

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS - HISTORY

SEMESTER-IV

HISTORY OF NORTH BENGAL (1757 A.D.-1947A.D.)

ELECTIVE 406

BLOCK – 1

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FOREWORD

The Self-Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

HISTORY OF NORTH BENGAL (1757 A.D.-1947A.D.)

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BLOCK-1 HISTORY OF NORTH BENGAL (1757 A.D.-1947A.D.)

Introduction to the Block

Unit 1 deals with Emergence of Modern North Bengal. North Bengal is truly a treasure hunt for the nature lovers, especially for those who are looking for a periodical escape from the hectic chores of the modern city life.

Unit 2 deals with Pre-colonial North Bengal; North Bengal and Sub-Himalayan. Cultural Background of North Bengal; describe North Bengal In Post Partition.

Unit 3 deals with Region-adjoining areas: Ethno Socio-Religious confluence. It emerged in the most critical phase of its history, and played a very significant role in shaping the fate of the lonely princely state of Bengal

Unit 4 deals with Colonial penetration. This unit utilizes a three-pronged analytical model to examine the mechanics of British colonialism and its socioeconomic and political consequences in India.

Unit 5 deals with Colonial administration. The British Raj refers to the period of British rule on the Indian subcontinent between 1858 and 1947.

Unit 6 deals with Re-organization of North Bengal. The North Bengal Plain is developed by the deposition of both the Ganga-Brahmaputra River system.

Unit 7 deals with History of Migration : Demographic Changes : New Social Structure. Migration: Situation in North Bengal.

UNIT 1: EMERGENCE OF MODERN NORTH BENGAL

STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Background
- 1.3 Emergence of Modern North Bengal
- 1.4 Let us sum up
- 1.5 Key Words
- 1.6 Questions for Review
- 1.7 Suggested readings and references
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the Background of North Bengal
- To discuss the Emergence of Modern North Bengal

1.1 INTRODUCTION

North Bengal is truly a treasure hunt for the nature lovers, especially for those who are looking for a periodical escape from the hectic chores of the modern city life. Lying in the Northern half of the State of West Bengal and encircled by international boundaries of Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh, North Bengal offers a unique combination of varied landscape - from high mountainous region in the extreme north to the vast Gangetic plains in the extreme south. The geographical diversity blended with the cultures of different ethnic groups has placed North Bengal in the most treasured tourist destinations in Northeast India. North Bengal comprises of six districts- Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Coochbihar, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda.

The landscape, history and cultures of each district have a distinguished character. While nature has showered his bountiful beauties in Darjeeling with great Himalayan ranges passing through it, Jalpaiguri, lying in the

sub-Himalayan foothills, presents a rich biodiversity with dense forests, varied faunal and floral life forms. Coochbihar is a city of old palaces of Koch kings, with temples and large water bodies. North and South Dinajpur are basically agricultural plains and Malda again is an old civilization and has its own importance from the archeological point of view for the famous ruins of Gour kingdom. From tourism aspects North Bengal has immense potential to cater the needs of all kinds of travelers. For luxurious leisure tours, adventures high and low altitude treks, exciting jungle safari, elephant safari, daring white water rafting, remote village tourism, ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, angling tour, ornithology tour, heritage tour and much more North Bengal is just the place one needs to go.

The Hills, the jungles and the serene beauty of undulating tea gardens spread to the horizon. From the low lying agricultural fields to the High alpine Mountains of Sandakphu. The Red Panda, the Gaur, the leopards, the Rhinos and an innumerable variety of avifauna all around. From the Mangos of Malda to the Oranges of Kalimpong Hills. The bio diversity of North Bengal is unmatched anywhere. The people of North Bengal are also a varied lot. The tea gardens brought in Trials from Bengal and Bihar. The hill stations attracted people from neighbouring Nepal, and the partition of 1947 brought in Hordes of Bengalis from Bangladesh. Along with the local inhabitants known as the Rajbongshis, this made a heady mix of culture and traditions.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The face of the plains of north Bengal (see Figure 1) has been largely shaped by silts deposited by its numerous rivers, large and small. The intensity, duration and geographical distribution of rainfall throughout the region have constantly raised the water-level in the rivers which produced floods that carrying silt and vegetation away have continuously altered the shape of the ground. Undivided northern Bengal, comprising the districts of the Rajshahi Division (Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Malda, Rajshahi, Pabna and Bogra), has displayed certain distinctiveness in respect of climate, river influence and rainfall which have brought natural disasters upon it again and again. The Himalayan

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rivers along with their large and small tributaries intersect and irrigate the whole region. Tista, the largest river of northern Bengal, has many times brought down large quantities of water due to the melting of glacier or heavy rainfall in the hills, inundating a large tract of land spread across northern Bengal. Other rivers of northern Bengal like Karatoya, Lish, Ghish, Torsa, Jaldhaka, Kaljani, Mahananda, Atreyi, etc., also flooded the region frequently. Ganges, rolling down to the southern part of northern Bengal mainly through the district of Murshidabad, also caused severe floods.

The Himalayan sources of the major rivers made their behaviour unpredictable since they would any time bring down large amounts of water and mud in floods caused by melting of snows or excessive rainfall in the hills. The loss of human life, cattle and property naturally caused much misery. Destruction of crops and increase of food prices caused famine-like conditions again and again. Floods that were principally attributed to the increase of rainfall were aggravated by human interference with the natural flow of water through the construction of embankments, roads and railways. The intensity and duration of suffering were aggravated by the government's indifference. So, it is pertinent not only to trace the causes of the floods, but also to consider the plight of the victims whose bread and livelihood were affected by the flood.

Rivers and Rainfall: Floods and Vulnerability in Colonial Northern Bengal

The reprint of the book of Radhakamal Mukherjee in 2009 with an introduction written by Arun Bandopadhyay has renewed the discourse on the changing pattern of river courses and floods from the seventeenth or eighteenth century onwards and their impact on Bengal's agriculture, population and public health. While Mukherjee has traced in his book the continuous riverine changes through drying up of older river channels during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries along with the creation of new rivers, Bandopadhyay has well summarised the work on this subject done by Mukherjee, William Wilcocks and C. Adams-Williams during the early part of the nineteenth century.¹ The diverse arguments among

the colonial engineers, irrigation officers and hydrologists relate to the relevance and vitality of the issue of riverine changes and their impact. Differing opinions were held, for example, by Wilcocks and Adams-Williams regarding the issues of flood records, measures of channel volumes and the impact of railways and embankments on the occurrence of floods.

The recorded history of devastating floods that occurred in colonial northern Bengal can be traced back to 1787 when the Tista changed its course leading to the Ganga and took a new path making it a tributary of the Brahmaputra. This flood considerably altered the agricultural geography of north Bengal where new problems of drainage and irrigation emerged.² The flood of 1787 also produced a severe famine in the abandoned area. In the Malda district floods of a destructive character were of frequent occurrence and between 1850 and 1870 there were three severe inundations which caused great suffering in all parts of the district, especially in the low lands along the rivers. These floods were not so much produced by the heavy rainfall on the spot but took place due to the abnormal rise in the rivers as a result of rainfall at the upper parts of the mountain-fed rivers.³ In 1856, a very severe flood occurred in the Ganges. The Murshidabad embankments burst at Lalitakori, the whole country below was inundated, and the crops and large numbers of cattle were destroyed. In the district of Rajshahi floods of severe magnitude, which caused serious damage to the harvest, took place in 1838 and 1865. The flood of 1865 was caused by the excessive rainfall. Though Rampore Boalia, the sadar town of Rajshahi district, was protected by a seven-mile-long embankment, it yet suffered from periodical overflows of waters. One such an incident took place in 1864 when under the flood from the Ganges greater part of the town 'including the Government offices, was swept away'.

It was not before the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century that the Government perceived the necessity to compile the documentary evidence available regarding the floods in north Bengal. The Government then appointed the North Bengal Flood Committee in February 1923 under the chairmanship of G.T. Huntingford, Officiating Chief Secretary, Public Works Department, Government of Bengal, in

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order 'to prepare a series of maps showing the actual position and quantity of the rainfall immediately preceding some of the more important floods ... which had actually occurred in North Bengal during the period 1870–1922'.⁷ After analysing the Administration Report of Bengal from 1870 to 1922 and the District Gazetteers of all the districts of Rajshahi Division, the committee presented a list of important floods. It classified all floods under four heads—Catastrophic which involved considerable direct loss of human life and great destruction of cattle and crops; Severe that caused small loss of human life and significant destruction of crops and cattle; Moderate floods which caused sizeable damage to crops and cattle but no loss of human life; and Slight which involved minor damage to crops but no direct loss of cattle or human life.⁸ The present article deals with the occurrences of severe floods and their impact on society and economy of northern Bengal.

The Floods of 1871

The 1871 flood was caused by unprecedented rainfall in the monsoon period. The monsoon of 1871 had carried a large amount of water with it. Though the year 1871 had witnessed a great quantity of rainfall, it widely varied from district to district. During the second half of August rainfall increased considerably and in September there was excessive rainfall in different parts of north Bengal (Table 1).

Table 1 Rainfall in the Second Half of August and 12–16 September in North Bengal, 1871

Place	Rainfall in August (%)	Rainfall in September (%)
Rangpur	87	63
Dinajpur	67	153
Bogra	80	207
Rampore Boalia (Rajshahi)	69	101
Sirajgunj	11	103
Pabna	7	298
Malda	33	136

[View larger version](#)

There was a huge increase in rainfall from August to September in the district of Rajshahi and Malda. On the other hand, rainfall for the whole month of August was low, and in fact, deficient in some places. There

was little excess of rainfall in Pabna, Dinajpur and Rangpur in August. However, in the first week of September considerably greater rainfall than the average took place in the eastern part of northern Bengal where the volume of excess had varied from 50 per cent to 150 per cent.⁹ From 12 to 16 September, rainfall was in excess of the south-eastern part of north Bengal. Though the month of September witnessed moderate excess of rainfall in some places, rainfall at Jalpaiguri 'was in defect by 46 per cent and at Buxa by 19 per cent'. In Malda (1871), the river Mahananda overflowed its banks and flooded the adjacent villages and caused serious harm to cattle, bhadoi crops (reaped in August or September) and mulberry; and the town of English Bazar and the lower portion of the police stations of Harishchandrapur and Kharba were flooded. Floods in Malda had been chiefly attributed to the abnormal rise of water level in the rivers due to rainfall in the hills instead of local rainfall. Most of the rivers and streams which were running through Malda originate in the Himalayas and were vulnerable to sudden freshets produced by the melting of snow and excessive rainfall in the hills. In the diara tracts of the district the flood caused changes in the mainstream of the Ganges which resulted in cutting away of cultivable and dwelling areas that turned 'the inhabitants of whole villages ... in a night to the position of landless labourers'. But this, on the other hand, created opportunities for the formation of new char lands by silt deposits which made land fertile for cultivation. The district of Rajshahi was heavily inundated by the flood which was said to believe the 'highest floods on record in the district'.¹³ When water had subsided cholera broke out in an epidemic form in the district.¹⁴ Deaths were reported from the district, where a terrible mortality of cattle along with the destruction of crops also took place. The Hindoo Patriot reported: 'The oldest man living does not remember to have seen such a deluge, several of the fairest villages have been swept over by the flood, looking like one vast sheet of water studded here and there with huts and trees.'

Flood of 1885

The flood of 1885 lasted for about one month spreading in many parts of north Bengal. In severity and duration, the flood was unequal to those of

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1823 and 1871; the former of which was said to have persisted for nearly two months, and the latter for six to seven weeks. The damage commenced by breaches in the Murshidabad embankment on 23 August near Lalitakori where the water first penetrated under the embankment and eventually the embankment was partly destroyed, a breach 200-feet wide having formed.¹⁷ The flood inundated a large tract of the district amounting to 1,250 square miles or more than one-half of the total district area.¹⁸ Meanwhile the Gangetic flood, pouring down the Mathabhanga, breached the embankment near the Ramnaghur station of the Eastern Bengal Railway on 28 August.

The flood of 1885 was attributed to the floods in the Ganges, aggravated by an unusually heavy rainfall over the area affected. For the temporary relief from the disaster, relief circles were built in the affected areas, and a Central Committee had been formed in Calcutta to receive donations and ‘organized relief for those forms of distress with which Government agency could not adequately cope’. (In 1890 there was a similar inundation due to the bursting of the Lalitakuri embankment.)²² The flood of 1885 in Malda was also the result of an abnormal increase of the water level in the Ganges. Throughout August Ganges witnessed very heavy rainfall in its upper course which contributed to raising the water above flood level near Malda.

It was stated that the flood ‘was attended with little loss of life’ in Murshidabad and the poorer classes were, for some time, put to considerable distress for food, and the cattle suffered from want of grass. ‘The first and most necessary’ step which was undertaken to avert any future occurrence like this, was ‘the retirement of the embankment from the treacherous soil near Laltakori (Lalitakuri), to good ground where it can be held against any flood’. The other proposed measure was the provision of sufficient flood outlets on the Eastern Bengal Railway between Ramnagar and Aranghata. Moreover, for the safety of the country liable to damage in case of high floods, orders [had been] issued for the immediate construction of a short retired line in the rear of the breach of last year, which it [was] hoped [would] be sufficient for present safety

The situation was naturally not identical in all the parts of northern Bengal. As a result of total loss of rice in the fields there were many places where the people were suffering from want of food. The Amrita Bazar Patrika wrote on 17 September:

In many parts of Bengal the people [had] eaten up their last grain. What they had has been washed away by the great inundation which [had] flooded almost all the districts of the Province. Hundreds of villages [had] been totally destroyed, and men, women and cattle swept away by the torrent. Thousands of people in those places [had] been rendered homeless and [were] likely to die of starvation, if no material help [was] sent to them at once

There was considerable loss of property and destruction of standing crops in the diara part of the district of Malda where the flood reduced the villagers 'in a night to the position of landless labourers'. But it was also believed that the layer of silt deposits brought out by the floods could ensure a good crop in the forthcoming years.

The Floods of 1892

The 1892 flood covered a greater part of north Bengal. In the first week of July 1892, there was unprecedented rainfall in Raiganj, Balurghat, Kurigram, Siliguri, Mathabhanga and Cooch Behar. In River Dharla, the water rose to an abnormal level due to the excessive rainfall. The district of Dinajpur was considerably affected by the flood which was caused by the heavy inundation from the Atrai River and below its combination with the Gabura and Ghagra streams. The flood 'swept down on the town of Dinajpur from the north-east and washed large numbers of the inhabitants of the northern and eastern quarters out of their houses'. Floods in Dinajpur were an almost annual occurrence. But what took place in 1892 was exceptionally disastrous in the history of the district.

At one time it seemed likely that the whole of the central portion of the town might be destroyed, but the timely cutting of the Darjeeling road let the water off and relieved the pressure. A dangerous feature of this flood was that its first appearance in the evening, and the darkness which ensued, added greatly to its terrors.

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The flood caused serious damage to houses. Some money was allocated to the victims for repair of their houses. Though both the river Atrai and Punarbhaba rose but it was Atrai which by its rising caused maximum devastation. The enquiry, conducted to establish the main causes of the flood, found that 'the railway line, which bisects the district from east to west, was in large measure responsible for the damage done by holding up the flood water coming from the north'. The Raiganj–Parbatipur–Kurigram railway line held up the waters of Atrai for a long time. Increased water flowing down from the hills contributed to the serious overflow from the Mahananda river above Kisengunj, from the Atrai below Siliguri and near Dinajpur and Chirirbander and from the Dharla below Magalghat and near Kurigram. Mathabhanga and Cooch Behar Suddar Sub-divisions of the Cooch Behar State were severely affected by this flood. There was excessive rainfall in several parts of the district of Darjeeling where severe landslides occurred and roads were damaged.³⁴ Serajganj was also flooded massively as a result of excess of water in Brahmaputra which too overflowed.

The Calamities in Darjeeling, 1899

The year 1899 has been regarded as the year of the great disaster in the Darjeeling district. The rainfall during the rainy season of 1899 was exceptionally heavy there. A cyclone on 23 September, accompanied with heavy showers, continued for three days (23, 24 and 25 September). The downpour naturally varied from place to place, as shown in Table 2.

Place	Rainfall on 24 September	Rainfall on 25 September
Darjeeling	5.30	19.40
Kalimpong	4.80	9.16
Kurseong	4.67	15.18
Pedong	4.42	–
Mongpoo	3.25	12.96
Siliguri	–	3.98

As a result of excessive rainfall, Tista waters spilled over its banks which resulted in widespread destruction especially at Tista Bazar where almost all the houses were swept away. The flood severely affected the tea

gardens which lost 2,000 acres, and the value of property destroyed such as that of stocks of tea, buildings, etc. was valued at more than 10 lakh rupees. Large areas of forest were washed away. River Balasan also came down with huge amount of water which caused serious destruction to the Balasan forest. The mud, water and stones carried by the constant stream were scattered over a large area and the roads were obstructed by fallen trees, electric wires and other debris or were washed away. The four consecutive natural calamities—cyclone, excessive rainfall, flood and landslips—took a heavy toll in the district of Darjeeling where deaths occurred among both Indians and Europeans. At the eastern side of the Mall of Darjeeling, there was a series of continuous landslips, most of which were generated from near the top of Observatory Hill. The destruction and the loss of life in Darjeeling received wider notice than during any previous calamity that had occurred in the district.³⁷ The landslides caused severe damage to buildings, roads and overall communication system.³⁸ The Government appointed a committee to formulate strategies to deal with such situation in case of future occurrence and to minimise their consequences. The committee under Holland of the Geological Survey of India, after a thorough inspection of roads, buildings, rails and drains; reported that the causes of the landslips were the ‘defective drainage of sites, excessive load on drains, imperfect or badly constructed revetments, neglect to reduce or protect steep slopes, defective supervision of building sites, quarrying in unsafe localities, etc. ...’. It was only in 1900 that the Bengal Act I conferred some of the necessary powers and responsibilities on the local authorities to enable them to protect the mountainside better.

Floods of 1902 and 1906

The district of Jalpaiguri was severely inundated in 1902 and again in 1906. It has been argued that uninterrupted rainfall in the Darjeeling Hills and in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar resulted in an exceptionally large quantity of water flowing into the Tista which overflowed its banks and so caused floods.⁴¹ Moreover, in the central part of north Bengal, that is, in the districts of Rangpur and Dinajpur, rainfall was very heavy in the month of September—Rangpur had 107 per cent and Dinajpur had

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75 per cent excess of rainfall.⁴² On 26, 27 and 28 September rainfall was remarkably heavy in Bogra, Pabna, Rajshahi and Malda districts, though no flood was reported from anywhere.

The rainfall at Jalpaiguri during the month of August (1902) was above average and again in September it was excessive (100 per cent or more) which caused a great rise in the Tista's water-level. It started to flow with much force but its flow was checked by the railway embankment built for the Eastern Bengal State Railway. The flood, however, caused an extensive breach in the embankment and ravaged rice fields down to the Ghoramara river. There appeared a number of breaches between the main breach and Mandalghat railway station where a bridge was washed away. The flood caused some deaths. The total reported number of lives lost in the flood was 'only' ten including 'three herdsmen', 'three women and two children' who belonged to poor families and were exposed to such danger very frequently due to their failure 'to reach the high bank in time'. Loss of cattle was estimated at a great number—350 heads of cattle and 20 buffalos were lost, the Deputy Commissioner reported. There was a large herd of about 500 buffalos on the Nathua Khal when it was submerged in the flood and only 79 among them were rescued.⁴⁶ But most surprisingly, it was reported at the same time that 'little damage was done to the crops'. One would be surprised to think that the flood had taken toll of cattle and buffaloes, whereas crops remained standing in the field! Parts of Cooch Behar were also affected. The Cooch Behar Narrow Gauge State Railway was reported to have been badly damaged by the flood.

Severe and extensive floods again occurred in the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Rajshahi, Pabna and Malda in August and September of 1906. In Jalpaiguri floods took a severe form: Though the flood of 1902 had been limited to the basin of the Tista, in 1906 it spread throughout the district.⁴⁸ To the west of Mal Bazar, several bridges were washed away including the bridge over the Kumlai river and a series of breaches were made in the embankment, among which the breach near the Chel river was the widest.

Nagrakata and the surrounding tea gardens situated to the east of it heavily relied on the Ramshai Hat railway station for their purchases of

rice and coal and for transport of tea to its distant destinations. The flow of traffic on the Ramshai Hat-Sulka para and Ramshai Hat-Gairkata roads 'was in consequence very great, and efforts were now directed to make these roads passable for traffic to keep them open'. The major damage in the Bengal–Duars Railway caused by flood led to a recognition of the need to build an alternative roadways between Ramshai Hat and the tea gardens, lying between the Jaldhaka and Torsa rivers. Construction of a road was started within the Tondu forest and a protective embankment was proposed to be built along the line of the Tista in order to protect the town of Jalpaiguri from flood.⁵¹ Western Duars of Jalpaiguri district had also been devastated by the 1906 floods. Destruction of crops led to abnormal rise of prices of food grains. This severely affected the tea garden workers who looted a tea garden haat at Bataigol near Malbazar and a few shops near Chalsa railway station.

In the district of Malda during the post-flood period the price of rice increased to 6 seers per rupee, and as a result relief measures were initiated by the Government through the extension of advance of lakh of rupees under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. The high prices of rice resulted from the sudden increase of demand from East Bengal. Otherwise the crops were adequate in the barind region of the district which escaped from the flood owing to its higher terrain. The Bengalee reported that—in Malda

rice and all the vegetables and other eatables [had] been selling at famine price for these two months and a half and the state of things [had] at last assumed a fearful aspect...the present famine [was] almost unprecedented in the annals of the district of Malda...the aus crop... [had] also been washed away by the persistent and high flood of the last few days.

Rajshahi also suffered from the scarcity of food grains. The Rajshahi Famine Relief Committee attempted to start relief operations on a moderate scale helping able-bodied men and women with relief works and men of limited resources with cheap rice sold to them at a rate considerably below the market price and with gratuitous distribution of food to those who by long starvation have become unfit for work.

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Starvation took away life of a woman whose two infant daughters suffering from chronic starvation had turned into 'skeletons'. Since Government funds were not sufficient 'kind hearted ladies and gentlemen [were] earnestly requested to come to the help of suffering humanity'.

The Princely State of Cooch Behar was also visited by a terrible flood in the first week of August 1906. Though the flood had spread to all parts of the State, it caused maximum damage to the twenty-eight Taluks in the Mathabhanga sub-division. Roads were damaged throughout the State and due to the 'destruction of two large bridges and some other breaches on the line from Gitaldah to Cooch Behar, railway communication was suspended for four days from the 5th August'.⁵⁸ Cholera broke out in most parts of the tract that had been inundated. In addition to this high prices now prevailed to add to the suffering of the people.

The Floods of 1918

The districts of Rajshahi and Bogra were severely affected by flood in 1918. Heavy rainfall in the district of Rajshahi coincided with equally abnormal rains in the neighbouring districts of Dinajpur and Bogra, from where water drained into the northern parts of the district of Rajshahi. About one-half of the district (about 1,200 square miles) was affected by the 1918 flood, 'the height of which varied from 2 to 4 feet above' danger level. It was said to be 'a flood [which] had not occurred for over a century ...'. The districts of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Bogra and Pabna were inundated 'causing much damage to crops, homesteads, and cattle over an area of about 1,300 square miles, particularly in the districts of Rajshahi and Bogra'. The main line of the Eastern Bengal Railway was also affected. From 24 August the water level began to rise abnormally and reached its highest point on 30 August. 'Two aged persons and three children were killed by the fall of mud walls and three children were drowned'—reported the Collector of Rajshahi. In addition, the Collector reported that more than 7,000 houses were severely destroyed and cattle were suffering from want of fodder and shelter since they had been standing in the water for days. The aman crop was severely damaged and this 'loss was directly due to the long immersion in the flood water'. In the month of September, the situation worsened further. Amrita Bazar

Patrika reported: Heartrending details of distress occasioned by high flood continue to come from the districts of Rajshahi and Bogra. Naugaon...has suffered most and thousands of people have been rendered homeless.... Of the 4,000 villages affected by the flood the Committee has been able to extend relief operations to 100 villages only. It is important to note here that the relief committee did not succeed in providing relief to most people in distress, despite the official declaration that the relief was 'promptly rendered' through 'a novel method of ... the distribution of seeds by way of loan'.⁶⁶ It was reported that about four lakhs of rupees were distributed in agricultural loans.⁶⁷ In spite of all these measures, many people were still starving for days while some were 'being ill-fed with un-boiled rice which sells 5½ seers a rupee'. From the district of Bogra it was reported that, 2,000 families there were homeless and about 1,000 people were starving.⁶⁸ Apart from Rajshahi and Bogra, the district of Dinajpur was also inundated by heavy rainfall from the end of June. Numerous houses were drowned and roads were under water when the river Punarbhaba rose and flood waters penetrated into the low-lying areas of Dinajpur town.

The Princely State of Cooch Behar also suffered from excessive rainfall during the year 1918. From the month of June, rainfall was increasingly heavy, the month of June witnessing the maximum rainfall of the year (45.11 inches). The rainfall registered at the Sadar Station was 158.37 inches against 114.97 inches of the previous year. The excessive rainfall caused serious damage to the crops. Bitri crop 'could not be harvested owing to the heavy rainfall and the out-turn which promised to be a bumper one turned out to be 12 annas (75 per cent) only'.⁷¹ The heavy rainfall recorded in July retarded the transplantation of Haimanti seedlings especially in low-lying lands.

The Flood of 1922

One of the most disastrous floods overwhelmed the Rajshahi Division in 1922. This was caused by excessive rainfall throughout north Bengal. The rains were brought about by a strong depression that formed in the Bay of Bengal on 21 September and passed through north Bengal producing exceptional rainfall on 23, 24, 25 and 26 September. The

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heaviest rainfall occurred in the Atrai and Punarbhaba Basins.⁷³ Balurghat, Gangarampur, Gazol, Naogaon and Natore witnessed abnormal rainfall, for ‘almost as much rain fell in one week as during the course of three months in a normal year’.

Meghnad Saha, Professor of Physics, Allahabad University, and the Publicity Officer of the North Bengal Flood Committee, wrote an article titled *The Great Flood in North Bengal* in the *Modern Review* (Vol. 32), November 1922. Saha divided the river system of north Bengal into two major groups—the Ganges (or the Padma) on the south and south-west with its tributary the Mahananda, and the Jumna or the Brahmaputra on the east with its tributary the Tista on the north-east. Atrai, another major tributary of the Jumna, received waters from numerous small streams of this region, its course roughly indicating the line of the greatest slope. The flood of 1922 which occurred in the Atrai basin largely owed its destructive effects to the raised railway lines which blocked water passages.

The rain-water descending from the Balurghat Subdivision swept across the Balurghat-Hill District Board road, and brushed against the railway line. Up Santahar, this volume of water bifurcated. The upper part broke through the upper section of the line, between Jamal-gunge and Akkelpur at several places; on the night of the 25th September...the flood water came at right angles against the Bogra-Santahar line and breached it at several places, east and west of Adamdighi.... The only way of escape was through the channel of the Atrai and some other small rivers... [which was] very insufficiently provided with culverts, and often times the culverts of the meter gauge line have no corresponding culverts on the parallel broad gauge section.

Moreover, it was observed that during the time of ‘reconstruction of the new broad gauge line, many openings on the original line were either closed or much shortened in width. As a result, flood waters could not pass easily under the railway line’. The flood in Eastern Rajshahi, in the Panchupore Singra area, was caused by the flood waters coming from Bogra through the Raktadaha-Chalanbil line. Water only slowly subsided in the inundated area due to ‘the obstruction offered by the broad gauge line from Sara to Serajgunj’ which implied that if the Sara-Santahar line

had not been laid out, the 'flood water west of this line would have spread into this area, and would have ultimately passed through Pabna to the Jumna thus relieving the pressure west of this line'.

The official version, however, differed from the above. The official reports did not admit that 'the course of western section of the floodwater which poured into Naogaon and Natore, was held up by the double line running from Sara to Santahar, causing a devastating accumulation of water for upwards of a fortnight'. The Official Committee overlooked the disastrous impact of the railways and had put all the blame upon 'freaks of nature'. The flood brought havoc upon crops in the districts of Rajshahi and Bogra where 70–75 per cent and 90 per cent crops, respectively, were destroyed. The area affected in the district of Rajshahi was three times the area affected in Bogra and was also greater in terms of loss of crops and cattle.

As colonial hydrology even at the end of the nineteenth century had yet to adopt new tools for dealing with hazardous effects of inundation, embankments were supposed to be a major protection against extended flooded area. Yet these by blocking passages for water kept large areas under flood waters for long periods. No real relief from inundations and their work of devastation was really secured.

1.3 EMERGENCE OF MODERN NORTH BENGAL

Before we enter into the detail study of our problem, we have to determine the area or field over which our investigation is concerned. This chapter will attempt to give a description of that geographical area of North Bengal which had been changed its area and shape in course of times. Even during the period of our study from 1869 to 1969, the geographical boundary of North Bengal had been changed due to the circumstances created by the colonial rulers. The chief aim of this chapter is to analyse the nature of the changes brought about in the area and the history of North Bengal in general. It is admitted by so many scholars in different volumes that history of North Bengal in general are very rich and glorious. From ancient times, it had a tradition, and of

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course, sometimes it was the central place in the context of the history of whole of Bengal.

During ancient period we find mention of the capital city of Bengal was situated in North Bengal. During the later Gupta Period and later on under Sasanka, North Bengal played a remarkable role not only in the history of Bengal, at the same time in the context of the history of North-East India and Northern India also. In this connection it has to be mentioned that the North Eastern region of India situated in one of the greatest migration routes of mankind' from the time immemorial, had been the inhabitant of population which perhaps represent the admixture of all most all the racial strains, like Aryans, the Alpine-Iranian and the Tibeto-Burman, later being the most numerous and predominant. They had migrated to settle in the region with their own culture, language and religion as groups of Non-Hindu affiliation.[^] In the context of our present study on North Bengal and its socio-cultural history, it is found that this region is said to have inhabited by the Non-Aryan tribes having Mongoloid traits and features. Accordingly we find some areas of our study like Cooch Behar (presently a district of North Bengal) which is admitted as the headquarters of those tribes who were called indiscriminately Koch, Rajbansis and Pali. During the medieval period, we find that the region was similarly important in the history of Bengal. From early medieval period to the advent of the colonial rulers, Bengal (particularly North Bengal) was always in the main stream of history. Considering all those things, it may be assumed that the geographical area, which is called North Bengal, had a glorious past. It is quite known that sometimes this North Bengal with its geographical and historical prominence highlighted various aspects on the history and archaeology of Bengal. Before studying history of North Bengal, it seems desirable to know the geography and geographical boundary of this area. North Bengal, at present a narrow area of land at a short distance from the Chinese border connects to two divisions of India as a vital point in the bottom of the Himalayas. Its geographical proximity with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan in the North, Assam and Bangladesh in the east, and Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar in the South and West has provided her a special place of strategic importance.' Since long past North Bengal

has been serving as the eastern gateway for the passage and communication of people, commodities and ideas between the Indian Sub-continent in the West and Assam, Burma, China and other parts of South-East Asia in the East. This area is situated in the centre of the network connecting different civilization.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know about the Background of North Bengal?

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2. Discuss the Emergence of Modern North Bengal.

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1.4 LET US SUM UP

Koch Rajbongshi is an ancient tribe originally from the ancient Koch kingdom. The Rajbongshi tribe is referred to as Koch Rajbongshi, or Rajbanshi, or Rajvanshi. The word "Rajbongshi" literally means "royal community". They have a rich cultural heritage and their own language.

Habitation

The homelands of this ancient tribe include West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and various North Eastern parts of India. The Great Kamatapur was divided into Bangladesh, West Bengal, Assam, Nepal, Meghalaya, Tripura, Bihar and Bhutan, during the British rule and after the independence of India. A large number of Rajbongshi people now live in North Bengal, West Assam, Meghalaya, Bangladesh and Nepal. A large number of political and non-political organizations of this community have been formed in West Bengal and Assam. Most

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prominent among them are Kamatapur People's Party, Greater Coochbehar Demanding Committee, All Koch Rajbonshi Students Union and Koch Rajbonshi Sanmilani, and these groups are demanding a separate Kamatapur state consisting of North Bengal and West Assam. Kamatapur Liberation Organization is an armed militant outfit of the Rajbonshi community, and it is demanding independent Kamatapur State to bring back its past glory. Because of migration, this community can be found in various parts of India and other parts of the world.

Language

The Rajbongshi/Rajbanshi language is spoken by one crore people, according to a 2001 census report for West Bengal (Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Malda and Murshidabad), Assam and Bihar) in India. The language is also spoken in Bangladesh and Nepal. Other names of the language are Kamtapuri, Rajbangsi, Rajbansi, Rajbongshi, Goalpariya and Tajpuri. The Rajbanshi language has a complete grammar.

Dialects

The main dialects are Western Rajbanshi, Central Rajbanshi, Eastern Rajbanshi and the dialect of the Rajbanshi of the hills, also known as Koch language.

The Central dialect has majority of speakers and is quite uniform. There are publications in this language. The Western dialect has more diversity. Lexical similarity is 77% to 89% between the three dialects. But the dialect spoken in the hills has some influence of the local tribal languages. Koch Rajbonshi Sahitya Sabha has given emphasis on bringing a unique identity of the Rajbonshi language.

Religion and beliefs

The Rajbongshi were primarily animist, but later on they followed Hinduism/Sanatana (both Shaiva and Vaishnabhite), A few section of Rajbongshi people were also found to be followers of Christianity, both Roman Catholic and protestant.

Royal history

The Kamata kingdom appeared in the western part of the older Kamarupa kingdom in the 13th century, after the fall of the Pala dynasty. The rise of the Kamata kingdom marked the end of the ancient period in the history of Assam and the beginning of the medieval period. The first rulers were the Khens, who were later displaced by Alauddin Hussain Shah, the Turko-Afghan ruler of Bengal. Though Hussain Shah developed extensive administrative structures, he could not maintain political control and the control went to the Koch dynasty. The Koch Rajbongshi's called themselves Kamateshwars (the rulers of Kamata/Kamatapur Kingdom), but their influence and expansions were so extensive and far reaching that their kingdom is sometimes called the Koch kingdom. Under His Highness Maharaja Naranarayan the then King of Kamatapur, the Koch dynasty flourished to the highest extent and his brother Shukladhwaj Singha (famous as Chilarai) was one of the greatest heroes of that time and he prominently dominated the eastern part of Kamatapur which now known as Assam(Previously Assam is known as Pragjyotispur)now it is known as Asom which is an integral part of The Republic of India.

The Rajobngshi community has a rich heritage and culture which had been inherited from the ancient civilization. The Rajbongshi community has their own dialects, culture, and way of living. The culture reflects the humbleness, peace, unity and harmony with nature, as Rajbongshi are primarily animist.

A few rulers, kings, queens, princes and princesses of the Koch dynasty are His Highness Maharaja Naranarayan, Prince Chilaray, Maharani Gayatri Devi, (Princess Gayatri Devi later on married Prince of Jaipur - Jai Singh) which had helped a strong relationship between the two kingdoms. Maharaja Ajit Narayan Dev of Biddapur (a part of then Assam*) Kingdom was also part of the Koch dynasty.

