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Editor: Piyal Basu Roy



From the Desk of the Secretary

Geographical Society of North Bengal is an NGO located in the district of Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India. Initially it was formed for educational development in the under developed Dooars area but its area of operation is not restricted in a single point and rather it is open for all, irrespective of geographical space. Geographical Society of North Bengal has stepped in to eight year of its working. The society is bound by promise to continue its unending efforts in the processes of social development and the first edition of ‘Geo-Analyst’ is one of such endeavours related to that. I thank all the members of the society for their kind co-operation to publish this Journal. I appeal to every Academician, Research Scholars and Social scientist from India and abroad to enrich the idea of social science related themes.

Alipurduar
July, 2011

Hiranmoy Biswas
Secretary



Editorial

In our contemporary life, the study of social sciences arouses great significance as the social landscape has been rapidly changing. In view of multi-faceted and dynamic nature of social sciences each and every micro level study of it highlights distinct importance in multi-disciplinary studies. Recently, there is a sign of growing interest as well as anxiety about the social changes taking place almost every part worldwide and the interest in social studies is growing for this reason. The introducing issue of Geo-Analyst, a bi-annual journal of social sciences of the Geographical Society of North Bengal is out on the stand, which has addressed to complex, changing and challenging issues along with few innovative ideas of development in the courtyard of social sciences.

Alipurduar
July, 2011

Piyal Basu Roy
Editor

Evolution of Land Revenue Settlements in Western Dooars under the Bhutanese and the British

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Abstract

This article covers the aspects of land revenue in chronological concatenation as were introduced in the western Dooars during the reins of the Koch kings, the Bhutanese occupants and the British colonial administrators. The Koch kings ruled Dooars since the year 1496; and under them there were two types of land namely Revenue free Land and Land under Revenue. Revenue free lands were divided into different parts. The Bhutanese did not introduce radically any new system of land revenue in Dooars since 1760s; and the system in vogue continued with minor alterations. They collected revenue and often extorted extra amount by raids. Under the Paro Penlop, defferent officials remained responsible for the collection of taxes. Dzungphons and Dzingkhab at the top of the order were all Bhutanese; and the local Mech and Koch people could occupy posts at lower level. At the lowest ladder there were Chukanidars, Dar-Chukanidars and the Dar-dar-Chukanidars who collected taxes directly from ryots. Under the British colonial rulers since 1865 the lands in Dooars were divided into several categories to distribute by lease or under direct control or direct taxation to achieve colonial economic target of maximum profit. Apart from these, the British government created some zones under miscellaneous systems of land revenue, and thus there came up some exclusive colonies of some ethnic groups in Dooars.

Keywords: *Dooars, Revenue, Settlement, Colonial, Policies*

The geographical location of Dooars

'Dooars' is a geographical descriptive name. Down the Bhutan hills, the part of India with an average breadth of 30 kilometres and length of 350 kilometres in West Bengal and Assam is known as Dooars. Dooars or Duars meaning doors were the doors of Bhutan leading down to the plains of India and vice-versa. There were in total 18 Dooars, of which 11 Dooars were in Bengal and the remaining 7 Dooars were in Assam. The Bengal Dooars were: (1) Dalimkot, (2) Chamurchi, (3) Zumerkot or Maynaguri, (4) Luckee or Lakshmi, (5) Buxa or Baxa, (6) Bhalka or Bhulka, (7) Gommar, (8) Reepoo, (10) Bagh, and (11) Sidli. The seven Assam Dooars were: (1) Boree Goomah, (2) Kalling, (3) Shurkolla, (4) Chappaguri, (5) Banska, (6) Chapkahama, and (7) Bijni. Geographically the Assam Dooars were between the River Dhanshiri on the east and the

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Manas on the west; whereas the Bengal Dooars were between the river Manas on the east and Tista on the west. The British Government first realised the importance of Dooars in terms of its natural resources, economic prospects and strategic importance. After the partition of India in 1947, the significance of Dooars has increased manifold for the chicken's neck of Dooars is the only corridor of communication of India with its seven eastern states.

