The Indian Economic
and Social history
Review

April - June 1975
XII – No. 2.

THE INDIAN ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL HISTORY REVIEW

Volume XII *April-June 1975* *Number 2*

Delhi School of Economics
University Enclave
Delhi 110007

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd
5 Daryaganj, Ansari Road,
Delhi 110006

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Institutions:	Rs 60	$16	£6
Individuals:	Rs 20	$8	£3

PRINTED IN INDIA

AT DELHI PRINTERS, 21 DARYAGANJ, DELHI 110006, AND PUBLISHED BY MRS SHARDA CHAWLA, VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD, 5 DARYAGANJ, ANSARI ROAD, DELHI 110006

The Structure of Landholding in Uttar Pradesh, 1860-1948

ERIC STOKES

At the end of British rule, with a population swollen to some 63 million, the land of the United Provinces was found to be in the ownership of just over two million persons (2,016,783).[1] Of these the vast proportion, or some 85 per cent (1,710,530), were small men falling in the category of revenue-payers of less than Rs 25. Their average revenue payment was, in fact, only some Rs 6. Probably more than half paid Re 1 or less, the proprietary share of each being well under one acre. Meeting only some 15 per cent of the total land revenue, these 1,710,530 proprietors must have owned (allowing for the favourable differential assessment for the small owner) no more than a fifth of the agricultural land. A further 13½ per cent (276,111) of revenue-payers paid between Rs 25 and Rs 250. The remaining 1½ per cent, a mere 30,142 persons, were responsible for meeting 58 per cent of the land revenue demand. On any reckoning these constituted the economic elite. But as an elite it was far from homogenous and spanned vast disparities of wealth. Somewhat more than half (16,758) paid under Rs 500 each, a further quarter (7,491) between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000. Of the remaining 5,893 persons paying over Rs 1,000 each, there were 804 who paid over Rs 5,000, the membership qualification for the Agra Province Zamindars' Association.[2]

Taking the United Provinces at large, the landownership structure can be described, therefore, as a pyramid possessed of an extremely broad base but tapering rapidly to a tall, narrow elite pinnacle. Despite large differences in other respects the width of this elite pinnacle remained more or less constant throughout the province, the number of revenue-payers over Rs 250 rarely exceeding a thousand in any one district (ranging from the extreme of 140 in Bahraich to 1,594 in Moradabad). But the height of the pinnacle and the size of its pyramidal base varied enormously. For example, Meerut and Etawah districts both possessed elite pinnacles of almost equal size (in Meerut

[1] *U.P. Zamindari Abolition Committee Report* (cited hereafter as ZACR), Allahabad, 1948, Vol. II. On the reliability of the Report's statistics, see the comments of W.C. Neale, *Economic Change in Rural India*, 1962, p. 250ff.

[2] The number of large revenue payers had probably been reduced sharply before 1947 in anticipation of zamindari abolition. Cf. figures for Meerut district: *Meerut Settlement Report 1940*, over Rs 5,000, 19; over Rs 10,000, 6; ZACR, over Rs 5,000, 12; over Rs 10,000, 4.

1,035 persons raising some 8½ lakhs, in Etawah 875 persons raising some nine lakhs). Yet in Meerut the pinnacle rose from a huge base of 20,000 or so 'yeomen' farmers (paying between Rs 25 and Rs 250 in revenue and raising over 14 lakhs)[3] and 145,000 petty proprietors (paying under Rs 25 and raising some seven lakhs). In Etawah by contrast the base was of diminutive proportions, the 'yeoman' farmer class numbering only 4,452 (and raising nearly 3½ lakhs) and the petty proprietors, 19,328 (raising just over one lakh). A still more arresting contrast was to be seen in the Oudh (Avadh) district of Sitapur where a very considerable revenue (of some 21 lakhs) was raised by a handful of taxpayers, as much as 18 lakhs being found by only 749 persons (paying over Rs 250 each), and the remaining three lakhs by fewer than 10,000 persons.

It might be supposed that the elitist character of landowning was sharply exaggerated by the *taluqdari* system of Avadh. Yet when the Avadh figures are subtracted, those for the remainder of the territory (in practice, the province of Agra) show little variation in the distribution of proprietory rights. Revenue-payers under Rs 25 formed 85.5 per cent of the total and met 17.6 per cent of the land revenue; revenue-payers between Rs 25 and Rs 250 amounted to 13.2 per cent of the total and met 31.3 per cent of the revenue: revenue-payers over Rs 250 formed 1.3 per cent of the total and met 51.2 per cent of the revenue.