1.5 KEY WORDS

Emergence: the process of becoming visible after being concealed.

1.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the meaning of North Bengal emergence.

1.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Jatindra Chandra Sengupta, West Bengal District Gazetteers: Malda, Calcutta, 1969, p. 97.
- G.E. Lambourne, Bengal District Gazetteers: Malda, Calcutta, 1918, p. 50.
- The flood caused much damage to cattle due to the want of fodder, and people were compelled to leave their houses and take shelter in high places. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers: Rajshahi, p. 92.
- W.W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, Vol. VIII: Districts of Rajshahi and Bogra, London, 1876, p. 79.
- C.E. Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors: A Narrative of the Principal Events and Public Measures during Their Periods of Office from 1854 to 1898, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1901, p. 495.

1.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 1.2
2. See Section 1.3

UNIT 2: PRE-COLONIAL NORTH BENGAL; NORTH BENGAL AND SUB-HIMALAYAN

STRUCTURE

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 North Bengal During Vedic age
- 2.3 North Bengal in Early Medieval Era
- 2.4 North Bengal in Medieval Period
- 2.5 North Bengal in Morning Age
- 2.6 Cultural Background of North Bengal
- 2.7 North Bengal In Post Partition
- 2.8 Let us sum up
- 2.9 Key Words
- 2.10 Questions for Review
- 2.11 Suggested readings and references
- 2.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the North Bengal During Vedic age
- To discuss the North Bengal in Early Medieval Era
- To know about North Bengal in Medieval Period
- To know about North Bengal in Morning Age
- To discuss about Cultural Background of North Bengal
- To describe North Bengal In Post Partition

2.1 INTRODUCTION

North Bengal comprises of seven districts namely, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Coochbehar, and Alipurduar (created in 2014). North Bengal's strength is its strategic location. It shares international borders with three South Asian countries — Nepal,

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Bhutan and Bangladesh. It shares state borders with Assam, Sikkim and Bihar. It is also known as the gateway to the Northeast, and serves as a corridor to China and some South East Asian countries like Myanmar and Thailand. Its water resources are vast and its natural beauty is fascinating. Almost every town is situated on the banks of a river — the Teesta, Mahananda, Balason, Karla and Torsa. North Bengal is famous as a business hub for tea, timber and tourism. Recent development in a wide variety of emerging sectors such as real estate, IT and ITES, healthcare, education, manufacturing etc is raising new hopes. With mangoes in Malda, pineapples in Uttar Dinajpur, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, Black Pepper in Alipurduar, oranges in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts, the region is also a veritable food basket. In fact, North Bengal also has another great advantage. It is a region where people of Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan can easily identify themselves with — in terms of history, heritage, languages, cultures and customs. This is something that helps create a comfort zone for those keen to do business in the region, which is on the cusp of transition.

2.2 NORTH BENGAL DURING VEDIC AGE

During the Later Vedic age, we find mention of some places the name of which are demarcated with some areas of present North Bengal. At that time North Bengal was probably known as 'PRAGJYOTISHA-KAMARUPA' and vast adjoining Himalayan regions. We know that in the ancient divisions of India North Bengal, the area of our study was known in the name of 'PAUNDRA or PUNDRA.^ As regards the geographical boundary of present North Bengal in ancient Bengal, we have further testimony of the 'RAJATARANGINI' that PUNDRAVARDHANA or chief town of PUNDRA was the capital of the king of GAUDA.^ Present North Bengal, a geographical boundary of six districts over which our study is concerned (viz., Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda) have so many historical dimensions in respect of its ethnicity, culture, language and in economic and social aspects. When discussing about its past geographical and historical importance we find a series of

information about its importance both in ancient and medieval period. Dr. N. N. Acharya in an article, "New Light on North Bengal from the records of Assam History" have mentioned very specifically about the geographical boundary and historical importance of this area. In the ancient literature we also come across a few other place-names and the names of the people associated with North Bengal such as Kiratas (hill people of North Bengal) the Paliyas (Rajvansis of North Bengal), and Kachchha (CoochBehar).¹ Some other places in this area have also important impact on the history and culture of North Bengal some of the places were Kingdom of Matsya located in the West of the river Koratoya," Vijaya Pura, which is situated on the North of the Purnia District and Gorkha King of Nepal conquered it.² Madra and Salya Kingdoms are situated on the North-West of Kamampa and at the bottom of the Bhutan hills. From the period of Mahabharata we have also some reference of North Bengal. There is mention of twenty-three Princes of the family of Bhagadatta, who continued to govern after his death in the Kurukshetra war. It is also known to us that those princes ruled over Bengal including its northern part. We have further reference about Bhagadatta, the king of PRAGJYOTISA, sided with the KAURAVAS along with the other eastern countries-ANGA, VANGA and PUNDRA "Practically the whole east supported them".³ Moreover, in this context we find the mention that the people led by BHAGADATTA were the CINAS and the KIRATAS.⁴ About the Kiratas, we have so many references in which we will get some relevance with our study on North Bengal. From the 'MAHABHARATA', we came to know that the kiratas are mountain dwellers. Apart from these, we have so many information about the kiratas, the inhabitants of this region (North Bengal). But all these things are not required to be discussed for our purpose. However, to draw a Geo-Historical profile of present North Bengal we will have to go through so many evidences to get a clear picture on the area of our study.

2.3 NORTH BENGAL IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ERA

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According to our above discussions, we see that during the early historical period we come across a few geographical names, which signified the territories hardly covered the entire area of the boundary of North Bengal. In other words, the territories beyond the Pundravardhanabhukti appear to have been ignored by the people in general, although the place was not altogether unknown to them as we learn from the references to the temples of Sveta Varahasvamin and Kokamukhasvamin situated in the Himalayas (Himavachehikhare), in the Damodarpur Inscriptions of the 5th century A.D.[^] When we try to know trying to study the socio-cultural, and political history of North Bengal, we have to know its past. It is a fact that North Bengal came into limelight of history since the days of the emergence of the city in Pudanagala (Pundranagara) on the bank of the Karatoya in c. 3rd century B.C. We had to wait for a few centuries more dawn to the age of Guptas to have a clearer picture about the socio-economic life of the people of this region. For our study, very little is known of Bengal during the period between the fall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Gupta Empire, i.e., approximately between 200 B.C. and 350 A. D. There is, however, no doubt that Bengal now occupied a definite place in the political and economic map of India. This is proved by the accounts of the Greek and Roman writers of the period. Pliny, a great Roman scholar of the first century A.D. refers to the Gangarides through whose country flowed the Ganges, in the final part of its course. The Gangaridai are also mentioned by the great Roman poet Virgil in his 'GEORGICS' (about 30 B.C.)[^] We also get some information from the 'PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHRAEAN SEA' written by a Greek sailor who made a Voyage along the Western and Eastern Coasts of India. His date is not definitely known, but is usually placed in the second half of the first century A.D. Another Greek writer, Ptolemy, who flourished in the first half of the Second century A.D., refers to the five mouths of the Ganges and adds that "All the country about the mouths of the Ganges is occupied by the Gangaridai". And the king lived in the city of Gange.^{^^} Gangaridai, denoting the people of Bengal, were very powerful in the fourth century B.C. and the above references indicate that their name and fame were known even to the remote countries of the west during the next five

hundred years. Regarding the prominence of North Bengal during the post Maurya period nothing can be said definitely. Kushana coins have been discovered in large number both in North and South Bengal. But this does not necessarily indicate the suzerainty of the Kushanas over Bengal.¹* More definite information is available for the political condition of Bengal at the beginning of the fourth century A.D. According to R.C. Majumdar, Bengal was then divided into a number of states, one of which was Samatata, comprising the delta of the Ganges to the east of the present Hooghly river. Another was probably DAVAKA which lay between Samatata and KAMARUPA (roughly denoting present Assam, a portion of which is still called by that name). The exact location of Davaka cannot be determined. Fleet looked upon it as the ancient name of Dacca, while V.A. Smith located it in 'NORTH BENGAL'. The existence of a third State, about the same time may be inferred from some records engraved on the Susunia Hills about twelve miles to the North-West of the town of Bankura in West Bengal which mention the name of Maharaja Chandravarman. It is an established fact that the foundation of the Gupta Empire was a landmark in the history of ancient Indian history. The rise of the Imperial Guptas put an end to this state of things, and gradually whole of Bengal was conquered by them. There are some controversy regarding the early home land of the imperial Guptas Dr. D. C. Ganguly, however, propounded the view that the early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabad, Bengal, and not in Magadha (IHQ vol. XIV). What ever it may be, that is not our concern. But when we are to discuss about the Geo-historical position of North Bengal it must be mentioned that during the Guptas, we find the mention of North Bengal which was included within the Gupta Empire. The view is based on the tradition recorded by I-Tsing that Maharaja Sri.Gupta built a temple for the Chinese priests and granted twenty four villages as an endowment for its maintenance. This temple was known as the 'Temple of China', was situated close to a Sanctuary called Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no which was about forty YOJANAS to the east of Nalanda following the course of Ganges. Considering the views of Allan and Fleet Dr. Ganguly concludes that the original home of the Guptas was in Bengal and not in Magadha. Dr. Ganguly located it

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definitely at Murshidabad as its distance from Nalanda is about forty Yojonas (equivalent to 240 English miles). But Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya has argued that as the Chinese pilgrim first went to the Ganges from Nalanda and then voyaged down the river the distance from Nalanda to the Ganges should be included in the total and this takes us to 'MALDA' in Varendra.^{^^} Due to some controversy we may not accept the view that the early home of the Imperial Guptas is to be located in Murshidabad, Bengal, and not in Magadha, it is a valid presumption that the parts of North Bengal were included in the territory ruled over by the founder of the Gupta family. During the post-Gupta period, the reign of 'Gouradhipa Sasanka' was the most significant incident in the history of Bengal. It is an accepted view that Sasanka occupies a prominent place in the history of Bengal. Unlike the three kings in lower Bengal who preceded him, he is more than a mere name to us. He is also the known king of Bengal who extended his suzerainty over territories far beyond the geographical boundary of that province. What we know definitely about Sasanka is that some time before 606 A.D. Sasanka became the king of Gauda with his capital at 'Kamasuvama'. There is hardly any doubt that both Northern and Western Bengal were included in the domains of Sasanka. We have further reference about the geographical boundary of Sasanka's domain. Hiuen Tsang who travelled in Bengal about 638 A.D. Shortly after the death of Sasanka, mentions, besides Kajangala (territory round Rajmahal) four kingdoms in Bengal proper viz., Pundravardhana, Kamasuvama, Samatata and Tamralipti. The first two undoubtedly denote to the two component parts of Sasanka's Kingdom viz. North Bengal and northern parts of Western Bengal. It is mentioned that the capital city of his Kingdom was Kamasuvama, presently situated in Murshidabad district. Some historians have described that Sasanka was the first son of the soil who was ruling over both northern and southern parts of Bengal. If this view is accepted, then it is true that during the 7th century A.D. North Bengal had an important impact on the history and culture of Bengal. After Sasanka's death anarchy and confusion was prevailing in Bengal both in Southern and Northern parts. The death of Sasanka proved to be a political disaster of the first magnitude. Not only were the dreams of a far-flung Gauda

Empire suddenly shattered, but within a few years his kingdom, including the Capital City Kamasuvama passed into the hands of BhasKaravarman the hostile king of Kamarupa. After the foundation of the Pala dynasty in the middle of the 8th century A.D, this anarchy came to an end. The rule of the Pala dynasty from about the middle of the eight century A.D. marks a new epoch in the history of Bengal. It is interesting that this dynasty with so many political and cultural dimensions continued to rule nearly 400 years. During the rule of the Pala rulers, North Bengal the area of our study had a very important cultural background. Immediately after the fall of the Pala dynasty, another dynasty, the Senas came into prominence to rule this area. During the Pala period, we have so many references that North Bengal was included within the frame of Pala Empire. In the first place 'RAMACHARITA' definitely refers to Varendri as the 'JANAKABHUH' or ancestral home of the palas. We should of course remember that Varendra (also called Varendri) denoted the northern, and the Vainga, the eastern and southeastern part of Bengal. The evidences of Ramacharita and Gwalior inscription might therefore appear to be contradictory, unless we regard Vainga as denoting the whole Province of Bengal. Such an use of the name Vaihagan can, however, be justified or explained only on the supposition that the palas were originally the rulers of vanga, and the name came to be applied to the rest of the province. Whatever may have been the limits of the kingdom of Gopala it is reasonable to hold that he consolidated his authority over the whole of Bengal. The Sena dynasty that ruled in Bengal after the Palas appears from the official records that they had included North Bengal within their Empire. It is evident that Lord of Gauda who according to Deopara Inscription, fled before Vijayasena, was almost certainly Mahanandapala whose dominions in Bengal were at that time confined to North Bengal. That Inscription records the creation by Vijoyasena of the magnificent temple of Pradyumnesvara whose ruins now lie on the bank of an enormous tank at Deopara about seven miles to the west of the town of Rajshahi. This proves the effective conquest, by Vijoyasena of at least a part of North Bengal. It was perhaps in connection with this expedition to North Bengal that Vijoyasena came into conflict with Vardhana, king of Kausambi and defeated him. It is

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very probable that Vijoyasena's young grandson, Lakshmanasena, took part in this expedition in North Bengal. Hence, from this discussion it appears that during the Sena period North Bengal had some importance in the geographical jurisdiction of the Sena kingdom. As already noted above, Lakshmanasena's campaign against Gauda, Kamarupa and Kalinga might refer to expeditions which he led or accompanied during the reign of his grandfather. After the Sena rule Bengal witnessed a new experience due to the sudden attack of the Turks. The only detailed account of the Muslim invasion of Bengal during the reign of Lakshmanasena is "TABAQAT-I-NASIRI," a historical work composed by Maulana Minhaj-ud-din Abii umar-i-usman. Without any detailed discussion about the Muslim invasion in Bengal it may be mentioned here that when Bakhtiyar Khilji arrived at Lakhnawati, (13th century A.D.) the power of the Sena rulers collapsed and a new chapter was opened in the history of Bengal and North Bengal in particular.

2.4 NORTH BENGAL IN MEDIEVAL PERIOD

When Bakhtiyar Khilji became successful in establishing the power of the Delhi Sultanate in Bengal, the history and culture of this area opened a new chapter. During the subsequent period the Sultans of Bengal established the cities (towns) of Gour and Pandua which had created tremendous impact on the life and various activities of the people of this region. As we are making a study on Present North Bengal, it may be mentioned here that these cities of Gour and Pandua are presently situated in Malda district which is within the geographical jurisdiction of our area of study. With the advent of Islam in this area and the contact and interaction of an alien culture with the existing system in all respects gave birth to a change and created new ideas which are of far-reaching consequences. When we are to sketch in brief the historical outlines of North Bengal which is required to be thoroughly investigated we find that this area had vast geographical boundaries which had been changed in the course of different times.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know about the North Bengal during Vedic age?

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2. Discuss the North Bengal in Early Medieval Era.

.....

3. What do you know about North Bengal in Medieval Period?

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2.5 NORTH BENGAL IN MORNING AGE

So long we have described and highlighted the geographical profile and its historical importance from ancient period to early medieval and medieval period. During medieval Period, the history of Bengal as well as North Bengal has been studied elaborately in different Volumes. But in modern times the geo-historical profiles of North Bengal to some extent is rather difficult due to a series of factors. Before the partition of 1947 North Bengal had a vast area some parts of which at present are lying with Bangladesh, now an independent state. At that time the area of North Bengal was confined within the Northern side of the Ganges and the western side of the River Brahmaputra. The area of North Bengal at that time covered the area of undivided Rajshahi Division, (Dinajpur, Pabna, Bagura, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Jalpaiguri, Maldah, Darjeeling) Cooch Behar Princely state, some parts of Purnia District in Bihar, some parts of undivided Nadia District. Moreover the Districts of Goalpara and Kamarupa (partly) of Assam were situated within the geographical jurisdiction of North Bengal. Akshay Kumar Maitreya have mentioned that the Rajshahi Division is known as North Bengal comprising the

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Districts of Rajshahi, Maldah, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Bagura and Pabna. It is quite evident that some places of the above mentioned districts are at present lying in Bangladesh. But at the same time, according to Akshay Kumar Maitreya, we have an outline about the geographical area of North Bengal. Of course it was the picture of North Bengal during the pre-partition era, (1947) and in undivided Bengal. At that time, the study of the history of North Bengal, its Socio-Cultural practice gained much importance in the context of the history of Bengal with the sincere effort of some contemporary Scholars. In the pre-partition era, we have a good number of Institutions and Associations which were engaged in the sociocultural study mainly to study the history and archaeology of this region. For instance, we can mention the name of 'RANGPUR SAHITYA PARISHAD' which was established in Rangpur as a branch of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad in the year 1905. About this institution we find the reference that, "Accordingly on nt h Baishak, 1312 B.S, (1905) Rangpur Sahitya parishad started with 28 members as a branch of Bangiya Sahitya parishad". Perhaps it was the first branch of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad which was established in North Behgal (Rangpur). For academic and intellectual exercise, Rangpur Sahitya Parishad had a distinction and it started to publish a PATRIKA (journal) as its mouthpiece. The 'Rangpur Sahitya parishad patrika' with its outstanding academic exercise marked a significant role in the study on North Bengal. It is stated that 'As a Branch of Bangiya Sahitya parishad this institution was inaugurated with the avowed object of (i) making archaeological discoveries in North Bengal and Assam. This Institution, (Rangpur Sahitya Parishad) from its inception was very much interested with literary activities and due to this interest the Parishad arranged a literary conference in the name of "UTTARBANGA SAHITYA SAMMILAN". About this literary conference it is mentioned that, "It was in the 3rd year of Parishad's existence the first literary conference met under the Presidentship of Akshay Kumar Maitreya, Babu Surendea Chandra Roy Chaudhury, the secretary of Rangpur Sahitya Parishad, has appointed as permanent Secretary of North Bengal literary conference. The Parishad had a special interest on literature, and due to this interest the Parishad arranged 'Uttarbanga Sahitya Sammilan'

the first literary conference in North Bengal. The Rangpur Sahitya Parishad was an important institution, which was devoted on research activities especially on history and archaeology of North Bengal. If we quote some relevant portion from the editorial of the PATRIKA, it will be evident that the prime motive of the Parishad's Patrika was to explore on the history and archaeology of North Bengal. "Half Portion of the Patrika will contain the folk literature, archaeology, different historical facts and events and the details of the different rare books. Another half portion will publish the rare and unpublished books, description about the authors of the books of North Bengal and book review". This organization was no doubt a research institute which may be entitled to the distinction of having regular publication on Socio-cultural history of undivided North Bengal. It may be mentioned in this connection that the study of history and socio-cultural aspects of this area have started lately. Some scholars, like Akshay Kumar Maitreya took a special care on research and publication through this organization. In this connection mention may be made that some of the issues of this Patrika published so many important articles on linguistics, ethnology, history and cultural identity of the people of North Bengal. Akshay Kumar Maitreya wrote an article, entitled "Uttarbanger Puratatyanusandhyane" which was a pioneer work on the archaeology of North Bengal. So long, any article or book had not been published particularly on North Bengal. From this work of Akshay Kumar Maitreya it became evident that historically the area of North Bengal can attract the attention of the scholars. At the same time so many unknown information came into being and enriched the history and culture of North Bengal. Similarly, during the same year, another article was published by Hamed Ali, entitled, "Uttarbanger Musalman Sahitya". It was a study of new taste and identity which is evident from the title of the article. From medieval period particularly from the time of the invasion of Baktiyar Khilji this area of North Bengal went under the Muslim rulers and that rule had been continued up to the coming of the British. During this long period under Muslim rule some literary activities of the Muslims of this area were developed. Hamed Ali, in his article have highlighted on this new dimension of Muslim literature. The writers in this Patrika did concentrate their writings not

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only on socio-cultural field but on other sides also. For instance we can mention that Keshablal Basu wrote an article, titled "Uttarbanger Swastha Tatyanusandhan".

It was published in three parts in the Sahitya Parishad Patrika.' Apart from Rangpur Sahitya Parisad, another institution was established in Rajshahi for the cause of North Bengal study. It was 'VARENDRA ANUSANDHAN SAMITF which was established in 1910 in Rajshahi. Kumar Sarat Kumar Ray and Akshay Kumar Maitreya were the most interested scholars who with their intimate and sincere efforts founded this organization to cultivate the socio-cultural and historical study of this region." Another interesting thing is that the selection of the name of the institution is also significant. Probably, the very word ' Varendra' signifies the glory of the past of this region. Whatever it may be we can mention one thing that before the establishment of the 'Rangpur Sahitya Parishad' in 1905, and the 'Vandra Anusandhan Samiti' in 1910, no institution or organization had any interest or activity on the study of this area. In fact though the Bangio Sahitya Parishad was working in broad sense about literature, language, history, archaeology, culture, and so many things, but it was in wide perspective. In this connection this two institutions had a special character to emphasis on the study of North Bengal. As the head of these two institutions Akshay Kumar Maitreya proved his scholarship though he was a lawyer by profession at the Rajshahi court.*^ His activities and fame was by far the greater for his historical research since he was a pioneer researcher on the history of Bengal on scientific way. Before the establishment of this institute, Akshay Kumar, due to his personal interest on history and culture of Bengal started to publish a quarterly journal under the title 'Aitihask Citra' in 1899.' As a distinguish scholar, Akshaya Kumar was full of glory throughout his life. He had a series of publications and his main aim was the collection and preservation of antiquities as well as encouraging the study of the history and culture of Bengal in general, but North Bengal in particular. In his writings, the study of North Bengal has mostly highlighted. Such as we can mention here that a lecture was delivered by Akshay Kumar in the Indian Museum, Kolkata, in 1927,

under the title, 'The ancient Monuments of Varendra'. It was edited by K. C. Sarkar and published in 1949."

2.6 CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF NORTH BENGAL

From the above discussions it is clear that the territory 'North Bengal' in undivided Bengal had a glorious past/ history. Now let us have some idea about the cultural background of this region.

From the archaeological evidences discovered in different places of the Brahmaputra Valley prove that most of the sculptures, temples, coins, inscriptions etc. were the works of the Hindu people and patronized by the Hindu royal authorities.*^ Apart from this the icons of the Buddhist deities preserved in the Assam state Museum shows that in the medieval period Tantrik Buddhism could have some hold in the Brahmaputra Valley. In the Brahmaputra Valley two rock-cut Jaina Sculpture have been found and it prove that the Jaina faith existed here. These Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina people who settled in Brahmaputra Valley' and spread their culture in this region must have come from the west i.e. region located to the immediate west of Pragjyotisha, Kamarupa or Assam. We know that the immediate west of the present state of Assam stands 'North Bengal' and a part of Bangladesh. So, it is not unlikely that these Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu faith were predominantly prevailing in this region of North Bengal. Dr. D. C. Sircar in his study on Mahasthan inscription pointed out that both North Bengal and North Bangladesh were included in the Mauryan Empire.*^ After the decline of the Mauryas so many dynasties ruled India among which the Kushanas were the most famous (before the emergence of the Gupta rule). On the basis of the evidences, especially the discovered coins belonging to the Kushana Empire also included this region."

It is evident and accepted by the scholars that the Mauryas and Kushanas were perhaps best known for their Buddhist religious faith and cultural activities. So it can be said that Buddhism or Buddhist religious faith could have some hold among the people who settled in this region. During the Gupta rule Pundravardhana or North Bengal was included in the Gupta Empire from the 4th century to 6th century A.D. So many

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scholars have admitted it and now it is a well-known fact. It is said that, during the days of Kumara Gupta I North Bengal formed an important administrative division.^^ At that time, if we look into the religion and cultural activities of this North Bengal region, it will be evident, that a change in the cultural field of North Bengal came into being. At that time one very important thing has been mentioned by Dr .D. C. Sircar that, the pragjyotisha or KamrGpa Kingdom was separated from the Pundravardhana territory in the west only by the river 'KARATOYA'. About the origin of the Guptas, some scholars have made an attempt to locate the original home of the Imperial Guptas some where in North Bengal.^' Reference may be made that I-tsing, the Chinese pilgrim has stated that 'Maharaja Sri-Gupta built a temple for the Chinese priests and granted twenty-four villages as an endowment for maintenance. Quite naturally the question may raise that where this temple was located. By measuring the distance, on the basis of the Survey of India Maps, it has been suggested that Sri. Gupta, the first known member of the Gupta dynasty, who made an endowment of twenty-four villages for the maintenance of the 'temple of China' situated near Mrigasthapana (Mi-li-Kia-Si-Kia-Po-no) stupa in Malda. Though, in the later centuries, particularly during the 13th century, we find in the Taboqiat-I-Nasiri, that it might have been situated in Rajmahal, just opposite to Malda. Whatever may be the location of the Chinese temple, either in North Bengal or elsewhere, the fact is that the Gupta Emperor (Maharaja Sri-Gupta), no doubt, had some soft corner and respect to Buddhism. Probably for this reason he personally patronized the cause of Buddhist religion by granting twenty-four villages to a Buddhist temple (Temple of China), constructed for the cause of the Chinese priests.

After the Guptas, the breakup of the Gupta Empire followed by inevitable results. The provinces and feudatory states declared their independence and the whole of North India were divided into a number of independent states. In the home provinces of the Gupta we find a long line of rulers and the family is known in history as the 'later Guptas of Magadha'. It was after the reign of Skandagupta that decline of the Gupta Empire became extinct. Inevitably the Gupta Empire broke up and on ramified parts different rulers related to Guptas were ruling. Although the

Gupta Empire broke up small families related to the Guptas were found to rule in some parts as local rulers up to the eight century A.D. Removal of strong rule at the centre, the distinctly after Budhagupta brought the centrifugal forces in action and Kathirowar, Bundelkhand, North Bengal became virtually independent. With the growing weakness of the central authority due to struggle for succession among the princes of royal blood and personal inefficiency of the rulers, the feudatories of the Gupta Empire began to raise the standard of rebellion and eventually tore off their local areas from the Gupta Empire.

During the rule of the later Guptas, about 525 A.D. an independent kingdom was established in Vainga i.e.. East and South-Bengal, but North Bengal still remained under Guptas, when the Gupta Empire fell, Gouda comprising west and probably also North Bengal asserted independence, but were defeated by the Maukharis. Subsequently, half of a century later the throne of Gouda was occupied by Sasanka. Bana and Hiuen TSang have described Sasanka as the king of Cauda and he settled his capital at Kamasubama (near Murshidabad) and probably soon made himself master of the whole of Bengal. So during this period, we also find that there was some political and cultural identity of North Bengal under the independent rule of Sasanka. Whatever may be the geographical boundary of present North Bengal, or the historical background of this region, it is simply to have an idea about the area of our study. Our major objectives are something different. In this course of study there are so many ups and downs as a result of which we find an area, northern part of present West Bengal which is popularly known as 'North Bengal'.

2.7 NORTH BENGAL IN POST PARTITION

In the initial stage, immediately after the great partition of 1947, the term 'North Bengal' was a vague one. From that time this term 'North Bengal' took the shape of a verbal geographical area which had no official recognition. But its socio-political and cultural character remained something different which did not come to be highlighted. Though North Bengal is a particular geographical area in the northern part of West

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Bengal comprising five districts (presently six districts) of the northern part of West Bengal, still its remarkable Socio-cultural feature, and identity cannot be denied. During recent times so many Scholars of different fields are trying their best to explore and highlight the issues of North Bengal. Even some measures have already been taken from the part of administration (Government) considering its importance. But the root of this issues and problems are yet to be investigated and emphasis should be given properly on the particular points which are related with socio-cultural practices and identity question.^{^^} So far we have discussed about the geo-historical profile of North Bengal right from ancient period to the colonial rule. From this discussion it is understood that some etymological and socio-cultural identity during the period of our study (1869-1969) are inherent. It is evident that North Bengal is the meeting place of different group of peoples with different cultural identities. The Aryans, the Non Aryans, Dravidians, and the Mongoloid peoples all have settled here. Moreover, North Bengal may be called to be a part of 'KIRATABHUMI'.^{^^} The Kiratas or the Mongoloids are the early settlers of North Bengal. In the ethnological framework of North Bengal we see that, the Koches, the Bodo-Kacharis, the Meches, the Garos, the Totas, the Jaldas, the Limbus, the Kirantis, the Lepchas are all of Mongoloid origin and the early settlers of North Bengal.^{^^} But one thing we observe that the Rajbansis are the dominant among the early settlers of North Bengal. Among the different group of people, it is evident that the Rajbansi people were majority in this region. They are found in good number in all the five (presently six) districts (Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, North and South Dinajpur, Darjeeling plain and Malda).

We have sufficient documents and evidences in favour of the above statement. But at the same time one interesting fact which has to be studied, that from early period, people of different ethnical groups and cultures have settled in North Bengal. Their social habits, social structure cultural practices, always maintained a general unity and harmony. In our study from ancient times to pre-colonial period we don't have any major social and cultural troubles in respect of their language and culture like present days. But later on due to several factors like financial exploitation, and poverty of the common people, we get some incidents

of troubles of agrarian and peasant discontent. We find a series of agrarian and peasant revolt in Bengal during the colonial period. Immediately before the partition of 1947 we observe peasant revolt like 'TEBHAGA MOVEMENT' especially in present North Bengal region.

After independence, in North Bengal Changes happened to come on different aspects. With the passage of time, tremendous changes have taken place in this region (North Bengal) in respect of Socio-economic, political and cultural fields. During the period of our study North Bengal came into limelight in respect of socio-cultural and political tensions. In the last three decades, the entire region and its people have attracted and held the attention of the rest of the country. No doubt, it must have definite reasons which are going to draw due importance. While studying about the Geo-historical profile of North Bengal we have simply observed its traditional-history and geographical boundary in course of different periods. This is just to have the traditional dimensions of history and culture of present North Bengal. But the period of our study is 1869 to 1969 of which the major part was within the framework of British India and the rest in Independent India. During the period of the one hundred years North Bengal have witnessed series of incidents in respect of political and social movements. It is fact that both in pre-partition and Postpartition period so many unrest had taken place in course of times. Those unrests which took place in North Bengal were sometimes time-specific, geospecific as well as ethno-specific and they had an important impact on our socio-cultural and political history.

More specifically it may be mentioned that a series of Socio-political movements with certain aims and objectives have brought some change in our socio-cultural atmosphere. It is really a matter of great surprise that most of the post-colonial problems in West Bengal were originated in present North Bengal. For example, we can refer some cases like Cooch Behar Merger question with West Bengal, the Berubari question of Jalpaiguri Enclave or Chitmahals, the Naxalite Movement in Darjeeling District and the movement of some hill community in Darjeeling. The nature and importance of these movements were so grave that for all these incidents the name and fame of North Bengal has taken place in the national and international atlas. In this situation what

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we tend to ignore is the enormous potential of such incidents for bringing about desired change in the order. So long we have discussed on various aspects related to North Bengal, the area of our study. Now we would like to turn our eyes on a very important issue which is the main theme of our study i.e., publication of press and formation of Association. It is evident that like greater Bengal or undivided Bengal there emerged a good number of press publications and Associations in North Bengal. In Socio-political and cultural activities, these publications and Associations had a great role to play. In fact these publications and formation of Associations were practically the reflection of society, polity, economy and cultural practices of North Bengal. In fact these were the mirrors which constantly highlighted most of the major socio-political problems. In this perspective, we have a series of theoretical framework. 'Russick' in his 'Social and political philosophy' pointed out about the issue of man's relations with the society.

According to him, it is the society, that shapes man as a social being: in social life man attains complete development of his personalities. There is no such thing as 'merely an individual experience': there is no idea of man divorced from his social circumstances. Man minus his social surroundings is a misnomer; he attains some meaning only as a member of the society. Theoretically it can be said that social problem come out due to many reasons. Individual problem is one which affects one individual or a small group. On the other hand a public social issue is one which affects the society as a whole, or the larger part of society. At the same time social problem may change with the passage of time.

What was not considered a social problem a few decades back might become a crucial social problem after two decades. For example, the population explosion in our country was not viewed as a social problem up to the late 1940's of the twentieth century but from the early 1950's it has come to be perceived as a very crucial problem. Social change as well as the political change creates new conditions in which an issue comes to be identified as a social problem. Similarly, youth unrest in India was not a problem up to 1940s but in the 1950s and the 1960s it became a problem and in the 1970s and the 1980s it became a very serious one and continues to be so in the 1990s. These are not quite fit to

study the social and political problems of present North Bengal. Some problems of distinct character emerged in North Bengal of which some were in the colonial period and the other after independence. However, it is a very persistent question, that why these crisis came out. There is no doubt that after 1950 a new political dimension emerged in North Bengal the root of which required to be studied. The demographic character, social structure, political environment, cultural identity question, the racial stratification, backwardness of the area (North Bengal) in respect of communication, education, treatment and other essential services, all these things will contribute sufficiently for the socio-cultural and political movements in North Bengal.

We have studied elaborately on the diversity of the Geo-historical profile of North Bengal of which six districts will comprise the field of our present study. In these six districts the most important district of North Bengal is Jalpaiguri district which has a distinction in the field of Social, cultural and political movements from the Colonial period to the recent times. Specially, in the field of political activities the Associations/organizations and Vernacular press of Jalpaiguri made a significant contribution in the growth of national political regeneration. It is surprising that, within one year of the establishment of Indian National Congress, Jalpaiguri got contact with this all India political organization. For example, it may be noted that at the second annual session of the India National Congress in the year 1886, Jalpaiguri district was represented there by participating the congress session.^{^^} Without any communication with the all India political organization and without any organized political force of the district this participation in the session of the Congress could not have been possible. In this context the elites played an important role. In the colonial context of the British Indian Nationalist politics this has often been viewed at least basically as a reflection of western educated people. This western educated people or the elites were always active for constitutional reforms and competition and conflict among what have been considered as elites groups for having an increasing share in the formal political institution under the British Raj. But politics is viewed here as an endeavour on the part of the people to bring about a transformation in their social economic and

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political situation. We have a series of examples of sociopolitical movements not only in the district of Jalpaiguri, but more or less in all the six districts of North Bengal. Here, I just mentioned an example of the emergence of political activity only in the district of Jalpaiguri in the early stage.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know about North Bengal in Morning Age?

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2. Discuss about Cultural Background of North Bengal.

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3. Describe North Bengal In Post Partition.

