constituted only 1.4 % of the cropped area and 8.1 % of the value of the agricultural production. The southern portion of the Rangpur district was famous for its sugar production and the sugar produced in this area was known as the Ghoraghat sugar. The zamindari of Sooroopoor which was part of the Chakla Ghoraghat also yielded bountiful sugar-cane(174). This accounted for the large sugar-cane production in these villages.

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(173) For the cultivation of 3381 local bighas of land, it required nearly 450 labourers. If we suppose, 200 of them had a family of five members and 200 of them has that of four members and the remaining 50 were dependant labourers of some of the above 400 families, it required 13496 maunds of paddy for their subsistence. Aus land produced only 7373 maunds of paddy and the deficiency of paddy should be either purchased or met by the aman rice. To meet this insufficiency, the aman rice from 576 bighas of land would be required. The coarsest kinds of aman rice would presumably be utilised for this. cf. Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp 175 to 177.

(174) BR-P 8th Feb. 1792. No. 22.

The following three abstract statements based on the statistical data collected by F.Buchanan in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea show the area and value of the several important articles of agricultural production at the beginning of the 19th century. They give us a general idea about the agricultural production of these districts. Considering that the crop estimates formed as late as in the early 20th century were, as F.O.Bell (the settlement officer of Dinajpur district) found, grossly misleading, the following statements should be taken only as providing a general idea.

Table-15 : Three Abstract Statements showing the total cropped Area, the gross Produce and the Export and Import of the several Articles of Cultivation in the Districts of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea, 1807 to 1810

Table-15-(a) : Dinajpur (1807 to 1808)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Articles	Cropped Area (thousand bighas)	%	Gross produce (thousand rupees)	%	Export	Import
Aman rice	5162	60.3	12600	63.1		
Aus rice	1470	17.2	2560	12.1		
Boro rice	13	0.2	20	0.1		
Total or rice	6645	77.6	15180	76.0	3180	
Oil-seeds	678	7.9	1318	6.6		15
Kitchen vegetables	330	3.9	1000	5.0		
Plantations (Mangoes & Bambus)	140	1.6	950	4.8		
Sugar-cane	25	0.3	450	2.3	378	
Pulses	516	6.0	403	2.0		
Jute &c(for ropes &c)	80	0.9	245	1.2	13	
Wheat & Barley	110	1.3	145	0.7		
Betel leaf & nut	1	nil	103	0.5		46
Mulberry	.8	0.1	90	0.4	57(Raw Silk)	
Tobacco	15	0.2	48	0.2	4	
Indigo	15	0.2	38	0.2	250(Manufactured)	
Total	8563		19970		4753(1)	1276(1)

Table-15-(b) : Rangpur (1808 to 1809)

(1) Articles	(2) Cropped Area (thousand bighas)	(3) %	(4) Gross Produce (thousand rupees)	(5) %	(6) Export	(7) Import
Aman rice	2400	34.0	6149	39.2		
Aus rice	2578	36.5	5155	32.9		
Boro rice	1	nil	2	nil		
Total of rice	4979	70.5	11306	72.2	1284	17
Oil-seeds	737	10.4	1069	6.8	300	36
Betel leaf & nut	19	0.3	649	4.1	44	16
Kitchen vegetables	110	1.6	515	3.3		
Sugar-cane	25	0.4	445	2.8	149	1
Fruit & Bambu	222	3.1	336	2.1	121(Bambu bags)	35
Tobacco	73	1.0	253	1.6	168	
Pulses	328	4.6	217	1.4	2	
China, Kangni(grains)	184	2.6	213	1.4		
Pat, Sun & Kankura (for ropes &c)	83	1.2	188	1.2	13	
Mulberry & Erondo	18	0.3	136	0.9	252(Raw Silk)	62
Indigo	79	1.1	127	0.8	644(Manufactured)	
Wheat & Barley	156	2.2	108	0.7		
Opium	13	0.2	66	0.4	32	
Motha & Ulu (for Mats &c)	40	0.6	37	0.2		
Total	7066		15667		3648(1)	1450(1)

Table-15-(c) : Purnea (1809 to 1810)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Articles	Cropped Area (thousand bighas)	%	Gross Produce (thousand rupees)	%	Export	Import
Winter rice	3267	36.1	8372	40.5		
Summer rice	1960	21.6	3920	19.0		
Spring rice	162	1.8	162	0.8		
Aswini rice	24	0.3	49	0.2		
Total of rice	5413	60.0	12503	60.5	951	138
Oil-seeds	1031	11.4	2289	11.1	759	66
Pulses	1194	13.2	1657	8.0	144	2
Wheat & Barley	547	6.0	1147	5.5	118	1
China, Kangni, Kheri &c(Grains)	314	3.5	595	2.9		
Sugar-cane	52	0.6	550	2.7	1	68
Mulberry, Ricinus	24	0.3	357	1.7	550(Cocoons)	
Vegetables	93	1.0	343	1.7		
Fruits & Bambus	117	1.3	330	1.6	25	
Tobacco	60	0.7	303	1.5	18	
Betel leaf & nut	1	nil	184	0.9		
Pat & Son (for ropes &c)	57	0.6	172	0.8	101(Bags & Mats)	1
Indigo	156	1.6	156(2)	0.8	866(Manufactured)	
Cotton	8	0.1	89	0.4	43	273
Total	9067		20675		5543(1)	2039(1)

Sources : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, General Statistical Tables - 4, 5 & 6.

Eastern India, ed. by M.Martin, reprint 1976 vol.5 Appendix of Statistical Tables, Book-1, G, H & M. Book-2, F, K & L

(1) This figure includes the goods not appearing in the above statements Among the non-agricultural products, salt formed the major part of Import.

In Dinajpur, Import of Salt was Rs.829,750

In Rangpur Do. was Rs.691,700, while Rs.332,125 of Salt was exported from this district.

In Purnea, Do. was Rs.771,950, while Rs.175,000 of Salt was exported from this district.

Other important items of Exports & Imports of these districts were Cotton-wool(Import) and various cotton-cloths(Export).

(2) Corrected according to Buchanan's own explanation in Main Report.

F.Buchanan, Purnea, pp. 388 to 399

In the district of Dinajpur, where the major portion of the cultivated land (55 %) was stiff clay, the ryots concentrated on the cultivation of aman rice which yielded a fairly high profit per bigha. Aman rice accounted for 63 % of the total value of the agricultural products of Dinajpur. In a few Thanas (Bongsihari, Jogodol & Purusa), the whole of the cultivated land was stiff clay. It was probable that the ryots of these thanas imported a considerable quantity of coarse rice from the adjacent locality for their home consumption, while they exported most of their produce (the aman rice). In the district of Rangpur where the loam land constituted 95.6 % of the cultivated land, the ryots could cultivate a variety of crops. The total acreage under aus rice was bigger than that under aman rice, but in point of value of produce, aus (32.9 %) was inferior to aman (39.2 %). In Purnea, more than half of the cultivated land (50.3 %) suffered from annual inundation(175), and cultivation on such land was carelessly done due to the uncertainty of the harvest. A large portion of winter rice was sown by broad-cast, and of inferior quality. Hence the export from this district of winter rice was smaller than that of the other two.

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(175) See Appendix (a) to Section 2 of this chapter.

Second in importance was the cultivation of Sarisha(Mustard). Though the profit from the cultivation of the oil-seeds was low(Re 1-1 per bigha), they were extensively cultivated because of their general utility. Buchanan observed :

> "It is the great winter crop on land that has given a summer crop of rice; but it is frequently intermixed with wheat, lentils, and some other pulses, and it is also sown with cotton...It is trodden out by oxen, and sells usually at about 48 seers per rupee. The farmer sells [the seeds] to those who express the oil", or "others receive the grain from the farmer, deliver a certain proportion of oil and for their trouble keep whatever more they can express from it, together with the cake". The oil-cake after the expression of the oil "is partly used as food for cattle, and partly for manure"(176).

The oil was an indispensable item of the daily life of the peasants for the preparation of food, anointment of body and for use in lamps. As Sarisha was, as pointed out by Buchanan, usually sown as the second crop on the loam land, it was quite natural that both Purnea and Rangpur produced a greater quantity of it than Dinajpur. For Purnea and Rangpur, it formed an important article of exportation (Rs. 759,000 and Rs.300,000 respectively), while a small quantity of it (Rs.15,000) had to be imported into Dinajpur.

Though rice and oil-seeds were the most important crops in point of the cropped area and value, they were not necessarily produced for sale. Except for the aman rice of the superior quality, rice and mustard were cultivated primarily for the subsistence of the peasants themselves, and only the surplus portion was sold. This explains why such a great quantity of them was raised in spite of their comparatively low profitability.

Now let us examine some other articles of cultivation which we may call valuable crops. The valuable crops may be defined as those which were primarily

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(176) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 184

grown for sale and not for home-consumption, and which generally yielded a high profit per bigha. Their cultivation usually required considerable capital which the generality of the peasantry could scarcely provide, and it was very often linked to the foreign trade and to the Company's investment. The harvest of many of them was very precarious. The Table-15 shows that aman rice, sugar-cane, mulberry, tobacco, betel-leaf & nut, mango and indigo were the articles which would properly be called the valuable crops in the northern Bengal districts. Before going into the study of each of them, we must make it clear that most of the crops above enumerated were divided into two sorts; one of the superior quality and mainly grown for sale, and the other of the inferior quality meant chiefly for home and local consumption. The price of the latter was much lower. than that of the former and we had better not consider the latter as valuable crops. For example, in Bhutan cotton of superior quality was produced mainly for exportation and it yielded a clear profit of EA. Rs.9-9 per bigha, while in Rangpur the ryots produced cotton which was "infinitely inferior" and the cloths "made from it of the worst and coarsest kind such as Dooties, Yakputtahs, Paulas, Gillauss, Serree, Gumchas &ca which were never worn but by the very lowest classes of the people"(177). It hardly yielded an income of one rupee per bigha. Still the ryots cultivated one or two cottahs of such cotton about their own houses not with a view of selling its produce, but for their own use(178). This is also true of the cultivation of sugar-cane(179) and tobacco(180).

The cultivation of Betel leaf fetched a large profit of Rs.150 per bigha. But it required a considerable capital of Rs.168 per bigha "before the garden becomes productive" and then "the annual expense will be Sa Rs.73-10"(181).

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(177) BR-P 15th June 1793 No. 86
(178) Ibid
(179) F.Buchanan, Purnea, pp. 385 to 387
(180) Do Dinajpur, p. 232
(181) Do Do . pp. 206 to 207

The cost was too high for the majority of the ryots. Its cultivation was necessarily a very limited one (700 bighas in Dinajpur, 19,000 bighas in Rangpur and 1,000 bighas in Purnea), and its effect on the peasant economy in general must have also been limited.

Maldah and its neighbourhood in the districts of Dinajpur and Purnea were famous for their mango production. "The produce of mango is one of the most valuable in this district; for it cannot be of less annual value than 4,50,000 Rupees"(182). One bigha of grown mango trees produced 64,000 mango fruits which yielded a sum of Rs.56-10. In spite of this large profit, its cultivation was decreasing. Buchanan attributed this decline to the very uncertain nature of the crop, to a considerable capital required to commence its cultivation (Rs.40 to 50 per bigha), to the insecurity of the ryot's claim over the trees as on the occasion of his giving up the land, "he is allowed nothing for the trees that he leaves behind", and to the long period that took the trees to produce fruits. Buchanan observed that all the produce of mangoes was consumed within the districts in order to enrich the tables of the ryots in the forms of pickles and condensed juice.

Mulberry was cultivated in all these districts. The gross produce from the plantation of one bigha of mulberry was put at Rs.15 by Buchanan, and the annual expense of cultivation at Rs.7-7-10. The ryots who sold leaves to the breeders of worms could expect a profit of Rs.7-8 per bigha. Many ryots who grew mulberry plants reared their own worms. A usual family was supposed to "cultivate, collect the leaves, and feed as many worms as can be reared on four bighas of land"(183). From four bighas of mulberry plants, he could rear as many worms as would produce 7½ maunds of cocoons which were sold at Rs.90 at the market price of the time, and thus the ryot had a very handsome net income of Rs.68-8. Mulberry plantation and rearing of silk-worms were most.