All this was the end-product of a century or more of British rule. How far had the ownership pyramid altered? On the face of things, very little. Until 1921 population remained remarkably stable, increasing by no more than 10 per cent in the previous half-century, but leaping by some 37 per cent in the next three decades.[4] The numbers of landowners would also appear to have remained fairly constant, the census reporting them as 1,196,876 in 1881 and 1,275,432 in 1931. The figures of land revenue-payers returned for franchise purposes in 1919 and for the Zamindari Abolition Committee in

[3] The category of 'yeoman farmer' as one paying revenue up to Rs 250 was proposed officially in 1896. *Selections of Papers on Agricultural Indebtedness*, Vol. III, Government of India, Simla, 1898, p.1. Insofar as it denotes a social rather than economic category it has to be used cautiously in the knowledge that some proportion of this group would be members of the trading classes.

[4] U.P. population:

1872	42,780,292	1921	46,669,865
1881	45,034,574	1931	49,776,754
1891	47,844,299	1941	56,531,848
1901	48,625,310	1951	63,215,742
1911	48,152,273		

SOURCE: *Census of India, 1951*, Vol. II. *Uttar Pradesh, Part I-A Report*, Allahabad, 1953, p. 25, Table 27.

1947 were much higher—2,270,664 and 2,016,783 respectively—but observed the same constancy. The discrepancy between the two sets of figures is readily explicable. Among the revenue-payers of 1919 was a vast mass of some one and a half million persons paying under one rupee, over half of whom in the census of 1931 failed to qualify for classification as primarily landowners by occupation, and the great bulk of whom must have been inextricably intermixed with the tenantry through holding tenant land in addition to their proprietary shares.[5] For all the precautions enjoined there may also have been a considerable element of double counting of the same persons, given the extraordinarily complex and fragmented nature of ownership rights at this level.[6] Even so, there seem strong grounds for believing that the multiplication of proprietary interests was accelerating from the end of the nineteenth century and that the sub-division of ownership rights proceeded much farther than the Zamindari Abolition Committee's Report suggests. In almost any district selected at random the number of co-sharers recorded in the roughly contemporaneous Settlement Reports is far in excess of the Report's figures (see Appendix 2). No doubt the liability to double counting was higher here, the records for settlement purposes being concerned with the number of shares into which estates were divided rather than the actual number of sharers who were physically present in a tehsil or district and who might own multiple shares in different estates. The percentage of absentee co-sharers, a portion of whom would be town-dwellers or reside outside the district, was often well over 50 per cent and probably accounts for the wide discrepancy between the figures of the settlement reports and that of the Zamindari Abolition Committee. Some of the increase in the numbers of recorded co-sharers was artificial, in the

[5] Cf. In Gorakhpur district the smallest fraction in use for coparcenary tenures was 1/1,105,920,000. H.R. Nevill (ed.), *U.P. District Gazetteer, Gorakhpur*, Vol. XXXI, Allahabad, 1909, p. 109.

[6] I am greatly indebted to Professor P.D. Reeves for information and criticism on the number of landowners. The 1919 figures are taken from *The Reforms Committee (Franchise). Evidence Taken before the Reforms Committee (Franchise)*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1919, Table VIII, p. 90 [India Office Library, J & P (Reforms) Ser. 427]. Comparison with the ZACR figures gives the following results:

Statement of persons paying land revenue:

		1919	*1948*
over	Rs 100	120,073	81,706
	Rs 50—100	87,790	81,657
	Rs 25—50	125,503	142,800
under	Rs 25	1,937,298	1,710,530

The figure of one and a half million persons (viz. 1,489,246) paying less than Re 1 in land revenue is arrived at from the figure of 2,270,664 as the total number of landholders given in 1926 (*U.P. Leg. Co. Proceedings, Official Report*, Vol. XXX, 1 July 1926, pp. 196-97), less the figure of 781,418 persons paying over one rupee given in 1919. (Professor Reeves considers the 1926 Legislative Council answer to be framed on the 1919 statistics.)

sense that men who had previously been content to share informally and allow one or more of their brotherhood to be recorded as the proprietors wished increasingly from the later decades of the nineteenth century to have their interests registered officially. The same growing sense of individual rights lay behind the partition of estates so that these multiplied along with the number of co-sharers. In Bijnor the settlement officer in 1939 wrote of 'the immense increase in the number of mahals as a result of partition'; certainly since 1872 it had almost trebled.[7] If the figures are to be believed the increase was as much as eightfold between 1860 and 1921 in Muzaffarnagar district. Yet, when all allowances have been made for sub-division among existing sharers there can be little doubt that their numbers also increased absolutely through natural increase and partition among heirs. In Bareilly district the settlement officer in 1942 noted that 'the number of co-sharers has almost quadrupled since the settlement of 1870'. In Meerut the increase was some two and a half fold between 1865 and 1940; in Mainpuri two and a quarter between 1824 and 1944; in Unao twofold between 1895 and 1930 (see Appendix 2).