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2.8 LET US SUM UP

During the colonial period the picture of CoochBehar district (at that time. Princely state) in respect of Social and political movements, was to some extent different from the other districts of North Bengal. As it was a native state, and there was a friendly relation between the Cooch Behar state and the British government political activities against the Raj were restricted there. Moreover, deportation law was existing there for which any kind of seditious activities were strictly prohibited. In spite of that situation, Cooch Behar had witnessed some political movements rather incidents. Other than political movements, in the field of Socio-cultural activities Cooch Behar had a glorious past like 'Brahmo-Movement'. Before Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, the Cooch Behar Royal family was

very much influenced by the religious faith of Vaishnavism and Saivism. At the end of 16th century, the great Vaishnava religious leader 'Sankaradeva' came to Kamata-Koch kingdom.^^ His appearance in Cooch Behar stirred the religious life of the Royal family and the common people at large. It is said that Maharaja Naranarayana in the later part of his life was influenced by this Vaisnava faith. Moreover prince Sukladhyaja (Chila Roy) married Kamalapriya the daughter of Ram Roy, who was a near relative of Sankaradeva. But in spite of all this the religious faith of Vaishnavism could not stay for long in Cooch Behar. The common people of Cooch Behar state had a special softness and belief on Saivism. According to their religious belief the Saiva cult was the symbol of fertility (EPW. April, 1991). As a result they again started to worship the Saiva cult and Vaishnava religious movement was getting a failure. Like 'EKSARAN' religious faith, which was introduced by Sankaradeva, 'BRAHMO-RELIGION' (Brahma movement) also got so much importance in the religious life of the Cooch Behar Royal family. This happened definitely by the influence of Keshob Chandra Sen, (a- Nababidhan Brahma preacher) the great Brahma leader of Calcutta and the historical marriage of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan with Suniti Devi, daughter of Keshob Chandra Sen. During the reign of Maharaja Nripendra Narayan, who after receiving English education tried to inculcate the spirit of the twentieth century ideals on his own people, Brahma religion flourished in Cooch Behar. This is a long story in the history of Cooch Behar. We have just mentioned it as a reference for good understanding of the discussion. Likewise, so many instances may be mention as a reference of Socio-political and cultural activities of North Bengal in other districts also. Especially during the colonial period Malda played a very significant role in the context of Press publication. All of these will be discussed in the appropriate place during the course of our study. When we will be discussing about the 'Role of the press and Associations in the Socio-cultural and political Movements', we will have to look into the respective areas for a few decades which were under the colonial administration.

2.9 KEY WORDS

Colonial Era: Colonial period (a period in a country's history when it was subject to administration by a colonial power) may refer to: Spanish conquest of Guatemala. Viceroyalty of Peru. Colonial history of the United States. British Raj, British colonial rule in India, 1858 to 1947.

Sub Himalayan: The Sub-Himalayan Range is the southernmost mountains in the Himalayan range, located on the Indian subcontinent. Their average height varies between 600 and 1200 meters, and are not so high in altitude as compared to other mountain ranges in the Himalaya range. Himalayan foothills form the sub-Himalayan zone.

2.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the Pre-colonial North Bengal; North Bengal and Sub-Himalayan.

2.11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- William Theobald (1881). The Siwalik group of the sub-Himalayan region.
- Geological Survey of India (1879). A Manual of the Geology of India: Extra-peninsular area, by H. B. Medlicott and W. T. Blanford. [n. d. Geological Survey Office. pp. 521–.
- Gwen Robbins Schug; Subhash R. Walimbe (13 April 2016). A Companion to South Asia in the Past. John Wiley & Sons. pp. 39–. ISBN 978-1-119-05547-1.

2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 2.2

2. See Section 2.3
3. See Section 2.4

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 2.5
2. See Section 2.6
3. See Section 2.7

UNIT 3: REGION-ADJOINING AREAS: ETHNO SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONFLUENCE

STRUCTURE

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Region-adjoining areas
- 3.3 Ethno Socio-Religious confluence
- 3.4 The Demographic Composition
- 3.5 Ethno-linguistic and Cultural Division
- 3.6 Confrontation on the Rajbanshi Kshatriyahood
- 3.7 The Ethno-caste-linguistic antagonism
- 3.8 Historical Evidence of the Hitasadhani Sabha
- 3.9 Post-independence Political Scenario
- 3.10 Let us sum up
- 3.11 Key Words
- 3.12 Questions for Review
- 3.13 Suggested readings and references
- 3.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- Region-adjoining areas
- Ethno Socio-Religious confluence
- The Demographic Composition
- Ethno-linguistic and Cultural Division
- Confrontation on the Rajbanshi Kshatriyahood
- The Ethno-caste-linguistic antagonism
- Historical Evidence of the Hitasadhani Sabha
- Post-independence Political Scenario

3.1 INTRODUCTION

THE EMERGENCE of the Hitasadhani Sabha, an ethno-linguistic based political group or association was an important episode in the closing phase of the princely state of Cooch Behar. It emerged in the most critical phase of its history, and played a very significant role in shaping the fate of the lonely princely state of Bengal. What was more important is that the majority of the 'Cooch Behari' people were emotionally associated with the Hitasadhani Sabha. Its popularity was almost overwhelming. But the funny situation is that neither the non-Cooch Beharis, nor the Bengalees of the surrounding areas did like the Hitasadhani Sabha's aims and actions. Until now, no serious attempt has been made by any academician or non-academician to unfold the rise and decline of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the peculiar ethno-linguistic and social hierarchy of this tiny princely state. Both the antagonists and protagonists of the Hitasadhani Sabha had not written any memoirs on this tumultuous phase barring Hemanta Kumar Roy Barma, a high-official of the princely state as well as the 'son of the soil'. This silence is unhistorical and also irrational. As a disciple of Clio, we cannot support this type of unhistorical attitude of the onlookers or the participants of the Hitasadhani Sabha. This behaviour of the contemporaries has deprived the scholars and researchers of the regional history on area studies from carrying out research on this most important issue of the history of northern North Bengal and western Assam. Frankly speaking, to understand the post-colonial and the post-modern political and social tensions of Cooch Behar, nay, the northern North Bengal i.e. Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Siliguri plains, one cannot shut his or her eyes over the event of the immediate past i.e. the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Objectively speaking, both are staying in the same place only with the difference of times. Another important lacuna is that the governmental records on the Hitasadhani Sabha are also scanty. We cannot understand how it happened. It is not unlikely that the records and the information related to the Hitasadhani Sabha were destroyed intentionally by some vested interest group. What is more curious is that even the participants, who are now aged, have conspicuously kept mum on the most hotbed issue of yesteryears. With such hurdles and

constraints, I am trying to portray a pen-picture on the rise and decline of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the historical perspectives.

3.2 REGION-ADJOINING AREAS

Mech tribe is one of the scheduled tribes of India and belong to Bodo-Kachari group of tribes. They belong to Mongoloid race and speak mainly Bodo language, which is a Tibeto-Burman dialect but have got influenced by the Assamese language. The Mech people live in the Dooars region of West Bengal and parts of western . The name Mech is supposed to be arrived from the in the Terai region. According to a belief, some ancestors of these people had resided in the region adjoining the Mechi river and subsequently they were named as Mech. Others say, the word Mech has come from the Sanskrit word Mleccha, meaning unclean. Today, a section of Mech people in West Bengal prefer to refer themselves as Bodo instead of Mech.

Origin: Myth and history : Meches migrated into India through Patkoi Hills between India and Burma and gradually spread themselves into the whole of Assam, North Bengal and parts of East Bengal. It is said that, during their migration to India, they marched towards three directions. A group of people from there went up to Cachar district in Assam. In Cachar, they are called Kachari. Another group went along the river Brahmaputra and established themselves in the whole of Assam up to Goalpara district and parts of Jalpaiguri district and Cooch Behar district under the name of Bodo or Bara. The third group went towards the West along the foot of the Himalayas up to the river Mechi, bordering India and Nepal and settled on the North bank of the river known as Mech or Mechia. Later they spread to Darjeeling Terai, Baikantpur in Jalpaiguri district again marched further East and settled in the Dooars. It is said that, a group of Mech people, again moved further East, crossed the Sankosh River, and went towards Goalpara in Assam. Due to repeated floods in Dooars and eastern bank of Teesta river, a large number of families migrated towards Assam.

According to N. Vasu (1922) Meches and Kiratas belong to the Asura dynasty. They were Mlecchas and so abbreviated into Mech. They ruled Pragjyotisha Kingdom for four thousand years and later began to decline

with the elevation of the Aryans. Many of them sought refuge in the remote forest areas to be regarded as wild and uncivilized tribes in later years. George Abraham Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India also maintains that Mech is a corruption of Mlecchas.

Sanyal (1973) narrates a mythical story about the origin of Mech people. It says Mech and Limbu used to live together. They were driven out from the north-eastern corner of India, Burma and Tibet. They fled along the foot of the Himalayas and came to the low lands of the present Darjeeling district in the midst of thick forests. They lived there temporarily. The Limbus did not want to stay back there. They started towards the hills making the way by cutting trees. The Meches started a few days later. They tried to follow the track but lost the way and came upon the river Mechi between Darjeeling and Nepal. Some of them preferred to live on the banks of river Mechi. They called themselves Meches or Mechias. Thus, it is believed that the Limbus of Nepal and the Meches of India belong to the same tribal group.

Risley (1891) tells a story about the origin of Mech, which is close to the above one. God sent Mech people on the earth from the heaven. They descended to Varanasi in the beginning. However, Varanasi was not the ascertained place for them. They started moving towards north and reached Kachar in Kamrup. The youngest brother decided to stay back there. He was the forefather of Mech, Koch and Dhimal. The elder brothers went towards the hills. The descendants of those two brothers are Limbu and Khambu of Nepal. From the third to the tenth century, Aryan kings of Gaur namely Samudragupta, Prabhakar Vardhana, Jayapala, Vikramaditya and many other Kshatriya kings advanced as far as the Louhitya with their army and subjugated Kamarupa from time to time. Some of the military personnel must have been retained there and miscegenation between the invading army and the indigenous people must have taken place. Thus, the Hinduized Bodos and Meches gradually assimilated much of Kshatriya blood, adopted Aryan Hindu gods and started worshipping them along with their own gods. The Meches were one of those early inhabitants of the Dooars and adjacent tracts and had exercised control over large areas in earlier centuries. Several accounts state that the Koch Behar royal family descended from a Mech leader

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Haria alias Haridas Mandal. Since the thirteen century, the Meches experienced a process of both Hinduization and Islamization.

Occupation

More than a century ago the Meches used to practice 'jhum' cultivation, that is cutting and burning the jungles and then sowing different seeds in each hole made by dibblers and sowers. Short-staple cotton was their cash crop. They had no idea of cultivation with bullocks and the plough. In the later years, they found themselves displaced from their lands by the strict forest rules of the British foresters and extension of tea plantation. Meches were compelled to adopt settled cultivation. D.H.E. Sunder (1895) a British surveyor reports that the Mech people showed a rapid progress from the nomadic to settled state They had taken to the permanent cultivation in all seriousness with bullocks and the plough. They raise many crops of which rice is the principal one. They are experts in areca nut (betel palm or betel) cultivation Betel vines climb ups the areca trees. These are their cash crops.

Mech women rear silkworm. They spin Endi thread from the cocoons. Mech women also weave cloths with the thread produced at home, on a primitive loom called 'kanti', which is made from bamboo. They also make baskets, fish traps and other items out of bamboo. Their traditional houses are still constructed with bamboo.

Today, most of Mechs are mainly dependent on agriculture for their livilng. They follow subsistence level agriculture, though in recent times they are progressively using modern methods of agriculture. Both male and female member of the community work together.

A sij plant (Bathou) in a Mech house in Dooars

Meches view the 'mother earth' as human mother. Even today, they follow the same idea and customs of agriculture even after they have shifted from 'jhum' (slash and burn) cultivation to settled agriculture with the bullocks and the plough. The Meches call 'jhum' as 'Hadang' and the settled cultivation as 'Hal-wai-nai'.

The Meches have still retained their distinctive Septs or Gotras. They have five or seven principal Gotras. They are associated with the objects other than human that might be the remnants of some form of totemism

as probably practised earlier. The most common Gotras, found among the Meches in the Dooars today, are following, Sampram-ari or Campram-ari (the priestly class), Narzin-ari, (the warrior class), Basumat-ari (landlords and cultivators), Bargaon-ari, Iswari-ari, Moch-ari and Hajo-ari. The suffix 'ari' means Sept or Gotra. In some early literature, more numbers of septs are mentioned among the Meches and Bodos.

The Meches prefer negotiated marriages. They marry within their tribe and within any of their septs. However, there is no restriction in marrying outside one's sept. Rarely do they marry outside their own tribe. If it happens, the couple is not made out caste but absorbed in the society, reports Sanyal in his book.

The Mech families are mostly joint or extended. The boys usually do not take a separate house after marriage. Separation is done by the head of the family according to necessity. Girls after marriage go to their husband's house. In a Mech family, only sons inherit father's property. Daughters, both married and unmarried, do not have any right to the property. However, they may get maintenance.

For the Meches, any object possessing super-human power is regarded as an object of worship. Meches worship rivers like Tista and Torsha. The Meches worship celestial bodies, the god of the forest (Hagra Modoi) for protection against carnivorous animals. They worship Manasha (the snake goddess), Mahakal (Shiva), and Bathou, which is represented by a Euphorbia plant or sij plant. Bathou is the most important god of the Meches. Bathou is worshipped in every Mech household. Later on, they started worshipping several Vedic and Hindu gods too. Lately, some of them have started making idols of gods, probably under the influence of Hindu culture.

The Meches in West Bengal also follow other religions like Islam and Christianity. There is also a small number of followers of Brahmoism, use Brahma or Brahma as their surname. At the beginning of the present century, the Brahmo reformatory movement, under the leadership of Guru Kalicharan Brahma, became popular among the Bodo Kachari people and led to an overhauling of the social system.

Social movements

The Pan Bodo Movement, which originated in the neighbouring state of Assam, has given rise to political aspirations among the Mech. They have extended moral support to the movement of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam for a separate state of Udayachal. The Pan Bodo literary movement, which also originated in Assam, under the name of the All Bodo Sahitya Sabha, has its counterpart in West Bengal. As a result, the educated Mech of this state demand that the medium of instruction, at least at the primary school level, should be their mother tongue in the predominantly Mech or Bodo speaking areas. The Mech have achieved a literacy rate of 26.97 percent. The males and females have registered literacy rates of 33.37 percent and 19.97 percent respectively.

3.3 ETHNO SOCIO-RELIGIOUS CONFLUENCE

Ethnic diversity as well as ethnic politics is playing a decisive role in functioning of modern states throughout the world. Our country is not an exceptional one. In case of India ethnic consciousness has risen mainly in post-independence era. The demand for formal recognition of the distinct identities often varies from legal and institutional safeguards and discrimination, cultural autonomy for identity preservation, increasing federalism of the state structure and decentralization of political power to separate independent homelands. Particularly, along with the partition of India, North Bengal witnesses a series of changes in its social, demographic and economical fabrics. Sudden influx of refugees from erstwhile East Bengal, (Pakistan) later put a new pressure on the existing resources and competition among the inhabitants of this region. That ultimately led to some kinds of unrest on ethnic line and divide, particularly between the indigenous and immigrant population. So the economic, political and social unrest which are going on in North Bengal over last three decades need to require thorough scrutiny. The primary objective of the proposed research is to examine the origin and development of Kamtapur movements led by Rajbanshis, the major ethnic group of North Bengal, from ethnohistorical –geographical and

environmental perspective. In particular, with reference to approach, the study will try to explore the ethnic dimension of the Kamtapur movement in a historical frame of reference and the logic of employing the term 'KAMTAPUR MOVEMENT IN NORTH BENGAL GEO-ETHNO-ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE'. The merger of the then princely state, Cooch Behar with West Bengal on 1st January 1950 and converted it from a state to a district of a province became a turning point in the history of North Bengal. Large part of Rajbanshi population in general was unhappy with the merge of so called independent princely state with West Bengal as a district of the province. Their unhappiness and discontent increased with the passage of time when they found that the successive government did hardly take any comprehensive steps for the socio-economic development of the region. After the partition of the country on religious ground the social-political scenario of North Bengal abruptly changed. Various social groups were communally divided. Religious and ethnic identities vitiated the entire atmosphere. Large scale migration from the then East Pakistan to North Bengal greatly changed the demographic scenario of the region. All these aggravated the socio-political problems. The Rajbanshis were bewildered. The state government could not come forward with any comprehensive programme for the development of this area. The non-Rajbanshis became dominant in all spheres of life. The peasants, workers and other section of people belonging to lower stratum found no way out to overcome this situation. The traditional working class and peasants movements could not properly deal with ethnic, linguistic and political issues. Ultimate fall out of which was the emergence of Uttarakhand and Kamtapur movement in recent past. The separation of Goalpara from North Bengal and merger with Assam in 1874 is another important event as it divided Rajbanshi community after the division of traditional belt of the Rajbanshi homogeneity and because for the first time after 1874 a section of them has formed a common platform- Greater Kamta United Forum for the common interest of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya community of West Bengal and the Koch Rajbanshi Kshatriya Sammilani of Assam. Notwithstanding the fact that a number of studies have been conducted on the ethnic unrest in North Bengal including the movement of

Rajbanshi community for the formation of Kamtapur state yet there is scope to review and address problem.

3.4 THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

To understand the social origin of the Hitasadhani Sabha, we must know the demographic composition of the princely state of Cooch Behar. Demography encompassed here the religious composition, ethno-linguistic identity issue and the historical heritage of the princely state. All these were different from the rest of Bengal mainstream. Unless we understand these differences, we cannot understand the pulse of the Cooch Behari people. Before entering into the discussion, it would be better to provide the definition of the 'Cooch Behari' people. This was the key-issue of the problem. Though differently garbed, the connotation of the identity question of today and the Cooch Behari identity issue of the Hitasadhani phase has by and large remained the same with little differences. In fact, the underlying spirit is same though the manifestation is different. In addition to these differences, the question of power-politics was also a crucial factor behind the emergence of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Truly speaking, in the high noon phase of the Hitasadhani Sabha, the sharing of political power was becoming the most priority issue in their struggle. This issue is very much interesting. In the election of 1946, the Hitasadhani Sabha got sweeping majority. This resulted into massive association of the newly elected members of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the executive and administrative structure of the state. For the first time, they got the test of political and administrative power. This share of political and administrative power had whetted their political will on the eve of the Merger Agreement. It is against this historical backdrop that we shall discuss here ethno-linguistic canvas of the princely state of Cooch Behar.

3.5 ETHNO-LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL DIVISION

The people of the princely state of Cooch Behar were sharply divided on two broad categories—Cooch Beharis and non-Cooch Beharis. Cooch Beharis meant the local Rajbanshi Hindus, the local Rajbanshi Muslims known as Nasya Sheikh, the Kamrupia Brahmins i.e. the Maithili Brahmins who had settled in Cooch Behar since the time of the beginning of the Hinduisation and some other non-caste Hindus such as the Saha's, Jogi's and some tribals. The ethnic feature, the language, the culture, even the food habits of both the Hindu and Muslim Rajbanshis are almost identical. The Rajbanshi Nasya Sheikh Muslims, even in the beginning of the twentieth century, were only the believers of Islam, but actually practising Hindu Rajbanshis. Both D.E. Sunder and Miligan, the two top-ranking British officials, have corroborated this fact. For example, the local Muslims of Cooch Behar state have generally followed the Hindu law of inheritance, instead of the Islamic law in regard to property rights. This was a unique case of history of the Hindu-Muslim relations in the princely state. Two factors were responsible for such a unique situation. Firstly, the Maharajas of the Cooch Behar state did not adopt any discriminatory policy towards the minority subjects of the state. This gesture of the Maharajas would have to be found in the holiday lists of the Cooch Behar state. The modern model of the secular state has been practised in Cooch Behar long before its implantation in the other princely states of India. Secondly, due to the lack of the rapid communication and transport system, the Islamic preachers could not succeed in introducing the ritualistic practices of the Islam. In addition to this, the Pirs and the Darbesh's, the chief exponents of Islam always advocated the idea of assimilation and amalgamation rather than forcible conversion. It is also to be noted that the number of the Ashraf Muslims i.e. Sayyed Sheikh, Mughal and Pathans were insignificant in this part of the country. According to the census of 1891, the total Muslim population of the state was 170746, out of which only 1146 were the outsider Muslims. Naturally, a kind of ethno-linguistic consolidation rather than the religious consolidation took place amongst the Hindu and Muslim Cooch Beharis.

The third category of Cooch Beharis was the Maithli Brahmins who were locally known as the Kamrupia Brahmins. The Maithili Brahmins had a

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good understanding with the Rajbanshi Hindu community. In fact, the social customs and the religious rituals of the Rajbanshis were largely the product of the Maithili customs. It is to be noted here that the South Bengal or the Rahr Bengal had followed customs of Kalinga and northern North Bengal the customs of Mithila. However, in all occasions, the Kamrupia Brahmins had extended their moral, intellectual and physical support to the Rajbabshi community's cause. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the readers to another interesting point that the Kamrupiya Brahmins were despised by the Rarhi Varendra and Vaidik Brahmins of the rest of Bengal. There was no social communication between the Kamrupia Brahmins and the Brahmins of the rest of Bengal. The question of the inclusion of the Saha's, a traditional Bengal merchant community and the Jogi's, a non-caste Bengali community in the category of the Cooch Behari's is not above suspicion. They were in actuality the indigenous people or 'son of the soil'. Was it an expression of anger against the higher caste Bengali Brahmin, Baidya and Kayasthas? Or was it an exhibition of the anti-caste consolidation? Now we will discuss the definition and arena of the term non-Cooch Beharis. The terminology 'non-Cooch Beharis' has come naturally as a counterpart of the Cooch Beharis. There is a plain meaning of the term—not the people of Cooch Behar. They are called by the local people outsiders i.e. Bahiragata or Bairer lok. They were also addressed by the local people as the Bhatias i.e. the people who have come from the Bhatir Desh (in terms of the river course). The Bhatia people meant those who have come from the East, South and West Bengal. Surprisingly, the Marwaris and the other non-Bengalis were not called Bhatias. The outsiders or the Bhatias on the other hand called the local people as the Deshi manush and in some cases as the Bahes, though an affectionate address in the local society but it was used derogatively by the outsiders or the Bhatias. So, a ground was prepared for social and political conflagration in the princely state of Cooch Behar.

3.6 CONFRONTATION ON THE RAJBANSHI KSHATRIYAHOOD

Another outstanding area of confrontation between the Cooch Beharis and the non-Coochbeharis was the question of Kshatriyahood claimed by the Rajbanshis. The Rajbanshi claim of the Kshatriyahood was an anathema to the caste system of the Bengali Hindus. We do not find any existence of the Kshatriya caste in the pre-colonial and the early colonial phase. It was only after the census of 1891, that the different castes of Bengal organized movements for the Kshatriya status. It was an all-India phenomenon. In Bengal, we found the birth of the Ugra Kshatriya, Barga Kshatriya, Paundra Kshatriya and Rajbanshi Kshatriya movements. This resulted into the birth of serious social tensions in Bengal. In Northern Bengal, the movement took a new shape, because the upper caste Hindus of lower Bengal who have settled in the princely state of Cooch Behar and the British Bengal districts of the Rajshahi Division, could not reconcile with the claims of the Rajbanshis as the Kshatriyas, because, conventionally the Bengali society was composed by Brahmanas, Baidyas, Kayasthas and Sudras. Harendra Narayan Chaudhury, a noted Administrative official of the Cooch Behar Raj has nicely depicted the picture. He observed that this caste hierarchical belief has created a psychological hiatus between the local Rajbanshis and the migrant Bengali caste Hindus. It is also to be noted here that the Hindus of upper and lower Bengal residing in Cooch Behar usually did not drink water touched by a Rajbanbshi. In this connection, a pertinent question has been raised by the post-modern subaltern scholars of the region. The question is that theoretically the Baidyas and the Kayasthas were included in the Sudra caste. But in Bengal, the Baidyas and the Kayasthas had demanded a higher caste status and they enjoyed it without social and Sastra's sanction. This unsanctioned social position of the Baidyas and the Kayasthas was not criticized by the social historians, while they are very critical about the Kshatriyahood claims of the Rajbanshis. It seems to us that the colonial Bengal's so-called upper caste Hindus could not recognize the Kshatriyahood of the Rajbanshis and in the post-colonial phase also, the bhadrlok Bengali historians have not shown their impartiality with regard to the Kshatriya status of the Rajbanshis. So, a psychological cold war was growing in the princely state of Cooch Behar and the surrounding districts of the British Bengal.

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This cold caste war had converted into an open caste war when the Rajbanshi Kshatriyas had submitted a Memorandum to the government for the inclusion of the Rajbanshis in the Scheduled class category status. A serious social conflict as well as rupture took shape all over the northern portion of Bengal on this issue. It was really a contradictory situation. Whatever the arguments placed by the eminent social reformer Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma and his followers, it was definitely a debatable issue. The Kshatriyahood and the Scheduled Caste status could not be enjoyed simultaneously. Obviously, it also became an issue of social dispute between the Cooch Beharis and the nonCooch Beharis of the Cooch Behar state and the neighbouring and surrounding areas.

Another small area of conflict was the language question (not linguistic identity). The language spoken by the Cooch Beharis was different from the chaste Bengali of Krishnanagar-Nadia of central Bengal. This Krishnanagarik chaste Bengali was recognized by the Bengali speaking people of Bengal as the standard Bengali for teaching, study and writing. It is true that the today's linguistic question was not raised by the Cooch Beharis. However, the linguistic homogeneity amongst the Rajbanshi Hindus, Rajbanshi Muslims, Kamrupia Brahmins and the other sub-castes strengthened the foundation of the linguistic consolidation (not identity).

3.7 THE ETHNO-CASTE-LINGUISTIC ANTAGONISM

This ethno-caste-linguistic antagonism was further aggravated by the economic and educational disparities. The text-book historians and the non-Cooch Behari intellectuals seem to have given much emphasis upon the ethno-castelinguistic identity issue rather than the economic disparities and deprivation of opportunities. Let us try to unfold the issue of educational inequalities. It is true that the Maharajas of the Cooch Behar state particularly the Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhaup Bahadur was a pioneer of introducing western and modern education in Cooch Behar. Many Primary and Secondary Schools both for boys and girls were established. Maharaja also established a college in the name of Queen Victoria in 1888 for remembering the Golden Jubilee celebration

of her coronation. It was the first degree college of the then North East India. It is to be noted that the Cotton College of Guwahati was established after 12 years of the Cooch Behar Victoria College. The primary objective of the Maharaja was to spread higher education among his subjects. But it appears from the Administrative Reports of the state that the lion's portion of the opportunity of higher education was availed by the outsiders. The Administrative Reports of 1939 shows that forty-seven candidates appeared for the examination of whom only eleven were Cooch Beharis. Out of eleven, seven were Hindus and four were Muslims. In 1940, forty-three students appeared in the Calcutta University Examination, out of whom, forty-one students were Hindus and two Muslims, and only seven were Cooch Beharis. Not only this; even the higher posts of all the educational institutions were occupied by the non- Cooch Beharis. Frankly speaking, all the Head Masters, Head Mistresses, teachers of the Jenkins School and the Sunity Academy including the Principal of the Victoria College were the non- Cooch Beharis. This disparity had created a feeling of discontent in the rising middle class community of the Cooch Beharis. It is true that their organization was in an embryonic form; still its influence over the Cooch Behari masses was overwhelming. Like the sphere of education, the administrative officials particularly the higher officials were non-Cooch Beharis. The process of domination of the outsiders i.e. Bhatias or the bhadralok Bengalees over the administration of the state began with the advent of the company's full control in the administrative affairs of Cooch Behar. This resulted into the dominance of the outsiders over the state administration. The already boiled situation took a new turn in the question of land. There was a massive change in the ownership of the land. Government adopted various measures to develop the agriculture of the state for enhancing the income of the state, and so, the fallow land and jungle land was distributed to the cultivators of the outside Cooch Behar. In order to attract the cultivators of the outside areas, the government had announced various measures. This resulted in a radical change in the land-man ratio as well as ownership of the land of the Cooch Behar State. This new land scenario was reflected in the land settlement Report of Mr. Becket, a high statured Settlement officer of the

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Cooch Behar state. He wrote in 1872, “From calculation made, I found that out of about 150,000 Bighas of revenue paying lands included in 185 taluks, about 81,000 bighas are held by foreigners, of the remaining 69,000 bighas, less than a third is held by cultivating jotedars, and the remainder by resident jotedars, who do not actually cultivate lands but live on profits derived from Chukanidars (Middlemen).” This process of change of land man ratio and ownership was a continuous process in Cooch Behar. Even today, this process of change is very much visible. As a result, the fronts of the conflict between the Cooch Beharis and the non-Cooch Beharis extended day by day. The emergence of the Hitasadhani Sabha was the direct outcome of these divergent types of conflicts. It was not a passing phase of history. On the contrary, it was the culmination of the long-standing conflicts between the Cooch Beharis and the non- Cooch Beharis. It was waiting for the time. Finally, the time came on the eve of the merger of the Cooch Behar state with the Union of India. So, we can say that the stage was set for the birth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Now, we will trace the birth of the Hitasadhani Sabha.

3.8 HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF THE HITASADHANI SABHA

The origin of the Hitasadhani Sabha is shrouded in obscurity. The exact date of its foundation is debatable. Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal, an eminent political personality and editor of the Janamat Patrika (a well circulated Bengali weekly) of Jalpaiguri has mentioned in one issue of the Patrika that the Hitasadhani was founded on 18th May, 1947. On the other hand Sree Parbananda Das, a retired Headmaster and a member of the Hitasadhani Sabha has stated that the Hitasadhani Sabha was founded on 19th May, 1946. The statement of Parbananda Das was more authentic one. There are other events which help us to believe that the Hitasadhani Sabha was founded in 1946. The first concrete historical evidence is the Election of 1946 in the Cooch Behar State. The second and the last election was held in 1949 despite the criticism of the Indian National Congress leaders of Jalpaiguri and the Cooch Behar State congress leaders. The Hitasadhani Sabha participated in both the

elections and got thumping majority in the Legislative Council of the Cooch Behar State. The second historical evidence is a song composed by an anonymous Coochbehari poet. It was distributed among the visitors and the pilgrims of the Rash Mela (fair) in 1946. The content of the song is very interesting. It was composed in the names of the leaders of the Hitasadhani Sabha. The song also indicated the grievances of the Cooch Behari people against the outsiders i.e. bhatias. The song is presented here in English scripts with Bengali words

OÑhore Native BhÊi, JÊgore Native,
 TÊrÊo BhaÑiÊ Sab,
 Gorji uÑhila Satish Singha
 Tuli HunkÊr Rab,
 Eso DeprÊn Jaladhar Eso,
 Satish Sange Kori,
 Dharanir SÊthe Eso ÀnsÊr
 Kari GÊIÊ DharÊdhari,
 KothÊy Majir Majila Ede¼e,
 Gelo BhÊÑiÊr HÊte,
 Gelo Kata Bir Purnendu Eso
 KhÊn Chowdhurir SÊthe.

So, on the basis of the above historical and oral evidences, we can say without reservation that the Hitasadhani Sabha was founded on 19th May, 1946. We have already tried to locate the underlying causes of the emergence of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Now we will try to find out the immediate factors which precipitated the birth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Though it is a very complex task, still we cannot overlook the issue because the whole issue was very much problematic. Grievance is one thing and organized action against the grievance in another thing. There is a long distance between the grievance and the organized action against the grievance. The basic question is who were instrumental behind the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha? Before searching the answer of the question, it would be better to study the composition of the Hitasadhani Sabha. The following was the composition of the Hitasadhani Sabha.

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The first constitutional question that comes to our mind is why the Raja was not the President of the Hitasadhani Sabha. According to the convention and practice of the princely state, the king or queen on the scion of the Raj family will be the Head or President of every Organization or Association. This happened at the time of the formation of the Praja Hitaishana Sabha in 1859. The Raja or King by virtue of his position became the President of the Praja Hitaishana Sabha. But in the case of the Hitasadhani Sabha we found a non-conventional practice. Secondly without the consent or approval of the king or the Royal Administration, no Organisation or Association was allowed to function in the princely state . If we believe in this practice, then we can say that at the blessings or connivance of the king, the Hitasadhani Sabha was formed. This hypothesis was supported by the writings of some Hitasadhani leaders or by the onlookers or by oral interviews of the participants. Abbas Uddin Ahmed, a leader of the Hitasadhani Sabha and a prominent folk singer, has written in his memoirs that the Maharaja was sympathetic to the cause of the Hitasadhani Sabha. On many occasions, the Maharaja had addressed the meetings of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Indrajitendra Narayan, a scion of the Royal Family had also delivered a speech in the meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha at Mekhliganj. Naturally we can say that in the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha, the role of the Royal Family including the Maharaja was not beyond doubt. In regard to this discussion, another pertinent question is that the same Royal Administration of the predecessor of the last Maharaja before the merger did not allow opening up the branch of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti in the princely state of Cooch Behar. Even the propaganda of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti was prohibited in the Cooch Behar State. Why the Maharaja nay, the Royal Administration did not allow the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti to function in the Cooch Behar state? The question is unanswered even today. However, some Cooch Behari writers have tried to prove that not the Maharajas but the outsiders who were holding the high posts in the administration of the state, were responsible for it. Their hypothesis is however not supported by historical evidences.