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(182) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Book 3, Chap. 2, Para 79
(183) Do. Do. pp. 210 to 214

extensively done in Purnea from where cocoons to the amount of Rs.550,000 were annually exported. From Rangpur, cocoons worth Rs.252,000 were annually exported. Mulberry cultivation was the smallest in Dinajpur.

Tobacco was extensively produced in Rangpur and Purnea. The quality of tobacco produced in Purnea was inferior to that of Rangpur. Rangpur exported a huge quantity of tobacco. McDowall, the collector of Rangpur, reported in 1789 that there were six kinds of tobacco produced in his district and the total produce amounted to 300,000 maunds. Out of this, 275,000 maunds(91.6 %) were exported. According to the prices given by him the total value of the tobacco production amounted to about Rs,390,000 and that of export to about 358,000. He said, "the greatest part of which is purchased by the merchants of Dacca, Murshidabad, Jungypoor, Cutwah, Calna, Bogwangola, Chandernagore and Calcutta through their gomasthas on the spot who transport it to the abovementioned places according to the orders they receive from their Principals"(184). The produce and exports were formerly much more considerable, but owing to the recurring inundations and Dearth since the River Tista changed its course, its production declined. The goodness or badness of Tobacco entirely "depend on the care and attention paid to the cultivation of it...for which reason, the Tobacco is always the best which grows contiguous to the ryots Houses where they can avail themselves in paying that attention to the preparation of the ground and the cleaning of the plants which is indispensably necessary...The same field and frequently the same stalk furnished the 6 different kinds...the more attention paid to the cultivation, the greater will be the produce of those kinds which are reckoned the best"(185). The best sort sold at Rs 2-5 per maund and the inferior one at Re 1 per maund. About one-third of the total production was of good quality and the remaining two-thirds of inferior quality. It is noteworthy that in the same year the

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(184) BR-P. 15th June 1789 No. 86
(185) Ibid.

the Collector of Birbhum reported that tobacco of Rangpur when imported into Birbhum sold at Rs 4-4[186] per maund or nearly double the price at which it was purchased in Rangpur.

The Table-15 shows that sugar-cane was the most important valuable crop produced in these three districts, except for aman rice of superior quality. On the cultivation, marketing and profit of sugar-cane, we shall discuss in detail later.

Indigo occupied a sizeable proportion of the cropped area in these districts. Though indigo was a market crop, it was not perhaps a valuable one. The gross profit from this crop was unnaturally low; Rs 1-1 per bigha in Purnea, Re 1-10 in Rangpur and Rs 2-8 in Dinajpur. It is understandable that the profits from such articles as were mainly intended for home-consumption were low, because they were primarily produced for their utility not for their market-value. Only the forcible measures taken by the indigo manufacturers, who were exclusively Europeans, and the advance of loans at lower rates of interests could have maintained the cultivation of this unattractive plants at a certain level. The indigo manufacturers in Dinajpur derived a gross profit of Rs.250,000 per annum from their manufactories, and paid only Rs.38,000 for the plants. In Rangpur, they earned Rs.644,000 and paid Rs 127,000 for the plants. In Purnea, they got Rs 866,000 and paid Rs 156,000[187].

Abovementioned market crops constituted 67.5 % of the gross agricultural production of Dinajpur, 57.8 % of that of Rangpur and 72.2 % of that of Purnea. The low figure for Rangpur was the result of the small extent of aman cultivation there, which we added in this calculation. These fairly high proportions of the market crops in the total production, however, do not necessarily show that the market-relations (or money economy) had

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(186) BR-P. June 1789 No. 63
(187) For more detail see following sub-section (3)-b.

penetrated deep and wide into the economy of the peasants (or the agrarian social structure) of northern Bengal in our period.

To understand this paradoxical situation, we must take into consideration the role of the advances made by the merchants and manufacturers to the cultivators. As we shall see, in the trade of aman rice, sugar-cane and indigo, the merchants and manufacturers advanced loans to the cultivators partly to enable the ryots to cultivate the crops, and partly to secure a certain quantity of crops at a lower price. Not unfrequently, the loans were directly paid by the merchants to the zamindars as rents of ryots. In fact, the most urgent need for money on the part of ryots was for payment of rent. The extensive advance-system deprived the ryots, who had taken loans, of gaining any profit from the fluctuations in prices of their produces. The extremely limited extent of stock which majority of ryots possessed obliged them to borrow from year to year for their subsistence and for the payment of rent. The exorbitant interest on these loans deprived the ryots of most of the profit from the cultivation of market crops and so they were as poor as other ryots who had not cultivated market crops, excepting rice.

(2) Market-system - with special reference to the Grain Trade -

The phrase 'market-system' used here does not mean that this system in northern Bengal in the late 18th century was a free and purely economic one where the prices of goods were determined mainly by relation between demand and supply. The open market operation was of rather minor importance in the trade of rice, sugar-cane, indigo & mulberry which formed by far the major portion of the country's whole trade. These articles were mostly purchased by the merchants who made advances to the producers. The prices of goods thus purchased were only to a small extent regulated by the bargain between sellers and buyers. Another feature of the market-system of those days was the interposition of the zamindars in the commercial activities of the merchants.

The staples of north Bengal districts in the late 18th century were aman rice, sugar-cane, mulberry & tobacco. Among them, aman rice formed by far the greatest proportion of the whole exports of north Bengal. Buchanan estimated the exports of rice from Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea at Rs.3,180,000, Rs. 1,284,000 and Rs 951,000 respectively. Though the production of aman was less profitable than that of other valuable crops, the size of its exports and its importance as the main food of people in Bengal made the grain trade the most important branch of the internal trade.

The trade was transacted in two ways; one in the open market in ready money, the other through cash advances to cultivators by grain merchants.

Most of the ready money trade was carried out in the numerous markets (hats, bazars and ganges) spreading all over the country. In the Dinajpur district alone, there were nearly 40,000 vendors of every description(188). Buchanan described the hats as the places "where once or twice a week all

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(188) JD-Gv-P 8th May 1795 No. 8.

those from the neighbourhood who wish to buy or sell assemble and dispose of their commodities by retail. The farmer brings the produce of his land, the artist that of his workshop, and the fisherman that of his snares"(189). And "numerous small traders among whom may be included all the shop-keepers also attend to buy up goods for exportation to sell those which have been imported or to act as intermediate agents between the producers and consumer"(190). Until the resumption of the Sayer duties by the Company's government in 1790, the zamindars were allowed to levy duties from the traders on the goods sold in the markets(191). In the zamindari of Dinajpur, the zamindar established an office (kachari) at the important market-places. A Haut Darogha(192), writer(mohrir), sirdars and their paiks were stationed there. At Jemaulgange, which was one of 30 important ganges in the zamindari(193), 3 sirdars and 7 paiks were stationed at the market-place to watch and protect the place. They received rent-free service lands (jagir lands) amounting to 125 bighas in the vicinity of the market-place(194). The ryots who came to the market to make some purchases usually exchanged their coins into Kauris(195). By this "chopping", the zamindar indirectly levied an imposition on the purchasers, though such a levy was forbidden by government even before the take over of the sayer duties in 1790(196). Thus, a mohrir of the above market caused a weaver who did not exchange his coins before he made the purchase to sign an agreement to the following purport : "if you want to buy thread at the Haut without being chopped, you will give Gongary [a small contribution]"(197).

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(189) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 322
(190) Do Do
(191) The later documents liked to call this take over of the Sayer duties by the Company's government as the abolition of the duties on the merchants, as Buchanan did in his Dinajpur report, but it is not true. More or less the same amount of taxes were continued to be levied on the merchants in the name of Police Tax.
(192) Darogha : A chief officer of any departments, a superintendent, a manager.
(193) PCR-DNR-P, See the monthly report of price current attached to several volumes.
(194) BR-P. 18th April,1791, Nos 8 to 15
(195) Kauri : A small shell used as coin . 4 Kauris = 1 Ganda
(196) BDR-DNR. Vol. 1, 20th Oct.,1786, No. 19
(197) Ibid

The grain trade in the open market was, however, of smaller importance than that through cash advances some months before the harvest.

G.Hatch, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote in 1788 that "the chief part of the Khurref Crop [winter crop or aman rice] of this district is, invariably advanced for at the beginning of the season by the grain merchants residing in different parts of Bengal, and their agents, and exported at the setting in of the periodical rains, when the river rise, in boats either the property of the merchants or freighted from the lower parts of Bengal..."(198). The Collector of Nadia was more particular about the mode of such advances by the grain merchants : "The ryots seldom, excepting the more wealthy of them, keep seed for the ensuing season, but receive advances in the months of Phagun & Chite (199) from the Mahajans [money-lender] & repay in kind in the months of Bhadon & Assin(200), generally, double the amount of the advance. And they will have by this time disposed of the greatest part of the surplus paddy in order to pay their rents". The calculation of the quantity of grains to be repaid to the merchants was usually made on the "market price of the day on which it is delivered"(201). If a ryot received the advances earlier, he had to pay more than the ryot who received them later.

The big merchants made their purchases through their agents. According to Buchanan(202), the bigger merchants were divided into two ranks : Sayodagur who had a very large capital and possessed many vessels, and the Mahajans who had a moderate capital of Rs.2,000 to 25,000, but in general did not possess the vessels and hired them when necessary. The only resident merchants who deserved the name of Sayodagur was Bydenaut Mandal who was one of the biggest purchasers of the lots of the Dinajpur Raj at the public auction. Another big

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(198) BDR-DNR Vol. 1, 27th Decr., 1788 No. 294.
(199) Phalgun & Chaitra : February, March & April.
(200) Bhadra & Aswin : August, September & October.
(201) RD-Grain-P. 3rd Nov. 1794 No.2.
(202) Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp. 317 to 322.

merchant who had a close business connection with Dinajpur was Thakurdas Nandi of Kalna near Calcutta who was also one of the biggest purchasers of lots of Dinajpur zamindari. The merchants who were ranked as Mahajans were many. They exported rice, sugar, molasses, oil[203] and tobacco and imported salt, coconuts, betelnuts, sugar and tobacco[204].

These bigger merchants had their ware-houses (golahs) at various commercial centers known as gunges or bandars in the district of Dinajpur. They usually did not purchase or make advances by themselves but transacted the business through the smaller merchants called Pykars and Beoparis. The following observation made by the Collector of Tipperah would also be applicable to the north Bengal districts;[205]

> "The usual mode of purchasing Grain practiced by the Merchants in this District is to employ a number of Agents who make advances to the Ryauts in the mofussil & take engagements from them to pay a specific quantity of Rice or Paddy for each Rupee advanced when their Crops are reaped."

The Pykars were men of a small capital of Rs.100 to 500 and possessed their own small ware-houses. They purchased and sold wholesale grain, cloth, cotton, silk & salt and did not retail. They either traded on their own account or acted as the agents of the bigger merchants. They went into the local markets and made their purchases and sales there. The Collector of Purnea observed that "they from keeping a number of cattle are enabled to go some distance into the country and purchase the grain immediately from the cultivator who in consideration of his being relieved from the expense of carriage that must attend the transportation of it to the Gunge, disposes of the commodity at a rate sufficiently moderate to admit of the Pykars selling of it at the Gunge price."[206] When they acted as the agents of bigger merchants, they distributed the advances to the

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(203) Oilseeds were imported from Rangpur and manufactured into oil in Dinajpur and exported to other localities.
(204) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp. 314 to 317.
(205) RD-grain-P 19th Decr. 1794 No. 13.
(206) Ibid 31st Octr. 1794 No. 15.

cultivators and lower agents and were held responsible for the repayment of the loans and received a certain commission ($6\frac{1}{2}$ % in Dinajpur) on the value of the purchased goods and a premium for his becoming the security of the loans(207).

Beoparis were the most numerous class of the small traders found all over north Bengal. Many itinerant merchants (Beoparis) came to Dinajpur when the main winter crop was reaped. They made "their purchases and collecting their grain in the village Golahs which they hire for this purpose for a temporary time seldom more than three months, against the setting in of the Rains [when they sent out their grain by river]"(207 a). In Dinajpur, there was a peculiar division of labour. Those ryots whose holdings consisting exclusively of the stiff clay land (khyar land) acted as the small grain traders during their off season. They not only brought the produce of their own lands for sale, but during the dry season when their work on the holdings was at a stop, they made large purchases from the ryots who occupied loam land (pali land) and carried the grain to those ware-houses (golahs) where the grain was sold at the best price. The rich peasants of the khyar lands "make large advances and can afford to keep the grain for favorable market. The poor chiefly assist the rich in carrying their grain to market, and receive daily wages for themselves and cattle."(208) The wealthy ryots thus played an important role in the grain trade not only as the chief sellers of grains but also as the suppliers of the advances and grain dealers.