This fragmentation of ownership rights and the subdivision of proprietary holdings occurring at the base of the landholding pyramid was associated with another process, that of land transfer. The two, however, by no means marched hand in hand; indeed, the rate of land transfer appears to have slowed down as the multiplication of proprietary rights gathered pace during the present century.[8] While land transfer bore most directly on the social composition of the proprietary classes, the subdivision of proprietary rights affected the size of 'estates' (mahals). Yet all were not affected alike. There seem good grounds for believing that the economic elite in possession of large estates was kept insulated from the general process of sub-division and transfer partly because of economic and partly because of institutional forces. The main casualties were instead the intermediate and the peasant proprietors. In 1907 H.K. Gracey, the settlement officer of Kanpur (Cawnpore), shrewdly observed:

> The fact is that the only zamindar for whom the Indian economy has a proper place is either the big taluqdar governed by the law of primogeniture and owning so large an estate that he can afford to be generous or the peasant proprietor cultivating his own land. For the small middleman who tries to live on his rents and whose property is being constantly split into smaller and smaller shares under the ordinary rules of Hindu or Mohammedan heirship, there is no niche . . . .[9]

[7] *Bijnor S.R. 1939*, pp. 7, 45; *Bijnor S.R. 1899*, p.13.

[8] In Etah district the number of co-sharers in pattidari and bhaiachara tenures doubled between 1904 and 1944, while one-third of the land of the district changed hands (*Etah S.R. 1944*, p. 6, paras 20-22). The slowing down of the transfer rate is seen most vividly in Mainpuri where between 1870 and 1904 some 25 per cent of the district land was transferred outright, and between 1905 and 1942 only 9 per cent (*Mainpuri S.R. 1944*, p. 8, para 21).

Contemporaneously, W.J.D. Burkitt was commenting that in Aligarh over the previous 30 years 'the rich Zamindars have on the whole gained, [and] nearly all the loss [of land] has fallen on the small men and the [village] communities'.[10] In Mainpuri conditions were also unpropitious to middle-sized estates: '. . . the big zamindars are few and are mostly absentees from the district while the mass of petty proprietors, who own, and with their fellow castemen cultivate, the bulk of the district, are at all times impecunious and living up close to the critical margin of subsistence'.[11] In Azamgarh the same levelling process appears to have been at work: 'where the area held by any clan [of Chattris] has materially diminished, the decrease is due to the losses of those individuals who have had estates of more than usual size'.[12] Two decades later A.A. Waugh was observing the persistence of the same phenomenon in Budaun: 'The zamindar who is content to live on his rents and to use neither his brain nor his hands has lost ground'.[13] Yet, in effect, the fractionalization of 'land control' did not stop short at the cultivating proprietor.

In the immediate post-Mutiny decades the price rise from the late 1860s, the swing to cash rents, and the expansion of cash-crop agriculture had appeared to give reality to British institutional arrangements for reducing Indian tenures to a landlord-tenant basis. In Saharanpur district it was found as late as 1867 that there was 'hardly any distinction between the rent-paying tenant and the rent-paying proprietor', except on estates bought up by money-lenders where competition rents had begun to appear. By 1890 L.A.S. Porter could report that apart from a small number of estates held by cultivating communities where a certain amount of land was let out at revenue rates, 'the old equality of landlord and tenant has given way to competition'.[14] But countervailing forces were already at work to whittle away landlord advantages as the legal recognition of occupancy rights began to take practical effect.

In Budaun it is possible to trace their action distinctly. Between 1850 and 1870 no difference existed between occupancy and yearly tenants, according to Waugh's estimate, both continuing to pay on average some 20 per cent of the produce value despite the background of rising prices. By 1900, however, occupancy rents represented only 13 per cent of the produce value while yearly tenants still paid 20 per cent. The decisive change came after 1900.

[9] *Cawnpore S.R. 1907*, para 25.

[10] *Aligarh S.R. 1903*, p. 7, para 11.