The issue requires serious historical study, because it is a deep historical problem. We find a separate Kshatriya Samiti at Cooch Behar known as the Cooch Behar Kshatriya Society. It was founded in 1941 in Cooch Behar after the passing of thirty years of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti. Why a separate Kshatriya Society was founded in the Cooch Behar State? Was this separate Society wanted by the Royal Family vis-a vis the Cooch Beharis? It is to be noted that the Cooch Behari identity was more emotional and powerful than the Rajbanshi identity. The Cooch Beharis of the premerger period never called themselves Rajbanshis. The Cooch Beharis also called the Rajbanshis of Rangpur Rangpuriya. All these questions are to be studied in the historical perspectives; otherwise the dichotomies of the Rajbanshi society of the colonial phase will not be understood. The same kind of problem also prevailed in the Western Assam, another centre of the Rajbanshi community. The Rajbanshi community leaders of the western Assam (lower Assam i.e. Namani Assam) could not welcome the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti's movement for the Kshatriyahood. Another interesting point is that before the advent of the Rajbanshi Kshatriya Samiti, another society was founded in 1909. It was known as the Adhikari Society (Samiti). Uptil now, we did not get any information on the Adhikari Samiti, barring a photograph of the Samiti. It is said that the Hitasadhani Sabha was the brain child of Nawab Khasru Jang, a relative of the Nizam of Hyderabad and also the Personal Assistant of Maharani Indira Devi, the Queen-Dowager of Cooch Behar State. Nawab Khasru Jang's role in the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha was not above suspicion. In order to understand the issue we must review the change of political and administrative scenario of the State. Since the marriage of Prince Jitendra Narayan with Indira Devi, the princess of Gaikwar State, we found a change in the administration. The Bengali dominance over the administration began to reduce due to the attitude of Maharani Indira Devi. Her Highness was in favour of appointing the high officials of the state from the other parts of India. So, the administrative structure of the state which was headed by Dewan Calica Das Dutta, I.C.S. was revised with consent of His Highness Maharaja Nripendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur. This reversal was revealed in the appointment of high officials earlier dominated by the Bengalee

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bhadroloke particularly, the Brahma Bengali bhadrak. A list of names of high officials is presented here: 1. Dr. A.R. Secondy, Chief Medical Officer of the State. 2. Mr. L.B. God, Chief Engineer of the State. 3. Mr. Hanuman Sah Routh, Revenue Secretary of the State 4. Mr. I. Sekhar, Education Secretary and Publicity Officer of the State. 5. Mr. P.K. Kaul, Commandant, Home Guard of the State. 6. Mr. G.C. Fookan, Police Commissioner of the State. 7. Captain K. Grey, Pilot of the State. 8. Mr. K.R. Singh, Minister-in-waiting of the State. The Bengalisation process of the Cooch Behar State has received a set back and this resulted in the birth of a deBengalisation process. However, the Cooch Beharis did not welcome this Indianisation of the state administration of Cooch Behar. It was also alleged that the British Resident at the Durbar (Court) of Cooch Behar patronized the growth of the Hitasadhani Sabha. It was firmly believed by the nationalists and patriots that the British Resident was playing the communal card not on religious line but on ethno-castelinguistic tone. Apart from this, the British Government had some definite political objective behind the patronization. The British officials wanted to keep Cooch Behar out of the influence of the Tebhaga Movement (Share cropper's Movement) of the neighbouring districts of Bengal. In addition to this, they also wanted to save the Cooch Behar state from the influence of the communist party. However, we do not get hard historical documents in support of this allegation. It is actually the opinion of some local scholars and elderly people of Cooch Behar. In such a messy situation, it is difficult to reach any conclusion in regard to the formation of the Hitasadhani Sabha but it is true that there was something wrong in the state of Cooch Behar. And it is also true that the Hitasadhani Sabha received the support or blessings of all the above groups or persons of Cooch Behar state. Their rapid growth and expansion will prove this contention. Without the connivance of the Royal Governemnt Administrative officials, it was not possible on the part of the Hitasadhani to expand their tentacles in the grass-root level within this shortest time. (1946-1949). It is difficult to locate the primary and the secondary objectives of the Hitasadhani Sabha. The think tank of the Hitasadhani Sabha could not formulate any long term strategy. They had identified their enemies as well as the problems. But they did not

know how to eliminate the enemies and overcome the problems. For example, they had launched a crusade against the caste Hindus i.e. the outsiders or the bhatias and raised the slogan of 'Bhatia Hatao.' Abbas Uddin Ahmed has rightly stated that the predominance of the outsiders was the main reason behind the 'Bhatia Hatao' slogan. The meetings of the Hitasadhani Sabha used to be started with an inaugural song which was fully anti-Bhatia. Few lines of the song are as following: 'O Mor Cooch Behârî BhÊi Re SabÊr Ghare Jale Suraj BÊti TomÊr Ghare Kene ÀndhÊr RÊti? With this emotional song, the Hitasadhani leaders have successfully channelised the anger of the Cooch Behari people against the non-Cooch Beharis. It is to be noted that the song was composed by Anwar Uddin Ahmed, the younger brother of the noted folk singer Abbas Uddin Ahmed. What is more interesting is that the song was sung by Abbas Uddin himself in every meeting of the Hitasadhani Sabha. As a result, a new kind of communalism developed in this princely state. The circle of the ethnic and caste based division was completed in the state. It was reflected in the Election result of 1946 when the Hitasadhani Sabha got thumping majority in the election. Khan Choudhury Amanatullah Khan, the President and Sree Satish Chandra Singh Roy Sarkar, the Vice-President of the Hitasadhani Sabha were elected and appointed as the Revenue Minister and Education Minister respectively. After assuming the Ministership, they have introduced several communal and repressive measures against the non-Cooch Beharis in the field of service, educational opportunity and land distribution. Sir AKbar Hyderi, the Governor of Assam and in-charge of the Cooch Behar state, wrote to Sardar Patel that there was a strong anti-Bengali feeling in the state. These communal activities of the Hitasadhani Ministers had vitiated the social atmosphere of the state. The Hitasadhani Sabha not only confined their activities against the bhatias but also got involved in the anti-Indian activities. Their anti-Indian activities were first published in the 'Janamat Patrika', a weekly Bengali news paper of Jalpaiguri. Dr. Charu Chandra Sanyal, the Editor of Janamat was an eminent local congress leader and physician. No other National level newspaper was able to publish any news on the Cooch Behar state, because the Hitasadhani Sabha Ministers have imposed a kind of restriction upon the publication of the news of

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the Cooch Behar state. The only newspaper which had extensively published the events of the Cooch Behar state was the Janamat Patrika of Jalpaiguri. A few excerpts from the News items of Cooch Behar are cited here for understanding the gravity of the problem. On 21st Bhadra, 1355 B.S. in an editorial Dr. Sanyal had written that 'The Revenue Minister of Cooch Behar state, Amanatullah Khan Choudhury, who was a pro-Muslim League political stature and a leader of the Hitasadhani Sabha and his colleague Satish Chandra Singha Roy, the Education Minister of the State, expressed in a meeting held at Mekhliganj that they wanted Cooch Behar to remain independent of the Union of India. They also called for the destruction of the State Congress and accused the state Congress of involvement in anti-state activities. Amanatullah Khan Choudhury himself demanded plebiscite to solve the problem of integration of the Cooch Behar state. Another high official of the state Hakim Ahmad Hossain, while serving as a S.D.O of Mathabhanga delivered a speech on the occasion of a Muslim religion festival supporting the cause of merger of Cooch Behar with Pakistan. The Indian National Congress Flag was dishonoured at Mathabhanga. The Cooch Behar state Government had also obstructed the celebration of Independence Day on 15th August, 1947 at Cooch Behar organized by the Civil Liberties Committee. The Independence Day was celebrated at Tufanganj but the organizers did only hoist the Indian National Flag. The Cooch Behar state Government authorities had arrested and subsequently externed the leader of the celebration from the State. This anti-Indian feelings of the members of the State Council and the Hitasadhani Sabha have complicated the integration problem of the Cooch Behar state. The political environment of the state was further complicated by the indifferent attitude of the Maharaja to these anti-Indian activities of his Ministers. It was argued that without his tacit approval it would not have been possible for his Ministers to make such assertive and clearcut statements. It was also alleged that the Maharaja had become a puppet in the hands of the members of the State Council and wanted to maintain the separate identity of the Coch Behar state.

3.9 POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICAL SCENARIO

The political atmosphere of the Cooch Behar State was rapidly taking a serious turn. Nari Rustamji, Advisor to the Governor of Assam noted that pro-Pakistani elements were very active in the Cooch Behar state. The Governor of West Bengal, K.N. Katju also alleged that a plan was afoot to infiltrate huge number of Muslims into the State of Cooch Behar and thereby strengthen the cause of merger with Pakistan. In a letter to Sardar Patel, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, wrote that the obnoxious developments in Cooch Behar state will not only affect the security of West Bengal but also of the Indian Union. Sardar Patel himself informed Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that the Hitasadhani Sabha had sympathy for Pakistan. Let us examine the background of the anxiety of the high officials as well as the national statured political leaders of the time. The Hitasadhani Sabha, the centre of the problem, was primarily responsible for such serious situation. We have already stated that the Hitasadhani Sabha was essentially an ethno-caste-linguistic Association of the Cooch Beharis irrespective of their religion. But after the birth of Pakistan, the lion's section of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha deviated from their Coochbehari identity which was the cornerstone of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Instead of pleading for Cooch Behari identity they have been inclining to the Muslim identity. This change of mind of the major section of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha was very much distinct from their speeches and actions. It is true there was no branch of the Muslim League in the Cooch Behar state. But it was alleged by the nationalists of the Cooch Behar state that the Hitasadhani Sabha's Muslim members acted as the counterpart of the Muslim League in the Cooch Behar state. Some of the nationalists compared the activities of the Hitasadhani Sabha even with the Rajakars of Hyderabad state. The activities of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha were really alarming. Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani's call for 'Great Bengal' greatly influenced the minds of the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha. Khan Choudhury, the President of the Hitasadhani Sabha and the Revenue Minister of the Cooch Behar state encouraged the Muslim immigrants of

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Rangpur and Mymensingh to settle in the Cooch Behar state. Land-hungry Muslim peasants of the over-populated East Pakistan's district of Rangpur and Mymensingh took this advantage and by marrying the girls of the Rajbanshi community began to settle in Cooch Behar as Cooch Behari. Apart from this, at the invitation of Khan Choudhury Amanatullah, Majahed Four (Army of Liberation, Sirajganj, Pabna) leaders led by Assadullah Siraji came to Cooch Behar with his army. His plan was to march to Cooch Behar with his army. By this way, the Muslim members of the Hitasadhani Sabha tried to materialize their dream known as "turn Cooch Behar into Pakistan." Though the Hitasadhani Sabha had successfully sold the Cooch Behari identity, still there were many people who did not subscribe to their views. It is true that the researchers and historians are very unkind to them. Anyway, the person who had strongly opposed the Hitasadhani Sabha's aims and actions was Umesh Chandra Mandal, a Gandhiite Cooch Behari or Rajbanshi pleader of Dinhata Town. In order to resist the nefarious design of the Hitasadhani Sabha, Umesh Chandra Mandal had founded the 'Cooch Behar State Praja Mandal' with the help of the progressive minded people. These people were mostly the followers of the Forward Block and the Communist party. It is to be noted that some Communists and Forward Block activists had been working secretly in Cooch Behar since 1940's. But they had no regular official establishment there. In fact, barring the Hitasadhani Sabha, the different political parties have opened up their office in the Cooch Behar State only after 1947. The Praja Mandal was a secular organization. The President of the Praja Mandal was Umesh Chandra Mandal and the Secretary was Ramesh Chandra Roy, a CPI worker. The Praja Mandal leaders and followers actively supported the cause of merger of Cooch Behar with the Indian Union. They cautioned the people about the dangerous communal politics of the Hitasadhani Sabha and tried to remove Cooch Behari – non-Cooch Behari animosity. The Praja Mandal was very much aware of the anti-Indian activities of the Hitasadhani Sabha. In a memorandum dated July 20, 1948 addressed to Vallabbhai Patel, the Vice Premier of India, the Praja Mandal alleged that the Maharaja and his pro-League Muslim Ministers as well as the Ministers who belonged to the Scheduled Caste

were hobnobbing with Pakistan. It has also been said that the Maharaja himself met Suhrawardy, the Prime Minister of Bengal and invited his opinion about the question of merger referring to the fact that his state was surrounded on three sides by the territories of Pakistan. To draw the attention of the intelligentsia as well as the people of Calcutta nay, West Bengal and the Government of West Bengal and India, some people of the Cooch Behar state with the help of the Praja Mandal, formed a new Association at Calcutta known as the ‘Cooch Behar Peoples’ Association’. This Association’s spokesmen Prof. Chuni Lal Mukherjee , Pulakesh Dey Sarkar, Tarapada Chakravarty and Sailen Roy prepared a memorandum for submission to the Prime Minister of India, signed by Umesh Chandra Mandal, Prof. Chunilal Mukherjee, Ramesh Chandra Roy Mondal, Satis Chandra Pal, Prem Nihar Nandi, Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Rajendra Chandra Chatterjee, Kalanath Roy Barman, Chura Mohan Bhowmic, Asmat Ali Byapari. In order to create public opinion upon the problems of Cooch Behar, the ‘Cooch Behar Peoples’ Association’ and the ‘Praja Mandal’ convened a public meeting at Calcutta. The intellectuals, writers, political activists, journalists, social activists of Calcutta have published an Appeal Letter to the people. The signatories of the Appeal Letter were Atul Chandra Gupta, Soumendra Nath Tagore, Kalidas Nag, Tarashankar Banerjee, Naresh Chandra Sengupta, Sajani Kanta Das, Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, Chapala Kanta Bhattacharya, Radha Binod Pal, Vivekanda Mukherjee etc.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know Region-adjoining areas?

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2. Discuss about Ethno Socio-Religious confluence.

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3. Discuss about the Demographic Composition.
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4. What do you Ethno-linguistic and Cultural Division?
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.....
5. Discuss Confrontation on the Rajbanshi Kshatriyahood.
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.....

3.10 LET US SUM UP

It emerged in the most critical phase of its history, and played a very significant role in shaping the fate of the lonely princely state of Bengal. What was more important is that the majority of the 'Cooch Behari' people were emotionally associated with the Hitasadhani Sabha. Its popularity was almost overwhelming. But the funny situation is that neither the non-Cooch Beharis, nor the Bengalees of the surrounding areas did like the Hitasadhani Sabha's aims and actions. Until now, no serious attempt has been made by any academician or non-academician to unfold the rise and decline of the Hitasadhani Sabha in the peculiar ethno-linguistic and social hierarchy of this tiny princely state.

3.11 KEY WORDS

Linguistic: Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It involves analysing language form, language meaning, and language in context. Linguists traditionally analyse human language by observing an interplay between sound and meaning.

3.12 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss the Ethno-caste-linguistic antagonism.
2. Discuss Historical Evidence of the Hitasadhani Sabha.
3. What is meant by Post-independence Political Scenario?

3.13 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Sujit Ghosh, Colonial Economy in North Bengal: 1833–1933, Kolkata: Paschimbanga Anchalik Itihas O Loksanskriti Charcha Kendra, 2016, ISBN 978-81-926316-6-0.

3.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 3.2
2. See Section 3.3
3. See Section 3.4
4. See Section 3.5
5. See Section 3.6

UNIT 4: COLONIAL PENETRATION

STRUCTURE

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The British Art of Colonialism in India: Subjugation and Division
- 4.3 Divide and Rule
- 4.4 Colonial Education in India
- 4.5 The British Raj and the Law
- 4.6 Let us sum up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Questions for Review
- 4.9 Suggested readings and references
- 4.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the British Art of Colonialism in India: Subjugation and Division
- To discuss about the Divide and Rule
- To know about the Colonial Education in India
- To discuss about the British Raj and the Law

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit utilizes a three-pronged analytical model to examine the mechanics of British colonialism and its socioeconomic and political consequences in India. Those three elements are divide and rule, colonial education, and British laws. The British took some reformative initiatives that ostensibly deserve appreciation such as the development of a predictable legal system, investment in infrastructure development, and education in the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries. However, most colonial policies and reforms were against the will and welfare of the people of India. The British took away India's resources and introduced the English educational system to create an educated and elite

buffer class for its own interests. It also introduced positivistic and predictable laws and repressive and discriminatory measures, including force, to control the natives and prevent anti-British agitation, protests, and armed uprisings in India. Although the consequences of British colonialism in India has been explored from various disciplines, the legacy of British colonialism to present day Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan has not been examined from the Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) lens. Johan Galtung's (1990) violence triangle framework helps us to understand the different forms of colonial violence, and the need for positive peacebuilding in the post-colonial context. This paper argues that the current educational policy, the legal framework, and the ethno-religious-cultural diversity of today, exhibiting the structural, cultural, and direct violence, are a continuation of the legacy of the British Raj.

4.2 THE BRITISH ART OF COLONIALISM IN INDIA: SUBJUGATION AND DIVISION

India became a Crown colony in 1876, yet the origins of British colonialism can be traced back to 1757 when the British navy and merchants first arrived in India (Lyer, 2010). During the 1760s, the British acquired India from Mughal emperor (Baber, 1996, p. 110). The demise of the Mughal empire and the consolidation of British colonial power resulted from the intersection of internal and external, historical, conjectural, and structural factors (Baber, 1996; Condos, 2016; DeSousa, 2008). Colonialism refers to “the conquest and control of other people’s lands and goods” (Loomba, 1998, p. 2), the forceful seizure of local land and economy, and the reshuffling of noncapitalist economies to speed up European capitalism (Loomba, 1998, p. 20). Mercantilism and political and military control were the driving forces behind the British colonial expansion in the Indian subcontinent (Lloyd, 2008). Britain employed the military in territorial colonialism in India while it used maritime commercial colonialism in North America (Lloyd, 2008). According to Lloyd (2008), “The depth of the penetration of British culture varies widely from Ireland or the Caribbean through India to the virtual apartheid regimes of British Africa” (Lloyd, 2008, p. 390). With India’s

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defeat on June 23, 1757, in the Battle of Plassey, the Indian subcontinent remained colonized under the British Empire for the next two hundred years (Lyer, 2010). The British took two-thirds of the sub-continent under direct administration and achieved their economic and political objectives (DeSousa, 2008). In 1664, the British East India Company (EIC) competed with the French *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* and tackled the escalation of factional conflicts, wars of succession, and rivalries among the regional Indian powers (Baber, 1996, p. 119). The British took full control of Bengal after the 1757 Battle of Plassey and the 1764 Battle of Buxar, collecting revenues, and establishing its colonial domination in India (Baber, 1996, p. 123; Chatterjee, 1993, p. 284). After the 1857 mutiny, the British Crown established direct rule—giving up the policy of annexation, as a token of recognition to curry favour with some native states during the mutiny. However, the colonial administration maintained its right to intervene in the internal affairs of those native states whose rulers were considered to be treacherous to the crown (Lyer, 2010). Under the treaties of accession, these native states joined Pakistan or India in 1948, and followed the same legal, administrative, and political systems as the colonial power. However, as history shows, the aftermath of accession is still felt to this day in the case of Balochistan and Kashmir. With the 1784 India Act, Britain established direct involvement in India, initially through bringing EICs activities under the British Parliament's direct supervision. The 1813 Charter implemented full colonial administration and separate territorial and commercial jurisdictions for the EIC (Baber, 1996; Chaudhary, 2009). In the meantime, the EIC appointed the British ambassador, established permanent factories, and entrenched British settlements in India. Britain's colonial governments controlled 680 "princely states" or "native states" through hereditary local kings that constituted about 45 percent of the total area of British India (excluding Myanmar and Sindh) (Lyer, 2010, p. 610), with 23 percent of the total population (Lyer, 2010, p. 694). By co-ordinating its economic and political objectives, Britain ruled India—one of the largest colonies in terms of land and population (Stokes, 1973). The British codified laws in India in terms of the rationalization of law in the Weberian sense to ensure "order,"

“certainty,” and “uniformity” (DeSousa, 2008, p. 68), as well as Bentham’s liberal ideas of the rule of law and equality principles (Kolsky, 2010). These laws, while giving a sense of uniformity to the rule of law, were also used against the local populace to suppress uprisings. The British abolished the Mughal Court and removed three-quarters of the warlord aristocracy. They eliminated many local feudal landowners and established a British-styled bureaucracy whose new aristocrats tended to follow a British life style. The British introduced the English language, its underlying culture, literature, and philosophy to strengthen its power base, as well as an elite class who were biologically Indians but culturally English.

This unit discusses British colonialism in India with a specific focus on three interlocking areas: governance, education, and the law, as well as the legacy of British colonialism in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, by applying Johan Galtung’s (1990) violence triangle framework. In each section, some cases or examples are used. The elements of the British colonial model applied by Britain to its former colonies include control over land, divide and rule, apartheid laws, ethnocentrism, education and language, religious suppression, native inferiority, depoliticization, and trauma and inward violence (Byrne, Clarke, & Rahman, 2018; Rahman, Clarke, & Byrne, 2017). From the common elements of the British colonial model, this article, however, focuses on three elements: divide and rule, colonial education, and draconian law, since they are applicable to the colonization of the Indian subcontinent.

Violence, conflict, and peace are explored extensively by Galtung (1964, 1990, 1996). Each of these interlocking terms is conceptualized as a triangle that has been less explored in a postcolonial peacebuilding context. According to Galtung (1969, p. 168), “...violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations” (p. 168). Violence is “the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is” (p. 168). Violence can take three forms: a) direct (physical violence that includes murder, assault, rape, torture, hate crimes, ethnic violence); b) structural (that results from the uneven distribution of resources caused by the structural

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mechanisms—social, political, and economic); and c) cultural (that includes religion, language, symbols, ideology, etc.) (Byrne & Senehi, 2012, pp. 34–36; Reimer, Schmitz, Janke, & Matyok, 2015, p. 24). Structural, cultural, and direct violence are intricately interrelated so that one form leads to another and vice versa (Byrne & Senehi, 2012, p. 3). Direct violence may be utilized to generate and perpetuate structural violence (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). Cultural violence can be used to maintain and legitimize direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1990). Conflicts are mostly viewed from the lens of direct violence, overlooking indirect and invisible (structural and cultural) violence (Galtung, 1964). According to Galtung (1996), conflict is a triadic construct in terms of equally important aspects: attitudes (A), behaviours (B), and contradictions (C) (p. 71, 72). “The basic contradiction/content of the conflict lies in the verticality of the structure, the repression (of freedom) in the political case and exploitation (of well-being) in the economic case” (Galtung, 1996, p. 93). Galtung’s (1969) notion of peace has two sides: negative and positive (pp. 167, 183). He notes that “peace” is “absence of violence” (pp. 168, 183). The absence of personal or direct violence is negative peace, and the absence of structural violence or social injustice is positive peace or social justice (pp. 172, 183). Peace means the social goals agreed by many, if not most citizens, and that peace is attainable (p. 167). Consequently, as Byrne, Clarke, and Rahman (2018) state, “inclusive and just societies must explore their past and address the legacy of colonialism that continues to fuel and drive conflict” (p. 14). It is argued in this paper that the British sustained their colonial presence in India through the application of divide and rule policy, colonial education, and discriminatory laws promoting direct, structural, and cultural violence, as conceptualized by Galtung (1969, 1990). This paper further argues that this British colonial legacy impacting ethno-racial and religious minorities requires positive peacebuilding in the post-colonial context.

4.3 DIVIDE AND RULE

The British used the strategy of “divide and rule” to provoke hostility between Hindus and Muslims. The divide and rule policy used religion to

drive a wedge between Indians which eventually resulted in the death and displacement of millions of people, as well as the destruction of key economic assets (Lyer, 2010; Tharoor, 2017). The British realized that India was a land of sociocultural diversity, and to exploit and control the lands, it was imperative to incite Hindus against Muslims and the masses against the princes, as well as provoking one caste against the other to augment caste divisions and class disparity among the Hindu community. For example, the British denied the legitimacy of the Muslim Sultan Tipu's rule and used propaganda to violate the Hindu constitution around landed property (Baber, 1996, p. 127). In the years following Britain's victory in the Battle of Plassey, the British initiated policies that undermined India's national cohesion and provoked communal division (Tharoor, 2017). In the 1857 mutiny, Hindu and Muslim soldiers were unified around loyalty to the Mughal prince, which worried the British rulers who devised policies and programs to fracture relationships between Muslims and Hindus. For example, the British ousted Muslims from power and they naturally were hostile to the British who favored Hindus, which further alienated Muslims. The colonizer's policies were intended to purge Muslims from India's sociopolitical landscape since they strongly protested and challenged British imperial rules. The divide and rule policy can also be traced to the English education policy that included Hindus while excluding Muslims. As a result, Muslims lagged behind, and the British took no steps to bring Muslims into economic parity. This divide and rule strategy also surfaced in appeasing the Muslim community when the colonizer became wary of Congress' popularity, because of the latter's highly nationalistic undertones. The British knew it was critical that they develop a good relationship with Muslims if the influence of the Indian National Congress was to be countered. Hence, the British reached out to Syed Ahmed Khan, who was later knighted and who believed that co-operation with the British would benefit Muslims more than forging an alliance with Hindus in national agitation (Lewis, 1962). Britain's anti-Muslim attitudes waned in favour of initiating anti-Hindu policies. Another example of the policy of divide and rule was the 1905 partition of Bengal which sought to suppress the spirit of the progressive intellectuals of Bengal (Asiatic

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Society of Bangladesh, 2003). The partition was an astute project intended to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims and stifle their national movement (Lewis, 1962). The British rulers tried to destroy Bengal's integration through its partition by separating the largely Muslim eastern areas from the largely Hindu western areas to undermine people's unity. The British objective was to rule and exploit people, but Lord Curzon viewed it as a policy to promote his administrative efficiency (Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2003).

The scars of the divide and rule policy are still evident in modern day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. The Hindu-Muslim hostility, spawned by the divide and rule policy, is still prevalent in these countries. The antagonism often takes a serious form that contributes to marginalizing Muslims in India and Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh. As such, Hindus and Muslims view each other with suspicion and feel discomfort in co-existing as they did for years before the advent of the British. Hindus do not feel safe and secure in Bangladesh, so they migrate to India. As a result, the Hindu population is declining in the country. According to the 1951 census report, Hindus were 22 percent of the population in Bangladesh; by 1974, this figure declined to 14 percent, and the last 2011 census records only 8.4 percent Hindus living in Bangladesh (Trivedi, 2016). This gradual declining figure suggests that Hindus migrate to India for a safer and better life. Hindus also leave Pakistan for India because of a lack of security, among other things. Like Hindus of Bangladesh and Pakistan, Muslims as a minority group are often persecuted and victimized in India. In recent years, Muslims have often been harassed and tortured and sometimes even lynched by radical Hindus on the suspicion of indulging in selling or buying beef (Chatterji & Babu, 2017; Suri, 2015). However, while the legacy of British colonialism in the form of divide and rule still exists, to hold the British solely responsible for present day affairs in the Indian sub-continent would be unfair. Politicians in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have used religion to fan the flames of hostility and to garner votes, a policy which has had disastrous consequences for the region.

The legacy of British colonialism continues implanting divide and rule policies against ethnic and religious minorities in post-colonial India

today. In Bangladesh, ethnic violence in the Chittagong Hill-Tracts (CHTs) can now be briefly explored to demonstrate postcolonial violence in Galtung's terms. The CHT has been the home of over eleven Indigenous communities who have been living there from at least the fifteenth century onwards (Adnan, 2004; Chakma, 2010; Levene, 1999; Schendel, 1992; Schendel, Mey, & Dewan, 2000) The tribalism policy of the British colonizers divided the people of the CHT into tribal/hill people (paharis) and the Bengalis, to ensure political control (divide and rule policy) and for economic exploitation of environmental resources, such as forests. The Pakistani and Bangladeshi governments have inherited a similar colonial mindset by continuation of land-grabbing, displacement, and imposed dominant education and language on CHT Indigenous communities (Adnan & Dastidar, 2011; Chakma, 2010; IWGIA, 2012; Rahman, 2015, 2017; Schendel et al., 2000). The hilly Jumma (Indigenous) nation has experienced rape, arson, assault, kidnapping, and hate violence, as well as military violence (Adnan, 2004; Chakma, 2010; Rahman, 2015). This is direct violence by Bengali settlers and the state against the Indigenous people. Many view the communal riots, rape, murder, and arson attacks as a mechanism for pressuring Indigenous families and communities to leave their traditional land (Chakma, 2010). Postcolonial economic and development policies, such as the Kapati Electric Dam, the massive demographic and Bengali resettlement scheme, illegal or forceful land-grabbing, forced displacement for infrastructure projects, and the imposition of dominant education and language on CHT Indigenous Peoples, affect their land rights, traditional practices, and cultures across indigenous communities in the CHT (Chowdhury, 2008, 2014; R. Datta, 2015; IWGIA, 2012; Partha, 2016; Rahman, 2015, 2017). These political and economic measures and structures create and perpetuate structural and cultural violence among the CHT peoples. Postcolonial nation-building and assimilation policies have not addressed their needs and welfare including the recognition of the cultural rights and identity needs of the Jumma nation (Adnan, 2004; Chakma, 2010; R. C. Roy, 2000). The Bengali settlers have changed the original Indigenous names of localities/settlements and disturbed the Jumma people's celebration of

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religious and cultural festivals/rituals as a result of the resettlement schemes (Partha, 2016; Schendel et al., 2000). These are examples of structural and cultural violence that led the CHT peoples to resort to armed insurgency.

The Government's 1997 peace treaty with the CHT peoples appears to be cosmetic as it has failed to make any significant progress in resolving the land disputes, their rights to selfrecognition and cultural identity as adibhasi (Indigenous people). (Bashar, 2011; Dowlah, 2013; P. Roy, 2016; The Daily Star, 2016). For example, after almost two decades of the peace accord, only 26 out of 72 clauses are implemented; the government has not made necessary laws to effect the rest of the clauses (P. Roy, 2016). The invisible and enduring structural and cultural violence has been continued through the Bengali resettlement politics, the non-withdrawal of security forces, and the establishment of infrastructures for economic, religious, and political purposes in the CHT (IWGIA, 2012; Larma, 2016; Rahman, 2015, 2017).

4.4 COLONIAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

Education in a country is closely related to its culture, as it provides “intergenerational knowledge transfer” (McGregor, 2010, p. 9). Prior to the British arrival, India's education system was small in scale but well organized with Muslim children being schooled in madrasas and maktabas, and Hindu children being taught in pathshalas and tols. These institutions taught children Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, theology, grammar, logic, law, mathematics, metaphysics, medicine, and astrology (Chopra, Puri, & Das, 2003; Nurullah & Naik, 1943). The British government, however, ignored this faith-based education system and replaced it with a British system—an action that affirms a colonial motive the British government intended to fulfill by introducing English education into India. Initially, however, the British showed no interest in education and religious affairs of India (Chopra et al., 2003). The British believed that any interference in Indian education and religious matters might endanger its political and commercial enterprise (K. K. Datta, 1975), and in order to ensure its domination and control of India and to keep Hindus and Muslims quiescent, the British founded madrasas and colleges to

provide an oriental education within the relevant cultural framework of the country. The founding of Alia Madrasa in 1780 by Warren Hastings (Governor-General from 1772 to 1785), and Sanskrit College in 1823 by Lord Amherst (Governor-General from 1823 to 1828) are two such examples. To advance oriental studies, Governor-General Lord Wellesley founded Lord Fort William College in 1800 so that English officials could learn local languages (Chopra et al., 2003). British Liberals and Evangelicals, however, demanded the introduction of British education with English as the medium of instruction. The British formed a Committee of Public Instruction, which was composed of two opposing groups, namely the Anglicists and Orientalists. The Anglicists argued in favor of British education by denigrating indigenous education, while the Orientalists argued in favor of indigenous education. Thomas Babington Macaulay—an influential member of the Governor-General’s Council—recommended introducing English education and the following comment made by Macaulay (1965) indicates the colonial enterprise of Britain: We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class, we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees’ fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population. (Macaulay, 1965, p. 116) Based on Macaulay’s recommendation, Lord William Bentinck (Governor-General from 1833 to 1835) introduced British education in India on March 7, 1835, and devised a filtration model of education, according to which English education was first imparted to the upper classes from whom it would then filter down to the masses (Chopra et al., 2003). Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Council, who drafted a report that provided for a comprehensive education system, followed Macaulay. The report recommended that English should be the medium of instruction for higher education, and local vernaculars remain the medium of instruction in schools. The report also recommended the founding of universities in Kolkata, Bombay, and Madras as teachers’ training colleges, and grade

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schools—elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools. To implement the recommendations, universities were founded in Kolkata, Bombay, and Madras, and English was introduced as a medium of instruction in the Indian sub-continent's higher education system. Introducing a British-styled curriculum did not impact the lives of most Indians as the new system failed to bring about qualitative changes in the educational system, since the curriculum in this English model pushed learners into rote memorization (Whitehead, 2005). The same was also true for madrasas and pathshalas which did not encourage students to question and share their views. Moreover, English education was not universal as it was designed only for the Indian and British elites, and individuals from humbler backgrounds did not come under the purview of this education project. People who received English education viewed themselves as superior as compared to those who were not educated under this system, and as such, the education system divided people into two classes: a class which received a British education and a class which was deprived of that education. Consequently, this education system encouraged class distinction and engendered antagonism among India's natives, thus weakening cohesion and contributing toward fulfilling the British vision of domination and exploitation. The introduction of English education in India was a key component of Britain's divide and rule policy for engendering hostility and creating divisions among the natives. The English education system introduced by the British lacked uniformity and homogeneity, which left far reaching effects. For example, the British rulers introduced an English educational system in India, but they did not abolish the traditional madrasa educational system—resulting in the creation of a dual education system. The sustainment of a dual education system continues to engender unrest and tension in educational institutions to this day. For instance, the students studying in mainstream educational institutions view themselves to be better than those studying in madrasas. On the other hand, the students of madrasas claim that they have better knowledge about theology and logic than those studying in mainstream institutions. Thus, students of both streams treat each other with suspicion, hostility, and antagonism. Records indicate that madrasa students are more hostile and are more

vulnerable to violent radicalization. While madrasas have existed for centuries, many argue that these seminaries are breeding grounds for militancy and radicalization (Rahman, 2016b; Rahman & Kashem, 2011; Riaz, 2008a, 2008b). The study of Ahmed (2009) shows that the madrasa students, indoctrinated with jihadi ideology during Zia-ul-Haq's time, were sent to Afghanistan to fight against Soviet occupiers. The study also reveals that the University of Nebraska-Omaha developed and designed textbooks to inspire and justify the "holy war" against the Soviets. Radicalization of madrasa students is, therefore, manufactured and manipulated. Radicalization and extremism among youths with non-mainstream education are complex and multidimensional, and the underlying issues of, risk factors for, and pathways to, violent extremism among youths in Bangladesh need empirical research (Rahman, 2016a, 2018b; Riaz & Bastian, 2011). The radicalization of madrasa students came to the attention of lawenforcement and scholars during 2005-2006 (Rahman, 2016b; Riaz, 2008b), and the students with private university and English medium schools have been found radicalized afterwards (Rahman, 2016b, 2018b; Riaz, 2016). Students of non-mainstream schools (madrasas and private university/English medium schools) fall victim to radicalization (Rahman, 2016b, 2018b, Riaz, 2008b, 2016). The existing discourses suggest that madrasa students with poor economic background are more likely to be easily radicalized (BEI, 2011; Rahman, 2016b; Rahman & Kashem, 2011; Riaz, 2008b, 2016). On the other hand, private university and/or English medium students from economically solvent families keep themselves aloof from traditional social life, and are more engaged in internet and social media that can easily recruit and purchase them for terrorist activities. Moreover, it should also be noted that graduates with mainstream education background (Bengali) are rarely radicalized and involved in terrorist activities (Rahman, 2016b; Riaz, 2008b). This different trend stems from mainstream education based on indigenous cultural values as compared to the non-mainstream education system that impedes students from being apart of society. Division and discrimination in education systems contribute to generating radicalism and extremism (Rahman & Kashem, 2011; Riaz, 2008b).

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To further note, most employers prefer general (Bengali medium) and English medium students to madrasa students, and thus, the society sustains structural inequality. Remarkably, students of these two streams of institutions have a close similarity in a point: English medium students trained in the English education system advocate western values more than national values, and madrasa students trained in theology practice and plead Islamic values. Thus, they keep apart from each other and cannot unify with mainstream students. These employer perceptions, stereotypes, and negative attitudes of the mainstream society towards madrasa education, indicate the persistence of structural and cultural violence against students and graduates with non-mainstream graduates. The student community of the former British colony—India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—have been experiencing this triadic division. As the students of the two non-mainstreams are not formally trained in national values, cultures, and traditions, they are less careful about nation and country—a tendency that leads them to radicalization and terrorism. Some key informant interviews suggest the negative attitudes of society toward madrasa education and the unfair treatment by employers who often decline to hire madrasa graduates lacking adequate skills compared to mainstream students (Rahman & Kashem, 2011). The profile of Islamist terrorists in Bangladesh indicates largely non-mainstream educational backgrounds (Rahman, 2016b; Riaz, 2016). To specify, on July 1, 2016, six youths attacked Holey Artisan Bakery (a bakery shop located in Dhaka), where they killed 29 innocent people, including 20 hostages (18 were foreigners), two police officers, and two staff (Fair & Abdallah, 2017, p. 3). Of the six terrorists, five were identified as private university students with English medium education backgrounds, and the last was schooled in a madrasa.