Historical background of land Revenue settlement in Dooars

In the ancient period Dooars was a part of Western Kamrup. Till the middle of the seventh century this political arrangement continued. Afterwards there emerged some independent rulers in Dooars. Kamatapur was the most organised political entity of which Dooars became a part. In the initial years of the regime of Kamatapur, the possession of Dooars became an issue of contention between the Bhutanese rulers of Indian origin and the Indian rulers in the plains. From 1496, Dooars became the seat of the Koch Empire and it was only in 1760s the Bhutanese virtually occupied Dooars. Though after the First Anglo-Bhutan War and treaty in 1773, open hostility between Bhutan and Cooch Behar (Koch Kingdom) came to an end, never the less; the Bhutanese for all practical purposes kept on controlling Dooars. The Bhutanese army used to raid the plains of Dooars; and all requests from the side of the British Government to stop all these illegal raids fell in the deaf ears of the Bhutanese administrators. The Tongsa Penlop and the Paro Penlop who respectively controlled the Assam Dooars and the Bengal Dooars hardly regarded the requests to any effect. For that reason the British government could not but occupied the Assam Dooars in 1842. Many British missions to Bhutan to restore peace in the Bengal Dooars having failed, there ensued the Second Anglo-Bhutan War resulting in the permanent cessation of Bhutanese control over Dooars. By the Treaty of Sinchula, 1865, the British Government annexed the Bengal Dooars to the British Indian Empire. From the above description it is more or less ostensible that as once Dooars was with Kamrup, the taxation system of Kamrup might have been prevalent here which at present can not be known; nor is there any record of the system of land revenue as might have been there during the regime of Kamatapur. Only some mentions of the land revenue as was introduced by the Koch kings can be understood from the type of land revenue of the Koch kingdom. The Bhutanese, in fact did not introduce any system of land revenue in Dooars during the years of their occupation; they rather continued with the system as had been prevalent; their best

policy was to receive the collected revenue from the traditional revenue collectors and whenever necessary they simply would extort extra amount of taxes in kind from the inhabitants in Dooars.

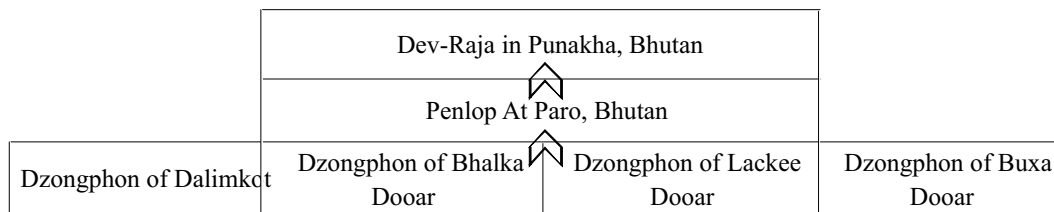
The Koch kings ruled Dooars for a long period of time since the year 1496; and under them there were two kinds of lands consistent with the land revenue system, namely (1) Revenue free Land and (2) Land under Revenue. Revenue free lands were again subdivided into several sections namely Brahmottar, Devottar, Pirpal, Lakheraj and Petbhata etc. Revenue free lands were such lands as were given by the government to persons as might have rendered service to the state in any form as recognised by the government as a genuine service or to persons as were considered liabilities by the government or to such persons capable of rendering religious service to the people in the name of the king. In that case that government did not discriminate between the Hindus and the Muslims. Whereas to the Hindu Brahmins for their service lands were granted tax-free, in the same spirit the government sanctioned lands to the Muslim Pirs for their religious service as they used to render to the Mohammedans who as citizen were equal to the Hindus. As such Brahmottar lands were given to the Brahmins so that they could practise religious activities free from anxieties of day-to-day livelihood. The Brahmottar lands were hereditary and transferable. Devottar occupancy of land was granted for the maintenance of temples, religious festivals and congregations. Pirpal possession of land was granted for the Muslims mainly for the maintenance of the Mosques. Lakheraj occupancy was granted to government servants as a symbol of satisfactory service to the kings; and the amount of land so apportioned included the monthly salary as well as the pension. Petbhata tenancy was granted only to the members of the royal family for their maintenance. It is said that the first Petbhata tenure of Baikunthapur was granted by King Viswa Singha to his brother Siswa Singha. After 1773 the British Government by dint of its paramountcy over the affairs of the Koch state often advised even in matters of land revenue; and it was detected that on some pretexts there existed a huge amount of tax free land occupied by persons on spurious grounds. British Government interfered and recovered all such lands as had been illegally converted into revenue-free land; and for regular collection Ijaradari system (collection on the basis of contract) was introduced, though the loopholes of the new system allowed the outsiders to become Ijaradars (Chakraborty , 1990). In the Koch state of which Dooars was a part, there were five varieties of land under revenue and these were: Khalsa, Khangir, Khasbash, Sairati

and Bajemahal. All lands under the direct control of the Government were called Khalsa. The Dewan of the state who in general was a member of the Royal Family and second in command only after the king virtually controlled the Khalsa land; but when after 1773 in the name of better administration even outsiders could become Dewan, the Khalsa land actually began to pass away thenceforward into the hands of the outsiders loyal to the Dewan by any means. Khangir was land of the king for the purpose of the Royal Family; and no doubt, fertile land not far away from the capital was earmarked as Khangir. Khasbash and Bajemahal were lands controlled by the government but occupied by ryots on payment of taxes. All swamps and partly or fully water filled areas were identified as Sairati. During the Koch regime the people of Dooars lived sparsely and there could be no settlement and measurement of land. People lived in clusters separated by dense forest; and communication being difficult, the collection of taxes too could never be regular. But on goodwill and out of loyalty to the king the people paid taxes as fixed by the local tax-collectors who acted as feudal landlords and enjoyed the power bequeathed by the Dewan of the state or the king. In the sixteenth century as the capital of the Koch kingdom was in Hingulavas in Dooars whatever type of land revenue might have at that time been introduced must have prolonged in Dooars; and no doubt the Koch and the Mech people had been the predominant owners of land in those days in Dooars. The fact is that, of the Koch people the majority rechristened them as Koch-Rajbanshi in the course of time.