[11] J.E. Lupton, *Mainpuri S.R. 1906*, p. 15, para 30.

[12] C.E. Crawford, *Azamgarh S.R. 1908*, p. 12.

[13] *Budaun S.R. 1930*, p. 7, para 29.

[14] *Saharanpur S.R. 1890.*

Between 1900 and 1926 prices rose roughly 100 per cent and yearly tenant rents by 110 per cent, but occupancy rents rose no more than 25 per cent. At the same time the occupancy tenant area increased rapidly, amounting to 70 per cent of the total tenant area by 1928. The effect was to strike at the income of the small non-cultivating proprietor proportionately. While his cost of living had risen 100 per cent his income had risen by under 25 per cent. 'In other words, the profits arising from the rise in prices of grain has gone to the cultivator and not to the proprietor'. The combined effects of the sub-division of holdings and of the sluggishness of occupancy rents was, therefore, 'to leave the majority of zamindars in no position to dominate either the tenant or the money lender.'[15]

The comparative prosperity of the occupancy cultivator had been observed in Saharanpur as early as the 1860s. Wynne, the settlement officer, noted at that time that Gujars whose proprietary rights had been confiscated for rebellion and transferred to outsiders were in consequence in a much more thriving condition. By 1921 the settlement officer in Saharanpur was reporting that 'the occupancy tenant appears to be even more prosperous than the cultivating proprietor' and on average possessed a larger holding.[16]

The position in Saharanpur may have been somewhat extreme, but the absence of any sharp gulf between the cultivating proprietor and his tenant was general, at least in the Western U.P. where *bhaiachara* tenures were common and caste differences were not marked. Inevitably it engendered conflict from the time the discrepancy between occupancy and competition rents became apparent in the 1890s. For both economic and social reasons cultivating proprietors found difficulty in resisting the accrual of occupancy tenant rights, but their own pressing need for subsistence as their numbers proliferated could well force them into what the Board of Revenue described in 1905 as 'a struggle for existence: the landholders [in the eastern districts] require the land more and more for themselves to meet their growing necessities, and it would be hard if they are in any way prevented from getting it into their own hands.'[17] Hence in Azamgarh the area under proprietary cultivation (sir and khudkasht) could increase at the same time as the area under occupancy tenancy was growing, even though the tenant-at-will land and the total

[15] *Budaun S.R. 1930*, p. 7, para 29.

[16] D.I. Drake Brockman, *Saharanpur S.R. 1921*, pp. 21, 25.

Average size of holding:

	Cultivating proprietors	*Occupancy and ex-proprietory tenants*	*Non-occupancy tenants*
1830-38	16.5 acres	10.6 acres	7.5 acres
1860-62	9.5 "	7.5 "	5.8 "
1920	8.4 "	11.3 "	4.6 "

[17] *Board of Revenue, Revenue Administration Report U.P. 1903-4*, Allahabad, 1905, p. 18, para 42.

tenancy area as a whole was being reduced.[18] In Meerut it was not unknown for a small proprietor to have to rent his own land from his occupancy tenant at twice the rental he received for it.[19] The occupancy tenant had in effect become a sub-proprietor.

Now this situation obtained not only in small mahals but also in some of the larger estates of the older landholding families. On the Kuchesar estate which was spread over the north-east portion of Bulandshahr district and the south-eastern portion of Meerut, the occupancy tenant had become almost independent by the turn of the century: 'the occupancy tenant feels that he has no concern with his landlord except to send him a money-order for his rent and commonly refers to his occupancy land as "hamari" [ours]'.[20] On the estates of the Mainpuri raj there was also a long tradition of indirect management which kept rents low and tenants independent.

The sum of these conditions vitally affected the position of the rural elite. On the one hand, middling-sized properties held by a gentry-farmer class tended to disappear and to leave little between the large estate owner and the cultivating proprietor. On the other hand, the growth of sub-proprietary rights meant that the elite was confronted not by a body of tenants who could be welded into coherent economic units or estates in the more modern sense, but by a mass of petty proprietors with whom their relations tended to be those of absentee rent-receivers.