From the viewpoint of justice, Britain's education policy in India was not only an instrument of domination but also a weapon of oppression meted out to Indians. This education system can be compared to the banking education model (Freire, 2012), where education is viewed as a process that deposits knowledge into students. Teachers are the supreme authority in this system while students' pre-existing knowledge is ignored (Freire, 2012). "The more completely they accept the passive

role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them ” (Freire, 2012, p. 73). Similarly, the British colonizers imparted British education, science, and philosophy to Indian learners. This indoctrination and oppression imposed on the colonized as an “undue strain inflicted upon pupils” who felt difficulty in expressing their ideas in English (Sundaram, 1946, p. 518). An effective education must ensure the consent and participation of learners, teachers, and administrators. The British ignored this issue and did not research what students wanted from their education. The British viewed their system of education as superior, and to make superior Indian citizens, they introduced the Western education system to them. This model manufactured skilled clerks who helped the colonizer to collect revenue. Moreover, this new system of education destroyed local cultures and stifled people’s political consciousness (DeSousa, 2008). From a practical point of view, the British taught the Indian elite the English language to get services and benefits from them. By providing British education and culture, and the English language to the Indian elite and the masses, the British made them produce goods for European markets and also consume European goods (Pennycook, 1988). British education was for profit for the colonizers. This kind of profit mongering is reflected in Shakespeare’s (1623) play *The Tempest*, where the colonizer Prospero confesses to Miranda that he (Prospero) must not disown Caliban: “We cannot miss him; he does make our fire, fetch in our wood, and serves in offices, that profit us...” (1.2.312-14). To explain, Caliban is one of the major characters in this play whose inherited island is usurped by colonizer Prospero who enslaves and uses him for his colonial enterprise. Like Prospero, the British colonizers made Indians Shakespeare’s Calibans from whom they would get profit, cheap labor, and information about the wealth of India. However, it can also be argued that learning the English language can be viewed from an empowerment perspective. The British taught Indians Western knowledge and the English language, which eventually enabled them to be aware of their rights. It can be argued that, enriched with the power of knowledge from Western education, the Indians began to think of their freedom. They spoke about their

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independence, reclaimed their land, and finally after ninety years of complete British rule, they succeeded in taking back their land from the colonial masters.

In British India, the colonial education policy imposed English upon the local populace, subjugated local languages, and even created a buffer class to serve the colonists. This language subjugation is an integral component of the colonial power's structural and cultural violence as viewed by Galtung (1969, 1990) that still exists and affects the Indigenous communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh. The dominant language (Bengali) was imposed by the state on the Indigenous people in Bangladesh. Indigenous languages are not recognized, and the Indigenous people's language rights to this day are not protected despite their demands for having mother tongue education and recognition in their schools (Partha, 2016; Yasmin, 2014). The same applies to ethnic and religious minorities in India and Pakistan, where to this day English is the official language in a majority of educational institutions and in the judicial system (Mahboob, 2017).

4.5 THE BRITISH RAJ AND THE LAW

“The foundation of our empire in India rests on the principle of justice, and England retains its supremacy in India mainly by justice. Without justice we could not hold India for a moment” (Kolsky, 2010, p. 1). This section examines the legal system constructed by the British Raj to govern the Indian subcontinent. Laws used by the British to further their own interests are also examined and finally the impact of the “legal” colonial legacy is explored. To begin, the codified English law administered by the courts was initially applied only to Europeans residing in the sub-continent. However, by 1773 it was proposed that in matters of marriage, inheritance, and other individual affairs, Islamic laws should be applied to Muslims, and Hindu laws to Hindus (Otter, 2012). While it is not clear whether this bifurcation of the law was proposed to introduce the policy of divide and rule, it had long lasting impacts that ultimately led to the division of the sub-continent based on religion. During the initial 150 years of the British Raj, the colonial

masters deferred to Indigenous and local laws for the resolution of disputes (Giunchi, 2010), even though at that stage Islamic law was applied to Muslims and Hindu Law to Hindus. This application of religious laws was convenient for the British, since unlike some other British colonies, the Indian sub-continent already had codified religious decisions such as the Fatawa-e-Alamigiri (The Edicts of Emperor Alamgir), which could be relied upon by judges. Moreover, during this period, anything that was indigenous and local was romanticized, including religious texts and laws. To achieve the colonizer's goals, key religious texts such as the Fatawa and the Hedaya for Muslims, and the Dharma Sastra for Hindus were translated into English by William Jones, Neil Baillie, and Nathaniel Brassy Halhead, respectively (Giunchi, 2010). This idealization of Indigenous Indian customs and laws was, however, short lived. For instance, the British philosopher James Mill considered Indigenous Indian laws to be "a disorderly compilation of loose, vague, stupid, or unintelligible quotations and maxims selected arbitrarily from book of law, book of devotion, and books of poetry; attended with a commentary which only adds to the absurdity and darkness; a farrago by which nothing is defined, nothing established" (Judd, 2004, p. 38). The reason for the eventual disillusionment of the British with Indigenous religious laws was a result of their attempts to categorize the monolithic, fluid, and diverse religious identities within both Hinduism and Islam. For example, Islam can be broadly divided into two major sects: Sunni'ism and Shi'ism. In Sunni'ism itself, there are four different schools of thought, with each school of thought having its own sub-school. Hence, trying to lump the diversity of opinions produced by these scholars into one, single, uniform code would logically entail a failure of the system. There is another way this change in attitude can, however, be looked at in a manner which is less judgmental of the British. Replacement of religious law with Western positivist law in the public sphere could have stemmed from the desire of the British to legitimize their rule over the sub-continent and to appear to be more accountable to the native population (Judd, 2004). For example, the codified law would turn the colonizers into "the prisoner of their own rhetoric," which presumably was meant to create a "feel good effect"

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amongst the colonizer (Kolsky, 2010, p. 72). However, detractors of the “benign” colonization argument view the subcontinent as a laboratory for the British to experiment with their legal test-tubes before implementing them in Britain (Giunchi, 2010; Kolsky, 2010; Otter, 2012). After the failed 1857 rebellion, the 1858 British India Act was introduced, which transferred the power to rule from the EIC to the British Crown directly. Moreover, a Secretary of State for India was established, who would be counselled by a 15-member council (Judd, 2004). This was the first of many steps that would lead to a complete and formal control of the Crown over its Indian subjects. The eventual British disdain for all Indigenous religious laws led to a complete purge of religion from criminal law and a partial purge from civil law. For example, in 1860 the Indian sub-continent was given a new set of laws, the Indian Penal Code. Among other things, the code outlawed adultery, fornication, and struck down corporal punishment for women in cases of adultery (Giunchi, 2010); all of these provisions were part of Shariah law. In addition, the British continued to treat women paternalistically by using the law. Section 506 (i) of the Indian Penal Code provided a jail term for up to three years for: Whoever, (i) intending to insult the modesty of any woman, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such woman, or intrudes upon the privacy of such woman. (The Indian Penal Code, 1860, s. 506 (i)) The provision is still part of the penal code of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan that may be seen as either a sign of times or as a tool to emasculate men by elevating the status of women and placing them on a pedestal. However, as Justice Willy Brennan once aptly pointed out, “Our nation had had a long and unfortunate history of sex discrimination. Traditionally, such discrimination was rationalized by an attitude of romantic paternalism, which in practical effect put women not on a pedestal, but in a cage” (Frontiero v. Richardson, 411 U.S. 677, 1973). The key change, in the context of the laws came in 1862 with the enactment of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The Code prohibited Indian judges from issuing arrest warrants or indicting European or British individuals for crimes (Kolsky, 2010). Moreover, the code

provided that only British born judges could try the cases of British born accused persons, and where the alleged crime carried the death penalty, the accused had the right to be tried by a jury, half of whom would consist of British-born persons (Kolsky, 2010). This was, indeed, quite the digression from the implementation of the “principle of justice” as was initially proclaimed by the British when they colonized India. During 1900-1947, British “illegal laws” governed the Indians. By the turn of the century, it became clear that the British had adopted a carrot and stick policy as a tool of governance. On the one hand, they created the Indian Civil Services by which they would control the Indians through Indians by appointing educated locals in the bureaucracy. On the other hand, the British were quite ruthless when it came to legislation and crimes. For instance, the 1901 Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) contended that individuals convicted of certain crimes, such as homosexuality, could be whipped; the jurisdiction of civil courts was barred; a whole tribe could be held responsible for the acts of an individual (their properties could be seized and demolished) and whole villages could be found accountable collectively (Ss. 6, 10, 21, 22, Frontier Crime Regulations 1901). The FCR was not the only draconian law enacted by the colonial masters. The Indian Press Act, for example, outlawed any publications which aimed to “bring into hatred or contempt his Majesty or the Government established by law in British India or the administration of justice in British India or any Native Prince or chief under the suzerainty of his Majesty...” (s. 4(1)(c) The Indian Press Act, 1910). As Otter (2012) points out, curtailment of civil liberties did not just stop with restrictions on the press. For instance, under the Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, a district magistrate was given power to prohibit any public meeting: “...if, in his opinion, such meeting is likely to promote sedition or disaffection or to cause a disturbance of the public tranquillity” (s. 5, Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, 1911). This legacy of the British Raj is still present in Pakistan wherein the government has the right to outlaw a public gathering of more than four individuals (S.144, Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898) and to subject speech: ...to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any

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part thereof, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court. (Article 19, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973) These laws are still operative even after seven decades of independence in these countries for political reasons or to oppress opponents/ dissidents. While the British were repressing free speech and expression, they were also leaning toward power-sharing with the locals. Under the 1908-1909 Reforms Act, commonly known as the Minto-Morley reforms, Indians would be elected to the legislative councils, both in the capital and in the provinces. While the reforms did reserve power at the center for people nominated by the crown, they enabled the provinces to elect natives who would be in the majority (James, 1997). The reforms also gave Muslims the right to a separate electorate. Whether this move was meant to exacerbate the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims, or whether it was an effort to recognize the demand of the All India Muslim League for a separate electorate, remains open to interpretation. The watershed moment of draconian legislation leading to massive violence and the ultimate victory of the wretched of India can be traced back to the two Rowlatt Acts of 1918 and 1919, respectively. After WWI, the British, keeping in line with their earlier attitude towards free speech and assembly, enacted laws that enabled an accused person to be arrested without a warrant, detained indefinitely, and not allowed to confront her/his accuser(s) (Vohra, 2002). This law was arguably passed to suppress Gandhi's satyagraha movement and the Khilafat Movement. The recently enacted stricter laws didn't prevent people from protesting and eventually on April 13, 1919, the worst attack by British law enforcement on unarmed protestors occurred. A group of roughly 10,000 protestors were protesting in Jallianwala Bagh, and on the orders of the officer commanding, General Dyer, the walls of the garden were locked and the British Indian Army opened fire on unarmed citizens leading to the deaths of almost 400 people (Judd, 2004, pp. 131–132). The Jallianwala Bagh massacre eventually resulted in weakening the British position in India and arguably, it led to the enactment of the 1935 Government of India Act, which provided that provincial powers would be devolved to the elected legislatures, and the provinces could function

autonomously. However, London still had the final word when it came to federal affairs (Judd, 2004). The importance of the 1935 Government of India Act cannot be overemphasized. The 1937 elections held under the new Act resulted in a sweeping victory for the Indian National Congress, which alarmed the Muslim League as it had presumed that even if the British left, they would be replaced by a Hindu tyranny (Judd, 2004, p. 149). Moreover, the Act was the de facto Constitution in the newly formed state of Pakistan, and even after Pakistan enacted its own Constitution, many features of the Government of India Act were included in it. Both Pakistan and India followed the Westminster model of democracy as set out in the 1935 Act, but amended it to suit their own interests. For instance, both newly formed nation states were highly centralized, and the provinces were not granted powers for many years (Otter, 2012). Several civil and procedural laws were enacted during the next decade so that the usual legal battles were over the devolution of powers in the Indian sub-continent, a tool employed by the British to hold onto the region. The most important of these plans was introduced in 1946 by the considerably weakened Raj and is known as the Cabinet Mission, headed by Sir Stafford Cripps. He proposed that India would remain united in the form of an All-Indian Union that would be divided into three provincial governments: Bombay, Central Provinces, Madras, Orissa and the United Provinces predominantly populated by Hindus. The second cluster included Muslim majority regions such as Baluchistan, Khyber-Pukhtunkhwah, Punjab and Sindh. The final cluster included Bengal and Assam. While the provinces could not secede from the Union, they had the liberty to enact their own constitutions. The clusters along with the princely states could also elect a constituent assembly (James, 1997). While the Muslim League agreed to the plan, Nehru and the Indian National Congress rejected it, reinforcing the League's belief that Hindus would never be willing to share power with Muslims. Eventually, a year later, two independent nation states, India and Pakistan, joined the comity of nations. While there is no doubt that the introduction of British positivist law changed the future of the Indian sub-continent, the legal legacy of the British Raj can be viewed both negatively and positively. On the negative side, it can be argued that by

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introducing Western law, the British destroyed the quasi-legal practices of native Indians that provided swift justice, which was acceptable to the local population. That system was replaced by a highly bureaucratic system that was mired in red tape. The counter to this argument is that those Indigenous systems/practices were at times unfair, especially when it came to women; the Jirga system and Wani are two such examples. Moreover, the laws introduced by British were flawed, yet they ultimately wrested power from the hands of the ruling monarchs. Furthermore, democracy on the subcontinent may be a flawed system, yet it was because of the Raj, and its legacy, that some 1.5 billion people can cast their votes to elect individuals who can represent their interests. Moreover, the banning of the Sati custom, the permit of widow marriage, and the passage of the 1910 Child Act that fixed the age of majority as 18, are some steps that deserve credit. While it can rightly be argued that the process of divide and rule continues to haunt the region for decades and has resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, it is also true that the “rule of law,” which is a legacy of the Raj, provides a modicum of security to individuals in establishing their justiciable and non-justiciable rights. Seen through this lens, the introduction of positivist law in the Indian subcontinent, whatever its intentions may have been, can be perceived as beneficial to the people in the long run. As illustrated earlier, many of the British laws are draconian and apartheid, and were against the will of the natives of India. The 1862 Code of Criminal Procedure separated jurisdictions of judges along racial lines. The FCR, the Indian Press Act, The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act, the Rowlatt Act, the Public Safety Bill, and the Trade Dispute Bill were used to suppress and discipline Indians by the British, and their fellow Indians by elite Indians (DeSousa, 2008; Kolsky, 2010). These laws and legal structures provided vast powers to the rulers that fueled direct violence and perpetuated structural violence against Indian natives. The legacy of these colonial discriminatory laws has been present in today’s criminal justice system. Bangladesh still inherits the penal code, criminal procedure code, police code, jail code, and evidence act, which were introduced by the British Raj (Khondaker, Kashem, & Rahman, 2018; Rahman, 2011; Rahman & Hossain, 2014; Senese &

Kashem, 1997). After seventy years of independence, the rulers today perceive those systems to be useful tools in suppressing their own people, and these laws and legal structures have promoted both structural violence and direct violence as conceptualized by Galtung. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has implemented a police reform project and facilitated the government's use of a draft ordinance during the non-party interim government in 2007 (Patil, 2012; Rahman, 2018a; UNDP Bangladesh, 2018). Yet no legislation has been enacted because of the resistance of the political elites, as they want to use the colonial law to oppress dissents and govern the people with immunity and impunity (Khondaker et al., 2018; Patil, 2012; Rahman, 2011, 2016b, 2018a; Rahman & Hossain, 2014). Finally, while the legacy of British colonialism under the guise of the law continues to haunt the Indian subcontinent, ultimately the responsibility to enact new laws that cater to the needs of indigenous people lies with the elected representatives of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know about the British Art of Colonialism in India: Subjugation and Division?

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2. Discuss about the Divide and Rule.

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3. What do you know about the Colonial Education in India?

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4. Discuss about the British Raj and the Law.

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4.6 LET US SUM UP

Prior to British colonialism, previous conquerors could not control India completely. (Stokes, 1973). However, within four years of the Plassey Battle, the British conquest unprecedentedly broke Indian social structures, basic institutions, and the self-sufficient village system. The consequences of the Battle of Plassey influenced the rule and the modes of the British cultural contact in the subcontinent. According to Stokes (1973), “The peculiar multicellular character of Indian society made it both highly resistant to change in its social and cultural aspects and ipso facto subject to constant political change and to conquest from within highly resistant to change” (Stokes, 1973, p. 122).

In the post-colonial period (1956-1987), British areas were found to have higher levels of investments in agriculture and production, but lower levels of investments in schools, roads, canals, and health centers (Lyer, 2010). The public goods in terms of the access to schools, health centers, and roads was minimal in areas that experienced British direct rule because of the heavy taxation and extraction of resources. Poor policies were installed in areas remote to the colonizers. On the other hand, areas that experienced indirect rule exhibited opposite developments. Native rulers had longer tenure to invest in public goods provision, than British administrators (Lyer, 2010). The native rulers’ families played an important role in post-colonial politics by manipulating elections and controlling resources. The British used India to supply raw materials and provide a rich market for Britain. The Permanent Settlement Act introduced in India undermined the land ownership of the peasants. British colonizers forced Indian cultivators to provide goods for export to Britain and the new railway system, and whilst being beneficial to the local population, it also served the economic interests of the colonial power (Das, 2011; Tharoor, 2017). Famines were deliberately created by the colonizers who forced the Indigenous population to seek relief work,

such as road-building, so that goods could be transported from factories to ports and shipped to Britain (Tharoor 2017; Lazzaro, 2013). The formulation of Anglo-Indian law toward having a unified and predictable modern legal system was meant to regulate economic, political, and social relations between individuals and groups. However, the British justified their codification of laws in India to show that they would guarantee the rule of law and justice, yet in reality, those laws were also used to discriminate between Indians and Europeans (DeSousa, 2008; Kolsky, 2005). The “Legal” legacy of the British Raj continues in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh today. The Police Act, the Evidence Act, the Penal Code, the Jail Code, and many other laws have been inherited from the British (Khondaker et al., 2018; Rahman, 2011; Rahman & Hossain, 2014). While the Indian sub-continent has been independent for seventy years, the continued existence of these laws may depict the utility that sub-continental rulers may find in using them to govern their populations. The British introduced Western education, the English language and culture, literature, and philosophy to strengthen their power in India. The British demonized Indians, viewing the natives as “incapable of understanding what was in their best interests” (DeSousa, 2008, p. 10).

They succeeded in creating an elite class that worked for the British and helped prolong colonial rule, and they provided a legacy that survives to this very day. Unlike other colonies such as Canada, British rule in the Indian sub-continent can be viewed as being somewhat beneficial to the local populace, particularly in the fields of education and law. Learning the English language empowered the native population, and local elites (zamiders/babus) were very happy about this system. The positive “side effects” of British colonial rule also deserve appreciation for bringing about an impressive awakening in cultural, social, and scientific fields in India in the late 19th and mid-20th centuries. The colonial measures addressing Sati, widow remarriage, infanticide, witchcraft, child marriage, polygamy, and dowry had some remarkable effects. Because of social movements and significant roles played by individuals like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, many of these superstitions and iniquitous practices were removed from the society. In India, the British colonizers faced

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several resistance and nationalist movements. Britain established institutions to justify and secure colonial rule, and used force to curb any challenges to its rule (Condos, 2016; DeSousa, 2008). Ultimately, these repressive measures empowered Gandhi's nonviolent resistance against the British, which culminated in their departure in 1947, as divide and rule became divide and depart. Despite some positive social transformative steps, the British policy of divide and rule fueled and nurtured conflict in the Kashmir valley, the port city of Karachi between Mohajirs and other ethnicities, and the Rohingya and Bihari ethnic conflicts in Bangladesh. These conflicts are a legacy of British colonialism that have claimed many lives and abused the human rights of hundreds of thousands of innocent people in the Indian subcontinent. Given the direct, structural, and cultural violence of colonial policies of divide and rule, education, and laws, the postcolonial states must not sustain the legacy of British colonial policy of forced assimilation, division, and subjugation by imposing the dominant language, religion, and culture against ethnic and religious minorities. For example, state policies in the CHT in the name of development, security, and environmental conservation must not create, and promote structural and cultural violence against the Indigenous communities. Positive peacebuilding approaches are imperative for addressing the ongoing religious divide and regional conflicts in Kashmir valley, Arakan State of Myanmar, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh, by granting the right of self-determination to the natives of this region.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Colonial Era: Colonial period. Colonial period (a period in a country's history when it was subject to administration by a colonial power) may refer to: ... Colonial history of the United States. British Raj, British colonial rule in India, 1858 to 1947.

Penetration: the action or process of penetrating something.

4.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the Colonial Penetration in India.

4.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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4.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 4.2
2. See Section 4.3
3. See Section 4.4
4. See Section 4.5

UNIT 5: COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

STRUCTURE

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The British Administration in India
- 5.3 British Colonial Administration: Introduction and Education
- 5.4 British colonial period - Colonial Rule (1858 – August 1918)
- 5.5 Hindu renaissance movement
- 5.6 Formation of Indian National Congress
- 5.7 First partition of Bengal
- 5.8 Early revolutionary movement
 - 5.8.1 Alipore Bomb case
 - 5.8.2 Hardinge Bomb case
 - 5.8.3 Ras Bihari Bose
- 5.9 Home Rule League
- 5.10 Let us sum up
- 5.11 Key Words
- 5.12 Questions for Review
- 5.13 Suggested readings and references
- 5.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit , we can able to know:

- The British Administration in India
- British Colonial Administration: Introduction and Education
- British colonial period - Colonial Rule (1858 – August 1918)
- Hindu renaissance movement
- Formation of Indian National Congress
- First partition of Bengal
- Early revolutionary movement

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The East India Company, was an English and later British joint-stock company. It was formed to trade in the Indian Ocean region, initially with Mughal India and the East Indies, and later with Qing China. The company ended up seizing control of large parts of the Indian subcontinent, colonised parts of Southeast Asia, and colonised Hong Kong after a war with Qing China. After the first war for Indian independence, the British Government took over the administration to establish the British Raj.

The British Raj refers to the period of British rule on the Indian subcontinent between 1858 and 1947. The system of governance was instituted in 1858 when the rule of the East India Company was transferred to the Crown in the person of Queen Victoria (who in 1876 was proclaimed Empress of India). It lasted until 1947, when the British provinces of India were partitioned into two sovereign dominion states: the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan, leaving the princely states to choose between them. Most of the princely states decided to part with either Dominion of India or Dominion of Pakistan. Except the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is only at the very last moment that Jammu and Kashmir agreed to sign the "Instrument of Accession" with India. The two new dominions later became the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (the eastern half of which, still later, became the People's Republic of Bangladesh). The province of Burma in the eastern region of the Indian Empire had been made a separate colony in 1937 and became independent in 1948.

5.2 THE BRITISH ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

1. Civil Services:

The Civil Service was brought into existence by Lord Cornwallis. We know that the East India Company had from the beginning carried on its trade in the East through servants who were paid low wages but who

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were permitted to trade privately. Later, when the Company became a territorial power, the same servants assumed administrative functions.

They now became extremely corrupt. By oppressing local weavers and artisans, merchants and zamindars, by extorting bribes and 'gifts' from rajas and nawabs, by indulging in illegal private trade, they amassed untold wealth with which they retired to England. Clive and Warren Hastings made attempts to put an end to their corruption, but were only partially successful.

Cornwallis, who came to India as Governor-General in 1786, was determined to purify the administration, but he realised that the Company's servants would not give honest and efficient service so long as they were not given adequate salaries.

He, therefore, enforced the rules against private trade and acceptance of presents and bribes by officials with strictness. At the same time, he raised the salaries of the Company's servants.

For example, the Collector of a district was to be paid Rs 1500 a month and one per cent commission on the revenue collection of his district. In fact, the Company's Civil Service became the highest paid service in the world. Cornwallis also laid down that promotion in the Civil Service would be by seniority so that its members would remain independent of outside influence.

In 1800, Lord Wellesley established the College of Fort William at Calcutta for the education of young recruits to the Civil Service. The directors of the Company disapproved of his action and in 1806 replaced it by their own East Indian College at Hailey-bury in England.

Till 1853 all appointments to the Civil Service were made by the directors of the East India Company who placated the members of the Board of Control by letting them make some of the nominations.

The directors fought hard to retain this lucrative and prized privilege and refused to surrender it even when their other economic and political privileges were taken away by Parliament. They lost it finally in 1853 when the Charter Act decreed that all recruits to the Civil Service were to be selected through a competitive examination.

A special feature of the Indian Civil Service since the days of Cornwallis was the rigid and complete exclusion of Indians from it. It was laid down officially in 1793 that all higher posts in administration worth more than £500 a year in salary were to be held by Englishmen. This policy was also applied to other branches of government, such as the army, police, judiciary, engineering.

In the words of John Shore, who succeeded Cornwallis:

The fundamental principle of the English had been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, to the interests and benefits of ourselves. The Indians have been excluded from every honour, dignity, or office, which the lowest Englishmen could be prevailed to accept.

Why did the British follow such a policy? Many factors combined to produce it. For one, they were convinced that an administration based on British ideas, institutions, and practices could be firmly established only by English personnel. And, then, they did not trust the ability and integrity of the Indians.

For example, Charles Grant, Chairman of the Court of Directors, condemned the people of India as **“a race of men lamentably degenerate and base; retaining but a feeble sense of moral obligation; and sunk in misery by their vices”**.

Similarly, Cornwallis believed that **“Every native of Hindustan is corrupt.”** It may be noted that this criticism did apply to some extent to a small class of Indian officials and zamindars of the time. But, then, it was equally if not more true of British officials in India.

In fact, Cornwallis had proposed to give them high salaries in order to help them resist temptations and to become honest and obedient. But he never thought of applying the same remedy of adequate salaries to eradicate corruption among Indian officials.

In reality, the exclusion of Indians from higher grades of the services was a deliberate policy. These services were required at the time to establish and consolidate British rule in India. Obviously the task could not be left to Indians who did not possess the same instinctive sympathy for, and understanding of, British interests as Englishmen.

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Moreover, the influential classes of British society were keen to preserve the monopoly of lucrative appointments in the Indian Civil Service and other services for their sons. In fact, they fought tooth and nail among themselves over these appointments.

The right to make them was a perpetual bone of contention between the directors of the Company and the members of the British Cabinet. How could the English then agree to let Indians occupy these posts? Indians were, however, recruited in large numbers to fill subordinate posts as they were cheaper and much more readily available than Englishmen.

The Indian Civil Service gradually developed into one of the most efficient and powerful civil services in the world. Its members exercised vast power and often participated in the making of policy. They developed certain traditions of independence, integrity and hard work, though these qualities obviously served British and not Indian interests. They came to believe that they had an almost divine right to rule India.

The Indian Civil Service has often been called the 'steel-frame' which reared and sustained British rule in India. In course of time it became the chief opponent of all that was progressive and advanced in Indian life and one of the main targets of attacks by the rising Indian national movement.

2. Army:

The second important pillar of the British regime in India was the army. It fulfilled four important functions. It was the instrument through which the Indian powers were conquered; it defended the British empire in India from foreign rivals; it safeguarded British supremacy from the ever-present threat of internal revolt; and it was the chief instrument for extending and defending the British empire in Asia and Africa.

The bulk of the Company's army consisted of Indian soldiers, recruited chiefly from the area at present included in U.P and Bihar.

For instance, in 1857, the strength of the army in India was 311,400 of whom 265,900 were Indians. Its officers were, however, exclusively British, at least since the days of Cornwallis. In 1856, only three Indians in the army received a salary of Rs 300 per month and the highest Indian officer was a subedar.

A large number of Indian troops had to be employed as British troops were far too expensive. Moreover, the population of Britain was perhaps too small to provide the large soldiery needed for the conquest of India. As a counterweight, the army was officered entirely by British officials and a certain number of British troops were maintained to keep the Indian soldiers under control.

Even so, it appears surprising today that a handful of foreigners could conquer and control India with a predominantly Indian army. This was possible because of two factors. On the one hand, there was absence of modern nationalism in the country at the time. A soldier from Bihar or Awadh did not think, and could not have thought, that in helping the Company defeat the Marathas or the Punjabis he was being anti-Indian.

On the other, the Indian soldier had a long tradition of loyalty to the salt. In other words, the Indian soldier was a good mercenary, and the Company on its part was a good paymaster. It paid its soldiers regularly and well, something that the Indian rulers and chieftains were no longer doing.

3. Police:

The third pillar of British rule was the police whose creator was once again Cornwallis. He relieved the zamindars of their police functions and established a regular police force to maintain law and order. In this respect, he went back to, and modernized, the old Indian system of thanas.

This put India ahead of Britain where a system of police had not developed yet. Cornwallis established a system of circles or thanas headed by a daroga, who was an Indian.

Later, the post of the District Superintendent of Police was created to head the police organisation in a district. Once again, Indians were excluded from all superior posts. In the villages, the duties of the police continued to be performed by village-watchmen who were maintained by the villagers.

The police gradually succeeded in reducing major crimes such as dacoity. The police also prevented the organisation of a large- scale

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conspiracy against foreign control, and when the national movement arose, the police was used to suppress it.

In its dealings with the people, the Indian police adopted an unsympathetic attitude. A Committee of Parliament reported in 1813 that the police committed “depredations on the peaceable inhabitants, of the same nature as those practiced by the dacoits whom they were employed to suppress”.

And William Bentinck, the Governor-General, wrote in 1832:

As for the police, so far from being a protection to the people, I cannot better illustrate the public feeling regarding it, than by the following fact, that nothing can exceed the popularity of a recent regulation by which, if a robbery has been committed, the police are prevented from making any enquiry into it, except upon the requisition of the persons robbed: that is to say, the shepherd is a more ravenous beast of prey than the wolf.

5.3 BRITISH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION: INTRODUCTION AND EDUCATION

From the beginning of the creation of the Central Provinces in 1861 it was the goal of the British administration to construct a governmental system providing for the improvement and development of the area. The Government of India Resolution establishing the Central Provinces noted that the previous forms of administration -- of the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories under the control of the North-Western Provinces, and a separate Province of Nagpur -- did "not present that unity, completeness and efficiency which are requisite in order that justice may be done to the condition and prospects of Territories so largely capable of improvement." Therefore the Government intended to create a new provincial administration encompassing those two areas Which would provide the new province "with the greatest advantage the management of the resources and to the development of the capabilities of the whole area." (1) Part II examines the activities of the British provincial government to develop the Central Provinces during the six decades from 1861 to 1921.

though the Government resolution creating the Central Provinces envisioned the use of government institutions to promote development, very few departments dealt with the improvement of the province. Rather they concentrated primarily on law, order, and taxation; only secondarily on providing rudimentary social services; and least of all on economic development. With the imposition of a provincial government most of the procedures of British rule which were designed to consolidate their position in India were brought to the Central Provinces. The wholesale importation of these procedures meant that there was little imaginative attempt to revise the form of provincial administration into what was needed to fit the particular character of middle India, or to meet the specific needs of its economic development.

Raghaven Iyer suggests that there were four dominant imperialistic themes or theories of Government that inspired the British administration and justified their ideas and policies- trusteeship, guardianship, utilitarianism, and evangelism. All were animated by a mixture of paternalism and laissez-faire. On the one hand, British administrators sought to teach and lead Indians in ways to improve their condition in British terms; on the other hand they sought to provide institutions which would free Indians to develop in their own chosen ways. Administrators formed policy based on this mixture of enlightened Western despotism and non-interference. Prevailing attitudes of Victorian idealism and optimism often clouded over inherent contradictions of British policy.

One task of the new government was to form policies based on current governmental theories. The effective implementation of these policies was quite a separate and more difficult activity. The hierarchical structure of provincial government imported and superimposed on the Central Provinces tended to divide the policy-making from the implementation functions of administration at the district level. British administrators above the district level debated, decided and finalized provincial policy. British administrators at the district level and below attempted to implement these policies through Indian officials. The division of governmental functions at the district level involving higher and lower levels of administrators tended to create two separate worlds. Those British administrators at the higher levels usually based their

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policies on English theories with only occasional and superficial reference to empirical information about Indian society and with only rare consideration of Indian opinion. Under the supervision of lower-level British administrators, the Indian officials sought to implement that policy in the context of local Indian society.

The tendencies of the British to segregate policy from implementation and to disassociate British administrators from Indian officials, isolated the higher levels of administration and local society. British provincial administration lacked the ability to penetrate into the lives of a majority of the population in the Central Province and therefore had a minimal affect on them. The Indians whom the British administrators influenced most were those connected with the provincial administration either as part of administration or involved in its institutions. They mainly consisted of lower officials, educators and student., the urban population, and taxpayers, in particular those designated as landlords to pay the land revenue.

The interaction with Indian society during six decades from 1861 to 1921. The analytical framework makes three distinctions. The first is between policy and implementation, that is between goals, ideas, and the intentions of British administrators, and the achievements and results of British rule. The second is between two levels, an upper provincial level and a lower district level of administration and the majority of Indians only partially affected by British administration but mainly affected by other events and changes. The third is between the two types of departments. Social service departments include education, health, and local government such as municipal committees and district councils. Consolidative departments consist of judicial, police, and taxation. Thus Part II examines two types of administration activity and its interaction with changes occurring within Indian society. The changes in Indian society consists first of educational changes, p.litical. evolution, and population growth; and second, land policy and taxation, and agrarian relations. Judicial and police activities are not examined separately.

As the first Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces from 1861 to 1866, Richard Temple formulated the structure of the provincial administration. His first annual report on the administration of the

province contains a wealth of information and impressions. He expressed both a concern for the everyday establishment and management of the administration and a vision for the future development of the area. The judicial, police, and taxation systems needed to be organized; substantial begin-

nings had to be made in education, health services, local government; and plans had to be made for other improvements. Temple estimated that the total provincial revenue from all sources was just over Rs. 8 million. Of this, about Rs. 3.25 million, or a little less than 40 percent consisted of expenses for the civilian government. Rs. 1.1 million, or 13 percent was paid as pensions and subsidies to recently deposed Indian rulers of the Central Provinces. Rs. 2.9 million or over 33 percent went for the military. The remainder, somewhat more than Rs. 1 million or about 12 percent, was for "material improvements," mainly public works. The accompanying table lists the expenditures of the civilian administration under Temple.

In addition to detailing his reorganization of the administration, Temple stressed the importance of other measures for the improvement of the province. He suggested that the payment of land tax (about 64 percent of all taxes) by landlords of the cultivated parts of the province should be made permanent and unalterable. He was confident that if the central Indian government would except this principal of land taxation, it would stimulate the "industry, enterprise, and self-reliance of the agriculturalist, the application of capital, and the accumulation of wealth." He also investigated the possibility of attracting European colonists to settle unoccupied lands of the province, confident that with "European capital and enterprise, it may be possible for the "a and plough to invade the ancient domain of the Forest and Prairie." Such European colonization in the Central Provinces, he regarded, as the "hope of the future." Temple also made a preliminary assessment of the forest and mineral wealth of the province, and placed emphasis on the improvement of communications and transportation. He wanted to put the postal and electric telegraphic communications on a sound footing (frail and rotting posts constantly interrupted service in the rainy season) and he had plans to improve the roads. He gave encouragement to private companies to

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build an extensive railway system across the province.

His administrative reorganization was to be implemented within a couple of years while his plans for the development of the province would take several years.

During the five year period (1868-1872) after Temple's administration, the annual income of the provincial administration averaged over Rs. 8.5 million, while expenditure within the province rose to over Rs. 4.5 million.