It was evidently in the interest of the ryots not to receive the advances from the grain traders, if possible. As the Collector of Burdwan observed in 1794, "the poorer class of ryots receive advance long before their crops are fit to gather," while "the more substantial ryots generally gather in their harvests, or wait until they can judge the state of the markets before they dispose of their grain." He further observed that "nearly half the crop now [in October]

(207) F. Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 320.
(207a) BR-P. 30th Sepr. 1794. No. 14.
(208) F. Buchanan, Dinajpur, P.320.

on the grounds is in this manner already engaged for."(209) J.Elliot, the Collector of Dinajpur, wrote in 1794 that "such ryots as do not cultivate by Addiarry [share-cropping], or have not already entered into contracts, have it in their power to drive a Market with the merchants... the head ryots by that time [viz., by the month of December to February] will have already discharged their revenue & of course possessed the means of fixing the price."(210)

The poorer ryots thus had to depend on the loans given to them by the grain merchants at an exorbitant rate of interest (usually double the amount advanced to them), because, as the Collector of Nadia observed, they did not keep the seeds for the ensuing season, and because they had to pay rent before their main harvest was reaped. Only a few wealthy ryots could pay their rents from their own funds and the majority of the ryots had to borrow for this. J.H.Harington wrote of an oppressive practice of the zamindar of Sooroopoor in order to secure his rent, which compelled the ryots to borrow money;

> "The cause of taking up loans... in general, to proceed from the monthly instalments in kistbundees not being determined by the time of reaping and selling, and by a practice which prevails of attaching the principal crops for the zamindar's security, until the Poose Kist be discharged. By this, ryots being disabled from selling their grain."(211)

The following extract from Buchanan's report on Dinajpur reveals quite an important fact in this respect;

> "The advances are usually made between the middle of June and the middle of November... The bargain must be confirmed by the landlords in order to procure his consent to wave his right of hypothic, and <u>the money is in fact, generally, paid to him for rent.</u>"(212)
> (Emphasis added)

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(209) RD- Grain-P 31st Oct. 1794. No. 2.
(210) RD- Grain-P 31st Oct. 1794. No. 29.
(211) Harington Report. Main Report.
(212) F.Buchanan, <u>Dinajpur</u>, p. 320.

It is striking that the grain merchants handed over the amount of his loans not to the ryots themselves, but to their zamindars as rents, and the ryots repaid the loans to the merchants not in money but in kind. The poorer ryots thus eventually paid their rents in kind to the merchants. As most of the surplus grain was handed over to the merchants, they possessed only a trifling quantity of grain which they could sell at the market. The poorer ryots were thus isolated from the market-relations and money-economy as a result of the advance-system. Buchanan's above observation, however, seems to have been a new development after the enactment of the Regulation 7 of 1799 (Haftam) where the zamindar's right over the ryot's produces was acknowledged as superior to any other claims over them on account of private engagements, until the ryot cleared all his rent obligation to the former(213). But even before Haftam, the alliance between the merchants and the zamindars or the combination of the rent payment and the loan advances was unmistakably seen.

It is necessary to examine who were "the poorer ryots" as mentioned by the Collectors of Nadia and Burdwan. No evidence concerning their status and size of the holdings is available, but it would not be wrong to infer that they were mostly 'the small self-sufficient ryots' and the upper portion of 'the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency' of our classification. As for the zamindars, the under-ryots and agricultural labourers had no direct contact with them. Hence no rent-problem regarding them.

The wealthy ryots, on the contrary, had enough stocks to escape from the snares of the grain merchants' advances. They could bargain better prices for their grain in the markets and "drive a Market with the merchants." Many of them had their golahs and stored considerable amount of paddy produced by themselves and agricultural labourers and received from their under-ryots.

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(213) See chapter 7.

Many of them, in fact, were the grain dealers on their own rights. They purchased the grains from their neighbours and advanced money for the cultiva-tion of the ensuing harvest.

In return for the important service which the grain merchants rendered to the zamindar in securing rents and in thus enabling him to pay up the revenue to government, the zamindar supported the merchants in compelling the ryots to repay the loans. The following petition of the Rajah of Burdwan explains this practice;

> "Without the assistance of the merchants, the ryots suffer the greatest distress to liquidate the demands of rent upon them. I, therefore, pray that for whatever sums the merchants may advance to the ryots either for the liquidation of the revenue or advanced for their own support, that the Gomasthas be permitted to attach the crop of the ryots for the payment of the principal and interest due to the merchants."(214)

Such alliance between the zamindar and the merchants was evidently for their mutual advantage. For the merchants, the sanction and support of the zamindar in the realization of the loans lessened their normal difficulties in this, since the poorer ryots who had no property could, without such a support from the zamindar, desert the lands, if pressed for the repayment. Attachment of the grain in the fields was the surest method of securing the repayment of the advances, but it could not be done without the sanction of the zamindar. The zamindar or his people sometimes stood as the security for the loans provided by the merchants to the villages for the payment of rent. For example, in the zamindari of Soroopoor, the village amins often became the security for the sum borrowed by the village for paying rent and village expenses(215). The benefit for the zamindar was quite clear. He was thus enabled to discharge the kist of revenue to government, the non-payment of which cost him his zamindari under the rigorous sale law, during the months

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(214) BR-P 11th Octr. 1790. No. 14.
(215) Harington Report. . Main Report & Appendix D.

when the ryots were least able to pay the rent. The zamindari system and the market-system thus worked together in keeping the majority of the peasantry isolated from the money economy to a certain degree.

There was another form of this alliance. The grain merchants sometimes obtained permission from the zamindar to monopolize the purchase of rice in a certain locality in return for the payment of an annual tax called Pahallee. The grain monopoly must have been a source of great distress for the ryots who were, in this case, obliged to sell their crops to the monopolist who was, of course, in a position to dictate the prices of rice. G.Hatch said that this malpractice was carried on uncontrolled in the district of Dinajpur until 1789 when he introduced a regular system of taxation on the merchants who had ware-houses (golahs) in the district(216).

Under such circumstances, disputes between merchants and ryots naturally arose. The following instance of the complaints of the ryots of the Pargana Lushkerpore in the district of Murshidabad against the oppression of the merchants indicates the kind of tension that existed between the ryots and merchants;(217)

"1st. The rate of interest allowed by Government is one per cent per mensem, the merchants exact 6 Rs. 4 As per cent mensem... they allege us to give them Kistbundee by confining and putting us in stocks.

2nd. They make advances for grain and exact 2 maunds excess on the Bazar Rates, on the two harvest, together with Interest.

3rd. They take a premium of 2 As in each rupee exclusive of the Interest, on settling the balance of the accounts.

4th. They make advances for cocoons and give us credit for 4 Rs. a maund less than the Bazar Rates. The Company's Sicca Weight is 76 to the seer, they take from us at the rate of 81 Sa Weight to the Seer.

5th. For the advances made in Rupees of 11 Sun and 12 Sun, they take 6 Pice Batta in each rupee.

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(216) BDR-DNR 16th Decr. 1789. No. 496.
(217) BR-P 14th Jany. 1791 No. 6.

6th. They claim balances from us on account of which we have not the most distant knowledge and confine us until we give Bonds and Kistbundee and sign the accounts."

Thus, the merchants did everything to cheat the ryots. In this occasion, the merchants against whom the ryots were complaining fortified their position by getting their names inserted in the list of the "under-Factory-Pykars" on the payment of Rs.25 to 50, as "no complaint can be preferred against the Factory Pykars."

(3) The Cultivation of the valuable Crops and the Peasant Economy - with special reference to Sugar-cane and Indigo -

(a) Sugar-cane Cultivation :

Until the battle of Plassey and the consequent political disorder and decline in trade, sugar formed one of the leading articles of export from Bengal. Even after the recession of external trade, it continued to be the second most important of the valuable crops cultivated in the northern Bengal districts, next only to rice(218). This persistence of sugar-cane cultivation and its manufacture would be explained by the existence of the vast" home consumption and inland trade" of sugar, as pointed out by Colebrooke(219). In the late 1780's, the consumption of sugar in Britain increased as the result of the increasing consumption of tea. Britain hitherto depended for her supply of sugar largely on the West Indies, but the cost of manufacturing sugar by the labour of the negro slaves was six times as large as that by the peasants and hired labourers in Bengal. Bengal sugar thus was highly competitive in the foreign markets due to its low cost. The insurrection of negro slaves in St.Domingo in 1791 was a decisive factor in the sudden expansion of the

(218) See section 3-(1) of this chapter.
(219) H.T.Colebrooke, "Remarks on the husbandry and internal commerce of Bengal", reprint 1884. P. 78.

exportation of Bengal sugar. The Court of Directors instructed, on the 11th December 1791, "a large quantity of Sugar in the ships of ensuing season," and the Commercial Residents at different Factories were ordered by the Company's government to make public investment in sugar as much as possible(220).

As shown in the following statement of annual investment in sugar actually received at Calcutta for the year 1792, the districts under the residency of the Commercial Resident at Rangpur (vizt., the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur) provided the largest quantity of sugar.

Table-16 : Statement of Sugar Investment actually received for the Year 1792.

Benares	55,740	15.2 %
Commercolly	29,086	7.9
Radanagore	47,392	12.9
Rungpore	128,676	35.0
Laulcipore & Burrore	21,319	5.8
Soonamookey	85,256	23.2
Total investment in Sugar, Sugar-cane & Goor	Sa Rs. 367,474	

Source : BT-P, 30th May, 1793.

Thus, the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur were among the main sugar exporting districts of Bengal and Bihar. Purnea also produced a considerable quantity of sugar-cane, but its quality was so inferior that it was neither manufactured into refined sugar nor exported(221).

The sugar-cane grown in the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur was of the kind called Kadgelee Ook and had a dark brown skin(222). For its cultivation, the highest land with a fine soft mould mixed with a little sand was preferred. If the height of the land was not sufficient, the land was artificially raised

(220) J.C.Sinha, "Economic Annals of Bengal", 1927. P. 258.
(221) F.Buchanan, Purnea, Pp 385 to 387.
(222) The following description is mainly based on the sources shown below :
F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, Pp 202 to 205 & 301 to 307
BT-P, 4th Sep. 1792. No. 26 & Ibid 25th Novr. 1793.

to the height of 4 or 5 feet. Before the cane grew up, manurings were necessary, once only cowdung and then dung & Cullee (The refuse of the mustard seed after the oil had been expressed. This, sometimes, had to be purchased by the cultivator from the oil-expressors etc.) It took 14 to 17 months before the sugar-cane was ready for cutting. The preparation of the land for the receipt of the sugar-cane plant started in the middle of October and the cutting was done first in the month of October for Patulee Gur (Gur of this description was consumed in its raw state) and then in December, January & February for Danadar Gur (Gur of this description was manufactured into the refined sugar). The cultivators of sugar-cane known as Gutchuah expressed the juice from the cane at a local mill called Gutch(223) and boiled it once to process it into Gur (molasses or treacle). Thus far, the sugar-cane cultivator did on his own account. Then he sold the Gur either at the markets to be consumed locally or to the manufacturers of sugar known as Golahdars who possessed works in the midst of the sugar-cane growing region, especially, the southern parts of the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur.

The cultivation of sugar-cane exhausted the soil so much so that land planted with it for one year had to be cultivated with less soil-exhausting crops for the ensuing two years. Therefore, a cultivator who wished to cultivate one bigha of sugar-cane every year had to possess three bighas of land fit for its cultivation. Thus, a rotation of the crops in a 3-year-period was adopted by many sugar-cane cultivators. Both B.Mason, the Commercial Resident of Rangpur, and F.Buchanan emphasised that it was necessary to take into account the produce of the whole period of a rotation (3 years) for the estimation of the annual assessment of rent on the sugar land and the annual profit from the cultivation of sugar-cane. Buchanan explained the system of rotation as follows :-

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(223) Gutch : It means a tree. The sugar-mill was made of wood, hence called "Gutch".