What held the properties of the higher elite together? In Oudh, if we accept Dr Metcalf's explanation, it was government action that shored up the great talukdari estates. But outside Oudh he acknowledges that the old magnate class was deprived of such institutional buttresses as encumbered estates acts and faced a hostile official tradition that consistently opposed the landlord class throughout the nineteenth century.[21] Dr F.C.R. Robinson has underlined the distinction between Oudh and the eastern districts on the one hand, and the Doab and the western U.P. (including Rohilkhand) on the other. It was in this latter region, which possessed in 1911, according to Robinson, 45 per cent of the population but enjoyed 72 per cent of total U.P. trade, that the corrosive action of commercial forces on the position of the traditional landholding classes exerted really serious effects:

> Thus the old elite of the Mughal Empire, Muslims, Rajputs and their Kayasth servants who owned 60 to 65 per cent of the land in the province

[18] *Azamgarh S.R. 1908*, p. 14, para 6

[19] S.W. Gillan, *Meerut, S.R. 1901*, p. 19, para 32.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] T.R. Metcalf, 'Social Effects of British Land Policy in Oudh' in R.E. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, Madison, Milwaukee & London, 1969, pp. 157-58.

were losing land, and social, economic and political power to those characterised [by Sir Auckland Colvin] as the "mere rubble of the political building", the trading and moneylending castes, Vaishyas, Khattris, Kalwars, and in some cases Brahmins whose gains in land had been immense over the nineteenth century, particularly in its last 30 years.[22]

Robinson appositely points to Kanpur district where the money-lending castes, according to him, extended their hold from 15.7 per cent of the land in 1802 to 41.7 per cent in 1900.[23] Although Robinson has exaggerated the timing and extent of this alienation, his thesis blends readily with the notion that while the social composition of the elite may have altered, large-scale landholding persisted. In other words, economic forces tended to sustain the size of the estate at the upper levels and countered the tendency towards subdivision.[24] At the top there was a shift towards plutocracy rather than a change of scale. A glance at the larger landholders of the western U.P. would seem to confirm this impression. In the Saharanpur district in 1920 there were 13 landholders paying over Rs 5,000 in revenue, of which six are clearly identifiable as Vaishya; in Muzaffarnagar in 1921, five of the 15 can also be similarly identified. In 1940 in Meerut eight of the 26 leading proprietors (paying over Rs 5,000) are described explicitly as Vaish.[25]

What evidence is there that estates of intermediate size were being steadily squeezed out of existence? For the most part one must rely on inferences to be drawn from the details of land transfers. These point strongly to a long, secular decline of traditional 'gentry' elements, Muslims in particular. In Aligarh Muslim landholding fell from 22 per cent in 1874 to 19.3 per cent in 1903, and to 15.7 per cent in 1943. It is noticeable that the loss fell lightest (4 per cent) on the Pathans who held substantial properties, especially the Sherwani Afghan family in Atrauli tahsil; and heaviest among the smaller

[22] F.C.R. Robinson, 'Some Themes in U.P. Politics, 1883-1916', a seminar paper read at the Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge, in May 1969. Cf. also his article 'Municipal Government and Muslim Separatism in the U.P., 1883 to 1916' in J. Gallagher, G. Johnson and A. Seal (eds.), *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870-1940*, Cambridge, 1973, p. 81ff.

[23] Robinson has counted all Brahmins as members of the moneylending castes whereas they formed an important part of the agricultural class in Kanpur, see later footnote *infra* for table of landownership changes in Kanpur district.

[24] The 'estate' in this sense was no more than an aggregate of revenue paying lands. How far estates were consolidated into effective social and economic units and how far they became mere bundles of scattered rent properties is another and most important question: Cf. P. Musgrave, 'Landlords and Lords of the Land: Estate Management and Social Control in U.P. 1860-1920', *Modern Asian Studies*, vi (3), 1972, p. 257ff.

[25] *Saharanpur S.R. 1921*, Appendix III, p. 48; *Muzaffarnagar S.R. 1921*, App. VIII, p. 36; *Meerut S.R. 1940*, App. VIII, p. 56.

Muslim landholders, particularly the Sheikhs who parted with 36 per cent of their land between 1874 and 1903. This tendency for the large men to prosper and the small men to decline, which Burkitt remarked upon in 1903, evidently persisted, for in 1943, S. Ahmad Ali, the settlement officer, could still observe: '[Among the Muslims] the Pathan zamindars of Atrauli, and the bigger Musalman zamindars elsewhere have done well on the whole, and the loss is generally restricted to the small zamindars who are poor'.[26] The same features are visible in the neighbouring district of Bulandshahr where total Muslim holdings fell between 1891 and 1919 from some 33 per cent to 29 per cent. But while the broad-acred Naumuslim Lalkhani proprietors increased their holdings slightly, Sayyids lost 28 per cent of theirs. Their fate was general. In Meerut they lost some 10 per cent of their meagre possessions between 1870 and 1900, and in Muzaffarnagar where they had once been the dominant landholding community they lost over 20 per cent between 1890 and 1920.[27]