The table showing provincial expenditures for various departments and activities indicates that the primary role of government was to promote law and order. The judicial and police activities including expenditure for salaries and office supplies always exceeded 50 percent of provincial funds . Social services expenditures for education and health never averaged as much as 17 percent. Expenditures for public works averaged 17 percent during the first three decades but were increased during the famine-troubled 1890's and 1900's to around 33 percent.

TABLE 7
CENTRAL PROVINCES ADMINISTRATION, EXPENDITURE AND INCOME
(Money in thousands of rupees, annual averages)

	1868-69 to 1890-91		1890 to 1900		1902 and 1904	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Expenditure						
General Administration	749.6	16	458	8	554.5	8.0
Judicial	730.8	16	1,454	25	1,576.0	22.5
Police	1,285.2	28	1,429	25	1,497.0	21.5
Jails	480.7	10	. . .	. . .	. . .	. . .
sub-total	3,246.3	70	3,341	58	3,627.5	52.0
Education	462.0	10	368	6	433.5	6.2
Medical	215.4	5	331	6	364.5	5.2
sub-total	677.4	15	699	12	798.0	11.4
Public Works	702.2	15	1,622	28	2,401.5	34.4
Other Expenditures	. . .	. . .	87	2	150.5	2.2
Sub-total, all	. . .	. . .	5,749	100	6,977.5	100.0
Miscellaneous Total	. . .	. . .	2,612	. . .	3,947.0	. . .
Total	4,625.9	100	8,289	. . .	10,924.5	. . .
Income						
Land Revenue	6,112.4	64	6,969	47	8,535.5	51.0
Excise	1,728.4	18	2,401	16	2,255.5	14.0
Stamps	1,016.9	11	1,629	11	1,504.5	9.0
Assessed Tax	302.9	3	480	3	361.0	2.0
Cesses or Provincial Rates	336.2	4	1,021	7	1,347.0	8.0
Forest	. . .	. . .	1,031		1,253.5	
Registration	. . .	. . .	116	15	91.5	16.0
Other	. . .	. . .	1,090		1,406.0	
Total	9,496.8	100	14,737	100	16,754.5	100.0

SOURCES: Fuller, *Progress*, pp. 20-24; and *Imperial Gazetteer: Central Provinces (1908)*, pp. 120-21.

*Includes for 1890-1900 such items as Charges for tax collection 1,750 thousand, Pensions--508 thousand, Famine--15 thousand, etc.

Though the general division of administrative expenditure changed little, the activities of government shifted gradually during the six decades of provincial administration under review. Temple's energetic administration in the 1860's saw the foundation of a provincial bureaucracy which exhibited many features similar to other Indian provincial administrations . But even by 1868 Henry Morris (Temple's successor) noted a shift. Rather than Temple's activities of "initiation," Morris emphasized "consolidation and development," and his long term as Chief Commissioner until the early 1880's was largely characterized by an effort to continue the structure of the Temple administration and to sit back and examine its affects on the province. As a result of this examination, several substantial places of legislation were formulated and passed in the decade of the 1880's. The last three decades until 1920 were used to amend that legislation and to revise administrative activity, mainly to deal with the economic problem which the famines of the 1890's had first revealed.

Other broad shifts in the character of the administration occurred during those six decades. Until the middle of the 1880's the Chief Commissionership was held mostly by administrators who had previously served in some capacity in the province. Between then and 1907 many of these Chief Commissioners came from other provinces. The period was characterized by rapid turnovers. Terms were often only two or three years, compared to Morris' thirteen years. Those who served in the Central Province included Alexander MacKenzie, Anthony MacDonnell, John

Woodburn, Charles Lyall, Denzil Ibbertson, John Hewett, Frederic Lely, and John Miller. During these years the subordinate staff of the province provided the only continuity. Frequent changes among these "outsider" Chief Commissioners often resulted in divergent views. One Chief Commissioner said of his predecessor, he "did not understand the question" of land revenue settlement and "let himself be betrayed into raising the . . . rent too high;" he was obstinate in making the amendments.

None of these Chief Commissioners of the middle period had been in

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charge of another province in India before; but subsequently, making use of their training in the Central Provinces, they advanced to the top positions of other provinces.

This importation of "outsiders" led to a gradual shift in the character of the administration. From the 1880's onward, the administration's policies and problems were viewed more in the broader context of the British Indian Empire. The relative isolation of the provinces was less noticeable, and its peculiar administrative procedures and concerns became more standardized and general. This was especially so in the late decades of the period under review when investigative commissions frequently toured India, and concerns arose and legislation was formulated in connection with such matters as irrigation, rural debt, cooperative societies, and land transfers.

There were than two recognizable periods during these six decades of administration. Roughly the first half was a period of inauguration and consolidation of British provincial administration, while the second half was a period of revision and standardization in the light both of local economic events and all-India influence.

5.4 BRITISH COLONIAL PERIOD - COLONIAL RULE (1858 – AUGUST 1918)

After 1858, India became officially a British colony as British crown took control of India from East India Company. The British crown put a Secretary of State for India in charge of India. Indian Council who had only advisory powers aided him. India was divided into three administrative zones (Bengal, Madras and Bombay). A number of administrative and legal changes were introduced. In 1861 Indian Councils Act, High Courts Act and Penal code were passed. British continued to expand the railways and telegraphic network and in 1868 new Ambala – Delhi railway line was started.

A combination of administrative failures and natural factors resulted in large number of famines in India that killed millions of people –

1861 Famine in North West

1866 Famine in Bengal and Orissa – 1 million perished

1869 Intense famine in Rajasthan – 1.5 million perished

1874 Famine in Bihar

1876–78 Famine in Bombay, Madras and Mysore – 5 million perished.

During this time, India was forced to produce cash crop, which were to be sold by the British. India was also forced to accept British goods that destroyed cottage industries. Many peasants had to borrow money to pay the extremely high taxes imposed on them.

1st January 1877, Queen Victoria was proclaimed **Empress of India** at a *Durbar* (assembly of notables and princes), in Delhi. The Viceroy Lord Lytton represented the Sovereign, who incidentally never visited her Indian Empire. In 1878 Vernacular Press act was introduced in India that imposed severe limitations on the rights of the press. In the same year there was ‘Rendition of Mysore’ and Mysore was returned to its original **Wodeyar** rulers. In 1883 the Ilbert Bill Act was passed which allowed Indian magistrates to try Europeans. This angered the Europeans and the bill was withdrawn. Indians suffered from growing unemployment while most well paying jobs were reserved for the British. Racial discrimination against Indian’s forced the Indian nationalists into organizing themselves for getting their demands accepted.

5.5 HINDU RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

Hindu renaissance movement – During this period several great saints and religious leaders were responsible for revival of Hinduism in different parts of India. **Ramkrishna Paramhansa** (1836-1886), **Swami Vivekananda** (1863-1902) and **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar** (1820-1891) led the Hinduism renaissance in Bengal that later spread to other parts of India. **Swami Dayananda Saraswati** (1824-1883) formed Arya Samaj, which became a major religious movement in north India.

5.6 FORMATION OF INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

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Allen Octavian Hume finally formed the **Indian National Congress**. The First meeting was in December 1885 in Bombay. **Womesh Chandra Banerjee** became the first president of Indian National Congress. It met every year in December in different parts of the country. In the early years, the congress used only Petition, Prayer and Protest to try to get their needs met. In 1891 Indian factory Act was passed and in 1892 Indian Councils Act was changed to include new provisions for administrating India.

Bubonic Plague in Bombay, 1896 -1914 and Indian Famine 1897 - 1901:

The epidemic spread from Bombay City, western and northern India, was hardest hit. Around 200,000 people died of plague in Bombay alone. Between October 1896 and February 1897, nearly half of Bombay's estimated 850,000 populations left the city resulting in great loss to commerce and industrial life and helped the disease to spread in countryside and other parts of India. Along with plague many parts of India were devastated by famine during 1897-1901 that killed around 2 million people.

5.7 FIRST PARTITION OF BENGAL

Following the '**divide and rule**' policy Bengal was divided by the British, on October 16, 1905, into Hindu and Muslim areas. By doing this British had hoped to increase tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims. Lord Curzon was the British governor general at this time. The following excerpts from Curzon's letter of 2nd February 1905 to St. John Brodrick, Secretary of State for India, give an idea of his aims in partitioning Bengal.

“CALCUTTA is the center from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal, and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire pullers and its most frothy orators all reside here. The perfection of their machinery, and the tyranny which it enables them to exercise are truly remarkable. They dominate public opinion in Calcutta; they affect the High Court; they frighten the local Government, and they

are sometimes not without serious influence on the Government of India. The whole of their activity is directed to creating an agency so powerful that they may one day be able to force a weak government to give them what they desire. Any measure in consequence that would divide the Bengali-speaking population; that would permit independent centres of activity and influence to grow up; that would dethrone Calcutta from its place as the center of successful intrigue, or that would weaken the influence of the lawyer class, who have the entire organization in their hands, is intensely and hotly resented by them. The outcry will be loud and very fierce, but as a native gentleman said to me – ‘my countrymen always howl until a thing is settled; then they accept it’.”

Protest meetings against the partition were organized in all parts of the country on and after 16 October 1905. Partition of Bengal also saw a strong polarization in Indian National Congress between ‘moderates’ and ‘hardliners’. Moderates such as **Gopal Krishan Gokhale** believed in making "loyal" representations to the government for small reforms, while hardliners like **Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak** complete freedom or ‘**purna swarajya**’. Tilak announced his slogan "**Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it**" in his newspaper and became the speaker for the new group of nationalists. The primary leaders of the nationalist movement were **Lala Lajpat Rai** (1865-1928) from Punjab, **Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak** (1856-1920) from Maharashtra and **Bipin Chandra Pal** from Bengal. Together, they were called **Lal-Bal-Pal**. **Ajit Singh** in Punjab and **Chidambaram Pillay** in Tamil Nadu were other important leaders of the **Nationalistic Movement**. In 1906, Tilak set forth a program of passive resistance, known as the Tenets of the New Party, that he hoped would destroy the hypnotic influence of British rule and prepare the people for sacrifice in order to gain independence. Mahatma Gandhi later adopted these forms of political action initiated by Tilak - the boycotting of goods and passive resistance - in his program of non-cooperation with the British. The Nationalistic movement adopted the slogan of "Swadeshi and Swaraj". Swadeshi means our country and promoted the use of Indian products and the boycott of foreign goods. Swaraj means self-government. Tilak aimed at Swarajya (Independence), not piecemeal reforms, and attempted

to persuade the Congress to adopt his purna swarajya program. On this issue, he clashed with the moderates at the Surat session of the Congress in 1907. Taking advantage of the split in the nationalist forces, the government again prosecuted Tilak on a charge of sedition and inciting terrorism and deported him to Mandalay, Burma (Myanmar), to serve a sentence of six years' imprisonment.

Formation of Muslim League (1906)

Many of the Indian Muslims were taken in by British divisive policy of 'divide and rule'. Although Muslims had a fair representation in Congress some of them wanted a separate platform for Indian Muslims. In 1906 Muslim League was formed to represent Indian Muslims.

By the partition of Bengal in 1905 British successfully sowed the seeds of division between Hindus and Muslims that lead ultimately to the partition of India in 1947. Ghosts of the British 'divide and rule' policy, continue to haunt independent India and Pakistan in present times with continuing tensions and border disputes.

5.8 EARLY REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Partition of Bengal created a massive outburst of public anger against British rule. Intellectual people as well as common man took part in mass agitation. Poet **Rabindranath Tagore** actively supported the movement. **Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's** '*Bande Matram*' was taken up as the soul-stirring slogan. Several groups of revolutionaries started operating in Bengal. **Aurobindo Ghosh** (later known as Sri Aurobindo), **Rasbihari Bose** and **Jatindranath Mukherjee** (Bagha Jatin) were some of the important leaders of these revolutionary groups.

5.8.1 Alipore Bomb case

On 30th April, 1908 in Muzzafarpur Bihar, **Khudiram Bose** and **Prafulla Chaki** tried to kill the Chief Presidency Magistrate Kingsford who was notorious for passing out stiff sentences against the nationalist activists Kingsford escaped the bomb attack which unfortunately killed two innocent British ladies died in the bomb attack.

Following a massive manhunt, Khudiram was arrested on 1st May 1908; **Prafulla** evaded arrest by shooting himself. On 11th August 1908, eighteen-year-old **Khudiram Bose** was hanged and became a martyr. Aurobindo Ghosh was arrested on charges of masterminding the attacks on Kingsford but a young lawyer **Chittaranjan Das** ably defended him. Aurobindo later left politics and became a Yogi and philosopher and became famous as **Maharishi Aurobindo** or **Sri Aurobindo**.

A Durbar was held in Delhi on December 12, 1911, to celebrate the visit of King George V. King was welcomed with great pomp and show and given numerous priceless gifts. In 1911 British government under pressure from increasing agitations in Bengal and other parts of India modified the 'partition of Bengal' to make again a united **Presidency of Bengal**.

5.8.2 Hardinge Bomb case

British shifted the imperial capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1912. On December 23, 1912 to mark the entry of the Governor-general of India into the new Capital, an imperial procession was taken out in Delhi, with Lord Hardinge seated on a caparisoned elephant. As the procession was passed through Chandni Chowk, a bomb was thrown on the elephant, killing the mahawat. Lord Hardinge escaped with injuries. Many persons including Master Amir Chand, a school teacher of Delhi, Bhai Balmukand, Master Awadh Behari, Basant Kumar Biswas, Ganeshilal Khasta, Vishnu Ganesh Pingley, Charan Das, Balraj, Lachhmi Narain Sharma and Lala Hanwant Sahey, and many others were arrested. L.N Sharma and G. Khasta were taken to Varanasi and sentenced to life imprisonment. V.G Pingley was taken to Lahore and was hanged. Master Amir Chand, Bhai Balmukand and Master Awadh Behari were executed on May 8, 1915 in Delhi Jail and Basant Kumar Biswas was executed the next day on May 9, 1915 in Ambala Central Jail.

5.8.3 Ras Bihari Bose

Ras Bihari Bose, who masterminded the Chandni Chowk incident, escaped to Japan and continued the struggle against British rule from

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abroad. He was the President of Indian Independence League and head of the first Indian National Army (INA) founded by General Mohan Singh. In 1914 Britain became engaged in World War I. Shortly after declaration of war, two infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade of the Indian Army were sent to Europe. In all 140,000 men served on the Western Front, 90,000 in the Indian Corps and 50,000 in the Labor Companies. Indian troops also played important role in operations in Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Gallipoli. They also served in the West and East African campaigns and in China.

5.9 HOME RULE LEAGUE

On 16th June 1914, Bal Gangadhar Tilak was released after serving a prison sentence of 6 years, most of which he had spent in Mandalay in Burma. In 1915-1916, under the leadership of **Tilak, Annie Besant** and **Subramaniya Iyer**, the **Home Rule League** was started. January 9, 1915, saw the beginning of a new phase in India's struggle for independence with arrival of **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi** to Bombay from South Africa. Two major events took place at the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress in 1916. First, the moderate and hardliner groups were united. Second, the Muslim League put aside old differences and joined hands with the Indian National Congress.

Responding to Gandhi's call for helping British in World War I, a large number of Indians joined British Indian Army during 1916-1917. By the end of the World War I in 1918, the numerical strength of Indians in British Indian Army had increased to nearly 600,000.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Discuss about the British Administration in India.

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2. Write about the British Colonial Administration: Introduction and Education.

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3. Discuss about the British colonial period - Colonial Rule (1858 – August 1918).

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5.10 LET US SUM UP

In the later half of the 19th century, both the direct administration of India by the British crown and the technological change ushered in by the industrial revolution, had the effect of closely intertwining the economies of India and Great Britain. In fact, many of the major changes in transport and communications (that are typically associated with Crown Rule of India) had already begun before the Mutiny. Since Dalhousie had embraced the technological change then rampant in Great Britain, India too saw rapid development of all those technologies. Railways, roads, canals, and bridges were rapidly built in India and telegraph links equally rapidly established in order that raw materials, such as cotton, from India's hinterland could be transported more efficiently to ports, such as Bombay, for subsequent export to England. Likewise, finished goods from England were transported back just as efficiently, for sale in the rising (burgeoning) Indian markets. However, unlike Britain itself, where the market risks for the infrastructure development were borne by private investors, in India, it was the taxpayers—primarily farmers and farm-labourers—who endured the risks, which, in the end, amounted to £50 million. In spite of these costs, very little skilled employment was created for Indians. By 1920, with a history of 60 years of its construction, only ten per cent of the "superior posts" in the railways were held by Indians.

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The rush of technology was also changing the agricultural economy in India: by the last decade of the 19th century, a large fraction of some raw materials—not only cotton, but also some food-grains—were being exported to faraway markets. Consequently, many small farmers, dependent on the whims of those markets, lost land, animals, and equipment to money-lenders. More tellingly, the latter half of the 19th century also saw an increase in the number of large-scale famines in India. Although famines were not new to the subcontinent, these were particularly severe, with tens of millions dying, and with many critics, both British and Indian, laying the blame at the doorsteps of the lumbering colonial administrations.

5.11 KEY WORDS

Movement: a change or development.

5.12 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the Hindu renaissance movement.
2. Discuss Formation of Indian National Congress.
3. Write about the First partition of Bengal.
4. Discuss about Early revolutionary movement.

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5.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 5.2
2. See Section 5.3
3. See Section 5.4

UNIT 6: RE-ORGANIZATION OF NORTH BENGAL

STRUCTURE

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Re-organization of North Bengal
- 6.3 Socio Economic Transformation of North Bengal
- 6.4 Let us sum up
- 6.5 Key Words
- 6.6 Questions for Review
- 6.7 Suggested readings and references
- 6.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To discuss about the Re-organization of North Bengal
- To know about the Socio Economic Transformation of North Bengal

6.1 INTRODUCTION

North Bengal plains starts from the south of Terai region and continues up to the left bank of the Ganges. The southern parts of the district Jalpaiguri, North Dinajpur baring some extreme northern regions, South Dinajpur, Malda and Cooch Behar districts constitute this geographical region. The narrow land mass in the North Dinajpur district is known as Mahananda corridor. This corridor runs north to south joining Malda with the plains of Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar and Cooch Behar. The entire part of North and South Dinajpur is silt laden plain.

Formation History of North Bengal Plain:-

The North Bengal Plain is developed by the deposition of both the Ganga-Brahmaputra River system. The deposition mainly take place in the Rajmahal-Garo gap located between the Shillong plateau and the

Chottanagpur plateau and continues up to the Sundarban region, and mostly composed by the Quaternary deposits of fluvial origin. The Himalayan origin sediments deposited in the Himalayan foreland basin and formed the North Bengal Plain, and its modification still continues today.

North Bengal comprise the seven districts of West Bengal. Since long time many indigenous group of peoples- like Koch ,Rajbanshi, the Bodos, Rabhas, Meches ,Pans, Paliyas, Madashis are living in these area. Among them the Rajbanshis are considered the most important indigenous group inhabiting at the northern part of West Bengal. Economically the Rajbanshis are more dependent on primary sector, i.e. agriculture. Till the advent of the ninetieth century most of the land in North Bengal was in the possession of the local people i.e.; the Koches, the Rajbanshis, the Mechs etc. Unlike the upper caste gentry, these local peoples did not face the problem of status inconsistency if they themselves cultivated the land. However, the situation began to change from the late ninetieth century and after the Independence with the migration of people in this region. They not only consolidated their position as non-cultivating gentry, but also came to form a middle class at the village level, as it was form the group that the majority of the Zamindari agents and the staff of the local catchery were recruited. Taking advantages of the backwardness of the local cultivators or poor rayots, they began to exploits them. On the other hand, the Rajbanshis who once dominated the local society and economy were gradually subordinated and alienated from land by the newly settled dominant upper caste Hindus (elites). This domination of an essentially immigrant gentry as well as the cultural differences between them and the Rajbanshis created a sense of community solidarity among the latter. They raised a new identity based on social, political and linguistic problem and articulated movement in the form of autonomous and separate state movement after independence in North Bengal.

Tourism is often seen as having great potential in developing countries which have substantial natural resources to attract tourists. It has been used as a strategy to promote regional development in both rural and urban areas and thus tourism has been recognized as an industry. The

building of a tourism cluster in developing economies can be a positive force in improving outlying infrastructure and dispersing economic activity (Amposta, 2009). This happens so that the tourism clusters invite foreign exchange earnings, generates employment and income in accommodation and transport sector and souvenir industry and accelerates the development of infrastructure (Richins & Scarinci, 2009). For this reason tourism continues to be a favoured regional development tool for many governments around the world (Gronau & Kaufmann, 2009; Brida et al., 2010; Dodds & Buttler, 2010). Thus ecotourism can be a means of obtaining economic development in many areas. India is fortunate for its rich ecotourism destinations. North Bengal, the northern territory of West Bengal is one of these. However the present paper first provides the present status of ecotourism activity of North Bengal. Then it proceeds to summarize a critical account of the impact of ecotourism activity on the regional economy of the area. Finally it outlines some problems of ecotourism activity of the area and reflects management strategies and actions for the promotion of the ecotourism activity.

6.2 RE-ORGANIZATION OF NORTH BENGAL

North Bengal comprise the seven districts of West Bengal-Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, Darjeeling,Uttar Dinajpur,Dakshin Dinajpur,Malda. Since long time many indigenous group of peoples- like Koch ,Rajbanshi, the Bodos, Rabhas, Meches ,Pans, Paliyas, Madashis are living in these area. Among them the Rajbanshis are considered the most important indigenous group inhabiting at the northern part of West Bengal, comprising the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling North and South Dinajpur and Malda. According to Census Report 1981, the Rajbanshis constitute 19% of total of Scheduled Caste population of West Bengal. Out of the total Rajbanshis of North Bengal, about 74% lives in Cooch Behar, 32% in Jalpaiguri, 13% in North and South Dinajpur and 8% in Darjeeling and Malda districts. Therefore, the major concentration of the Rajbanshis is in the districts of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri. The sex ratio of the Rajbanshis of North Bengal is 952 females per 1000 males (1971 Census). The Rajbanshis is one of the

major Scheduled Castes in West Bengal.(Constitution of India ,under 1936,1950,1956 Orders) . Out of total 2258760 Rajbanshis in West Bengal, 77.19 percent of them are found to live in the northern part of the state known as North Bengal. Some scholars believe that North Bengal is the homeland of the Rajbanshis and since long as a local community, have been dominating the ethnic situation of this climate(Biman Dasgupta,p,1, Census 1921,Bengal Report,p,357). Most of the lands were dominated by the Koch, Rajbanshis, Rabhas etc.

In the context of our present study on North Bengal and its socio-cultural history, it is found that this region is said to have inhabited by the Non-Aryan tribes having Mongoloid traits and features. Accordingly we find some areas of our study like Ccoch Behar (presently a district of North Bengal) which is admitted as the head quarters of those tribes who were called indiscriminately Koch, Rajbanshis and Pali.^ During the medieval period, we find that the region was similarly important in the history of Bengal. From early medieval period to the advent of the colonial rulers, Bengal (particularly North Bengal) were always in the main stream of history. Considering all those things, it may be assumed that the geographical area, which is called North Bengal, had a glorious past. It is quite known that sometimes this North Bengal with its geographical and historical prominence highlighted various aspects on the history and archaeology of Bengal. Before studying history of North Bengal, it seems desirable to know the geography and geographical boundary of this area. North Bengal, at present a narrow area of land at a short distance from the Chinese border connects to two divisions of India as a vital point in the bottom of the Himalayas. Its geographical proximity with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan in the North, Assam and Bangladesh in the east, and Bangladesh, West Bengal and Bihar in the South and West has provided her a special place of strategic importance.* Since long past. North Bengal has been serving as the eastern gateway for the passage and communication of people, commodities and ideas between the Indian Sub-continent in the West and Assam, Burma, China and other parts of South-East Asia in the East. This area is situated in the centre of the network connecting different civilization.

6.3 SOCIO ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF NORTH BENGAL

Economically the Rajbanshis are more dependent on primary sector, i.e. agriculture. The agricultural structures prevailing in different parts of Bengal varied widely. The Mughal land revenue system, the British land revenue reforms, the customary practices of different areas, and the ecological conditions largely determined the patterns of agrarian relations in different parts of Bengal. In the present section of our study the agrarian structure of North Bengal will be focused on the basis of rich farmer-share-cropper system in which the Rajbanshis as a cultivating community. Sugato Bose also support the same structure of agrarian system of Bengal.(Sugata Bose,1986,p,3) The Jotedari-adhiari system was dominant pattern of the agrarian relations in North-Eastern part of India. However, there are different parts of the region like –Dinajpur, Rangpur, parts of Jalpaiguri, which were permanently settled areas, and where zamindari system existed. There was no zamindari system in the Western Duars of Jalpaiguri and in Cooch Behar. The land was given to jotedars or rich farmers by the government in exchange of some undertaking to pay annual rent in these regions(Ray ,1979,p.203) . There were also variations of position and privileges enjoyed by the jotedars and other under tenants in different part of northern part of present West Bnegal.(Milligan, Appendix, pp,xxi,xxvi; Hartly, 1940,pp.54-55; Choudhury,1903, (Re print) pp.511-514) In pre-British time, there were vast stretches of uncultivated lands which were given to rich men at very low rents in order to motivate them to bring waste land under cultivation. This rich men gave the lands to poor cultivators, initially for no or minimum return. However, once cultivation started regularly the cultivators paid, generally in kind, 1 /2% of produce to the original titleholder. Thus, the cultivators who reclaimed the wasteland become the sharecroppers and the rich men by virtue of their economic supremacy became the landlords.(Sugota Bose,pp,11-12; Cooper, pp.26-28). During the British rule, this system of agricultural structure became much more popular among the substantial landholders.

The sharecropping system became popular in this region due to the scarcity of labour compared to the availability of land. It results that land is being less precious than labour (Taniguchi, 1977, pp.205-206). Under this circumstance, the wastelands are attributed to a want of farmers, and common workers or porters cannot be procured without the utmost difficulty (Mitra, 1951, Appendix-III, pp. ii-vii.). There were also other causes like rise in prices, purchase of land by money lenders, and merchants, effects of the war, and the depression- all contributed to the expansion of the share-cropping system. Landlords, particularly those who had no link with land, like traders, and moneylenders or upper caste gentry, preferred share-cropping because it ensured good returns without any direct involvement in the agricultural process. Thus, because of this gradual extension of the sharecropping system a highly stratified and complex agrarian structure developed in North Bengal. (Basu, 2003, p.48). If we follow the agrarian structure of this region, we will find that the Zamindar was the top of the hierarchy. He got land from the government, subject to the payment of a fixed amount of revenue. Next to the Zamindar, there was the jotedar who got land from the Zamindar, subject to the payment of rent at prevailing rates. The rent paid by the jotedar was subject to enhancements. (Hunter, 1876, p.279.) Though the jotedars formed an exclusive group of landlords, there were differences among them in terms of amounts of land hold. There were very big jotedars as well as a good number of small jotedars. A. Beteille has observed that jotedars were not an economically homogenous group and there were both rich and poor jotedars owing or cultivating large as well as small lands. (A. Beteille, 1979 1st edn, pp.135-6.) There were enormous sizes of jotes in different parts of northern part of present West Bengal. (Backett 1874, p,v)

There were different categories of land holders in northern part of present West Bengal. (Tweedie, p,65) However, the classes which were eventually recognized in law and by sufferance were four i.e; jotedar, Chukanidar, Dar-chukanidar and Adhiar.

Jotedar:

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A jotedar is a person who holds land directly of Government. He is a tenant with a heritable and transferable title in his holding vested in him by the fact of possession with power to transmit this title to those to whom he sublets. He has the right to resettle of the land included in his jote on the expiry of the term of the settlement, but subject to an increase of rent.(Sunder, p,118) .His title to possession of the land included in his jote is, however, always subject to the superior right of government as proprietor to resume any portion required for public or other purpose or proportional abatement being made in the rental and compensation allowed for any payment improvement. A jote may be acquired by direct settlement, by purchase and by inheritance.

Chukanidar:

The tenant immediately below the jotedars is the chukanidar or mulandar. The rent payable by him is fixed. His title to his holding is heritable and transferable. He is not allowed under the provisions of the jotedar's lease to sublet the whole or any portion of the tenure under pain of immediate forfeiture of such tenure. But he is permitted to employ adhiars.(Sunder,p,118) . Chukanidars can not be ousted from his holding, except by order of a competent court, notwithstanding the fact that he may not have been twelve years on a jote. There is an unwritten land between him and his jotedar that he cannot be ousted from his land as long as he pays his rent.(Ray Choudhury , 1987,p.27).

Dar-Chukanidar:

This class of tenants hold direct from the Chukanidars. The tenure rights of this class of tenants were neither found relevant by the Bengal Government nor approved by it. In a letter sent by the Revenue Department to Mr. Sunder, the settlement officer, it was stated, "The Lt. Governor approves your proposal that the newly created under-tenure of Dar-chukanidar in the Duars estate should be absolutely ignored, as much as these tenures have been made contrary to the express order of the government". (Sunder,p,118) .The dar-chukanidar was the under tenant of chukanidars. All these under tenants had occupancy rights in Cooch Behar, but not elsewhere.(Hunter, p.389; Sunder, p.119).

Adhiar:

Adhiars or Prajas are holders on the metayer system. They cultivate land immediately under the jotedars, chukanidars or a derivative chukanidar, but whatever the designation or status of the adhiars immediate superior be, he is known as the adhiars giri, half the produce of the land. The giri usually makes an advance of seeds and cash to the adhiar, which is adjusted when the produce is divided. The cattle and plough sometimes belong to the giri, sometimes to the adhiars. The legal status of various classes of adhiars unfortunately remained uncertain (Grunning, 1911; Bell, 1941, p.22). As the adhiars had to pay half of his produce, he was in a chronic state of debt and had very little means to improve his position. He had to take advance from his landlord to survive, and this the landlord realized with heavy interests during harvest time. (Hartly, , pp.M-15). There were no doubt variations in the position of adhiars in different areas of North Bengal. However, it was in this section of the local peasantry who had to bear the major burden of exploitation by the state and the landlord. (Hunter, pp,286-92) From the above discussion, it is cleared that the jotedars constituted the most dominant group in local agrarian social structure. An important to add in this context is the absence of noncultivating upper caste gentry in this region under study. Some parts of Bengal there was a class of upper caste gentry who owned substantial amounts of land. They did not cultivate themselves, as manual labour was a matter of disrespect in society. They, however, enjoyed maximum power in society by virtue of their social and economic position. There was another situation in northern part of India. Till the advent of the ninetieth century most of the land in North Bengal was in the possession of the local people i.e.; the Koches, the Rajbanshis, the Mechs etc. Unlike the upper caste gentry, these local peoples did not face the problem of status inconsistency if they themselves cultivated the land. However, the situation began to change from the late ninetieth century with the migration of people in this region. They not only consolidated their position as non-cultivating gentry, but also came to form a middle class at the village level, as it was from the group that the majority of the Zamindari agents and the staff of the local cutchery were recruited. Taking advantages of the backwardness of the local cultivators

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or poor rayots, they began to exploits them. In this respect we may refer from the Rangpur settlement report as follows(Hartly, pp. 14-15) “These men, of whom one or two are to be found in almost every village, are the leaders of the local factions who by a smattering of legal knowledge and ready wit have gained the confidence of their co-villagers. Often they are retained by the Zamindar’s staff and in return for land at favourable rates of rent or even rent free they watch their interest”.

Thus, the non-cultivating jotedars increased day by day in this region and secured a dominant position in the local agrarian structure. Based on the settlement reports, Amit Mitra has shown the ethnic composition of the jotedars of the Falakata tahsil in Jalpaiguri district between the year 1894 and 1905 where the Rajbanshis held 40% of the total jotes in 1894 and around 34% in 1905(Mitra,1986,p.12, Basu, p.51; Ray Choudhury,p.35.). There, were however, subsequent changes in the pattern of land control in North Bengal with the result that the Rajbanshis were gradually pushed out by the non-Rajbanshi land holders from their position of eminence. In 1911, only 1.2% of the Rajbanshis who had any occupation derived their income from rent. In Rajshahi division, which contained the major concentration of this caste population, they constituted only 10.68% of the rent-receivers, while, the representation of the Brahmins in this category amounted to 25.26 %.(Census Report of India 1911, Vol. V,pt.I, p.574;Vol.V,pt. II, Appendix to Table XVI,p. 379). Another example may be given here; one fairly big jotes (618 bighas) in the paragana Mekhliganj where Chunder Kishore Nandy was the proprietor of this jote. He leased out the entire jote to one Chutiram Doss, who after retaining 335 bighas and his direct management (Nij Chukanidars) sublet the rest to 10 Darchukanidars. By title (or family names), these were 7 Dosses, 1 Nasya, 1 Doss Mali and 1 Singh Doss. Thus a caste from Bengal obtained this jote and sublet the whole to nature inhabitants of Koch Behar, namely, a Rajbanshis (7 Dosses, 1 Doss Malli and 1 Singh Doss) and a native convert to Muslim (Nasya).(P.K.Bhattacharjee,pp.182-183).

The changes that were taking place in the economic share because of war, depression, and famine in Bengal also severely affected the existing pattern of land ownership in the North Bengal districts. The rise in prices

of food grains, and other necessities, following the World War II, also seriously affected the middle and poor peasants and this culminated in the great Bengal famine. The beneficiary's from this crisis were the merchants, moneylenders, and speculators- those who also invested their capital in land. The result of this development was the transfer of land from small jotedars and middle peasants to rich farmers, moneylenders, and speculators.(Bose, pp.58-69,87-97,134-140; Cooper,pp.37-62). In the North Bengal, large-scale transfer of land from the Rajbanshis to this non-Rajbanshis, which had started, from the late nineteenth century was only accelerated further by these later developments.

Another important reason for land transfer to the non-Rajbanshis was the migration of a large number of outsiders to different districts of North Bengal. At the earlier stage, the attraction of this region were the abundance of land, possibility of good business, job opportunities in Government offices as the local people were not in a position to compete with them , opening of tea gardens which provide job facilities for both the 'Babus' as well as labourers.(Sanyal, , pp.1- 3 ; Dasgupta, ,1992,pp.31-32). Regular settlement work was undertaken and the Duars had been brought under regular administration providing security to the inhabitants.

This administrative stability had particularly induced migration. However, most important factors that had encouraged the migration of the landed gentry were the land price of land and low rent compared to the situation in other parts of Bengal. Therefore, in the third settlement a large number of people who were not born to the soil could obtain lease could obtain lease from the Government as jotedars in the settled area. (Ray Choudhury,p.35). Some ones acquired jotes through purchase. Escalation of land price caused by migration furthered transfer of jotes through sale to outside. In fact, the migrants were controlling many of the jotes paying revenue from Rs. 20 to 2000 per annum after the 1895 settlement in Western Duars.(Ray Choudhury, p.36.) Comparing the population statistics of the 1881 Census with that of 1891 one finds an increase of 114277 in the population of the Western Duars. The break up of the increased population, who were migrants, can be studied based on the following table.(Sunder, 1881 ,p, 118, Grunning, 1891,p 32).

Notes

Table N0. 1: Number, and place of migration

Place of Origin	Number
Darjeeling	1588
Dinajpur	505
Rangpur	10101
Kuch Behar	32224
From other District of Bengal Proper	11364
Bihar districts	8491
Orissa	292
Chhotnagpur	20341
Other Province	29371
Total	114277

Source: Sunder's Report; Gruning, Jalpaiguri District Gazetteers; Census Statistics, 1881 and 1891.