> "The land is of the first quality, is cultivated in a succession of crops as follows : 16 months sugar-cane, 7 months summer rice, 9 months cotton and mustard, 4 months pulse (thakuri), in all three years. The same succession is repeated. Some variations occasionally take place, but this is the most common."

In the districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur, only those lands best suited for the cultivation of sugar-cane were planted with it. It accounted for the high produce per bigha and high quality of gur of these districts.

Extraction of the juice from the cane and its processing into gur had to be done by the producers of sugar-cane themselves. It is notable that processing of gur was done through the co-operation of sugar-cane producers which considerably reduced the cost of this process. Buchanan wrote ;

> "[The mills] generally belong to some wealthy man, who lets them out for hire to his poorer neighbours, and the whole unite to clear each other's fields by turns; so that although many people [8 to 16 men] and many cattle [12 to 20 oxen] are employed at one of these miserable works, very few are hired, and the greater part of the labour is performed by the common stock of the farms."

They worked day and night and processed about 8 maunds of gur in 24 hours. Such co-operation and the advances of loans by the golahdars made it possible for the poorer ryots to cultivate sugar-cane. If the whole process above-mentioned had to be done by hired labourers alone, as the Collector of Nadia reported(224), it would cost about Rs.10 per bigha.

According to B.Mason, one bigha of sugar-cane land produced 10 to 20 maunds of gur and its price was estimated at Re $1\frac{1}{2}$ to Rs.$2\frac{1}{2}$ per maund. Though the prices of gur fluctuated widely from year to year especially after it was put on the list of the Company's investment, we may take Re $1\frac{1}{2}$ as its usual price. If we estimate the average produce of gur per bigha at 14 maunds, as Buchanan did, the gross produce per bigha would be Rs.21. There was little

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(224) BR-P 8th April, 1793 Nos. 7 & 8.

difference in the price between the Patulee Gur and Danadar Gur. The gross profit from the cultivation of one bigha of summer rice, cotton, mustard and thakuri, which were grown in succession on the sugar land, would be Re 1-9, Re 1, Re 1-1 and Re 1-4 respectively(225). The total gross produce from one bigha of sugar land in 3-year-rotation would, thus, amount to Rs.25-14.

The calculation of the cost of cultivation of these five articles is difficult to make. Rent and other charges changed where the mofussil settlement was made on fusali assessment according to the change in the articles of cultivation, but it did not change where the land was under thika assessment (or fixed assessment on the whole holdings). In Dinajpur, where hari assessment was introduced by Hatch, rent remained the same irrespective of change of the article of cultivation. In Rangpur, on many occasions, rent fluctuated according to the kind of crops grown on the land. Here we shall make calculation on the fusali basis. Rent and other charges would have been Rs.2-8 when sugar was planted and Re 1 for the remaining two years, in all, Rs.4-8 in three years. Following Mason's estimate, we may suppose that the cost of cultivation of the four crops (sugar excepted) was 8 annas each. He estimated the cost of cultiva-tion of one bigha of sugar-cane at Rs.17-13 on the supposition that all the works were done by hired labourers called Coolies and Bildars. The additional cost of processing sugar-cane into gur on the same supposition that all the works were done by hired labourers was put at Rs.10 by the Collector of Nadia. These estimates of cost of cultivation and processing were evidently unrealistic, simply because the total cost then far exceeded the gross produce. Considering that the golahdars advanced money to the necessitous cultivators at the rate of Rs.10 to 12 per bigha and the poorer ryots who were supposed to have possessed virtually no capital could cultivate land and pay rent with this assistance, we may suppose that half of the gross produce (Rs. 21) would be a fair estimate

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(225) See section 3-(1) of this chapter.

of cost including rent-payment.

From the foregoing study, we may estimate the net profit from the cultivation of one bigha of sugar land in a whole period of a rotation of 3 years at Rs.11-6 or Rs.3-12-13 per annum.

As we have pointed out earlier, there was a vast home market for the Patulee Gur(226), and only a small proportion of the cane was manufactured into refined sugar (chini) until the sudden expansion of its foreign export in about 1791. Even after this increased demand for refined sugar, the major portion was consumed locally. According to an estimate by Buchanan, about two-thirds of the gur produced in Dinajpur were sold in its raw state (Patulee Gur), and only one third was manufactured into refined sugar by the manufacturers (golahdars).

All the golahdars were "natives, and most of them are men of considerable wealth. Three or four thousand rupees for each boiler is the smallest capital that can carry on the business, and very few have borrowed money." A list of golahdars residing in the districts under the residency of the Commercial Resident of Rangpur, submitted to the Board of Revenue in 1794, reveals that out of 175 golahdars who received advances from the Resident, 107 borne the title of Saha, 23 that of Mandal, and 11 that of Sircar(227). This would show that the manufacturers of sugar were mostly native merchants who invested their capital in this line of business. 23 Mandals who owned sugar-works in these districts would most probably have been wealthy ryots who had started the manufacture of sugar in the countryside.

G.Hatch estimated that about one fourth of the gur produced in Dinajpur was consumed in the district and the three-fourths were exported in the form of both gur and chini (refined sugar)(228). One notable aspect of the sugar

(226) Native people consumed sugar in its raw state (gur).
(227) BT-P 4th July, 1794.
(228) BR-P 26th Decr. 1792. No. 17.

trade was that the manufacturers themselves were the exporters of their products. The golahdars sent their sugar to Dacca, Murshidabad & Calcutta and sold it through their agents there. But since the Company started to invest in sugar, almost all the refined sugar of superior quality was bought up by the Commercial Resident at Rangpur. Mason estimated the quantity of sugar produced and exported under his residency as follows;

1st Sort made from the original Gur	40,000
2nd Sort from a mixture of Gur and Cutrah(229) of the 1st sort in equal quantity	25,000
3rd Sort from ¼ Gur, ¾ths Cutrah of the 2nd sort	10,000
Total Maunds	75,000
Annual consumption about	3,000
The remainder exported to Dacca, Murshidabad & Calcutta ..... Maunds	72,000

The price of refined sugar before the Company's entry in the trade was about Rs.5 per maund which makes its total exports Sa Rs. 360,000. The sugar manufactured in southern parts of Dinajpur and Rangpur was called Ghoraghat sugar in the markets.

Considering that the golahdars could carry on their manufacture independently and that they had an established home market for their products, it is not surprising that they at first showed reluctance to receive advances from the Company. In 1794, the Commercial Resident at Rangpur tried to purchase almost the whole quantity of refined sugar produced within his residency. This created a great expectation among the golahdars that they could sell their produces at a higher price than before. The gutchuahs (sugar cultivators), in their turn, demanded from the golahdars Rs.$2\frac{1}{2}$ per maund for their gur instead of Re $1\frac{1}{2}$ which was the former year's price. The golahdars, of course, demanded from the Company a proportional increase in the price of refined sugar. So

(229) Cutrah : Syrup that drains after the first and second boilings.

persistent was their demand that the Company had to cut the alloted amount of its sugar investment for the Rangpur Factory from 70,000 maunds to 36,000 maunds(230). And in the next year, the allotment further dwindled to 10,000 maunds(231). The Commercial Resident of Patna also reported a similar situation. There, due to artifices of the contractors, the price was raised "to a most extravagant and unheard of degree,"(232) and consequently he could not obtain the assigned amount of sugar investment(233).

Though the golahdars in the districts of Dinajpur and Rangpur could carry on their manufacture and sale independently, the gutchuahs or sugar cultivators were often obliged to take advances from the golahdars. Mason explained the gutchuahs' necessity for taking up advances as follows :

> "The culture of sugar cane is so expensive that the generality of the ryots cannot carry it on with their own small funds alone; hitherto the Golahdars or manufacturers of the sugar-cane have been the persons from whom they have chiefly received the assistance for the purpose." He further observed that "the advances made... by them to the Gutchuahs may be considered as money lent to enable the former to secure Goor enough, by advancing the latter, to give full employment to their works, and to enable the latter to pay their revenues becoming due before they can sell their Goor in the regular course of trade - they each accordingly enter into engagements with the persons making advances to deliver a

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(230) BT- P 21st May, 1794.
(231) Ibid. 7th July, 1795.
(232) H.R.Ghosal, "The Economic Transition in the Bengal Presidency", P. 60.
(233) The Collector of Burdwan reported in 1792 that a great change occurred in sugar manufacture in his district on account of the sudden and great demand for refined sugar for the foreign market. Formerly, the surplus gur was exported in its raw state to Calcutta, Hooghly, Channock and Midnapur, but since the appearance of this great demand in the previous year, the surplus portion was "almost entirely manufactured into Sugar and exported to Calcutta." But he failed to explain how it was possible to manufacture so much sugar in his district. The present author inclines to think that there had already been many sugar manufactories in Burdwan for home consumption as it seems to have been the case in Dinajpur and Rangpur. Otherwise it was impossible to build up so many manufactories within a single year.

BR-P 26th Decr. 1792. No.22

certain overplus of Goor or Sugar when manufactured equivalent to the rate of interest, they must otherwise pay for monies borrowed from other persons." Concerning the interest paid by Gutchuahs, Mason wrote in another letter; "Many of them are bound to deliver an excess [of Gur] at the rate of 2 Annas for mensem on every rupee from time of receiving the advance till the delivery of the Goor, or in other words to pay interest at the rate of 150 per cent per annum. Very few pay less than 1 Anna per month or 75 per cent per annum. Moreover, if on settling the accounts of receipts and advances of the season a balance should appear in favor of Golahdar, the Gutchuah is obliged to enter into a fresh engagement from that date for the delivery of Goor of the ensuing crop ... The consequences of this load of compound Interest of usury upon usury are too obvious to require explanation."

Buchanan's observation on the advances made by the golahdars to the gutchuahs was more to the point;

"A principal part of their [golahdars'] profit arises from advancing money to the cultivators, from whom they procure the extract. The farmers who want advances, in the end of June or beginning of July, apply to a manufac-turer, who sends a person to inspect the cane. The terms having been settled, a Kundo-khalasi or release is procured from the landlord who accepts of manufacturer's security for the rent in place of his hypothic on the crop, and the manufacturer becomes bound to pay the whole money that is to be advanced by four instalments into the hands of the land-lord. In general, this is sufficient to pay the whole rent of the farm. It is usual to advance from 12 to 15 Rs. on the bigha... He on the whole receives from $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas on each rupee [in 6 months] that he has advanced." The interest paid by the gutchuahs thus amounted to 34 to 40 per cent per annum.

The above two explanations clearly establish that the golahdars-cum-merchants could through the system of advances buy the produce of sugar-cane cultivators at a price lower than the market one. Here again we find the same evil that we have noted in connection with the grain trade; the alliance of the zamindar and merchants or combination of the advance-system with that of rent-payment. In spite of the high profitability of sugar-cultivation, the poorer gutchuahs were deprived by the golahdars of most of their profit from

sugar-cultivation. Thus partly due to the exploitation by golahdars and partly due to the high demand of rent of the zamindar on the sugar land, "on the whole, the farmers in districts, where sugar-cane is cultivated, are by no means richer than where grain is the only produce". The wealthier gutchuahs who were free from the usurious advances and who generally held land at a low fixed rate were able to manage a higher income from the sugar-cane cultivation.

(b) Indigo Cultivation

Though indigo was an old plant of India, it's home market was narrow(234), and its quality was not fit for European market. The Bengal indigo, therefore, remained an insignificant item of cultivation and manufacture until the 1780's when the Court of Directors found it advantageous to grow indigo in Bengal where the political hegemony of the Company was secure and the cost of labour was very small. However, pioneering attempts by several European contractors to introduce an improved method of indigo manufacture proved to be unprofitable due to its vast initial investment in the works and inadequate management. After its manufacture was thrown open to private enterprise in 1788, the Bengal indigo began to improve and by 1792 its quality was acknowledged in the European market : The Court of Directors thus wrote in May 1792 ; "it had already surpassed the American and French and there is no doubt but by perseverance and attention of the planter it will effectually rival the Spanish". The following rough estimate would indicate how indigo cultivation in Bengal presidency rapidly increased.