Whether traditional 'gentry' losses were almost wholly absorbed by Vaishya gains and middling-size estates thus reconstituted is unclear, but as absentee rent-receivers without natural ties with the local community Vaishyas could never act as a rural elite. Notions of drastic social and economic change must, however, be regarded with caution. While it is true that land transfers remained brisk in the period after 1860 it is questionable whether the rate of inter-class or inter-caste transfer was sufficiently precipitous to effect a social revolution. F.C.R. Robinson points to the Kanpur district as a striking example of the rapid passage of land from the traditional to the commercial castes, and superficially there is much to corroborate such a view. H.K. Gracey, the settlement officer in 1907, lamented:

> ... reviewing events from cession downwards the salient feature in the situation is the progress and success of the bankers and speculators and the commercial men, irrespective of caste, and the downfall of the orthodox zamindar. . . . While there are in the district several properties of considerable size and importance, the owners are in the great majority of cases new or comparatively new men, and nothing is more striking in the district than the disappearance of the old estates, especially those of the Rajputs, whose

[26] *Aligarh S.R. 1943*, p. 5, para 14.

[27] *Bulandshahr S.R. 1901*, p. 9, para 35; App. VIII A. *Meerut S.R. 1901*, p. 10, para 26: 'Between the rent-collecting landlords and the cultivating zamindars are several communities chiefly Musalman, who partake of the qualities of both. They resemble the second in the number of sharers, but like the first, let out their land instead of cultivating. Some of these communities, like the Sayyids of Abdullahpur, have an extensive property, but the shares are constantly being subdivided, and generally the conditions of such proprietors is less satisfactory than that of other classes'. *Muzaffarnagar S.R. 1921*, p. 7, para 35; App. VIII B.

> Rajas, Rawats and Raos have either disappeared or have been reduced to the greatest straits. Even the most important Rajput property in the district, that of the Gaur family of Khanpur Dilwal in the Derapur tahsil, is in its present form of recent origin, the bulk of the land having been acquired by purchase or as the reward of the loyalty during the rebellion of 1857.[28]

Yet the statistics make it quite plain that the major losses on the part of the Thakur Communities and the major gains on the part of the commercial Brahmin and moneylending castes were accomplished before 1873-74, and that changes after that period were on a very much reduced scale.[29] The same can be said of other districts which were supposedly most susceptible to intercaste transfer. In Aligarh the Vaishya element strengthened its grip from 3.4 per cent in 1839, 12.3 per cent in 1868, 12 per cent in 1903, to 13.6 per cent in 1943. Brahmins, who included some commercial men among their numbers, rose from 9 per cent in 1839, 9.2 per cent in 1868, 13.5 per cent in 1903, to 14.5 per cent in 1943. Thakur holdings fell from 38 per cent in 1838, 28 per cent in 1868, 23.3 per cent in 1903, to 22.1 per cent in 1943. In Meerut, purportedly one of the most highly commercialized districts, Vaishya gains were slow and modest—7 per cent in 1865, 7.8 per cent in 1900, 14.7 per cent in 1940. To the north in Muzaffarangar and Saharanpur districts they look more startling. Vaishya holdings in Muzaffarnagar rose from 16.5 per cent in 1891 to 24 per cent in 1921; in Saharanpur, from 19 per cent in 1866, 25.1 per cent in 1890, to 27.9 per cent in 1921. But much of their earlier gains in these districts were made in uncleared jungle grants in the Siwalik terai or in

[28] *Cawnpore S.R. 1907*, para 21.

[29] Kanpur District.

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LAND HELD

	Rajputs (Thakurs)	*Brahmins*	*Moneylending castes*	*Muslims*	*Kayasths*	
1802	50	11.2	1.5	12.6	7.8	(10.84?)
1840	38.4	18.8	3.7	15.7	6.1	
1873-74	31.6	29.6	6.3	12.4	6.8	
1907	30.3	33.2	5.2	6.8	4.5	

SOURCES: E.A. Atkinson (ed.), *Gazetteer N.W.P.*, Vol. VI; *Cawnpore S.R. 1970*, App. X. The protagonists for restricting the power of hereditary agriculturalists to alienate land tended to exaggerate the extent of transfer to the non-agricultural classes, but even the inflated figures cited in the Memorandum on the Restriction of the Power to Alienate Interests in Land, Calcutta, 1895 (India Office Library List 10.2362/1), purportedly written by Denzil Ibbetson, support the notion that the major phase of transfer occurred before 1873. In ten districts taken at random moneylenders held in 1873 27 per cent of the total area, as against 10 per cent 30 years earlier. *Ibid.*, p. 10, para 33.