This process continued as the 1901 Census shows that nearly one third of the inhabitants of Western Duars were foreign born and the figure of the migrants rose to 188223. All the migrants i.e; 73946 persons after 1818 have settled in different thanas of Western Duars(Gruning,.p,32). Most of the migrants from Darjeeling, Bihar and Chhotonagpur have been employed by the tea gardens as workers. People from Dinajpur, Cooch Behar have taken up land as Jotedars.

The census figure on migration for the period between 1891 and 1921(table No. 2) in Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts give us an idea of the volume of migration that was taking place in north eastern part of India(Mitra, 1951, Cooch Behar, p,xxxvi,Jalpaiguri,p,iii, West Dinajpur,p.xii.).

Table 2: Migration to Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur from contiguous and other District between 1891-1921

Year	From contiguous District		From other districts to	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	<u>Migration to Cooch Behar</u>			
1891	12997	15191	3262	1201

1901	9161	12531	12668	2255
1911	11000	13000	5000	2000
1921	9000	12000	10000	6000
<hr/>				
<u>Migration to Jalpaiguri</u>				
1891	30920	27835	12431	7641
1901	24354	23856	65272	48636
1911	18000	15000	15000	10000
1921	21000	19000	5000	4000
<hr/>				
<u>Migration to Dinajpur</u>				
1891	22670	18819	9308	5894
1901	13901	13319	60143	34871
1911	19000	16000	12000	6000
1921	12000	13000	10000	7000

Source: A Mitra ,West Bengal District Hand Book, Calcutta 1951, Cooch Behar ,P.XXXVi, Jalpaiguri,P.Lii, West Dinajpur, P. Xii.

This large influx of people not only led to a growing demand for land but also led to a rise in land prices. Local people, tempted by the spiraling prices soon began to sell their lands leading to the transformation of the local small and middle jotedars into under tenants, subservient to a new class of immigrant landed gentry. In Rangpur and Dinajpur, the big jotedars and non-agriculturists brought the maximum number of jotes (Bell,p.26; Hartley,p.22). In Jalpaiguri, the number of jotes held by the Rajbanshis are decreased, while the jotes held by the Marwaris, the upper caste Bengali, middle –class people, others are increased sharply (V. Xara, p.77; Ray Choudhury,pp.13-17; Mitra ,pp.10-13). By 1872, in Cooch Behar 54% of the revenue paying land had passed into the hand of the outsiders. (Sarkar, 1990,pp.vii-32; Ray, pp.203-4). Indeed all over North Bengal the phenomenon of transfer of land from the hands of the Rajbanshis to those of the non-Rajbanshis became a standard pattern and in course of time it generated a sense of grievance among the disposed Rajbanshi gentry.

Migration of population created demographic changes in an issue of concern while figures quoted by authorities are suspect it is pertinent to note that in the 20th century under British rule, immigration and migration, particularly into Assam ,North Bengal and Tripura ,was probably to the extent of about 30% of the population of which about 2/3 was from East Bengal (Bangladesh).(The Statesman,2005).Unfortunately, after independence this trend was allowed to continue, with the majority of the migrants, being from East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). In 1971 again was a major refugee exodus from East Pakistan (present Bangladesh), the majority of who

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never returned owing to the situation, which leads to the Indo- Pak war. The population growth of North Bengal may show in Table No. 3 during 1951-2001.

Table No.3: The growth of population in North Bengal from 1951-2001
(Population in Lakhs).

District	Area sq km	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	% of decadal growth (1971-81)	% of decadal growth (2001-2011)
Darjeeling	3,386	459.6	624.6	781.8	1,024.2	1299.9	1609.1	28.74	14.47
Cooch Behar	3,075	668.1	1,319.8	1,414.2	11,771.	2171.1	2479.1	25.27	13.86
Jalpaiguri	6,224	916.7	1,369.3	1,750.1	8	2800.5	3401.1	26.11	13.77
West Dinajpur	5,206	976.9	1,323.8	1,857.9	2,214.8	*1897.0	*2441.7	29.19	*22.90
Malda	3,313	937.6	1,221.9	1,612.7	2,404.9	**1230.6	**1503.1	26.19	**11.1
West Bengal	21,625	3,959.7	5,549.4	7,418.7	9,447.6	68077.9	80176.1	22.96	13.93

Source: Census Reports

The table No. 3 shows that the decadal growth of the population of North Bengal in every district is higher than the growth rate of West Bengal. Darjeeling and West Dinajpur is most high rate. However, there are certain causes of growth rate of population in North Bengal. It is situated at national and international boundary and the media for communication with Eastern India. This geographical situation helps to induce the migration problem. Besides, in 1960 the Tibetan refugees settled in the Duars of North Bengal, the Bengalese from Assam came to North Bengal due 'Banal Kheda Andolan' in 1960-61, Nepalese from Meghalaya and Bhutan were driven away who took shelter in India and the extensive pressure of migrants for Indo-Pak war in 1965. This influx of immigrants' people created an extensive pressure and crisis in socio-economic structure in North Bengal.(Sixth Central Conference Proceeding, UTJAS, 1991,p.10; Itihas Anusandhan-19, 2005 ,pp.339-40.) 37 Marcus Dam says, "Indian authorities continue to thwart attempt by Bhutanese refugees back to their homeland. The problem of these displaced people is expected to snowball into a major geographical crisis in North Bengal specially Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri because they are sandwiched between Nepal and Bhutan".(The Statesman,1996.)

In addition to the demographic changes, the policy of the West Bengal Government, particularly the land reforms programme had directly contributed to the growth of ethno- cultural regionalism in North Bengal. After the introduction of land Acquisition Act (1953), a large number of

Jotedars of North Bengal lost their lands in excess to the limit of seventyfive bighas. Khas (vested) land had been distributed to the landless cultivators. Although the victim zotedars were mostly of the Rajbanshi community, but their caste fellows were not sole beneficiaries. Hence, there was a strong voice for the distribution of the vested land to the Rajbanshis only. Naturally, land alienation to the non-Rajbanshis began with the first phase of land reforms in West Bengal germinated the seeds of deprivation among the presettled communities of North Bengal.(Barman, 2007, p.128) Second phase of land reform was undertaken in West Bengal with the coming the United Front (UF) Government in 1967. The UF Government during 1967-70 vested one million acre of land, which broken the backbone of social dominance of the landed aristocracy (zotedars) of West Bengal.(Banerjee , EPW, Vol. XXXVI,No.21 and 22, p.1797)).

The zotedars of North Bengal could not escape from it. However, third phase of land reforms called “Operation Burga” under the Left Front Government was successful in vesting family land and recording 1.2 million of sharecroppers within three years(1978-81) (Banerjee , EPW, Vol. XXXVI,No.21 and 22, p.1797) 41 According to the sources, 428179.95 hector vested land has been distributed among 2605432 beneficiaries. In North Bengal 170081.80 hector vested land was distributed among 671841 beneficiaries out of whom 301498 are SCs and 144181 are STs. (.Department of SC and ST Welfare Government of West Bengal ,1987,p,7; Dakua, 2003,pp.30-31) Land reforms and distribution of vested lands to the landless agricultural labourers by the UF and LF Governments had direct impact on the socio-economic pattern of the indigenous elites in North Bengal. Because of the partitioned and the post-Independent State Government of West Bengal was busier for rehabilitating the displaced peasants of the East Pakistan. As a result the lion share of the vested land was distributed among the East Pakistan refugees. It is also a hard fact that the presence of the millions of the refugees had precipitated the passing of the Zamindary Abolition Act, 1953. Although SC/ST people were benefited by the land distribution process of the Government, but the Rajbanshis were not benefited by this process. However, in many villages anti-Refugee

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disturbances had taken place. This anti foreigner feelings and feelings of deprivation of the indigenous people were capitalized. Under this situation, the Rajbanshis were forced to migrate into the nearby urban areas and to the other province only to be absorbed into the marginalize section workers, domestic servants whose survival depended upon the selling of labour power. Alienation from their ancestral land and the transformation of Rajbanshi from land owing peasants to wage labour proletariats had various social connotations too and tension has been grown in North Bengal from time to time in respect of separate state and autonomous power in North Bengal. The self –sustain village community(Ray Choudhury,p,2;U.N.Barman,1392,B.S., pp,1-15), however, began to change with the beginning of the commercialization of agriculture(V. Xara,p.72; Ray Choudhury,,p.38.) particularly tea production, Jute, Tobacco production and the introduction of railways in North Bengal. The gradual penetration of moneylenders, merchants and middle-class service groups as appendages of the market economy, brought significant change in the existing agrarian social structure as well. However, the Rajbanshi who constitute the bulk of the adhiars in this region did not benefit from this transformation and they did not able to compete with the Caste Hindus(Adhikary, 2004, p.34; Basu, p,53;Bhattacharya, , 2005, p.23) There was also a tendency among the Rajbanshi adhiars to work under the jotedars of their own community and this is one of the causes of Rajbanshis economic depression. Another important cause of miserable economic condition among the Rajbanshis was that they did not invest money in other economic fields than cultivation. Only Rajas, the Raikats of Japlaiguri had invested some money in the tea industry in the middle phase of the plantation industry. Apart from this, the Rajbanshis was not fit for modern cultivation system. As a result, when the Zamindari system was abolished in West Bengal (1953), it had tremendously affected the Rajbanshi community in general. It brought miseries and hardships upon the life of the Rajbanshi Jotedars and Zamindars. The upper caste gentry would manage their economic crisis but the Rajbanshis could not.

Tapas Kumar Raychoudhry observes that the Rajbanshis were always prone to static. As all primitive communities, they were tied to family

profession (agriculture) and were normally disinclined to changes professions.(Ray Choudhury,p.45.) He also says, when the tea gardens were opened the Rajbanshis never opted out to work as tea garden workers; this factor had compelled the planters to import labour from the tribal of Bihar and Chhotonagpur. The Railways too failed to induce the local people to work in railway construction programmes, though the wages were high. All the labourers used to come from the United Province and Bihar. Even during season time when a labour could have earned as much as Rs. 1.00 a day in jute Godwans, Rajbanshis labourers were not available.(Gruning,p.96) Total abstentions from the non-family professions was the basic norms of the Rajbanshis milieu until the externals caused some important changes to be introduced in their attitude towards new professions. As they contact with the new forces of the society, a sense of exclusives gradually developed among the Rajbanshi elites, which created status differentiation within the community.(Ray Choudhury, p.45-46; Muhkopadhyaya, p.110)) Ultimately this Rajbanshi elite class played an important role to whip up this community consciousness in latter period in order to mobilize social and political movement.

From the above discussion, it is to be mentioned here that in the late nineteenth and until the end of the twentieth century, some important changes had been taken place in the socioeconomic structure of the region under review. One of the most significance changes was that the Rajbanshis who once dominated the local society and economy were gradually subordinated and alienated from land by the newly settled dominant upper caste Hindus (elites). This domination of an essentially immigrant gentry as well as the cultural differences between them and the Rajbanshis created a sense of community solidarity among the latter. The most articulate section of the Rajbanshi people, the elites took an important part to whip up the community consciousness in order to formulate socio-political organizations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Bengal. They raised a new identity based on social, political and linguistic problem and articulated movement in the form of autonomous and separate state movement after independence in North Bengal.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. Discuss about the Re-organization of North Bengal.

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.....
.....

2. What do you know about the Socio Economic Transformation of North Bengal?

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6.4 LET US SUM UP

This chapter will attempt to give a description of that geographical area of North Bengal which had been changed its area and shape in course of times. Even during the period of our study from 1869 to 1969, the geographical boundary of North Bengal had been changed due to the circumstances created by the colonial rulers. The chief aim of this chapter is to analyse the nature of the changes brought about in the area and the history of North Bengal in general. It is admitted by so many scholars in different volumes that history of North Bengal in general are very rich and glorious. From ancient times, it had a tradition, and of course, sometimes it was the central place in the context of the history of whole of Bengal. During ancient period we find mention of the capital city of Bengal was situated in North Bengal. During the later Gupta Period and later on under Sasanka, North Bengal played a remarkable role not only in the history of Bengal, at the same time in the context of the history of North-East India and Northern India also. In this connection it has to be mentioned that the North Eastern region of India situated in one of the greatest migration routes of mankind' from the time immemorial, had been the inhabitant of population which perhaps represent the admixture of all most all the racial strains, like Aryans, the Alpine-Iranian and the Tibeto-Burman, later being the most numerous

and predominant. They had migrated to settle in the region with their own culture, language and religion as groups of Non-Hindu affiliation.

From ancient period to early medieval period. North Bengal as a Geographical area gained much importance. In our discussion it is found that during that time North Bengal was a meeting place of different ethno-cultural identities. Later on during the medieval period some cities were grown up in North Bengal which got much importance in our Socio-cultural history. Even during the colonial period. North Bengal witnessed so many Socio-cultural movements. In our national movement North Bengal also played a significant role though it had certain limitations. Hence, as a whole it is found that for our present study North Bengal got a unique geo-historical profile which have attracted so many scholars for a comprehensive study on different fields.

Ecotourism, the nature based travel with emphasis on education, management, development of sustainable tourism product and activity and wellbeing of the local people is not simply a marginal activity to finance protection of the environment but it has proved to be an engine of growth in many economies of the world. Eco tourism has been recognized as the backbone of economies of many countries. North Bengal being the northern territory of West Bengal of India is fortunate for its rich ecotourism destinations. The present paper will explore the ecotourism landscape of this tract of India. It will also reflect an overview of its impact on the regional economy with six case studies. The paper will be concluded with some problems and management strategies of ecotourism activity of the area.

6.5 KEY WORDS

Transformation: a marked change in form, nature, or appearance.

Social: Combining work and play, it's an urban hangout designed to take you offline while still keeping you connected. Social is a collaborative workspace.

Economic: relating to economics or the economy.

6.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Discuss about the situation of socio economy of North Bengal.

6.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 6.2
2. See Section 6.3

UNIT 7: HISTORY OF MIGRATION: DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES: NEW SOCIAL STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 The Concept of Social Change
- 7.3 Culture and Social Structure: A Conceptual Primer
- 7.4 The Concept of Migration
- 7.5 Migration-Induced Change
- 7.6 Migration: Situation in North Bengal
- 7.7 Let us sum up
- 7.8 Key Words
- 7.9 Questions for Review
- 7.10 Suggested readings and references
- 7.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the Concept of Social Change
- To discuss about the Culture and Social Structure: A Conceptual Primer
- To discuss about the Concept of Migration
- To know about Migration-Induced Change
- To know about the migration situation in North Bengal

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Examining the multiple ways in which migration relates to social change is a daunting task. It requires, first of all, defining what social change is and, secondarily, delimiting the scope of analysis to certain types of migration and not others. The greatest dangers that I envision in this enterprise are, first, getting lost in generalities of the “social change is

ubiquitous” kind and, second, attempting to cover so much terrain as to lose sight of analytic priorities and of major, as opposed to secondary, causal linkages. I seek to avoid these dangers by discussing first the concept of social change, second identifying the types of migration to be considered, and third examining the major factors that link one to another. I conclude the paper with four theoretical and methodological considerations suggested by the analysis that may guide future work in this field.

7.2 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Since time immemorial, thinkers and writers on social affairs have fairly well divided among those who focused on stability and order and those that privileged transformation. Among the Greeks, Parmenides and the Eleatics denied the possibility of movement and stressed the permanence and unity of beings, while Heraclitus’ famous metaphor of the never-the-same river illustrated being as eternal becoming (Maritain 1960; 1963). Medieval scholastic thinkers were of one voice in envisioning the terrestrial social order as a reflection of the immutable heavens and, hence, of a natural hierarchy in which everyone was born with a defined place and calling and in which every humanly-created disruption of time-sanctioned norms and patterns of conduct was to be condemned as a violation of the divine design. The only possible society was that which already existed (Maritain 1963; Balmes 1961; Phelan 1969). It was necessarily for thinkers of the Enlightenment to toss off the one-to-one correspondence between celestial and earthly societies – a major intellectual achievement at the time – in order to begin to contemplate the possibility that other ways of organizing life-in-common could exist. The French Revolution, arguably the defining event of modern times, put these ideas into practice by showing how this could be done, confining divine rights in the process to the dustbin of history (Ortega y Gasset 1958; Dobb [1947] 1963). The French Revolution shifted the course of Western social thought from stasis to change. The discipline of sociology, a child of the Enlightenment was to make its business to trace the process by which European societies had shifted from Theological and Philosophical Thought to Scientific Thought (Comte); from

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Mechanic to Organic Solidarity (Durkheim); from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* (Tonnies); and from tradition to modernity (Simmel; Spencer). Philosophy and later political economy underwent a parallel re-orientation with the difference that, in addition to describing the stages of societal evolution, as most sociologists were doing, they thought to uncover the master mechanism that accounted for historical change (Maritain 1960; Ortega y Gasset 1958; Mandel 1978).

Philosophers found the key in the concept of dialectics where the reigning Idea did battle with a rising Anti-Thesis with the struggle eventually giving way to a new Synthesis that, in turn, became hegemonic provoking a new opposite thesis *ad infinitum*. Trained as a philosopher, Marx adopted this Hegelian master concept but then proceeded to turn his master “on his head” by arguing that it was not ideas, but material forces of production that clashed repeatedly, giving rise to new and previously inconceivable forms of economic and social organization (Marx [1848] 1964; Dahrendorf 1959). Dialectical materialism became the theoretical anchoring point for a school of thought in sociology and political economy influential to our day (Dobb [1947] 1963; Bourdieu 1990; Merton 1968).

With the wisdom of hindsight, we can see that the concept of dialectics, ideal or material, is less a causal master mechanism than a meta-theoretical assumption pitched at such a high level of abstraction as to render it unfalsifiable. It is certainly possible to construct dialectical narratives *a posteriori* but, in contemporary society, it is difficult to specify what the thesis and antithesis might be or when the awaited synthesis will burst into the scene. For this reason, Hegelian and Marxist dialectics are ultimately “sensitizing notions”, general perspectives whose value lies in highlighting certain aspects of reality as worthy of attention, but without identifying concrete causal sequences or mechanisms (Weber [1904] 1949; Stinchcombe 1968). Sociology had to await the advent of the Parsonian Synthesis in the twentieth century to restore some balance between theories of social stability and change and, in the process, return to some of the long-forgotten themes of medieval scholastic thought. Parsons’ pattern variables did repeat the familiar nineteenth century exercise about the stages of societal evolution, this

time breaking them down into five subsets – from “ascription/achievement” to “particularism/universalism” (Parsons 1951). However, the bulk of his intellectual project was to construct a conceptual edifice isomorphic with society itself and where “pattern maintenance” and “equilibrium” were paramount. Social change in this system was relegated to a marginal place where internally-driven transformation occurred only incrementally and where external “shocks” on the system were to be decisively confronted in order to restore equilibrium (Parsons 1951; Parsons and Smelser 1956; Coser 1956; Dahrendorf 1959). Much of contemporary social theorizing, arguably with the exception of post-modernism and other nihilist currents, consists of a continuing debate between post-Marxists and postParsonian advocates or, what is the same, between latter-day enactors of the historical contest between ideas of stability and change (Collins 1988; Bourdieu 1990; Kincaid 1996). Leaving these debates aside, we may ask what these centuries-old traditions have bequeathed us in the way of useful tools for the analysis of contemporary events. In other words, what have we learned? At the broadest level, such lessons may be synthesized in five points:

1. Stability and change co-exist. While it is true that “change is ubiquitous”, it is also the case that it could not happen if there was nothing tangible, no established structure to “change” in the first place.
2. Sources of change are multiple and are not limited to the social system’s internal dialectics.
3. Effects of social change are similarly diverse. They can be organized in a hierarchy of “micro-processes” affecting individuals and their immediate surroundings; “meso-processes” affecting entire communities and regions; and “macro-processes” affecting full societies and even the global system.
4. Change at each of these levels must be similarly prioritized into processes occurring “at the surface” and yielding only marginal

modifications of the social order and those producing core systemic changes of the kind identified in everyday discourse as “revolutionary.”

5. Stability is reflected, at the visible level of social life, in existing institutions and the social organizations that they underlie. Stabilizing major processes of social change consists precisely in institutionalizing their consequences. These five general points require additional explanation.

7.3 CULTURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: A CONCEPTUAL PRIMER

I borrow here from previously published essays on the definition of institutions and their positioning, relative to other elements of social life (Portes 2006; Portes and Smith 2008). This is done in order to clarify the qualitatively different levels at which social change can take place and the scope and the implications of these differences. From its classical beginnings, modern Sociology developed a central distinction, consolidated by the mid-twentieth century, between culture and social structure. The distinction is analytical because only human beings exist in reality, but it is fundamental to understand both the motives for their actions and their consequences. Culture is the realm of values, cognitive frameworks, and accumulated knowledge. Social structure is the realm of interests, individual and collective, backed by different amounts of power. This symbolic distinction provides the basis for analyzing the difference between what “ought to be” or “is expected to be” and what actually “is” in multiple social contexts (Merton 1936, 1968a). The diverse elements that compose culture and social structure can be arranged in a hierarchy of causative influences from “deep” factors, often concealed below everyday social life but fundamental for its organization, to “surface” phenomena, more mutable and more readily evident. Language and values are the deep elements of culture, the first as the fundamental instrument of human communication and the second as the motivating force behind principled action, individual or collective (Durkheim [1897] 1965; Weber [1904] 1949). Values are deep culture because they are seldom invoked in the course of everyday life. The

latter occurs, for the most part, in a habitual state with values coming to the fore only in exceptional circumstances. Yet, they underlie, and are inferred from, aspects of everyday behavior which are the opposite of unrestrained self-interest.

Values are not norms and the distinction is important because the first represent general moral principles and the second concrete directives for action (Newcomb et. al. 1965; MacIver and Page [1949] 1961). Values underlie norms which are rules that prescribe the “do’s” and “don’ts” of individual everyday conduct. These rules can be formal and codified into constitutions and laws, or they can be implicit and informally enforced. The concept of norms has been used, at least since Durkheim ([1901] 1982), to refer to this restraining element of culture. The significance of the values embodied into norms is reflected in practice in the level of sanctions attached to the latter. Thus life in prison or the death penalty awaits those found guilty of deliberate murder, while loud protest and insulting remarks may be the lot of those seeking to sneak ahead of a queue (Cooley 1902, 1912; Simmel [1908] 1964; Goffman 1959). Norms are not free-floating, but come together in organized bundles known as roles. Roles are generally defined as the set of behaviors prescribed for occupants of particular social positions (Linton 1945; Newcomb 1950: Ch. 3). Well-socialized persons shift from role to role effortlessly and often unconsciously as part of their daily routines. The normative blueprints that constitute a role generally leave considerable latitude for their individual enactment. Thus the role of “physician” or “mother” may be performed in very different ways by individual occupants, while still conforming to its normative expectations. An extensive literature in both sociology and social psychology has analyzed roles as the building blocks of social life and as one of the lynchpin concepts linking the symbolic world of culture to real social structures. The same literature examined such dynamics as the “role set” enacted by given social actors and the “role conflict” or “role strain” created when normative expectations in an actor’s role sets contradict each other (Cottrell 1933; Linton 1945; Merton 1957; Goffman 1959, 1961; Goode 1960). Along with normative expectations, roles also embody an instrumental repertoire of skills necessary for their proper enactment. Language is the

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fundamental component of this repertoire for, without it, no other skills can be enacted. These cultural “tool kits” also contain, however, many other elements – from scientific and professional know-how to demeanor, forms of expressions, manners, and general savoir faire suitable for specific social occasions. In the modern sociological literature, these elements are referred to by the concepts of cultural capital or “skills repertoires” (Bourdieu 1979; 1984; Swidler 1986; Zelizer 2005). Parallel to the component elements of culture run those of social structure. These are not made up of moral values or generalized “do’s” and “don’ts” flowing from them, but by the specific and differentiated ability of social actors to compel others to do their bidding. This is the realm of power which, like that of values, is situated at the “deep” level of social life influencing a wide variety of outcomes, albeit in different ways. Weber’s classic definition of power as the ability of an actor to impose his/her will despite resistance is still appropriate, for it highlights the compulsory and coercive nature of this basic element of social structure. It does not depend on the voluntary consent of subordinates and, for some actors and groups to have it, others must be excluded from access to power-conferring resources (Weber [1922] 1947; Veblen [1899] 1998; Mills 1959). While values motivate or constrain, power enables. Naturally, elites in control of power-conferring resources seek to stabilize and perpetuate their position by molding values so that the mass of the population is persuaded of the “fairness” of the existing order. Power thus legitimized becomes authority in which subordinates readily acquiesce to their position (Weber [1922] 1947; Bendix 1962: Chs. 9-10). In Marx’ classic definition, power depends on control of the means of production, but in the modern post-industrial world this definition appears to be too restrictive (Marx [1939] 1970; [1867] 1967, Part VII). Power is conferred as well by control of the means of producing and appropriating knowledge, by control of the means of diffusing information, and by the more traditional control of the means of violence (Weber [1922] 1947; Wright 1980, 1985; Poulantzas 1975). In the Marxist tradition, a hegemonic class is one which has succeeded in legitimizing its control of the raw means of power, thus transforming it into authority (Gramsci [1927-33] 1971; Poulantzas

1975). Like values are embodied in norms, power differentials give rise to social classes – large aggregates whose possession or exclusion from resources lead to varying life chances and capacities to influence the course of events. Classes need not be subjectively perceived by their occupants in order to be operative, for they underlie the obvious fact that people in society are ranked according to what they can or cannot do or, alternatively, by how far they are able to implement their goals when confronted with resistance (Wright 1985; Wright and Perrone 1976; Poulantzas 1975). Class position is commonly associated with wealth or its absence, but it is also linked to others power-conferring resources such as expertise or the “right” connections with others (Hout et. al. 1993; Bourdieu 1984, 1990; Portes 2000a). As emphasized by Bourdieu (1985) dominant classes generally command a mix of resources that includes not only wealth, but also ties to influential others (social capital), and the knowledge and style to occupy highstatus positions (cultural capital). The deep character of power seldom comes to the surface of society for, as seen previously, its holders aim to legitimize it in the value system in order to obtain the consent of the governed. For the same reason, class position is not readily transparent and it is a fact, repeatedly verified by empirical research, that individuals with very different resources and life chances frequently identify themselves as members of the same “class” (Hout et. al. 1993; Grusky and Sorensen 1998). Legitimized power (authority) produces status hierarchies which is how most social actors actually perceive the underlying structure of power and how they classify themselves. In turn, status hierarchies are commonly linked to the enactment of occupational roles defined by differential bundles of norms and skill repertoires (MacIver and Page [1949] 1961; Newcomb et. al. 1965: 336-341; Linton 1945). These various elements of culture and social structure, placed at different levels of causal importance and visibility, occur simultaneously and appear, at first glance, like an undifferentiated mass. Their analytic separation is required, however, for the proper understanding of social phenomena, including social change. Not everything is “constraints on behavior”, as currently popular neo-institutionalist analyses argue (North 1990; Greif 2006); some elements constrain, others motivate, and still others enable.

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The conceptual framework outlined thus far is summarized in Figure 1. As the citations accompanying the text suggest, this framework is not new or improvised, but forms part of an intellectual legacy dating back to the sociology classics and frequently neglected today.

Organizations, economic and otherwise, are what social actors normally inhabit in the routine course of their lives and they embody the most readily visible manifestations of the underlying structures of power (Powell 1990; DiMaggio 1990; Granovetter 2001). Institutions represent the symbolic blueprint for organizations; they are the set of rules, written or informal, governing relationships among role occupants in social organizations like the family, the schools, and the other major areas of social life: the polity, the economy, religion, communications and information, and leisure (MacIver and Page [1949] 1961; Merton 1968c; North 1990; Hollingsworth 2002). This definition of institutions is in closer agreement with everyday uses of the term, as when one speaks of “institutional blueprints”. Its validity does not depend, however, on this overlap, but on its analytic utility. The distinction between organizations and institutions is there to highlight an important mechanism of everyday social change that would be otherwise obscured. No doubt, as Douglass North (1990) puts it, “institutions matter”, but they are also subject to what Granovetter (1985, 1992) referred to as “the problem of embeddedness”; namely, that the human exchanges that institutions seek to control and guide in turn affect the same institutions. This is why formal goals and prescribed institutional hierarchies come to differ with how organizations operate in reality (Dalton 1959; Morrill 1991; Powell 1990). Absent this analytic separation, as well as the understanding that institutions and organizations flow from deeper levels of social life, everything becomes an undifferentiated mass where the recognition that “institutions matter” leads no further than descriptive statements and, at worst, to tautologies. The discussion in this section and the accompanying diagram serve to flesh out the five basic points cited previously. First, the causal hierarchy among different components of culture and social structure implies that those factors affecting deeper levels will have much more significant consequences in producing change than those impinging on its surface elements. A successful

revolution that upends the power hierarchy of a nation or a charismatic prophecy that transforms its value system will have more far-reaching implications than a decree creating a new government ministry, a new ban on smoking in public places, or a modified curriculum in public schools. Second, institutions crystallize prior processes of change at deeper levels of society because they represent the embodiment of existing power arrangements, social classes, values, and skill repertoires. Third, as “symbolic blueprints” for social organizations, institutions are in constant tension with actual reality so that if role occupants are governed by institutionalized rules, their actions and interactions also affect those rules and often modify their character. These dialectics between institutions and the organizations they govern -- the problem of embeddedness -- occurs at the surface of social life and tends to produce continuous, incremental changes. Social change, at this level, is indeed “ubiquitous”. Yet, focusing exclusively on these changes and others occurring at the surface, neglects the continued stability of basic elements of culture and social structure, quite removed from that level and far more resistant to change.

7.4 THE CONCEPT OF MIGRATION

With this conceptual spadework done, we can turn to the relationship between migration and social change. Migration is, of course, change and it can lead, in turn, to further transformations both in sending and receiving societies. Here I restrict the scope of analysis to migration across national borders, although several of the points made below may apply as well to long-distance domestic movements. As a form of change, international migration has been analyzed as a consequence of a diverse set of causes, both in the source and receiving countries. A number of summaries of this literature already exists (Massey et. al. 1998; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Sassen 1988), and thus it would be redundant to review it in detail again. For the record, it suffices to list the principal schools that have advanced hypotheses in this area:

- The neoclassical approach, based on an individualistic calculus of benefits and costs among would-be migrants (Borjas 2001; Thomas 1973).

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- The “new economics” approach, based on the concept of relative deprivation and an emphasis on family strategies to overcome capitalist market imperfections in sending regions (Stark 1991; Massey 1990).
- The world-system perspective, grounded on the concepts of structural penetration and “imbalancing” of peripheral areas creating the conditions for mass displacements out of them (Portes and Walton 1981; Sassen 1988; Alba 1978).
- The social networks approach, based on the concepts of “path dependence” and diminishing costs of migration. These concepts are invoked less to explain the origins of migration as its continuation and resilience over time (Tilly 1990; Anderson 1974; Castles 2004.)

As a cause of change, migration has been analyzed from a cultural perspective that emphasizes its potential for value/normative transformation and from a structural perspective that highlights its demographic and economic significance. Studies of change vary in scope, focusing at the micro-level of individuals and families; the meso-level of communities and regions; and the macro-level of nation-states and the global economy (Massey et. al. 1998; Portes 1999). Just as the scope of analysis varies, so does the depth of the processes of change attributed to migration. Effects may simply scratch the surface of society, affecting some economic organizations, role expectations, or norms. On the other hand, they may go deep into the culture, transforming the value system, or into the social structure, transforming the distribution of power. Such profound transformations are precisely what opponents of migration in receiving societies fear and what they have traditionally railed against (Grant 1916; Brimelow 1995; Huntington 2004). The power of migration to effect change either in sending or receiving regions and countries depends on three main factors: a) the numbers involved; b) the duration of the movement; c) its class composition. Concerning the first, it is obvious that small displacements have little causative power, seldom going beyond the lives of those involved and their immediate kin. At the other extreme, “telluric movements” that see

an entire people decamp and move to other parts of the planet in search of better future can have dramatic consequences in the places that they leave and in those where they settle. At various points in human history, such displacements have literally redrawn the social and demographic map of the world. The prehistorical cross-Pacific movements that populated the Americas; the “barbarian invasions” that did away with the Roman Empire and redrew the map of Europe; the peopling of Canada, Australia and other settler colonies by the English; the famine-led Irish emigration to North America and elsewhere in the mid-nineteenth century; and the Jewish exodus to Palestine in the mid-twentieth provide so many disparate examples (Braudel [1949] 1973; Pirenne 1970; Goldscheider 1986). In the United States and Europe today, the fears expressed by opponents of immigration commonly portray a similar “telluric movement” rising out of the poorer nations of three continents and overwhelming the social systems and the culture of the developed world (Lamm and Imhoff 1985; Brimelow 1995). Such fears are readily contradicted by the numbers – scarcely 200 million migrants in a planet of 6 billion, with only a minority going to the advanced countries (United Nations 2002) and by the capacity of the host societies to fend off drastic change, a point to which I will return.

Concerning the second factor, circular flows of short duration tend to produce less durable change than permanent displacements. Under certain conditions, cyclical movements may reinforce the existing social structures rather than change them. This may occur, for instance, when migrant workers’ earnings help support the development of rural productive structures at home, thereby strengthening their long-term viability (Stark 1984). Similarly, temporary labor migration to Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s helped significantly its economic expansion without making much of a dent into European social structures or cultures until the compulsory end of the program turned temporary workers into permanent migrants (Castles and Kosack 1973; Hollifield 2004). Permanent out-migration can significantly alter the demographic structure of sending societies, as when entire regions are depopulated. Permanent migrants can also have a stronger influence on sending regions by weakening local productive systems, and changing the culture

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in the direction of out-migration as the sole normative path to upward mobility (Lungo 1999; Delgado-Wise 2007). A settled permanent immigrant population of any size will also have a greater impact in the culture and social structure of host societies, as is evident with the transformation of circular to permanent immigration among Turks, Moroccans, and Algerians to Western Europe and with the end of cyclical labor migration across the U.S.-Mexican border, paving the way for a permanent unauthorized migrant population in the United States (Castles and Kosack 1973; Massey et. al. 2002). Finally, the third factor – the composition of migrant flows – affects the change potential of migration in unexpected ways. One may argue that movements composed of persons with higher human capital would have a greater impact on receiving societies because of the greater capacity of such migrants to express themselves and protect their cultural traits. In fact, the opposite tends to happen because educated migrants have greater flexibility and capacity to adapt to the receiving culture, being often fluent in its language. Greater human capital translates into better opportunities in the labor market and easier entry into the host society's economic mainstream (Hirschman and Wong 1986; Portes and Rumbaut 2006: Ch. 2). That is, in part, why migration of professionals is seldom seen as a problem in the host societies. On the contrary, flows composed of poorly-educated workers can have a more durable impact because of their initial ignorance of the host language and culture and the tendency, especially among migrants from rural origin, to adhere tightly to their customs. Sizable flows of migrant workers tend to give rise to visible cultural-linguistic concentrations, generally in marginal areas of host societies. Such “ghettos” go on to become natural targets for nativists who paint them as tangible evidence of migrants' inferior cultural or even biological endowments (Borjas 2001; Brimelow 1995).