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(234) The following description on the foreign market of the Bengal indigo depends upon the following three books.
J.C.Sinha, op. cit.
H.R.Ghosal, op. cit.
B.Chowdhury, Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal (1757 - 1900), Calcutta, 1964

Table-17 : A Statement showing the Amount of Export of Indigo from Bengal

1788	about	8,300 Maunds (including that of upper India)
1795		39,400
1796/7		34,700
1797/8		55,900
1800		40,000
1810		66,700
1815		120,000

Source : See foot-note (234)

In the northern Bengal districts, the cultivation of indigo started rather late. In Dinajpur, an early attempt was made by H.Creighton in 1789. He employed servants and provided them with the necessary charges of cultivation, but this was neither the Niz cultivation (cultivation of indigo on the land rented or owned by the planter) as the season's risks were to be borne by the latter who cultivated 12 to 15 bighas per head, nor ryoti cultivation as the cultivators were his servants(235).

More extensive attempts were made by a few Europeans since 1794. G.Udny's following petition in 1794 for the permission of Government to occupy 30 bighas of land for an indigo work explains the infant stage of its cultivation in north Bengal;

> "The indigo plant is cultivated to a considerable extent in the part of the country to the West, South and North of this [Maldah], and the cultivation is extending more and more every year...There has hitherto been little trial made of Indigo to the East and North East in your District [Dinajpur], it is now my desire to make one...the Tehsildar of the place on application for Ground, whereon to erect an Indigo work, has given me a Pottah...The cultivation of the Plant would be carried on entirely by the Ryotts, they receiving advances for it, and delivering the Plant at stipulated rate to be settled with them"(236).

(235) BDR-DNR Vol. 1 30th Nov. 1789 No. 481
(236) BR-P 8th April 1794

In Rangpur, indigo cultivation was started in 1796 by several European manufacturers who built their works under the sanction of Government. As Buchanan observed, the most difficult part of an indigo concern was not the manufacture itself nor the sale of its products, but the procurement of raw materials (indigo plants)(237). Until they introduced a kind of rotation system, they met with great difficulties in obtaining peasants and lands for cultivation of the indigo plant. After its introduction, the ryots came to know that they could cultivate such lands "as would yield indigo without interfering with the other crops they were accustomed to raise from them", and the European manufacturers thereafter "find no difficulty in procuring land of every description"(238). They also brought into cultivation 20,000 to 25,000 bighas of waste lands in six years by advancing money to the ryots. Thus by the introduction of rotation system with other usual crops, the European manufacturers could establish themselves in this district by 1801.

In Purnea, indigo cultivation and manufacture was still in its infancy in 1800, but it expanded rapidly and by 1807 its cultivation was 4 times as large as it was in 1800 and its manufactured product about 6 times. The following statement shows its rapid expansion under one manufacturer named Smith. It also shows the rapid improvement in its manufacture. In 1800, it required more than 300 bundles of indigo plant to produce 1 maund of dye, but in 1807 only 220 bundles was sufficient for the same.

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(237) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur p. 310
(238) BR-P 5th May 1801 Nos. 10 & 11

Table-18 : A Statement showing the Growth of Indigo Manufacture in the Manufactories under one European Manufacturer named Smith

Years	Number of bundles of indigo plant	Indices supposing number of 1800 as 100	Quantity of manufactured Indigo	Indices supposing quantity of 1800 as 100	Number of Bundles used to produce 1 maund of dye
			Maunds		
1800	41,764	100	131	100	319
1801	48,834	117	162	124	301
1802	26,083	62	109	83	239
1803	74,525	178	278	212	268
1804	93,945	225	381	291	247
1805	138,798	332	536	409	259
1806	92,770*	222	810	618	115
1807	166,106	398	754	576	220
Total	682,625		2,662		257

Source : F.Buchanan, Purnea, p. 395

* As it is in the text. Most probably misprinting of 192,770

From Buchanan's report, we come to know that the total produce of indigo dye was about 6,940 maunds in Purnea, which, on a modest estimate, yielded Rs. 866,000.

The following statement shows the state of indigo cultivation and its manufacture in the northern Bengal districts in the early 19th century.

Table-19 : A Statement showing the Area under Indigo Cultivation and the Value of Dye produced in Dinajpur, Rangpur and Purnea (1807-10)

	Cultivation		Manufacture	
	Area (Calcutta bighas)	Value of Plant	Number of Manufactories	Value of manufactured Indigo
	Bighas	Sa Rs		Sa Rs
Dinajpur	15,000	38,000	21	250,000
Rangpur	79,000	127,000	not known	644,000
Purnea	156,000	156,000	77	866,000
	250,000	321,000		1,750,000

Source : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 333
Eastern India, ed. by M.Martin, Vol.5 reprint, 1976, pp. 699 to 711

As we have mentioned before, the prices of indigo-plant were surprisingly low for an article cultivated exclusively for sale. In Dinajpur, 200 bundles of indigo plant which were paid at Rs 20 produced 1 maund of indigo dye the value of which was estimated at Rs 140. In Purnea, on an average, 300 bundles of plant, for which Rs 30 to 40 were paid, produced 1 maund of dye. But it did not mean that the cultivators of Purnea were better paid than those in Dinajpur. One bigha of indigo land produced 25 bundles of weeds in Dinajpur(239), while that in Purnea yielded only 13 bundles(240). The gross income per bigha was, therefore, Rs 2-8 in Dinajpur and Annas 13 to Re 1-1 in Purnea. Buchanan thus criticized the European manufacturers in Purnea :

> "The price given here...is much lower than that given in Rongpur and seems totally inadequate to induce the farmers to cultivate the plants". Even the value of summer rice from the same quantity of land "double the value of the indigo". He continued, Frauds (one-third of each bundle was grass) "together with heavy losses by bad debts and large outstanding balances, seem to me the natural result of giving for the weed a price far below its value, that is far inferior to the cost of raising it"(241).

It would be relevant to examine here why the indigo manufacturers paid so little to the ryots. Firstly, indigo was, from the beginning, meant for the foreign market (European market) and it had to surpass its rivals(Spanish and American Indigo) which then ruled the European market. To acquire the competitive power in the foreign market, the price of the Bengal indigo should be kept as low as possible. Secondly, almost all the manufacturers were Europeans whose sole object was quickly to make as much money as possible from the business and many of them were indebted to the bankers for the initial capital of their manufactories. Thirdly, indigo plant was ready for reaping in only four months and could be grown in any season in a year and on any soils(242). Thus, it could easily be cultivated as the second crop unlike other

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(239) F. Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 209
(240) Do Purnea p. 389
(241) Do Purnea p. 548
(242) Do Dinajpur pp. 206 to 209

market crops. The income from indigo cultivation was, therefore, of rather minor importance in the management of the ryoti-holdings. This circumstance also must have affected the prices of indigo.

Thus, it was a natural consequence of the colonial set-up of the indigo manufacture of Bengal as well as the nature of its cultivation that its price was kept very low as a market crop.

The following statement shows the break-up of the initial cost for the manufacture of 100 maunds of indigo dye in Dinajpur as reported by Buchanan.

Table-20 : A Statement showing the Initial Cost of building and managing an Indigo Work capable of producing 100 Maunds of Dye per annum.

Buildings & Utensils	2,500	
20,000 bundles of indigo plant	2,000	
Manufacturing charges(cloth, boxes, fuel & labourers)	2,500	
Servants employed the whole year	600	
Loss by bad debts	500	8,100
Remuneration to a Superintendent		3,600
Total		11,700

Source : F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 311

The buildings and utensils would at least last 5 years, and the remuneration to the superintendent should not be charged as cost, because the owner himself could superintend the management. The gross income was Rs 14,240 (Rs 14,000 from the sale of 100 maunds of indigo dye and Rs 240 as the interest on the loans advanced to the ryots at the rate of 12 % per annum). The annual cost of this work was Rs 6,100 to which we might add Rs 972 as the interest to be repaid to the bankers at 12 % per annum, as Buchanan found, on the initial investment of Rs 8,100. The owner thus obtained a net profit of Rs 7,168 per

annum if he managed the work himself or, in other words, 50.3 % of the gross income was his gain, while he paid only Rs 2,000 or 14 % of the gross income to the ryots. We cannot but sigh on finding how little the ryots were rewarded in comparison with the enormous profit the European manufacturer derived from his work.

The following description of indigo contracts and the methods adopted by indigo manufacturers to start or to increase indigo cultivation would reveal the exploitative feature of the system of its production ;

> "When a factory is first established, the manufacturer usually assemble the most wealthy farmers(Mondols) of the neighbouring lands; and from the accounts which they give of the population and nature of the soil in their respective subdivisions(Mauzas), a conjecture is formed how many bighas of cultivation may be obtained in each, and upon this calculation, money is advanced to these principal farmers who...divide the amount among the smaller farmers in such a manner as to procure the greatest quantity of properly cultivated land"(243).

Some ryots who refused to take advances were confined and compelled to execute the Sattahs or written engagements(244). The manufacturers of Rangpur described the contents of the Sattah as follows :

> "In our engagements with the Riots, it is specifically agreed that should the quantity of land they may have actually cultivated with indigo prove upon measurement to be less than the quantity of land they engaged to cultivate, they will immediately make good the deficiency, not by a return of advance, or in money, but by appropriating the further quantity of land wanted to complete their engagement ; In order to ascertain such deficiencies, we are obliged to employ a number of Aumeens whose business it is to measure the lands agreed for, and keep an accurate account of the state of the cultivation"(245). Buchanan wrote that "the Satta also specifies...the price which he is to obtain for his plants and seed".

When an engagement was made through the Mandals of villages, they were allowed to receive one-sixteenth of the produces of the smaller ryots.

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(243) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 311
(244) BR-P 5th May, 1801 No. 10
(245) BR-P 5th May, 1801 No. 11

Not to speak of the very low price, the above engagement was hardly acceptable for the ryots; the loss from the very uncertain and precarious nature of its harvest(246) was all borne by the cultivators under the fixed price system which was contrary to the current system of advances in the rice and sugar trade where the prices were allowed to fluctuate. The mandals could easily increase their profits at the cost of the smaller cultivators under the contracts abovementioned. Even more, the indigo manufacturers introduced an abominable system of collective responsibility(247) which was the same in nature as the najae system prohibited by the regulations for the Decennial Settlement in 1790.

It was the natural consequence of their engagements that "almost every farmer sooner or later falls into arrears"(248).

Both the zamindars and the ryots were displeased with the indigo manufacturers. They had "great objections, not only to the extension, but to the continuance of the culture"(249). Disputes between the employees of the indigo manufacturers and the ryots and the zamindari officers were endless. As most of the manufacturers were Europeans, they were not subject to the court of law in the districts, and stood above the common law of the country. For the zamindar, the very existence of the indigo manufacturers often resulted in lowering their local prestige. The manufacturers interfered with the zamindari affairs in order to win over the ryots. The zamindars of Rangpur thus complained :

> "In Regulation 7, A.D. 1799, appertaining to the collections, it is ordered that if a ryot does not punctually discharge his rent, the products of the land are subject to distraint, in liquidation thereof. We are however unable to levy distress upon the ryots who have received advances accounts Indigo, when they fall into arrears of rent...upon Paiks being sent by us

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(246) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, pp. 208 & 209
(247) Do Do p. 311
(248) Do Do p. 311
(249) Do Do p. 208

> to demand the Revenue from the Suttahdar Ryots [peasants who entered into indigo contracts], the people of the Factory beat the Paiks and release the defaulters. These are the causes of...considerable loss to the Revenue..."(250)

To turn out the indigo manufacturers from their estates, the zamindars, therefore, sought to frustrate the indigo manufacturers' business by raising the rent of the ryots who received advances for indigo cultivation and even by burning down the houses of such ryots(251).

Seeing the mounting evils of the indigo cultivation, Buchanan suggested adoption of the following measures : firstly, to "have the whole (indigo land) compact near his works, to have a lease of the whole from the landlord and to let it again to the farmers"(252). He argued that this would prevent the frauds on the part of the ryots and of the planter's employees and lessen the zamindar's interference. This was also good because the manufacturer could, then, collect the plants at smaller costs, which had to be carried to the manufactory immediately after reaping. Secondly, to raise the price of indigo plant so that the cultivators would voluntarily take advances and cultivate the plant. Thirdly, to give the management of the manufactory to the native Portuguese and Armenians who were subject to the common law of the country. It would lessen the misdeeds on the part of the indigo manufacturers. And lastly, the abandonment, if possible, of the manufacture of indigo by Europeans altogether and the introduction of indigenous enterprise in this field in their stead.