The figures cited by Robinson from the District Gazetteers in no way support percentage rates of 27 per cent; Gallagher, Robinson and Seal, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

khadir land in the Ganges valley.[30] The dramatic loss of Sayyid land in Muzaffarnagar was also primarily a pre-1870 phenomenon.[31] U.P. society in these western districts—where change was supposedly most intense—seems in fact to have been slowly evolving on lines laid down in an earlier period. The decisive revolution in land control had occurred before the Great Mutiny Rebellion of 1857, in a pre-commercial era, the product of institutional rather than economic change.

Nothing is more striking in this respect than the stability of the great estates in the post-1860 period. A list drawn up in 1860 and 1940 would display remarkably few changes; in Saharanpur the Landhaurah raj, in Muzaffarnagar the Jansath Sayyids, in Bulandshahr the Kuchesar and Lalkhani estates (including Chatari), in Aligarh, the Mursan raj, the Awagarh estate, and the Sherwani properties. Doubtless they had suffered many vicissitudes and some had carried in their time a heavy load of debt and litigation, but nevertheless they remained the great revenue-payers of their districts. They differed, of course, considerably in their internal management. Where a traditional magnate was of the same caste as his 'tenant' and held a position of quasi-lordship, he was unlikely to exact high rents. This was the position on the Gujar Landhaurah family's lands in Saharanpur and Meerut, on the Kuchesar estate in Bulandshahr, and Meerut, and on the Mainpuri raj estate in Mainpuri district.[32] But where caste homogeneity was lacking, traditional landlords could be severe and grasping. The Lalkhani estates in the 1890s acquired 'a general and unenviable reputation for oppressive management, exorbitant demands from tenants, including all sorts of nazarana'. Although these abuses had greatly diminished by 1919, it was reported that 'Lalkhani management indeed is still exacting, rents are high and rigidly collected, occupancy rights are prevented by leases, and the proprietor's authority is stoutly maintained.'[33] If caste could ever have been overtaken by class it was from here that a great landlord interest might have been organized, and it is perhaps significant that the final despairing attempt to mobilize the landlords in a political sense should have been led by the head of the Lalkhani estates, the Nawab of Chatari.[34] Whether such heterogeneous magnate elements constituted more than an economic category is a specifically socio-historical

[30] *Aligarh S.R. 1874*, p. 66; *Aligarh S.R. 1943*, p. 5, para 14; *Meerut S.R. 1901*, p. 10, para 27; *Meerut S.R. 1940*, p. 13, para 2; *Muzaffarnagar S.R. 1921*, p. 35, App. VIII-B; *Saharanpur S.R. 1891: Saharanpur S.R. 1921*, p. 47, App. II.

[31] Alan Cadell, *Settlement Report of the Ganges Canal Tract in the Muzaffarnagar District*, Allahabad, 1876.

[32] *Meerut S.R. 1901*, pp. 12-13.

[33] *Bulandshahr S.R. 1919*, p. 7, para 29. For details see *Bulandshahr S.R. 1891.*

[34] P.D. Reeves, 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934-7' in D.A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, London, 1968, p. 267ff.

question towards whose answer an investigation of the history of the Zamindars' Association (founded at Muzaffarnagar in 1896) and of the Agra Province Zamindars' Association (1914) would make a valuable contribution.[35] Still more significant, perhaps, would be the history of opposition to the magnate class, culminating in zamindari abolition. And here we return to our starting point. The 1947 figures of the Zamindari Abolition Report show that the critical differences among districts concerned, firstly, the number of large estates in any one district paying over Rs 10,000 and, secondly, the number of petty and yeomen proprietors and the proportion of revenue they raised. In Meerut district large estates were few, but there were an enormous number of petty proprietors (145,126) paying under Rs 25, as well as the largest number of yeomen farmers in the whole of the U.P., 20,603 each paying Rs 25-150. Together these two groups raised 31.2 per cent and 40.8 per cent of the large district revenue respectively, or a total of 72 per cent. It was appropriate that one of the centres of the zamindari abolition campaign should have been Meerut under the Jat leader, Sri Charan Singh.[36] The most dangerous enemy of the great landlord was the small cultivating landlord who here was the Jat peasant proprietor.