Dooars under Bhutanese Suzerainty

The Bhutanese never held any legitimate sway over Dooars nor ever the whole of the Bengal Dooars remained under them at any time of history (Rennie , 1866). It was under forceful occupancy, they collected land revenue from the people of Dooars. When the collection of revenue fell short of their demands, they went on raiding and pillaging the populace and their houses for whatever they could have the use of in Bhutan. Thus it is ostensible that by the Bhutanese neither a rule of law nor any uniform system of land revenue was introduced in Dooars. They largely collected revenue by their temporarily appointed officials who in turn did their jobs with the help of local leaders of different communities as in those days the different groups of people were, in fact, under the control of the community leaders. If collection failed because any reason, the Bhutanese attacked and plundered everything and for that aggression on property, the people of Dooars were practically afraid of the Bhutanese and their whimsical regime. The Bengal

Dooars was under the Penlop of Paro in western Bhutan. The Paro Penlop in turn was under the Dev-Raja in Punakha, the capital of Bhutan. Bhutanese records so far consulted by the present author bring to light that the Paro Penlop actually controlled Dooars areas of Dalimkot, Baxa or Buxa Dooar, Bhalka or Bhulka Dooar, Maynaguri (Zumerkot), Luckee or Lakhi, Chamurchi, Kyarantee or Kranti, Seebu, Maraghat and Sangbe. J. C. Haughton described the land possessions in various parts of Dooars under the Bhutanese. According to him Goomah Dooar, Raphoo Dooar and Bhalka Dooar were under Zamindars or Tahsildars (revenue collectors) quite under Bhutanese control. Buxa Dooar was under a Bhutanese officer called Dooar Deo; the northern part of Dooars was under the Mech Headmen; and Maynaguri was divided among the Zamindars including Hargobinda Katham, Khurgodhar Karjee and the Raikot of Jalpaiguri (Roy, 2002)



Sub-ordinate officials under each Dzongphon:

^
Dzingkhabs (only Bhutanese)

^
Local officials in Dooars under Bhutan

^
Kathams

^
Wuzdars

^
Mandals

^
Chukanidars

^
Dar-Chukanidars

^
Dar-dar-Chukanidars

(This chart of hierarchy is prepared by the author on his perusal of some Bhutanese records in Bhutan)

These collectors themselves possessed land and would devolve their lands to the cultivators. In fact, the Dar-Chukanidars were under the Chukanidars and the Dar-dar-Chukanidars were at the lowest level of powerful official land holders and tax-

collectors. The ordinary ryots were under the Dar-dar-Chukanidars. The precise powers and functions of each of the Bhutanese officials in hierarchical sequence in Dooars can not be determined accurately, but all of them were active in the chain of tribute extractions and each in the chain was responsible for transferring the major part of the tribute to the immediate superior authority (Roy, 2002). Under the Dzungphons and Dzingkhabs, the Kathams in Dooars played significant roles in collecting land revenue. The Bhutanese government was never happy only with the collection of regular land revenue from the tax collectors. The Dzungphons and the Dzingkhabs had to be paid extra amount of money in cash (coins) and kind. Even beautiful women had to be sent to the quarters of the original Bhutanese officers for their sexual gratification. When the Bhutanese army would come out in Dooars for any operation, the soldiers had to be provided with the types of food demanded by them, and the officers had to be pleased by placing young women to their sexual hunger. Every year a big number of people from Dooars used to be carried away to Bhutan by the Bhutanese Army, and the captured people were usually employed in hazardous work. Sexual activity was an open matter of enjoyment to all Bhutanese; for that reason, they even employed the captured men of Dooars to have frequent intercourse with the captured women mainly for the purpose of the procreation of hundreds of labourers leading to the increase of workforce in Bhutan. Thus the Bhutanese rule in Dooars was just a machine to feed the greed of Bhutan. The offspring thus born in Bhutan came to be identified as *Black Bhutia*. Hundreds of people of Dooars had to render wage-less compulsory service to the Bhutanese government and such forced labour was called '*Ula*'. In spite of the fact of extortion of and raid on the people by the Bhutanese, a human face can be guessed from a type of restraint policy of taxation introduced by the Bhutanese authority in Dooars. This policy was perhaps suited to the tactic of not to kill the goose once for all before it laid the eggs one by one. Moreover, this they might have done in order to allay the people or to encourage them to reclaim land from the marshy forest of Dooars. For this objective in view no revenue or tax was imposed on the peasants for five years' duration since the date of reclamation of the arable land from dense forest; but on the expiry of five years revenue would be calculated, claimed and collected. Grunning says that after forest had been cleared revenue would be assessed on the basis of a plough or a Hal of land which actually was an amount of land measuring 5 acres. As per Revenue Department, for a Hal of land used in the cultivation of mustard seed a cess amounting Rs. 1 had to be paid whereas for