Why did the cultivators receive advances from the indigo manufacturers on so disadvantageous terms ? One obvious answer will be that they received them because they were forced to accept. To some extent, this would be true, but it does not explain the whole question. The unequal distribution of agricultural

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(250) BR-P 5th May,1801, No.10
(251) Ibid No.11 & F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 209
(252) F.Buchanan, Dinajpur, p. 313-314

stocks in the countryside had again a role to play in this. The indigo manufacturers of Rangpur and Purnea were unanimous in this respect. The former said that the ryot received advances from them at the end of the year so that he was "thereby enabled to pay his heaviest kist without disposing of his Cattle, Rice or other products, at an under-valuation; or as it often happens, be obliged to take up money at the usurious interest of from 20 to 30 per cent per month for the purpose of liquidating such demands"(253). The latter thus argued : "had the farmer borrowed the money from a native merchants, and no one cultivate indigo that would not have been under the necessity of borrowing, he would have in the first place been obliged to repay the amount of the loan, in grain or other produce, at the low price given when the markets are glutted at harvest, by which he would loose 15 to 20 per cent. Secondly, in place of giving 40 sers for the man, he must have given 50, which is an addition of 25 per cent, not only on the capital but on the interest; and if he fails in the delivery of any part, he takes the deficiency in part of a loan for the next year, at double amount"(254).

Of course, we must consider that these were the assertions of manufacturers who were under fire. Even admitting this, we can not but see the truth of their assertion, because we have already studied the usurious ways in which the advances were made by the grain merchants and sugar manufacturers (Golahdars).

The relatively low interest on advances made the ryots eager to accept them, though they could derive no profit from the cultivation of indigo. Here again, it was the necessity of paying rent, when the ryots were least able to do so without borrowing from someone, or, in other words, the lack of savings on the part of the vast majority of ryots that drove them to the cultivation of indigo on such disadvantageous terms.

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(253) BR-P 5th May 1801, No. 11
(254) F.Buchanan, Purnea, pp. 394 to 395

CHAPTER 7

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PEASANTRY - WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PATTAH REGULATIONS AND THE DISTRAINT REGULATIONS

In this small chapter, we shall confine our attention to the measures actually taken by the Company to regulate the relationship between the zamindar and the ryots.

Hastings and his colleagues wrote and argued a good deal on the necessity of protecting the peasantry from the exactions of the zamindar(1), but, in fact, their administration failed to come down to the level of the actual cultivators of the soil, except on a few rare occasions.

The Company's government was very slow in taking measures to regulate the relationship between the zamindars and the ryots. Even after the great peasant uprising in Rangpur and part of Dinajpur in 1783, they did not try to work out any measure of a lasting nature to remedy the confusion in the countryside. The problems of the peasantry began to attract the notice of the Company's administrators only in the late seventeen eighties when they realized that without the assistance of the state-authority, most of the zamindars were incapable of suppressing the growing local power of the superior ryots and of normalizing their relationship with the ryots(2).

It was the administration of Cornwallis that stepped forward for the enactment of the regulation with a practicable plan for the re-establishment of an orderly relationship between the zamindars and the ryots. The rules relating to the delivery of the pattahs which were established in 1790 as part of the regulation for the decennial settlement of the Bengal districts were the first major deviation from the Company's policy of non-interference in the zamindar-ryots relation.

John Shore's monumental minute submitted to the Supreme Council on the 18th June,1789(3) ably described the background and the objectives of

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(1) See R.Guha, "A Rule of Property for Bengal", 1963 and M.Jones, "Warren Hastings in Bengal", 1918.
(2) See section 5 of chap. 4 and section 1 of chap. 6.
(3) Fifth Report Vol. 2 Appendix 1.

the regulations which were to be enacted for "preventing oppression upon the ryots by the zamindars and farmers, as well as collusions amongst the latter, tending to defraud the zamindars and farmers of their just dues."

His arguments were as follows : After the acquisition of the Dewani (the right of collecting the revenue) of the Bengal Presidency by the Company in 1765, the revenue system of Bengal, which under the Mughal government was effective in regulating the normal relationship between the zamindars and the ryots, fell into confusion. Under the former government, the government officers called the Kanungo whose duty it was to keep regular and detailed mofussil records, worked effectively as a check upon the conduct of the zamindar as well as of the ryots. The detailed records on the usages of the country preserved by them enabled government to judge the truth or otherwise of the complaints preferred to them by zamindars or ryots. But now this useful system ceased to function. Two evils arose in consequance; imposition of illegal and oppressive taxes on ryots by zamindars, and accumulation of wealth and growth of local influence of the superior ryots at the cost of both zamindars and inferior ryots. Increase of oppressive impositions and increased burden of rent on inferior ryots, due to its unequal distribution among the villagers by superior ryots, resulted in the obsolescence of the established rate of rent (nirkh) of the village and pargana. Such confusion in the countryside was the result of the inability of "the ancient institutions" to check and control the zamindar--ryots relation in the interior of the country. Especially the second evil, namely, the growing local power of the wealthy ryots had to be tackled quickly, because it had been imperilling the economic foundations of the zamindars[4] in whom the Company was going to vest the exclusive proprietor--ship of the lands. The regular collection of public revenue from the

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(4) See sections 2 & 5 of chap. 4.

zamindars depended on the smooth realization of rent by zamindars from the ryots. To restore regularity in the relationship between them as well as equality among the ryots concerning the rent-burden, government's interference was indispensable. Government should, for this purpose, re-establish the Kanungo system throughout the country, enforce the grant of the pattahs which were to specify a consolidated demand on the ryots by the zamindars and would thus revive the established rate of rent of the pargana.

J.Shore had to face a serious dilemma which made his otherwise consistent argument contradictory. In one place he declared that government's interference in the zamindar-ryot relation was indispensable, but he also asserted that government should not interfere in the internal management of the zamindari, because now government was about to vest the private proprietorship of the lands in them. If he was to be true to this principle, he thought, he should denounce any interference in the zamindar's private property by the government, but, on the other hand, he could not but admit "the necessity" of government's interference to protect the poorer ryots from the exactions of the zamindars and to suppress the collusion and frauds of the superior ryots. In a minute submitted on the 21st December, 1789, he was thus obliged to admit the prematurity of the bestowal of exclusive proprietorship in lands on the zamindars in the following way :

> "The relation of a zamindar to government, and of a ryot to a zamindar is neither that of a proprietor nor a vassal; but a compound of both. The former performs acts of authority, unconnected with proprietary right; - the latter, has rights, without real property; and the property of one, and rights of the other, are in a great measure, held at discretion. Such was the system which we found, and which we have been under the necessity of adopting. Much time will, I fear, elapse before we can establish a system, perfectly consistent in all its

parts; and before we can reduce the compound relation of a zamindar to government, and of a ryot to a zamindar, to the simple principles of land--lord and tenants".(5)

He, therefore, objected to a permanent settlement with the zamindar in a haste. However, Cornwallis rejected Shore's objection to the formation of a permanent settlement and declared the decennial settlement to be permanent.

The dilemma abovementioned resulted in great defects in the regulations proposed by Shore for the avowed object of the protection of the ryots. He dropped the plan of restoring the Kanungo system and proposed that the patwaris of the villages should be the servants of the zamindars. Thus, one of the main means for the regularization of the zamindar-ryots relationship, namely, the system of keeping of village accounts and the system of checking the conduct of the zamindar and ryots by the authority of the state was abandoned by the very persen who had so ably pointed out the vital importance of it. The pattah regulation which was first enacted in February, 1790 was based almost wholly on Shore's proposed regulation submitted with his minute of the 18th June, 1789.

The 27th, 28th and 29th articles of the regulation of 1790 for the decennial settlement of the Bengal districts were the rules for the regula--rization of the relation between the zamindar and the ryots. These articles would be summarized as follows; (a) Consolidation of the Assul, Abwabs and and Mathots into one specific sum : The zamindars were "positively enjoined "to carry into execution the consolidation of their demands on the ryots" so that the whole be completely performed within three years from the date of his agreement. "The accounts of the consolidated demands were to be inspected by the Collector of the district and enforced by the authority of Government. (b) Grant of pattahs : The zamindars were ordered to prepare a form or forms of pattahs and to cause them to be registered in the public office. The

(5) Fifth Report Vol. 2 Appendix 5.

zamindars were to grant pattahs to the ryots on application for the same by the latter. The lease of the pattah to be issued by the farmers or under-farmers should not exceed that of their own. The pattahs possessed by the Khodkasht Ryots should not be cancelled by the zamindars "except upon proof that they have been obtained by collusion, or that the rents paid by them within the last three years have been reduced below the rates of the Nirkhbundy of the Pergunnah, or that they have obtained collusive deductions or upon a general measurement of the Pergunnah for the purpose of equalizing and correcting the assessment." (c) Establishment of Nirkh : After the consolidation of the Assul, Abwabs and Mathots, zamindars were ordered to prepare a new Nirkhbandi. It should be publicly recorded at every mofussil Kachari. (d) Issue of receipts : The zamindars were ordered to issue a receipt for every sum received by them from the ryots. And at the end of the engagement for the year, they were ordered to issue the general release that the complete payment of rent was made. (e) Patwari : "For every village a patwarry shall be established by the zamindar for the purpose of recording the amounts (sic) of the ryots in that village." (f) The zamindars were prohibited from levying the rent of the deserted villagers on those who remained. (g) Imposition of mathots were prohibited under pain of penalty of thrice the amount exacted.

The above rules, generally known as the pattah regulation, were further strengthened by article 65 of the regulation passed on the 23rd November, 1791 which ordered that "The landholders and renters in Bengal are allowed till the end of the Bengal year 1198... to prepare and deliver pattahs to the ryots... but after the expiration of the year 1198, no engagements for rent contrary to those ordered, are to be held valid, and in the event of any claims being preferred by landholders, farmers or ryots

on engagements wherein the consolidation of the Assul, Abwab &ca shall appear not to have been made, they are to be non-suited with costs."(6)

The above rules of 1790 and 1791 were confirmed by the regulation 8 of 1793. But the Regulation 44 passed on the same date set a material limitation on the rights of ryots in land. It ordered that the leases to the ryots or under-farmers should not exceed ten years and that if an estate was sold at the public sale, all the existing engagements between the former proprietor and the ryots or under-farmers were to be cancelled. The new purchasers were, therefore, at liberty to relinquish the existing leases in the estate and to enter into a new engagement with them on the basis of the nirkh of the pargana.

It is surprising to find that these regulations, which were often called the pattah regulations, did not include any clauses which posifively ordered the zamindars to grant pattahs to ryots. They only provided that the zamindars should grant pattahs to ryots on application for them by the latter.

The collectors of the districts were, however, repeatedly asked to see to it that the zamindars in their respective jurisdictions would carry into execution the consolidation of their demands on ryots and delivery of pattahs to ryots who applied for them. We have already seen that, in the district of Dinajpur, the delivery of pattahs was vigorously promoted by G.Hatch, the Collector, and more than three lacks of pattahs were granted to the ryots by the end of 1793.

The case of Dinajpur was, however, exceptional. In many districts, the delivery of pattahs was attended with several difficulties.

As the zamindars were ordered to specify the amount of the land possessed by each ryot, the rate of rent per bigha and the specific sum of

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(6) Colebrooke, J.S. "Supplement to the Digest of the Regulations and Laws enacted by the Governor General in Council for the civil Government of the Territories under the Presidency of Bengal" 1807, Vol. 3.

the rent to be paid by each ryot, many zamindars alleged that a general measurement of their zamindari should be made, previous to the delivery of pattahs, otherwise they would sustain a large loss(7). In the district of Rajshahi, the period for the delivery of pattahs was postponed on the pretext of making a general measurement(8). The ryots, especially the wealthy ryots, opposed the general measurement strongly, because it would be likely to disclose the concealed surplus land in their possession and thereby weaken their privileged position in the countryside. In many zamindaries, the mofussil settlement was hitherto made village-wise. The zamindars used to give only one pattah to the whole village and all the members of the village were bound by one pattah for the payment of the village jama. But now pattahs were going to be granted to the cultivators individually. The mandals and kutkinadars would be "thereby totally prevented from exacting an extra cowrie from them (inferior ryots) more than the sum stated in their Pottahs."(9) Moreover, the rate of rent was to be equalized and a general nirkh was to be applied for all the lands in the pargana, or, in other words, the privileged rate of rent enjoyed by a few of the superior ryots were to be abolished(10).