Lastly, flows that are class-diverse -- comprising both high- and low-human capital migrants -- are most likely to give rise to institutionally-complete ethnic enclaves in receiving countries. This is so because skilled immigrants are able to set up enterprises using the mass of their co-ethnics as both a market and a source of labor (Wilson and Portes 1980); in turn, less educated immigrants find in these ethnic enterprises

an alternative source of employment opportunities and even a “training mechanism” to learn themselves the ropes of small business management (Zhou and Bankston 1998; Bailey and Waldinger 1991). Institutionally-complete enclaves represent the most visible manifestation of change wrought on host societies by migration. The duration of such formations varies significantly, however. In the United States, they tend to last no more than two to three generations because the very success of immigrant entrepreneurs pushes their descendants into positions of advantage in the host country’s economic mainstream (Zhou 1992; Portes and Shaffer 2007). In Germany and other European countries, according to some accounts, immigrant enclaves appear to last longer (Esser 2004).

The archetypical enclave was that created by the Jewish exodus out of Czarist Russia in New York City. At the start of the twentieth century, almost two million Russian Jews migrated to America from the Pale of Settlement where they had been confined by the Czarist regime and where they were subjected to repeated pogroms. Unlike Italians and other migrant workers of the time, Russian Jews were class-diverse. Skilled artisans and merchants abounded among them and they used their resources to set themselves up in business, starting as humble peddlers and gradually rising in the capitalist hierarchy. By the mid-1930s, an institutionally-complete Jewish enclave had developed in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, where religious and cultural institutions proliferated, an ethnic press in English and Yiddish flourished, and where the needle trades became the “great Jewish *métier*” (Rischin 1962; Howe 1976). A few years later, children of these now prosperous migrants were literally taking the East Coast universities by assault, with the City University of New York serving as the main focus for their educational and professional aspirations. By the 1960s, the Jewish Lower East Side was a memory, but members of the Jewish third generation had by then become ensconced in the city’s upper professional and business ranks, their education and incomes significantly surpassing those of other ethnic groups, including Anglo-Americans (Dinnerstein 1977; Sowell 1981: Ch. 4). A more contemporary example is provided by the Cuban exodus to Miami. Like the Jewish one, this emigration out of the island was class-

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diverse, led by the old upper- and middlestrata escaping Castro's revolution. Successively lower layers of the island's population followed the elites, all clustering in South Florida. In a few years, an ethnic enclave began to take hold and by the 1990s, it had consolidated into a cultural, religious, and political complex buttressed by over 72,000 Cuban-owned firms. By 2000, the incomes of Cuban exiles arriving in the 1960s and 1970s were at par with those of native whites and those of Cuban business-owners were the highest in the region. The exiles also had the highest rates of self-employment of any ethnic group in the area. Second-generation Cubans, while also displaying high average incomes, had much lower rates of business ownership, an indication that, like the Jewish second generation, they were leaving the original enclave to seek mobility in mainstream professions (Portes and Stepick 1993; Stepick et. al. 2003; Portes and Shaffer 2007).

The pace of cultural and political ascent of Cubans was, if anything, swifter than the early Jewish rise out of Lower Manhattan. Today, Spanish has joined English as the language of business and everyday discourse in Miami. The mayors of all large cities, including Miami proper and Miami-Dade County, are Cuban, as are the area's three federal congresspersons; Miami's delegation to the Florida State legislature is almost uniformly Cuban, being comprised of both former exiles and their children.

7.5 MIGRATION-INDUCED CHANGE

a. Host Societies

"Immigration has transformed America" is a frequent mantra in the current immigration literature. As a rhetorical device, there is nothing wrong with these statements, but it is time to consider seriously how accurate they are. In a more scholarly vein, Alba and Nee (2003) speak of the ways immigration "remade the American mainstream". Is this really so? In other words, is it the case that migration has transformed core elements of the host societies? Referring to the hierarchy of elements in Figure 1, it is evident that truly revolutionary social change requires the "remaking" of the value system and the transformation of a society's class structure. Are migration-induced changes capable of

achieving this? Seldom. It is true, as many authors have asserted, that massive immigration can transform the “sight and smells” of cities, the ethnic composition of the masses riding public transportation or, as Kasinitz et. al. put it in their recent study of New York City: That the city has no clear ethnic majority means that it was “no big deal” for our second generation respondents to have immigrant parents. They rarely felt like outsiders or exotics. Most of their friends were in a similar situation, and anyway, everyone is from somewhere (Kasinitz et. al. 2008: 22). But these are “street-level” changes. The fundamental pillars of New York society have remained unaltered. These include the legal/judicial complex, the educational system, the dominance of English, the basic values guiding social interaction, and, above all, the distribution of power arrangements and the class structure. As portrayed in Figure 2, mass immigration “pushes from below”, affecting certain organizations such as labor-intensive industries and public schools and forcing some institutional accommodations at this level. However, the transformational potential of migration is limited, at every level, by the existing web of institutions reflecting deep cultural and power arrangements. These channel migrants to “proper” places in the status system and educate them and their descendants in the language and cultural ways of the host society. This is what the process of assimilation is about. At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between the structural significance and the change potential of migration flows. As noted previously, they can be important precisely because they buttress the dominant political and economic structures, without so much as a dent made in the existing institutional order. Migration of professionals and technicians can acquire structural significance in furthering the development of high-tech industries; similarly, laborintensive sectors may become structurally dependent on flows of manual workers (Saxenian 2006; Roberts et. al. 1999; Cornelius 1998). These movements help consolidate, not modify, fundamental aspects of the culture and power structure of receiving societies. As we have seen, cyclical movements possess the least change potential because of their very temporariness and precariousness (Piore 1979). Permanent settlements can reach farther, but even in these cases their capacity to effect profound

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transformations in the host countries is limited. Unless immigration becomes a “telluric movement” overwhelming the existing structures of power, its capacity to induce profound social change is limited. In order to prevent migration from doing to the receiving societies what the “barbarian invasions” did to Rome, there is a thick institutional web defending the primacy of existing values and normative structures and there is, above all, the state. Modern states are sufficiently powerful to ensure that migration-induced change does not get out of the way and certainly that it does not challenge the core cultural and structural pillars of host countries. The “assimilative clash” portrayed in Figure 2 certainly has a number of important consequences, but they are not of a revolutionary kind. Leaving aside cyclical movements for the time being, it is a fact that even permanent settlers are unable and, for the most part, unwilling to confront the power of the host state. Instead they seek various forms of accommodation which depend on the third factor noted previously, namely the class composition of each flow. High human capital migrants tend to acculturate rapidly and seek entry into the middle-class mainstream, riding on their occupation skills and cultural resources; manual laborers cluster in poor and marginal areas, creating a host of religious, cultural, and sport organizations for comfort and self-defense; class-diverse migrations commonly morph into institutionally-complete enclaves where migrants carve their own path to upward economic mobility.

The presence of these foreign sub-societies frequently catches the eye of nativists and other observers, prompting the assertion that migration is “remaking the mainstream”. Nothing of the sort actually happens. Migration can transform the “looks” and the ethnic composition of the working-classes without altering the basic social order. In America, working-class migrant communities effectively disappear with the occupational and residential mobility of the second generation, as it happened to so many “Little Italys” and “Little Polands” that once dotted the Eastern and Midwestern urban landscapes (Alba 1985; Dinnerstein Thomas and Znaniecki 1927: 1511-49). Alternatively, racism and other structural forces may keep the second generation bottled up in the same marginal areas occupied by their parents which then degenerate into

urban “ghettos” or “barrios” -- places of permanent subordination and disadvantage (Wacquant and Wilson 1989; Mills 1967; Vigil 2002). For subsequent policy-makers, the problem posed by these areas is precisely how to make them join -- not remake -- the social mainstream (Wilson 1987; Barrera 1980; Bean and Stevens 2003). As seen previously, ethnic enclaves can represent avenues for mobility. Unless migration from the host society continues, they also tend to disappear in the course of two-three generations. While it is true that Jewish-Americans in their day and Cuban-Americans today escalated to top positions in the class structure of their respective cities, they did so precisely by conforming to the American value/normative complex and its legal system, not by challenging them. Although for local elites displaced from power in a city like Miami, the successive Cuban exile waves may have seemed “telluric”, the fact is that the newcomers’ ascent took place within the existing institutional rules (Portes and Stepick 1993). Today, the CEO of a large New York corporation may be named Lowenstein rather than Johnston and the mayor of Miami-Dade County may be an Alvarez rather than a King, but the normative order governing the corporation, the county and the broader society in which both are embedded remain largely unchanged and distinctly American.

Prompted, in part, by the fear that the foreign flow becomes overwhelming, these attacks -- of which Huntington’s “Hispanic Challenge” is the latest exemplar -- have several disparate consequences. On the positive side, they revive patriotic sentiment and, paradoxically, turn the presence of migrants into an occasion for the reaffirmation of national traditions and values. On the negative side, they deeply stigmatize migrants and push those groups least able to defend themselves to the lowest rungs of society’s status system and class structure (Fernández-Kelly and Konczal 2005). These conditions become the prelude for a self-fulfilling prophecy where racism blocks access to mobility channels, creating the basis for downward assimilation in the second generation and the perpetuation of poverty, disadvantage, and deviance (Portes and Zhou 1993; Wacquant and Wilson 1989). Whether descendants of immigrants end up at the top or at the bottom of the class system, they do not alter its fundamental structure; they simply populate

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its different layers with new names and new faces. The “diversity” that mass migration brings about consists precisely on the growing presence in existing organizations of new, ethnically-distinct role occupants. Some institutional rules may be changed to accommodate this population – such as making services to the public available in various languages. But the public and private institutions that decide to do so and the underlying class system remain untouched. Aside from creating diversity in the streets and building sub-societies at the margin – some as vehicles for upward mobility, others destined to degrade into permanent poverty – the transformative potential of migration is limited. Certain foodways and folkways will undoubtedly filter up and be incorporated into the cultural mainstream, but the bedrock value system and power structure operating through the existing institutional network ensure that whatever “melting” occurs will be decidedly asymmetrical.

b. *Sending Societies* The same distinction between structural importance and change potential of migration flows applies to sending countries and regions. Put differently, in a number of instances these flows may actually strengthen or stabilize the existing socio-political order rather than transform it. This occurs, for example, when out-migration provides an economic safety valve, alleviating the pressure of popular discontent on elites and allowing them to preserve their privileges (Robinson 1996; Ariza and Portes 2007). A similar effect is associated with the flow of remittances, which may grow to a sufficient size to resolve chronic balance-of-payments problems and even serve as collateral for securing additional external loans (Guarnizo 2003). In such instances, there is no question that migration acquires “structural importance” for the sending country, but its main effect is to consolidate the existing class structures rather than change them in any significant way. This is the reason why many scholars from these nations have rallied against mass out-migration, seeing in it not only an indicator of underdevelopment, but a cause of its perpetuation (Delgado-Wise and Cypher 2007). The distinction between circular and permanent outmigration is also relevant here. Circular flows are less likely to make a dent in the culture and social structure of sending regions because migrant workers are expected

to return after a short period abroad. As Stark (1991) and Massey et. al (2002) describe this scenario, the remittances and savings of migrants contribute to overcome the inexistence or imperfection of local credit and futures markets, thereby strengthening the economy of sending regions and facilitating their expansion. The change potential of such flows depends largely on the dominant political regime. Entrenched elites may foster circular migration as a way of alleviating domestic inequalities and poverty, thus helping consolidate the status quo. More progressive regimes may seek to channel migrant remittances and investments in ways that lead to more rapid local development (Gonzalez-Gutierrez 2005; Portes 2007). In either case, the change potential of circular flows are limited by their temporary character which makes their impact felt mostly at the level of sending localities and regions rather than the entire society. More far-reaching transformations are generally associated with the emergence and consolidation of large expatriate communities. Consequences that follow from mass permanent and semi-permanent outflows are not always positive. While, in some instances, they can bring about significant innovations and infuse local economies with new dynamism; in others, they merely aggravate the problems and imbalances suffered chronically by poor societies. Three such consequences may be cited for illustration. First, permanent out-migration may end up depopulating entire regions. The pathdependent character of migration generally makes the costs and risks of the journey lower as experience accumulates and as migrant communities consolidate abroad (Tilly 1990; Massey 1987). The continuation of the process over time may remove the very demographic basis for development as fewer and fewer able-bodied adults are left behind. As Arias (2008) has recently noted, continuing out-migration from the Mexican countryside has transformed vast areas into semi-empty places no longer seen by authorities as having any developmental potential, but merely as sites for implementation of welfare programs. Similar empirical accounts come from other countries of out-migration, such as Morocco and Turkey (Lacroix 2005). Second, when not demographically emptied, the culture of sending regions and even the entire nation may be thoroughly transnationalized. This implies that the value system and the pattern of normative expectations become

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increasingly affected by “imports”, in particular those from expatriate communities. In her studies of Brazilian and Dominican migration to the United States, Levitt notes how sending towns and regions have been culturally transformed by the consumer goods, values, and changed cognitive frameworks beamed from the United States. In this fashion, Brazilians and Dominicans become “transnational” without ever having left their own countries. In Miraflores, villagers often dress in t-shirts emblazoned with the names of businesses in Massachusetts, although they do not know what these words or logos mean. They proudly serve their visitors coffee with Cremora and juice made from Tang...And almost everyone, including older community members, can talk about “La Mozart” or “La Centre” – Mozart Street Park and Centre Street, two focal points of the Dominican community in Jamaica Plain (Levitt 2001: 2-3).

These change-inducing cultural transfers can affect not only towns, but entire countries. In El Salvador, arguably the Latin American nation most affected by this process, researchers note that TV news programs often dedicate more time to events occurring in Los Angeles than in the country’s capital (Lungo and Kandel 1999). Levitt (2001) refers to these transfers as “social remittances”. While, as noted previously, consequences may be positive, as conveying healthenhancing information and new technical skills, in other instances the outcome is more dubious. This is especially the case when upward mobility expectations among a country’s youths become geared to out-migration, to the neglect of education and the search for occupational opportunities in their own society. Scholars in several sending countries report that young people increasingly “mark time” in adolescence, while waiting for their opportunity to move and live abroad (Arias 2008; Lungo and Kandel 1999; Lopez Castro 2007). Surely, such a disaffected generation is not a good omen for future national development. Third, and most poignant, is a new and unexpected effect linked to permanent migration that has garnered increasing attention among scholars and policy-makers. Poor migrants who settle permanently abroad tend to bring their families with them, including young children. In the United States, these families settle in marginal areas where children confront a series of barriers to

successful adaptation: poor, prison-like schools; racism and discrimination by native teachers and counselors; street violence; and the omnipresence of the drug trade. Such barriers can lead, in a number of cases, to early school abandonment, joining gangs, violent street confrontations, and early arrest and incarceration. These negative adaptation outcomes have been well documented in the research literature and are collectively labeled “downward assimilation” (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes et. al. 2005; Rumbaut 2005). Youths undergoing this process can be lost not only to their countries of origin, but to their families and to themselves. As portrayed in Figure 3, the process does not end there. Foreign-born children who have grown in the host society are collectively known as the “1.5 generation” (Rumbaut 2004). In the United States, members of this generation who have been convicted of a felony are deportable. Many gang members and others who ran afoul of the law have suffered this fate. Once in the country of their parents, these “children of American streets” (Allegro 2006) are commonly forced to fend for themselves. Not surprisingly, they seek to reproduce and implement the same deviant patterns learned during their gang experience. Imbued with the prestige of things American, they commonly impress disaffected local youths and have little difficulty recruiting them. The result is the emergence and proliferation of a gang culture where none existed before (Lungo and Kandel 1999; Boerman 2007). The so-called “maras” or youth gangs have grown like wildfire in Central American nations and parts of Mexico, terrorizing the citizenry and becoming the number one public security problem in many cities. Commonly neglected in the sudden concern with this problem are two important considerations: First, the phenomenon has its roots in the social context confronted by migrant youths in American society, leading to “downward assimilation”. This concept provides the theoretical linchpin between what happens to migrant families abroad and its repercussions in the countries of origin. Second, deported gang members are a “social remittance”. The enthusiasm awakened by the growth of money remittances by first generation migrants originally led officials and economists in sending countries to overlook what was taking place on the side. At present, the cost of these deportations has come to rival

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the alleged benefit of economic transfers: Central Americans are among the national groups with the highest rates of criminal and non-criminal forced removals. While the deportation story largely ends for the U.S. once deportees are sent “home”, the impact for receiving nations presents an ongoing challenge as new democracies struggle with mounting gang violence contributed by expatriate youths who were “made in the USA” (Allegro 2006). The “mara Salvatrucha”, allegedly the most powerful of these transnational gangs, was created in Los Angeles by young Salvadoran migrants as they sought to fend off white racism and defend themselves from attacks by older black and Mexican-American gangs. The transformation that they have wrought in sending societies is a form of migration-induced change, although not one commonly invoked in the theoretical literature. The consequences have been neither positive, nor minor: gangs have literally taken over urban neighborhoods; challenged public security forces in open battles; and created a new, unexpected crisis in countries already struggling with the multiple problems of underdevelopment (Boerman 2007; Grascia 2004).

7.6 MIGRATION: SITUATION IN NORTH BENGAL

Research on forced illegal migration is a sensitive issue and necessitates participatory and reflexive approaches. Forced illegal migration is a global phenomenon. Hunger, poverty, security threat recognize no border. Migration is a safety valve for local problem. The unending flow of forced illegal migration to India in general and West Bengal in particular began with partition of Bengal in 1947. It is tragic fact of history that India’s independence brought in untold miseries to millions of the countrymen who had been forced to leave their ancestral homes under compelling circumstances (Kar, 2003)..

From 1947 to 1971 the region of Bangladesh was a province of Pakistan. As such, its official designation was changed from East Bengal to East Pakistan in 1955(Bangladesh Profile, 2005, Sept, www.infoplease.com). On March 26, 1971, leaders of East Pakistan declared the region independent as Bangladesh (Bengali for “Bengal nation”), and its independence was assured on December 16, 1971, when Pakistani troops

in the region surrendered to a joint force of Bangladeshi and Indian troops. Ten million took refuge in India

(Bangladesh Profile, 2005, Sept, www.infoplease.com). Many went back but a sizable undocumented section stayed back and mingled with the mainstream of India's life (Guha Roy, 2003).

West Bengal, an Indian state, place of destination of poor Bangladeshis, is bounded by Bangladesh in the eastern side with 9 border districts e.g Kolkata, 24 Parganas (North and South), Nadia, Murshidabad, Maldah, West Dinajpur (North and South), Darjeeling, Kooch Behar and Jalpaiguri.

Bangladesh border is the longest land border that India shares with any of its neighbours. It covers a length of 4096 kilometers (Krishnan 2001) abutting the states of West Bengal (2216 km), Assam(262 km), Meghalay(443 km), Mizoram(318 km) and Tripura(856 km). In West Bengal the entire stretch of 2216 km border, except a small portion in the southern extremity, is flat without any natural obstacles and people on both sides live very close to the border(Singh, 2001). The existing and emerging threats along this border are conditioned, to a large extent, by the terrain. The border runs through jungle, hills, villages, paddy and jute fields making it easy to cross. In some cases the border (Singh, 2002) cuts through the middle of several villages, while one section of a house is in one country, another is in the other. In West Bengal for instance there are more than 100 villages located right on the zero line, and in many villages there are houses where the front door is in India ,and other rear door opens into Bangladesh. There is also small riverine portion (Kumar Ananda, 2005). Wire fencing is in progress along this border. Demographic invasion along this border remains unabated. The main problems while policing Indo-Bangladesh border are incomplete demarcation, the problem of enclaves and problem of areas in adverse possession (Krishnan, 2001).

Massive undocumented migration poses a grave danger to our national security, social harmony and economic well being (Nath, 2003). On the security threat from the illegal migrants, it is believed that there is a close nexus between the illegal migrants and the extremist group (Reddy,

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2004). According to an estimation by the Border Police Department about one thousand cross the border each day and enter West Bengal (Mukherjee, 2003). Illegal migration has disturbed demographic profile and economic harmony of India in general and West Bengal in particular. These infiltrators are engaged in smuggling of sugar, drug, gold etc. Cattle lifting has been a very common phenomenon in these border areas (Banerjee, 2003).

In this context one can cite problem created by US-Mexico migration. The United States and Mexico are currently engaged in high-level discussions aimed at reforming the policies that govern migration between the two countries (Borderline81, 2001). Large scale infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals is one of the factors responsible for growth of Muslim population in West Bengal and other border areas (Pramanik, 2003). On the other hand, adopting and practicing anti-minorities (specially anti-Hindu) policies [enforcing EPA (Enemy Property Act) /VPA(Vested Property Act), Islamization of the Constitution, major communal riots and violence in 1990, 1992, 2001(Hossain, 1997), rapid Islamic orientation of the society by Madrassah education, Viswa Istema (World congregation of the Muslims in Bangladesh) and by other means, policy of forced conversion and ethnic cleansing, (Human Rights Features, 2001) etc.] by the successive Bangladesh governments have been forcing out the Hindus from Bangladesh to India (Hossain, 1997). Cross border movement of population in Indo- Bangladesh context is generating a range of destabilizing socio-political, economic, ethnic and communal tension in India (Alam, 2003).

In a recent study (Guha Roy, 2003) migration survey enquiring residence history of the migrants using network sampling was emphasized. In an another study census data have been used to evaluate migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal. (Sen, 2003). Chattopadhyay and Gupta attempted to measure undocumented population in some areas of 24 parganas during intercensal period on the basis of census data using some imputation techniques (Chattopadhyay and Gupta, 2003). Another study pointed that India's Farakka Barrage(Saikia, 2003) has become a

disaster for Bangladesh and which ultimately forces (Ahmed, 1998) people to migrate without any travel documents across the border towards Indian side. One Journalist expressed that this illegal migration is changing geographic maps of Karimpur, Tehatta, Chapra and Krishnaganj of Nadia district (Banerjee, 2003). Indian Border security force with their limited resources was vulnerable to this illegal migration and this illegal migration is posing security threat to nation (Nath, 2003).

Impact on Demography

Effect on Child Mortality

Respondents were asked to give their opinions regarding the effects on child mortality of West Bengal due to this massive flow of illegal migration. Mixed responses were obtained. About half of the respondents expressed that child mortality of West Bengal has increased due to influx of Bangladeshi migrants. Twenty percent stated that it has decreased. Nineteen percent believe that there was no significant change on child mortality of West Bengal due to illegal Bangladeshi migrants. About ten percent could say nothing regarding the impact on child mortality.

Child Mortality by Reasons

Perceptions of professionals regarding the reasons of increase or decrease in child mortality are obtained from multiple responses which are not mutually exclusive. Some respondents (thirty five) comment that child mortality decreased due to social services, proper treatment, post natal care provided by health worker. Thirty one respondents believe that settlement of migrants mostly in unhygienic conditions coupled with poor nutrition, scarcity of food indeed contributed to morbidity and child mortality. Twenty two professionals explained that unawareness, illiteracy of the migrants and unhygienic condition in the new environment may cause child mortality. There were thirty three respondents who mentioned that lack of proper health care facilities did increase child mortality. According to one sociologist "The proportion of child mortality has increased due to improper child health care system for these migrants".

As per opinion of one doctor

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“Child mortality has increased mostly due to poverty, illiteracy, social unawareness, new environment, unsettled condition of the migrants”.

There is opposite view also : Thirty five respondents said that child mortality decreased due to social services provided by health worker/proper treatment, prenatal and post natal care etc .

“Child mortality is not so significant as it is supposed to be. They get minimum health care facility to survive.”.: ----- opinion of one professor.

Effect on Adult Mortality

Influx of illegal migration from Bangladesh affected adult mortality of West Bengal. About 42 percent respondents pointed that there is no significant change in adult mortality of West Bengal due to these infiltration. Some (25%) responded that adult mortality has increased. Twenty percent were in favour of decreasing adult mortality due to these migrants. Few could say nothing.

Reasons of Adult Mortality

The respondents who expressed their opinion in favour of increase or decrease in adult mortality were asked separately the reasons for decrease or increase in adult mortality. Few expressed that adult mortality was not affected since they have more immunity and can stand for any struggle. Thirty seven respondents supported that social services provided by health worker / proper treatment may cause decrease in adult mortality.

The reasons given for increase in adult mortality are mainly a) poverty/unsettled condition/scarcity of food, b) illiteracy/unhygienic living conditions/ unawareness, c) lack of proper health care facilities

One Doctor in Calcutta said Too much hard work, belonging to lower social strata, unawareness, inability to buy medicines, sufferings from disease like TB etc caused adult mortality. After buying food grains, no money was left for purchasing medicine. On the other hand buying medicine will make the whole family to starve.”

Comments of one statistician “The migrants may have been subject to higher mortality. But since the migrants form a small fraction of the total

population of West Bengal, this is not likely to make a significant impact on the mortality of the total population.”

Effect on Population Growth

Though there is no specific qualitative study on effects of illegal migration from Bangladesh to West Bengal as such, most of the findings from this qualitative study corroborate to the facts and findings obtained from literatures (Chakrobarty, et al, 1997), news reports and magazines. As per one news report millions are coming in Assam, Tripura, West Bengal and other neighbouring state (Reddy, 2004). In present qualitative survey most of the respondents gave opinion in favour of faster population growth due to these migrants. Eighty seven percent respondents believe that population of West Bengal have increased faster due to the illegal migration from Bangladesh. Ten percent respondents hold the view that population increased at slower rate due to these migrants.

According to one respondent who is an economist and professor of a college in Kolkata:

“ The high rate of growth of population due to these illegal migrants is not detected in the census because when the census officials go to enumerate in the households they will not be present. So they are not recorded. Border Security Force(BSF) allows them to cross the border illegally in exchange of money or other means. People were safe during the regime of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001). But when Kheleda Zia came into power (1991-96, 2001 onwards) people started migrating more”. Those 100 informants whose opinions were in favour of faster population growth due to the illegal migration were asked the reasons of the same. Multiple responses were obtained and these were not mutually exclusive. About seventy two responses were obtained which pointed that high birth rate / high fertility among incoming illegal migrants may be the probable cause of population increasing faster in West Bengal. In support of this fact the remark of Prof..Ashis Bose, the India’s leading demographer may be cited : Growth of Muslim Population in India is due to high fertility among Muslim Bangladeshi migrants. High fertility among Muslims is also supported by evidences

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from recent news reports and magazines (Gilani, 2005). Prof Bose supported that Bangladeshi Muslim settled in some regions of India are now deciding the fate of politicians. Some districts of West Bengal account for substantive Muslim population (Gilani, 2005). Fourteen responses indicated religious taboos among the Muslim migrants as one of the cause of fast population growth in West Bengal since most Muslims do not accept family planning method for birth control due to religious taboos. Illiteracy and lack of awareness about family planning were mentioned as probable cause of population growth by some professionals (46 responses). Some of the respondents believe that migration by family and polygamy among Muslims may be other responsible factors for population increasing faster.

As per opinion of one scholar unchecked illegal migrants is important factor in 20 parliamentary assembly seats, mostly in West Bengal and Assam. The illegal migrants have changed demographic profile in border districts of West Bengal and in some metropolitan cities in India (Sinha, 2000)

Comments of a political leader :

“Population increased faster due to family migration. Migrated people went on reproducing. It increased due to lack of knowledge about family planning and social unawareness among the migrants”.

One Sub-Divisional Officer said “Polygamy and religious taboos among Muslims are responsible for high population growth.

Impact on working age group

The study of age structure of a population helps to identify the nature of population of a region i.e whether a population is young or old. Higher proportion of population in 15-59 age group compared to 0-14 and 60+ population reflects young population structure and high economically active population. Our main concern was to find out whether this illegal migration has any impact on population of working age group in West Bengal. Respondents were asked “Do you expect population of working age group will increase due to these illegal migration?”

Most of the respondents (92%) believe that undocumented migrants have contributed to increase in number of males of working age group in West Bengal. Eighty percent of professionals supported increase in working females in age group of 15-59 due to these illegal migrants. Since single income was not enough females also migrated for earning. Illegal migrants having poor academic background are mostly engaged in informal sectors of West Bengal. They work as daily labourer, wage earner. Some express that undocumented migration has no significant impact on male and female of working age group.

Respondents were asked about the reasons of immigration of economically active population from Bangladesh. Out of 106 respondents who expressed in favour of increased working male, seventy seven respondents pointed that lack of job opportunity in Bangladesh and economic stability in West Bengal would be the main reason for crossing the border illegally by working males. Due to lack of proper employment in the place of origin working age male migrate for permanent settlement and earning. Some (eighty eight responses) commented that lack of rights and facilities and economic crisis (Datta et al, 2004) in Bangladesh forced the economically active population to enter West Bengal without valid documents. Some people (twenty seven persons out of 106) believe that there was great influx due to migration by families. There are two interviewees who reported that working males are not coming. Six respondents could say nothing.

While answering the reasons of migration of economically active female population, sixty one respondents pointed out that since single income was not sufficient to maintain the family, therefore the female members engaged themselves in domestic household work in West Bengal. Some respondents were of the opinion that the illegal influx was strengthened by family migration.

About six respondents could not state any reason for coming. We quote the opinion of faculty:

“First working males enter in search of jobs, after they settle in a secured position, the whole family with working female migrates for permanent settlement” .

Policy Issues

Regarding policy issues (Datta, Sadhu, Bhattacharya, Majumdar, 2004 b) respondents argue that the whole issue of illegal migrants should be judged with human face since they are forced and uprooted from their residence by some political, religious, social and economic forces prevailing in the center of origin. Granting special work permit in some cases is also required. Repatriation may be a solution in other cases. Respondents were asked “ Do you agree that fencing and BSF cannot stop infiltration, given the long porous border ? The views of the respondents were:

About 58% professionals comment that fencing and Border Security Force with limited resources cannot stop infiltration. Negative attitude of corrupt BSF often helps the illegal migrants to cross over the border. Respondents believe that it requires proper implementation (Datta et al, 2004a) and monitoring of fencing with efficiency, transparency, political commitment and strong will.

One demographer points out: “ The BSF keeps vigilance along the long porous border between India and Bangladesh. Besides patrolling they intercept illegal migrants from across the border. I do not believe all infiltrations are intercepted”.

Sixteen percent hold the view that negative attitude of BSF often help the illegal migrants to cross the border.

As per opinion of one Faculty member of a college: “ Corrupt BSF can not stop infiltration. One can cross the border by paying Rs 70 which is divided between BSF(Border Security Force) and BDR (Bangladesh Rifles)”.

According to another faculty member: “ It seems that there is nothing like Indo Bangladesh border. Our Bangladesh maid servant goes there after every two/four months. When asked she replies in a manner as if she went to any nearby place. Free movement is going on across the border.”

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) See the end of the unit for tips for your answer.

1. What do you know about the Concept of Social Change?

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2. Discuss about the Culture and Social Structure: A Conceptual Primer.

.....

3. Discuss about the Concept of Migration

.....

7.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit has sought to clarify the concept of social change as it has evolved in sociological and political theory; extract basic lessons from its evolution; and relate it to migration, both as an outcome and as a cause. In conclusion, it is worthwhile to highlight the principal conceptual point that has guided my analysis of the change-potential of migration for both sending and receiving nations. This is the notion that society is no level playing field formed by a simple aggregation of individuals. On the contrary, it is complex and hierarchical, both in its constitutive elements and in its receptivity or resistance to change-inducing forces. The level-playing-field view induces a purely demographic analysis of the effects of migration, where the greater the number of persons leaving or arriving, the greater the magnitude of change. This is the kind of analysis leading to the conclusion that “migration is changing the mainstream”, because of the number and diversity of the foreign population. As we have seen, this conclusion is erroneous because it focuses on the visible plane of social life, neglecting more basic structural and cultural factors. At the surface level, the notion that migration is changing the mainstream is readily apparent in the new sights, sounds, smells that a growing foreign population brings along. An informed sociological analysis would reject this conclusion: despite high numbers, migration flows can

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leave intact and even buttress the fundamental constitutive elements of receiving societies. To affirm that migration is truly transforming them, one would have to demonstrate that its change-inducing potential is reaching such elements. This happens only under exceptional conditions. A second consideration calls attention to the common evaluative component in analyses of social change. Perhaps out of dislike with entrenched structures of power and sympathy with the plight of the downtrodden, many social scientists tend to see change – especially that of a revolutionary kind – in a positive light. By extension, the change-inducing potential of mass migration is also regarded as a good thing. In reality, change is not always superior to stability and, as the examples considered previously show, population movements can have both positive and negative consequences. A third methodological consideration has to do with the need of examine the relations between migration and change under a transnational lens because of the increasing boundedness of the global system. It is not always the case that migrant populations come to affect host societies “once they settled here” or that they changed the regions of origin “as they left”. On the contrary, the change-potential of migration is often gestated in events that took place “there”, not “here”. This is clear in the impact of social remittances in places of origin. As portrayed in Figure 3, the serious public security situation in Central America had its origins in the streets of Los Angeles and among youths that had left with their families many years earlier. Similarly, the displacement of Anglo elites from political power in South Florida and their substitution by Cuban-Americans in the 1980s and 1990s were not due to events in Miami, but to the revolutionary convulsions in the island two decades earlier. A final issue pertains to the appropriate time frame for the analysis of migration and its consequences. A short-term perspective, focused on the process as it is unfolding will provide rich detail, but may miss out its more durable effects. To cite again the same examples, the rise of the maras as a consequence of migration from El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America unfolded over three decades; the takeover of political power by Cuban middle-class exiles in Miami took about the same time. On the other hand, a long-term historical lens may also miss out important

migration-induced consequences because they may have been already absorbed into the culture and class structure of society. The assimilationist perspective in migration studies in the United States tends to take this long-term view of the process, making it appear unduly seamless and gradual. In the long term, of course, immigrants assimilate, leave, or die and their imprint is duly absorbed by the institutions of the receiving society. Using this lens, assimilation appears inevitable, but that conclusion ignores the many exceptions, contradictions, and failures that happened along the way. As Gans (1992) put it, the process of incorporation of immigrant flows is inevitably “bumpy”. For this reason, a middling time-frame encompassing two-three generations recommends itself. It would not be so immediatist as to miss the forest for the trees; nor so elongated as to miss the many trees that fell by the side as the forest rebuilt itself. This is the reason why it is still too early to pass judgment on the effects of several contemporary flows, including those now arriving in new countries of immigration in Western Europe. Durable effects of such movements, as they evolve in an increasingly transnationalized global system, cannot be determined with certainty at present. As social scientists, we must have the patience to wait and see how they unfold. They may repeat the lessons of the past, as those well charted by the migration of Europeans to America, or they may carve new paths with so far unexpected consequences for the places left behind and those where they have chosen to pursue their lives.

7.8 KEY WORDS

Migration: Migration is a way to move from one place to another in order to live and work. Movement of people from their home to another city, state or country for a job, shelter or some other reasons is called migration. Migration from rural areas to urban areas has increased in past few years in India.

Immigration: the action of coming to live permanently in a foreign country.

7.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. What do you know about Migration-Induced Change?
2. What do you know about the migration situation in North Bengal?

7.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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7.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 7.2
2. See Section 7.3
3. See Section 7.4