for religious festival each house or family had to pay Rs. 2 (two) From this it can be guessed that the amount of cess for religious rite was more than land revenue assessed on a plot of 5 acres of land used for the cultivation of mustard seed or any crop of the kind.

Colonial Land Revenue in Dooars under the British

Not long after the annexation of the Bengal Dooars in 1865 in consequence of the Treaty of Sinchula following the Second Anglo-Bhutan War, the British Government realised the depth of natural resources of Dooars and the usability of the huge fertile land not properly cultivated. The Bodos, the Koch-Rajbanshis, the Drukpas and the Rabhas had been accustomed in the practice of Jhum or shifting cultivation. This was possible mainly owing to the lack of cultivators. With the colonial economic objective in sight, the Government passed the Bhutan-Dooars Act in 1869 in terms of which declared the land of Dooars as Wasteland and all resources of forests as Government property. In general the lands in Dooars were divided into three categories - (1) Lands for Tea cultivation, (2) Lands for Reserve forest, and (3) Lands for agriculture. As all types of lands, in fact, were under the Government, the first two categories were directly controlled by the Government whereas forests were declared as exclusively government property. Entrepreneurs willing to plant tea could receive lands from the government on certain conditions; the ryots or cultivators could get land on paying taxes. In different intervals surveys of Dooars were completed in order to have approximately a clear picture of the position and possessions of land. And all these were done to assess what amount of land could be kept reserved for forest, for tea-estate and for agriculture. As a huge amount of land was declared as lease land, the amount of jot or Rayoti land got reduced in amount; for that reason in course of time the Government even distributed lease land among the lease holders. Those who received huge amount of land turned to be big ryots, no doubt; but the rich ryots too got the right of sub-dividing their own plots to give away to intermediary land holders on deed called 'Pattani' or 'Patta'. Thus there developed a kind of mini-feudal structure, though the practice was not prevalent in the whole of Dooars. With the beginning of the imperial rule in Dooars, the British Government right from the outset made an assessment of the resources of Dooars and they assessed also the possibility of Tea plantation and the prospect of agriculture in the fertile area down the Bhutan hills. Mr. W. O. A. Becket, Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri in 1871 carried out the first settlement under the British Government. On a detailed measurement, classification of all cultivated and waste land in the possession of

the jotdars, rates of revenues were fixed as follows:

Table-1, Categories of Land vis-a-vis Rent per acre in North Maynaguri and rest of Dooars

Categories of land	Rent per acre in North Maynaguri			Rent per acre in the rest of Dooars		
	Rupee	Anna	Paisa	Rupee	Anna	Paisa
Homestead and Rupit	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	1	6	0	1	6

Source: Sunder Report, 1895

In a summation, 142,127 acres of waste land and 80,398 acres of cultivated land were settled with the jotdars on total estimated revenue of Rs. 86,330 as against previously collected amount of Rs. 39, 526. The completion of the first settlement took a period of two years and in 1876 the south Maynaguri area was settled with the Raikat of Baikunthapur on a fixed amount of Rs. 65,133 per annum as against the previously payable amount of Rs. 42,706. The newly settled amount in every case was more than the previous amount; and the change ascertained increase to the dividend in favour of the government and to the detriment of the ryot; thus it strengthened the hold of the British colonial economy in Dooars. But owing to the detection of some errors and discrepancies in the settlement procedure adopted by Becket, the Government ultimately decided to make a substitute settlement or resettlement of the most areas in Dooars including the Parganas of Ambari Falakata, Chengmari, North Maynaguri, Moraghat, Lakhipur, West Madari, East Madari, Chakowakheti, Buxa Dooar, Bhatibari and Bhalka Dooar. Lord Ulick Brown, Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division was entrusted with the task of the resettlement. In order to solve the problems of the rates of revenue of different categories of land, Brown recommended the South Maynaguri rates to be introduced in the Parganas of Ambair Falakata, and Chengmari; and the North Maynaguri rates of revenue to be introduced in Lakhipur and West Madari; and for the rest of Dooars new rates of revenues as per different categories of land were reassessed and reintroduced (Sunder, 1895).