Naturally, the wealthy ryots and the privileged inhabitants of the villages opposed sharply the execution of the pattah regulation. The great local influence of the wealthy ryots alone was enough to make the implemen--tation of the regulation extremely difficult(11).

The opposition came not only from the privileged and wealthy ryots, but also from the common ryots(11A). The causes of the ordinary ryots' opposition to the delivery of pattah should be studied carefully, as they had their roots in various local conditions as well as in the general nature of the new pattahs. The Collector of Rangpur explained the objections of

(7) BR-P 5th Novr. 1792. No. 31 & BR-P 8th Feb. 1792. No. 20.
(8) BR-P 28th Novr. 1792 No. 17 & 10th Decr. 1792 No. 24.
(9) BR-P 5th Novr. 1792. No. 31.
(10) Ibid. Also see section 1-(4) of chap. 1 & section 5 of chap. 4.
(11) BR-P 29th June, 1792 No. 15 & 28th Feb. 1794. No. 21.
(11A) Full discussion on this point is given in B.B.Chaudhuri,"Agrarian Relationships in Bengal after the Permanent Settlement,1793-1819"

the ryots to take out the new pattahs in the following way :-

> "It is the general usage of the Zillah for the Ryots to pay not the Revenue of the whole of the grounds they occupy, but only of such parts as are brought into cultivation; and if by inundation or any calamity, the crops of any one field are destroyed, the loss does not fall upon them, but on the zamindar or farmer who by the custom of the country is obliged to allow them deductions proportioned to the damages they have sustained. This is a practice which the ryots in general conceive would be done away, were they to take out pottahs for their land... many of them are so obstinately attached to it (an indeterminate assessment)..." Another objection of the ryots was "derived from the nature of the soil which being generally sandy, it is found necessary after any particular spot has borne a few crops to leave it for some time fallow that it may receive its fertility, and this is the reason alleged for the frequent migrations of the husbandmen from one village to another, which they conceive would not be so easily practicable, were they to take pottahs(12).

The above extract shows that in the district of Rangpur, there were three general usages; firstly, the ryots paid rent only for such portion of their holdings as were under cultivation for the year, secondly, the loss due to natural calamities was borne by the landholders who had to allow proportionate deductions to the ryots, thirdly, migration of husbandmen frequently took place due to the nature of the soil which was generally sandy. The ryots feared that by taking out these new pattahs, which did not allow the flexibi--lity the ryots used to enjoy under the former indeterminate assessment, they would lose those advantages which they derived from the general usage of the Zillah. Besides these, there were many other local conditions which were not compatible with the rigid nature of the new pattahs and, therefore, led to the opposition to the receipt of new pattahs. There were oppositions of a more general nature. As we have seen, the period of the

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(11A)...(continued from prepage)
(unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to Calcutta University), chap. 3. The present author is obliged to him for allowing him to consult this dissertation.

(12) BR-P 8th Feb. 1792. No. 20.

pattah was limited by the regulation 44 of 1793 to ten years. This was inconsistent with the usage of the country that a resident ryot could never be ejected as long as he paid the established rent and the land in his possession might be inherited from father to son. But now the zamindar could demand an adjustment of rent, actually an enhancement of rent, every ten years from all descriptions of ryots. It was natural that the ryots refused to accept the pattahs on such conditions. Another opposition of a general nature was the immediate enhancement of rent which the ryots were obliged to pay according to the new arrangement. The ryots of Birbhum represented that due to "the unjustness of the Jummabundy, the false returns of the quality & quantity of their lands in the measurement, the Revenues paid by them in former times being now more than doubled by the Jummabundy, that unless the zamindar gave the remissions in the rates, they could not take out the New Pottahs ordered."(13)

In the face of the resistance of both the zamindars and the ryots, the delivery of the pattahs was delayed and finally abandoned by the Company's government by the enactment of the regulation 4 of 1794 which rescinded article 65 of regulation of 1791 and "entitled (the landholders) to recover the Rents due to them from such Ryots, either by the process of distraint laid down in Regulation 17, 1793 or by suit in the Dewanny Adalat." The zamindars could now proceed to the distraint of property or the institution of suits for the recovery of rents even if the delivery of pattahs had not been completed.

The distraint regulations were enacted to define the extent of coercion that the zamindars were authorized to exercise over the ryots in collecting the rents. We must take note that the distraint regulations were considered as a counter-balance to the pattah regulations : the Company's

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(13) BR-P 5th Novr. 1792 No. 31.

government feared that the new arrangement especially the pattah regulation, might arm the ryots with too strong a weapon against the zamindars. For the security of the public revenue, measures should be taken to counter-balance the strengthened judicial support to the ryots. This was the consideration that lay beneath the successive enactments of the distraint law in 1792,1793, 1795 & 1799.

The Collector of Rajshahi, in his letter dated the 23rd June, 1792, explained the necessity for the enactment of the distraint regulation. He wrote that, under the existing regulations the ryots were in general taking advantage of the difficulties in compelling the payment of rent due to the delay in the courts of justice,and were withholding what was due to the zamindar. It was impossible for the Maharajah Ramkissen to collect his rent under this circumstance. The Maharajah was "soliciting authority to continue former modes of coercion, which in addition to the Mohussils allowed, he states to have been confinement in Irong, corporal punishment and an attachment of property. It has been a prevalent practice in his zamindary to have recourse to fetters and flagellation for the recovery of arrears of rent." The Collector continued that "a regulation defining the power which may be legally exercised by the Land-holders and Renters in the collection of their rents, is a desideratum much needed... Some more ready means of recovery than a recourse to the established Courts of Justice is indispensably requisite, to enable the Land-holders and Renters to realize their just dues from the ryots."(14)

One month later, on the 29th July 1792, Cornwallis passed a regulation "vesting Land-holders & Farmers of land with a power of distraining & causing to be sold certain property belonging to their under-renters, ryots or dependent Talookdars, for realizing the arrears of Rent or Revenue that may

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(14) BR-P 29th June, 1792 No. 18.

be due from them."(15) It was re-enacted as Regulation 17 of 1793. Its contents could be summarized as follows : (a) The zamindars & ca. were "empowered to distrain without sending notice to any court of justice, the crops," cattle and all other personal property, but lands, house or other real property were to be exempted from the attachment. (b) They were prohibited from forcing open the closed out-door of the dwelling house or from entering the Zenana. (c) The attached property was to be sold on the fifteenth day after the attachment, if the defaulter did not give in a bond with a good security that he would institute a suit at the Dewany Adalat. (d) On the defaulter's giving in the bond, the distrainer should release the distrained property. (e) The sale should be performed by the Kazi of the pargana after the property was duly appraised by creditable persons. (f) The zamindars were enjoined not to inflict any corporal punishment or confine their ryots for arrears of rent.

The distraining power, thus, vested in the zamindars was considered still insufficient by some of the Collectors and the zamindars, especially the large zamindars who had to deal with numerous intermediary tenants in their extensive estates. The Collector of Burdwan asserted in his letter to the Board of Revenue that "the landholders cannot discharge their engagements to the public, unless they have the means of realizing, with perfect punctuality, their own demands upon their under-renters," and that, "the evils noticed in the preceding remark, in the end, be equally felt by Government and the landholders."(16) Answering the above letters, the Governor General in Council pointed out that the main cause of the default of the revenue payment by the several large zamindars was not the delay of the suits instituted by the zamindars against their under-renters for the

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(15) Ibid. 21st Sept. 1792 No. 3.
(16) Fifth Report Vol. 2. Appendix 6 & 8.

balance of dues but the mismanagement of their own estates. He, however, admitted the necessity to expedite the sale of the distrained property by repealing some of the articles of the Regulation 17 of 1793 which provided for the protection of the under-renters and the ryots against the undue practices of the zamindars concerning the distraint.

In 1795, the distraint regulation of 1793 was amended so that the zamindars might realize their rent from the ryots more speedily; The article ordering the distrainer to release the distrained property if contested at the court of justice, was rescinded. And the sale of the distrained property would now be performed by "every person having a commission from the judge of the zillah to hear and determine civil courts not exceeding 50 rupees," as well as by the Kazi. The judge of the zillah, after the summary examina--tion, was empowered to commit to the close custody the defaulters whose arrear of rent exceeded 500 rupees.

Now it is clear that the Government sided with the zamindar. The regularization of the zamindar-ryots relation, as aimed at by the East India Company's Government, was, in fact, the establishment of the zamindar's superiority over the ryots with the support of the state-authority. The regulations which might have guarded the rights of the ryots viz., the grant of pattahs and the release of the distrained property if contested at the court of justice were abandoned. The time-honoured occupancy rights of the residents ryots over their holdings(17) were now denied by the regulation 4 of 1794 which limited the term of the leases of any descriptions to ten years.

As we have seen earlier, the grant of pattahs and the equalization of the rate of rent throughout the zamindari of Dinajpur, under the strong administration of G.Hatch, blocked the rising local power of the wealthy ryots for a while, but as soon as the tight local control loosened, the

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(17) See appendix (a) to chap. 1.

wealthy ryots again started to accumulate land at a low rent(18). In the district of Rajshahi where the superior ryots used to exercise great local influence, the Jotedars retained a considerable local power even after the enactment of the distraint regulation of 1795. Under the storm of the public sale of zamindaris at the end of the 18th century, the confrontation between the zamindar and the superior ryots deepened in the countryside. The superior ryots invented several measures by which they counteracted the strengthened distraining power of the zamindars(19). J.H. Harington, who was then a member of the Board of Revenue, submitted a minute on the 2nd July, 1799 in which he urged the necessity of giving stronger authority to the zamindars to enable them to collect the rents from their under-renters and ryots punctually(20). He argued that the existing regulations were effectual and sufficient for collecting the arrears of rent from the immediate cultivators of the soil, but were insufficient for the collection of rent from the intermediate tenants who had no crop and very little personal property that could be attached. If they had any crop, they resisted the attachment and carried it off by force. Any affray which followed the attachment of the crop was then sued for by the tenants at the criminal court (Foujdari court) which impeded the zamindar's business of rent collection greatly, as the gomasthas of the parganas were summoned by the court to give evidence. Harington, thus, asserted that the ryots were pressing upon the land-holders with the support of the Court of Justice and because of their numerical strength. Ernst, the Commissioner at Bhoosnah, wrote that the defaulters often assembled their family and labourers and opposed the party sent by the zamindar to attach the crop.

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(18) See section 5 of chap. 4.
(19) BR-P 2nd July 1799. No. 76 & 80.
(20) Ibid. No. 74.

In Bhoosnah, the revenue was due from a vast number of tenants and their opposition created great difficulties in the collection of public revenue. They hid valuable things which were worthy of distraint in the Zenana where no zamindari officers could enter. He was of the opinion that the attachment of the crop was the surest way of securing the rent, but the existing regulations did not allow the zamindars to attach the crop on the field which had been either sold to another, or was not the immediate property of the tenants(21).

The notorious Regulation 7 of 1799 (Haftam) was enacted on the 29th August, 1799 to remedy these difficulties of the zamindars in the collection of rent from their tenants. By the new regulation, the tenants who failed to pay up their dues on the stipulated day were immediately considered as defaulters and were liable to the attachment of their property. The sale of the distrained property might be performed on the fifth day following the attachment of the property under the specified rules by the Kazis and other commissioners who were appointed by the judge of the zillah court. In the presence of the police officer, the landholders could now force into the Zenana to distress the property. The products of the lands were considered to be mortgaged to the landholders until the payment of rent was completed and the sale of these products was null and void as long as there remained arrears due to the landholders. On the application of the landholders, the police darogah was requested to furnish police officers to the landholders for suppressing any resistance of the defaulters. The most significant rule in this regulation was that the landholders were authorized to apply to the Kazi or the Commissioners for the confinement of the defaulters without previously making any express demand of the arrear from the defaulters and the Kazi or the Commissioners

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(21) BR-P 2nd July, 1799 No. 76.

were ordered to cause the immediate arrest of such defaulters and their sureties. The arrested defaulter and the sureties were to be sent to the Dewani Adalat of the zillah within twenty four hours and they remained there in confinement, until their cases were decided by the summary examina--tion by the judge. If the land-holder's claim was found to be well-founded, the defaulters were put in the close custody until the arrears of rent were paid up to the land-holders.