Table-2, Rates of land Revenues introduced by Ulick Brown

Categories of Land	South Maynaguri Rates			North Maynaguri Rates			Rest of Dooars Rates		
	Rupee	Anna	Paisa	Rupee	Anna	Paisa	Rupee	Anna	Paisa
Basti	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Doba	1	8	0	1	8	0	1	0	0
Faringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	8	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	6

Source: Ulick Brown, 1878-79

The rates of revenues as shown in table -2 indicate ostensibly that the rates of revenues of different categories of land were higher in South Maynaguri closely followed by North Maynaguri; and in the rest of Dooars the amounts were less. This further signifies the fact that in the nineteenth century in the whole of Dooars, South and North Maynaguri were ahead of other areas of Dooars in terms agriculture and agricultural productions. Most probably the lands in those areas were more fertile and more populated. It can not be denied that from the medieval period the people of Maynaguri were more advanced in culture and better way of life; therefore, the British Government did not miss to earn more in terms of revenue from Maynaguri.

The Board of Revenue of the Government of Bengal though apparently accepted the recommendations of Ulick Brown but as to the rates of revenue the Board made alterations to the effect of rather increasing the amounts. Lord Ulick Brown wanted to show a better face of the colonial government to the landholders but the greedy eyes of the higher authority did not retain all that he recommended; the interest of the government was better served by the modifications. Anyway, with the inclusion of the changes Ulick Brown's settlement of land revenue was introduced in Dooars in 1878-1879. The modified rates of Ulick Brown's settlement were as follows (Sunder, 1895).

Table-3, Ulick Brown's rates of revenue settlement as were modified

Categories of Land	In Ambari Falakata Chengmari, North Maynaguri and Moraghat			In Lakshipur and West Madari			East Madari Chokowakheti and Bhalka Dooar		
	Rupee	Anna	Paisa	Rupee	Anna	Paisa	Rupee	Anna	Paisa
Basti	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Bamboo	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Garden	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Doba	2	0	0	1	12	0	1	8	0
Rupit	1	8	0	1	4	0	1	2	0
Foringati	1	2	0	0	12	0	0	9	0
Waste	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	3	0

The content in Table no. 4, 5, 6 and 7 portray of the detailed pictures of Ulick Brown's survey, assessment and revenue settlement with the margin of increase of the amount in each case as mentioned in the caption (Sunder, 1895).

Rental	Amount in Rupee
Former rental	88618
New rental	151862
Increase	63246

Assessed area	Acres
Softled	217294
Under arable land Lease rules	47386
Under tea garden lease rules	19607
Total	287287

The tenure of Lord Ulick Brown's settlement was to terminate at the end of March 1890; therefore, a new survey and settlement was ordered by the Government of India and that was in fact the third settlement under the British and that was carried out by Sunder and named after him. Sunder's Settlement was completed in 1889-95 in four tahshils namely Maynaguri, Falakata, Alipur and Bhalka of the Western Dooars and in Ambari Falakata. It was stated that the terms of Sunders' settlement were to expire on March 31, 1908 (Grunning, 1911a). The Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, Mr. Lewis, submitted a report to inform the Government in October, 1888: (1) of the different classes of tenants namely jotdars, Chukanidars, Dar-Chukanidars and Adhiars he found in Dooars,

(2) of some of the mistakes regarding assessment of revenue committed in Ulick Brown's settlement and (3) of how the continuing settlement of Sunder could be put to practice. With minor revisions Mr. Lewis' recommendations were vindicated by the Director of the Department of Land Records and Agriculture of Bengal in December, 1888. Babu Chunder Kanta Ganguli was given the charge of an assistant settlement officer up to January 20, 1890, and Mr. Sunder was appointed as the settlement officer. Sunder's settlement was carried out under the provisions of the Bhutan Dooars Act XVI of 1869. On the subject of the rates of land revenue in Dooars, Sunder made an effort to follow Ulick Brown's, knowledge of Dooars and wrote to the Board of Revenue as follows -

Cultivable Waste	288006
Reserved Forest	267220
Rent free	272937
Total	828163

"A thoroughly satisfactory settlement throughout Dooars could, in fact, only be effected by making a separate arrangement with each individual jotdar according to the particular circumstances of his jote." In line with Mr. Sunder this was the only adequate

method of making a settlement which would be suitable to the jotdar. He asked, therefore, for permission to assess the jotes in three classes consistent with situation in respect of proximity to markets and roads (Sunder, 1870) Notwithstanding some exceptions the recommendations made by Mr. Sunder were accepted in totality by the

Tenures	Number	Land in Acres
Jotdars	3440	217294
Chukanidars	4027	67673
Dar-Chukanidars	901	6661
Dar-dar chukanidars	44	291

Government and in a letter to Sunder it was stated as under: "The Lieutenant Government accepts the classification of land and the rates for the various classes, recommended by you, as noted on the margin, and sanctions your proposals (a) that these rates be applied to jotes, and that, where necessary, the lands of individual

jotes be divided into first and second class and assessed at the soil class rates ; (b) that the fact of the jotdar's revenue being increased be not of itself sufficient, or any reason for enhancement of the rents now paid by Chukanidar, but that if the jotdars can show legal reason for enhancement of the rents of their chukanidars, they be allowed to institute suits for such enhancement either at the time of settlement or afterwards ; (c) that the rents of chukanidars and dar-chukanidars as now ascertained and recorded continue unchanged until they are altered by a decree of competent court (Sunder, 1895).

During the preparatory stage of the fixation of revenue, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal visited Jalpaiguri on 3rd April 1891 and on the perusal of Sunder's recommendation suggested for the change of revenue of Rs. 2 per acre for homestead

land and Rs. 2-12 for bamboo and betel nut gardens for the inclusion of homestead land, bamboo grooves and betel nut gardens into a new category of land to be called Basti (Bastu) whereof revenue was charged for at Rs. 3 per acre and this was accepted in the same year by the Government as Sunder had no alternative recommendation. By the 3rd settlement Sunder, introduced a total of 9971 jotes on 384895.91 acres of land in Dooars; but actually only 2743 jotes were newly created and 7228 jotes had already been there since the previous settlement. In average 38.6 acres constituted to be the area of a jote. The area of the largest jote in Dooars was 2608.94 acres, and that of the smallest one was 0.06 acre. The jotdars again were divided into two categories, the resident and the non-resident jotdars. There were 21724 resident jotdars and 1615 non-resident jotdars in Dooars. As a result of the implementation of Sunder's recommendation the revenue of Dooars increased from Rs. 233999 to Rs. 370316 revenues were paid by two kists or instalments, namely the 6 anna kist on October 31 and the 10 anna kist on February 15 every year. It implied that the revenue payable by each jotdar was divided into sixteen portions or divisions and on or before 31st October six portions of the total amount had to be paid and the rest ten portions had to be paid on or before 15th February every year.

After the 3rd settlement another settlement was felt necessary in order to eradicate the problems and loopholes that were detected during a period of several years and for that reason the 4th settlement was begun in the winter of 1907 and completed in 1916 under the supervision of surveyor J.A. Milligan. This settlement recorded a big change in the backdrop of the earlier settlement of 1889-95 by Sunder (De, 1981). The large portion of land in the east of the Torsha River was left unmeasured and un-assessed in terms of revenue so far and that tract of land was still considered waste and forest land; but now that area was taken care of by the fourth settlement. Milligan's settlement undertook the task of reassessing the land of the Western Dooars where the current leases were about to expire and it further stepped in the creation of new jotes by way of further devolution of the previous jotes and reclaiming waste land as arable land. As to the question of the classification of land an alteration was made from that of Sunder's. Sunder classified lands into such categories as: (1) Basti (homestead, garden, orchard and bamboo grooves), (2) Rupit or Doba or low land, (3) Faringati or high land, waste land and markets etc. But Mr. Milligan classified land as: (1) Basti (as that of Sunder) (2) Dohla or low-lying arable land with two sub-divisions of Dolha I or good paddy-producing land and Dolha II or ordinary low-lying arable land, (3) Danga or high arable land with two

sub-divisions of Dolha I or good paddy-producing land and Dolha II or ordinary low-lying arable land, (3) Danga or high arable land with two sub-divisions of Danga-I or partially cultivated and currently fallow land and Danga-II or arable land but not in cultivation, (4) Shohuri or land as midway between Danga and Dohla growing much winter crops as well as summer rice and this category of land too was subdivided into class I and class II, (5) Doba or Lands perennially under water, (6) Potit or Land incapable of producing crops, and (7) Un-assessable Lands or lands incapable of being assessed in terms of revenue and such lands comprised public roads, streets and pathways not possessed and used by any particular person. Milligan brought about minor changes in the rates of revenues as according to the divisions of land and as for instances the rates of the Maynaguri Tahshil. It is ostensible in table - 8 that the rates of revenues of the lands of Basti, Dohla, Shohuri and Danga categories increased in the assessment of the 4th settlement under Milligan; but the rates of revenues of Potit or uncultivated land and Doba or land under water decreased noticeably.