The new arrangement for the regularization of the zamindar-ryot relationship under the administration of Cornwallis consisted of pattah regulations and the distraint regulations. The inflexible nature of the pattah and the limitation of the tenure to ten years were repugnant to local customs and conditions of many districts and, therefore, the ryots in general resisted delivery of pattahs. For the wealthy ryots, the threatening nature of the regulations was clear from the beginning : the measurement of the land, equalization of rent among the peasantry, the grant of the pattahs to the individual, not to the village collectively were all liable to destroy their privileged position in the countryside. By dropping the plan of restoration of the Kanungo system, by setting the limitation on the ryot's tenure to ten years, and by gradually strengthening the distraining power of the zamindar, the Company's real intention became evident; regularizing the zamindar-ryot relation by establishing the superiority of the former over the latter. The real targets of these new arrangements were not the ryots in general, but the wealthy ryots who grew to be powerful opponents to the zamindar's authority in the countryside and were trouble-makers for the zamindar. After the enactment of the Permanent Settlement, there was no room in the Company's government for

making the choice between the two vizt. the zamindar and the local small leaders (wealthy ryots). For the sake of the security of revenue, the suppression of the growth of the wealthy ryots was a logical consequence.

The enactment of the regulation 7 of 1799 reversed the position of the zamindar and the wealthy ryots in the countryside. Now the zamindar was at liberty to cause the defiant wealthy ryots to be confined on the pretext of arrears of rent. There was no difficulty for the zamindar to forge a false case to embarass them. Except in a very few localities, the grant of pattahs and the preparation of detailed accounts were abandoned by both government and the zamindar, and the only documents which might have proved any unjustness of the zamindar's demands were kept by the village patwaris who were declared to be the servants of the zamindars. From then on, the zamindar exercised his arbitrary authority on the peasantry with the support of the Company's judicial mechanism.

The growing evils derived from the new distraint regulation could not but attract the notice of the local administrators in the districts.

The magistrate of Dinajpur accused the defective administration of government strongly in a letter dated the 24th July, 1810.

> "We have no regular leases executed between the zamindar and his tenants. We do not find a mutual consent and unrestrained negotiation in their bargains. Nothing like it : but instead, we hear of nothing but arbitrary demands enforced by stocks, duress of sorts, and battery of their persons.
>
> There is also an intermediate class, the money men, in every village, who first relieves, then aggravates the evil by his own usurious practices, and enforces them by like means.
>
> The general consequence is general poverty.
>
> The evil is of difficult remedy. It might perhaps be relieved by the compelling of the zamindars to grant Pottahs to their Ryots, and by establishing a register office for recording them... In order to secure the ryots against the zamindar and his myrmidons, it would be desirable

to relieve him by reducing or modifying the legal power of the zamindar in the distraint of property... All distraint and sale should be prohibited, except for a balance claimed on a regular registered pottah."(22)

The Collectors of Rajshahi, Rangpur and Bhagalpur were unanimous in admitting the prevalence of the evils produced by the distraint regulation of 1799(23). Many ryots were ruined by the abuse of the zamindar's distraining power. Kazis and the commissioners who were authorized to put up the distrained property for sale were mostly won over by the zamindars and the distrained property at the public auction was grossly undervalued(24).

The East India Company's government, thus, effected a very serious change in the relationship between the zamindar and the ryots by the new arrangements started by Cornwallis in 1790 and completed by regulation 7 of 1799.

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(22) "Selections of Papers from the Records of the East India House,"1820. Vol. 1 Pp. 211-212.
(23) Ibid. Pp. 239 - 244 & 222 - 223.
(24) Ibid. P. 223.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Some salient features of the agrarian structure of Northern Bengal of our period could be now indicated.

The relative positions of land, labour and agricultural stocks were the most important factors that affected the structure of the agrarian society. Thrpughout our period, land continued to be plentiful. Even at the beginning of the 19th century, one-fourth of the cultivable lands remained waste. Consequently, the scarcity of labour was strongly felt in the countryside. However, the extremely uneven distribution of the agricultural stocks among the peasants was presumably the most decisive factor.

The zamindar-ryots relations changed significantly during the period under review. The political confusions in the mid-18th century, the devastating effects of the great famine of 1770 and the exactions by the public farmers had greatly affected these relations. The zamindars found it unpracticable to continue the minute and well-defined system of rent collection under the changed circumstances. The mofussil settlement of the fussili type with annual investigations into the actual assets of every village was replaced by a more summary and loose one (the tahudi type). The high revenue demand of the government was made up for by the impositions of cesses which by our time accumulated to an alarming amount and made the old established rates of rents (nirkh) obsolete. The ryots, in their turn, concealed their holdings, evaded the full payment of rents through collusive means, absconded with their crops before the payment of their rents and raised armed disturbances to promote their ends. Both the parties, thus, overreached each other. The zamindars had to maintain an

armed establishment to ensure the rent collection and keep the country under control. The acute shortage of labour, however, constituted a great constraint on the zamindar's activities in this regard. The zamindar's rent demand on the ryots could not be an unlimited one. He had to make negotiations with the principal ryots of the villages when he wanted to impose new cesses or increase rent. The usage of the country (raj-ul-mulk) and the mutual agreements between the zamindar and the ryots had an important bearing on the zamindar-ryots relationship of our time. The usage of the country allowed the ryots to quit their lands after the full payment of their rents. Many zamindars were, thus, obliged to grant the advantageous privileged tenures to the ryots, who were capable of reclaiming the waste lands, or to grant such tenures with the necessary expenses of reclamation and cultivation to the ryots who agreed to take up the cultivation of the waste lands.

The peasant society of our time was undergoing very considerable changes. The zamindars ceased to keep a vigilant watch over the internal conditions of the villages, making it possible for the rich and shrewd ryots to exploit the poor and ignorant ones. The wealthy ryots rapidly accumulated lands in their hands at low rates of rents. The economic disparities among the villagers widened. Some village accounts of Rangpur show that among the 'registered' ryots, about 20 % was well-to-do ryots, about 16 % was small self-sufficient ryots and the rest were the ryots below the level of self-sufficiency. The ryots of the last category had to depend on the loans given to them by the wealthy ryots or grain-dealers. They were mostly under-ryots of some substantial ryots on share-cropping contract (adhi) or worked as agricultural labourers who were paid partly

in money and partly in kind. Such economic differentiations among the peasantry were of a very recent origin, dating perhaps from the mid-18th century. The most crucial aspect of the rapid accumulation of privileged holdings in the hands of the wealthy ryots was that it almost always led to the ruin of small independent ryots. The wealthy ryots had to get the labours to cultivate their privileged holdings, but under the condition of scarcity of labour, there were no other ways but converting the small independent ryots into their under-ryots and agricultural labourers. This disagreeable task was done through various devices ; threats, persuasions and deceptions. The wealthy ryots also acquired the labour through the grant of loans which the majority of the rural population badly needed. They, thus, held a considerable quantity of holdings at privileged rates of rents and had them cultivated by under-ryots (pirjas, adhiyars and kolait ryots) and agricultural labourers (krishans). The under-ryots were always indebted to their masters. The grant of loans enabled the latter to use the labour of the former at cheaper prices. Because of their economic strength, the well-to-do ryots acquired a great influence in the countryside, and dominated the village-politics. They could raise agrarian disturbances to promote their own narrow economic interests by urging the poorer ryots to take arms. Such local influences of the wealthy ryots really created great troubles for the zamindars. The latter, therefore, had to win them over by allowing them to continue their privileged holdings or by giving them special concessions as regards abwabs and mathots. The zamindar tried to control the villages through them. The wealthy ryots, in their turn, further strengthened their positions in the villages by exploiting the authority made over to them in regard to revenue matters.

In some outstanding cases, the wealthy ryots were too powerful for the zamindars, and their people were turned out of the parganas by the league of the refractory wealthy ryots who employed armed men. During our period, the well-to-do ryots, thus, grew economically as well as politically to be a great menance to the zamindars' authority in the countryside.

One notable aspect of the economic life of the peasant society of our time was the deep penetration of market-relations. However, the market-relations were not thoroughly open ones, and through the operation of the advance system tended to become a closed system. The poor ryots, who cultivated cash crops generally took loans from the merchants in anticipation of their crops ; otherwise they could scarcely bear the expenses of the cash crop cultivation. The needy ryots, who constituted the bulk of the rural population, very often borrowed from the grain merchants. They did so from the following reasons : Firstly, the zamindars pressed them for the payment of rent before their winter rice was reaped and distrained the crops in the fields until they completed the rent payment ; secondly, their insufficient stock of seed prevented them from commencing the cultivation; and lastly, they were to starve without loans, since their miserable stocks hardly sustained them for six months in a year. Such ryots made over a great portion of their produces to the grain-merchants on account of repayment of the loans and of the interest charges, expecting that the merchants would again provide them with the necessary food & seed when their small stocks ran out in the course of the year. The merchants were willing to give them loans because they were thereby enabled to secure the grains at low prices and to exact usurious rates of interest (30 to

100 %). The zamindars encouraged such advances by the merchants, because most of the loans given to the ryots were, in fact, directly or indirectly paid into the zamindar's treasury as ryots' rents. Thus the system of rent payment was integrated into that of the advances. Despite the fact that large portions of the produce of the ryots were bought up, the ryots scarcely gained from the cultivation of valuable crops. Almost all the profits from such cultivation went to the merchants through the operation of the usurious advance-system. However, the wealthy ryots, who could escape the snares of the grain merchants, could acquire a good amount of the profits from the cultivation of cash crops. The participation of the wealthy ryots in the grain trade was also widely seen.

During the Mughal period, the Bengal zamindars retained full military character and it was not rare that they extended their territories through warfare. Some of the biggest zamindars were allowed a semi-autonomous position by the Mughal government and no government officers could enter such zamindaris. These zamindars paid a fixed lump sum as their revenue to the government. Under early British rule, the zamindars were gradually being deprived of their military establishments and the transformation of the 'old zamindars' of the Mughal type into the 'new zamindars' under the British raj went on. This change, however, did not necessarily mean the actual substitution of the holders of the zamindaris. There were many 'old zamindars' who could suceessfully remould themselves into the 'new' ones. Such a change-over occurred during our time.

Under early British rule, the financial conditions of the zamindars were constantly deteriorating due to the high governmental demands,

exactions of the public farmers, blackmailing by the British administrators and the native government officers, corruptions of the zamindari officers, evils of the private farming system and the manoeuvres of the ryots. The Company's government under Cornwallis adopted elaborate policies towards a reorganization of the agrarian structure of Bengal on the eve of the permanent zamindari settlement (1793). Firstly, they did not want the wealthy ryots to acquire much local power, since it would certainly impede the realization of the state demand from the zamindars. They, therefore, tried to introduce an equitable and uniform rate of rent with a view to reducing the privileged holdings of the wealthy ryots. They further imposed a ten-year limitation on the tenures of the peasant-holdings, which upset the long established prescriptive right of the ryots, and thus enabled the zamindars to enhance their rents every ten years. Secondly, they wanted to replace the giant 'old zamindars', whose estates proved to be too large to be managed effectively and who could be potentail contenders for power. The intended deprivation of all the military and police establishments of the zamindars, though only partially implemented, was a necessary step towards consolidation of British rule in Bengal and the transformation of the 'old zamindars' into the 'new ' ones. To disable the giant zamindars, they interfered in the internal affairs of the zamindaris and transplanted their faithful servants as the zamindari dewans. These planted officers were given fat salaries. They appointed their kinsmen and dependants as the zamindari officers. The pay for them, for instance in Dinajpur, nearly absorbed the surplus resources of the zamindari and, thus, the financial conditions of the zamindaris greatly deteriorated. The failure of crops in 1798 when the loan market was extremely tight inevitably

resulted in considerable arrears of revenue and the enforcement of the rigorous sale-laws ruined before long a number of giant zamindars. Thirdly, after the transformation of the 'old zamindars' into the 'new' ones, the Company's government provided the new zamindars with full support in their relation with the ryots. The enactment of the Regulation VII of 1799 (Haftam) was the most effective measure in this regard.

A new stable agrarian structure was thus gradually taking shape during early British rule.

However, a notable feature of this was that though the composition and character of the landed society greatly changed, the basic frame-work of the peasant society did not show any radical changes, except that the further growth of the wealthy ryots was contained, at least, for a number of years.

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