Table- 8, Rates of Revenues of the 3rd and 4th Settlement assessed respectively by Sunder and Milligan

Class of Land	Pargana Maraghat				Pargana Lakshipur				Pargana West Madari				Remaining & Backward Parganas			
	Sunders Rate		Milligans Rate		Sunders Rate		Milligans Rate		Sunders Rate		Milligans Rate		Sunders Rate		Milligans Rate	
Basti	2	0	2	4	1	12	2	0	1	12	2	0	1	8	2	0
Dohla I	--	--	2	0	-	--	2	0	--	--	2	0	1		2	0
Dohla II	1	12	1	14	1	4	1	6	1	8	1	10		2	1	4
Shohuri	--	--	1	12	--	--	1	4	--	--	1	8			1	2
Danga I	1	4	1	6	0	12	1	0	0	12	1	0	0	9	0	12
Danga II	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	--	--	0	6	0	3	0	4
Patit	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2				0
Doba	2	0	0	6	1	4	0	6	1	12	0	6	1	2	0	2

Multifaceted Land Revenue Settlements

Land Revenue for the sustenance of Jalpesh Temple

It is an interesting facet of the Previous to Sunder's Settlement, in Maynaguri, 44 un-assessed jotes were kept separated to meet the expenses of the Jalpesh temple. But in accordance with the decision of the Government, the revenues of those jotes were fixed

at Rs. 2465 and the amount was declared to be paid to the Jalpesh Temple Committee to meet the daily expenses of the temple (Gunning , 1911b).

Land settlement with Col. Hedayet Ali and his posterities

For his great service to the British Government in the 2nd Anglo-Bhutan War in 1864 Colonel Hedayet Ali got a rent-free lease of 20 Taluks for five years in February, 1866 (Gunning , 1911b).

The terms and conditions of the lease made with Hedayet Ali were altered from the subsequent settlement to settlement more so in accordance with the requirements of the Government; and on least occasions in consonance with the prayers of the descendants of Ali as well. The terms and conditions of the lease with Hedayet Ali were modified in 1871, 1876 and in 1883. In 1883 a fresh settlement of 46754 acres of clean land including some areas of waste in Parganas West Madari, Moraghat and Lakshipur of the Falakata tahashil was made with his legal descendants and heirs at half rates for 39 years. Forthermore the government allowed them to hold on un-cleaned and waste land for more seven years free of revenue. As Ali's family failed to meet the prescribed terms and conditions of lease, 19191 acres of land were, therefore, taken back by the Government at the time of the 3rd settlement under Sunder and the remaining 22563 acres were resettled at half rates at the amount of Rs. 7897 (Gunning , 1911b).

At the time of the 4th Settlement under Milligan the total area held by the heirs of Hedayet Ali was found to be 28195 acres in the following categories (Miligan ,1906-16).

Table-9, Total area held by the heirs of Hedayet Ali

Basti	930.24 acres
Dohla	6915.22 acres
Shohuri	6174.01 acres
Danga-I	8517.90 acres
Danga-II	3990.41 acres
Doba	307.52 acres
Uncultivated Waste	819.35 acres
Unassessable	840.58 acres
Total	28495.23 acres

Of the total cultivable area under lease (Gunning , 1911b), 27119 acres were offered for rent to chukanidars and rents paid by them during the sway of the previous settlement came to a total of Rs. 26920, and the profit thereof for the heirs was Rs. 17736. Still they submitted a memorandum for further concessions in the rates of revenue and the Government agreed in the following manner: "The memorialists be informed that after a

full consideration of their case the Governor in Council has decided that the lands should be resettled at three-fourths of the pargana rates for a period of 20 years, the term fixed for the present settlement in the Western Dooars, after which they will be assessed at full rates. In the event of the chukanidars getting the benefit of progressive enhancements of rents, the revenue assessed and granted to the memorialists will be graduated accordingly, so that the difference between the rents settled as payable by the chukanidars to the memorialists and the revenue payable by the memorialists in any year may not be less than the present difference. The memorialists are also informed that there will be a clause in the new lease to the effect that unoccupied lands should be sublet to bonafide cultivators only (Miligan ,1906-16). The heirs of Hedayet again failed to bring all lands under cultivation and thereby failed to meet the terms and condition of the lease but in spite of their failure they applied to the government for further remission of revenues.

Settlement for Mech Colony

The Bodos and Garos habitually practised Jhum cultivation in Dooars. Before the inclusion of Dooars in the British Empire in 1865, as the majority of them shifted from place to place along with Jhum cultivation, they usually need not have to pay land revenue on regular basis. With the beginning of the British rule, the Bodos or Meches were made to pay capitation fee or tax at the rate of Rs. 4 and the Garos Rs. 3 per head per annum (Miligan , 1906-16). During the 3rd survey and settlement under Sunder (1889-95), an endeavour was made to identify and classify the settled agriculturists among the Bodos and Garos together, and declare for them a separate reserved colony on the east of the Torsha River and south of the road from Alipurduar to Rajabhatkhawa in Dooars. Accordingly 766 jotes covering an area of 90593 acres were made distinct for the Bodo or Mech colony (De , 1981)

The altered the boundaries of the reserved tract more than once ultimately the periphery of the colony were earmarked as follows by Revenue Department : **North:** the Southern boundary of Mr. C. C. Gulliland's tea garden. **East-South:** The western boundary of the Gaburbasa Reserved Forest, and the Alaikuri River from the point where it leaves the Gaburbasa Forest to the point where it meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Reserved Forest. **South-West:** The point where the Alaikuri River meets the western boundary of the Borojhar Reserved Forest. But no dependable steps were taken to stop encroachment and prevent the transfer and sub-in-feudation of lands to outsiders.

Sequentially a number of outsiders settled in the reserved colony. An enquiry for fact-finding was made in 1907-08, it was then detected that there was not a single Garo family in the Colony and more than fifty percent of the jotdars were outsiders the majority of whom were Oraons. In the total area of 766 jotes, there were only 218 Bodo jotdars; 177 Bodo chukanidars and 219 Bodo adhiars (De, 1981). On the condition of the colony in 1910 Milligan gave a report that out of a total area of 10550 acres settled Mech jotdars held 7170 acres out of which they sub-let 669 acres to chukanidars, and 2020 acres were cultivated by the Oraons, Rajbansis, Paharias and others. Out of 161 chukani holders 97 were Mech and 64 belonged to different miscellaneous groups of people. Milligan wrote, "Soon after this the Mech exodus from Dooars began, and in 1915, I was informed that practically every Mech had moved over into Assam." But the report of Milligan was found incorrect by a subsequent enquiry made by the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri in 1917 and he stated that the total area held by Mech jotdars were 6439 acres and the total area held by the other jotdars was 4481 acres. The population of the colony in 1921 was 7363 of whom 2638 were Meches, 3303 oraons and the rest were immigrants from Chhotanagpur of Bihar and Nepal. Thus in 1921 the Meches constituted to be near about 36% of the total population of the colony. The outsiders were allowed mainly because of the purpose of bringing more land under cultivation.

Settlement for Totopara

The Totos apparently are of the Indo-Mongoloid origin and speak a language of the Tibeto-Burman group. They seem to have been autochthonous and live in Totopara, an area bounded on the North by Bhutan on the east by the River Torsa and on the South by Titi forest. Like the Meches the Totos once practised Jhum cultivation but now they abandoned the old practice. Beside the production of food grains they are involved in growing orange, bamboo grooves and pan-leaves in their homestead lands. They usually rear pigs and fowls round the year. The British government identified the distinction of the Totos as a tribe and made a separate land revenue settlement with them. The entire jote of Totopara containing 2033 acres of land was settled by the British government in Mandali grant given in the name of the traditional headman or Mandal of the Totos for Rs. 120 per annum. It was so settled by Sunder during the 3rd settlement of 1889-95; but the Fourth Settlement (1907-1916) under Milligan abolished the Mandali system and introduced a settlement on the basis of population in every Toto family holding land. Alteration thus was made in the amount of the payable tax and it was settled at Rs. 2 per

adult male per annum (Dey, 1981).

Settlement for Santal Colony:

The Santals were brought to Dooars as tea garden labourers from Bihar, Orissa and South-Western region of West Bengal by labour-contractors. They settled in different tea garden areas of Dooars, and thus their socio-economic life got entwined with the prospects of tea gardens under the British estate owners who received land on lease from the Government. But the Government in collaboration with some Christian missionaries developed some plans to make some clusters of Santal colonies in some waste land in Dooars. Accordingly British surveyor Mr. Sunder during the 3rd Settlement (1889-1895) selected a tract of waste land in Mahakalguri Taluk in Alipurduar Subdivision. It was only 18 kilometres to the north-east of the growing town of Alipurduar. Accepting the suggestion of Sunder the Government earmarked an area of 29 square miles for the Santal colonies (Miligan , 1906-1916) though ultimately only 14 square miles of land was felt more than necessary. This so happened because of the reluctance of the Santals to settle in the unknown and unhygienic place of Dooars. In the newly built Santal colonies a land settlement for fifteen years as made with each occupant and the rate of revenue was 8 annas an acre per annum.

Conclusion

The perusal of the main theme of this article brings home the fact that the land revenue settlements in Dooars under Bhutanese authority and the British Government laid the bedrock of a lasting structure of land settlements in multifarious forms in the area of Bengal down the Bhutan hills; and these settlements not only set the system of revenue to continue long after but also set the demographic and social settlements of different stocks of people including the immigrants in Dooars. The colonial settlements have remained largely unchanged even in post-independence India. As a matter of fact even the loopholes and drawbacks of the colonial settlements, as persist to exist devoid of new policies, are still lingering and long waiting for amendment and corrections. Lease-land problem is one of the so many other problems which should have already been corrected for the smooth running of settlement and revenue system in Dooars. In short it can be said that the land revenue settlements in Dooars have been so promiscuous and multifarious that do not allow easy understanding of themselves.

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