But in some districts the process of land transfers appears to have prevented this expansion of the pyramidal base, the area under peasant proprietorship appearing to suffer marked contraction. Kanpur district was the most extreme example. Here large estates assessed at over Rs 10,000 were also negligible, but the petty and yeomen proprietors were by 1947 remarkably weak in numbers and, above all, in the proportion of revenue they provided. The two latter groups numbered 31,160 and 7,189 and raised only 8.5 per cent and 29.6 per cent of the revenue respectively. The predominant feature of Kanpur district had become the medium-sized landlord 'estates', owned by some 1,229 men who paid between Rs 250-5,000 and who met 49.5 per cent of the revenue demand. The absence of large traditional estates and the long history of commercial investment in rent rights had apparently resulted in the reconstruction of land proprietorship on a new social base. Yet the artificiality of the distinction between landlord and tenant warns us against facile conclusions drawn solely from the statement of proprietary rights. In a district like Kanpur, which suffered extensive tenurial derangement in the early years of British rule, a gap was opened between revenue-engagement rights (*malguzari*) and the proprietary dominion of the soil itself (*milkiyat-i-zamin*) that was probably never closed. Almost at the outset a substantial portion of the dominant cultivating castes were legally transformed into tenants while in practice they continued to exercise effective proprietary control, so that the Famine Commission of 1881 could single out as a typical cultivator a Brahmin occupancy tenant with a 21-acre holding.[37] The effect of British tenancy laws was, as we have seen, to reinforce the artificiality of the distinction. While for land revenue purposes a category of revenue-payers was separated out and called landowners these remained for the most part proprietors of a rent charge on the effective owner, the protected tenant, to whom as a result of rent control and social forces the bulk of agricultural profits increasingly passed. The greater value of tenant right over proprietary right was first visible in the permanently-settled districts of the east. The settlement officer of Ballia district reported in 1881: 'The value of the tenant right is very much greater than that of the proprietary right in most instances. The proprietary right is a multiple of the rent less the revenue, generally 16 times. The tenant right value is a much greater multiple of the rent 20, or 30, or 40 times, and is particularly valuable since no occupancy right can accrue under it'. Consequently agricultural incomes bore little direct relationship to the list of proprietors or revenue-payers. 'It is a matter of purely technical and litigious interest whether a given individual is a zamindar, or a fixed-rate tenant, or an occupancy tenant. The material point is whether he holds his land at favourable or unfavourable rates, and whether he has got enough of it.'[38]

The crucial economic and social divide was, therefore, not between landlord and tenant, but between the man who derived his income from rents and the man who depended on agricultural profits. At its widest extent—and in practice there were many intermediate positions—the divide corresponded with that between the absentee rent-receiver and the cultivating landholder, whose holding was composed of land held under various tenures ranging from full proprietary right to tenancy at will. The profitability of rent ownership was by no means as large as the traditional image of the landlord supposes. If illegal cesses on the one hand and shortfalls in collections on the other are discounted, proprietary incomes look distinctly modest even at the higher levels. After meeting management and other expenses the net income from rents of most proprietors by 1949 was distinctly below half rental assets. Only

[35] Cf. T.R. Metcalf in Frykenberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58, basing himself on P.D. Reeves 'Landlord Associations in U.P. and their Role in Landlord Politics, 1920-37', a working paper of the Institute of Advanced Studies, Department of History, Australian National University, 4 May 1961.

[36] Cf. P. Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, Bombay, 1966, p. 139ff. Charan Singh, *Abolition of Zamindari. Two Alternatives*, Allahabad, 1947. Sri Charan Singh was an active member of the Zamindari Abolition Committee set up in 1946. It is noticeable that among the 26 revenue-payers of over Rs 5,000 in 1940 only six were Jat, and that five of these six were magnates from the Kuchesar estate; *Meerut S.R. 1940*, p. 56, App. IX.

[37] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1881, XXI, pt. 2, p. 265.

[38] D.T. Roberts, *Reports of the Board of Revenue on the Revenue Administration of the N. W. Provinces, 1882-83*, Allahabad, 1884, Divisional Reports, p. 26.

[39] Neale, *op. cit.*, p. 252 and Table 19.

13,384 enjoyed an annual net income of Rs 1,162 or more; and of these only some 1,500 paying revenue in excess of Rs 3,000 were in receipt of more than Rs 5,000.[39]

Yet in ordinary circumstances there was little prospect of the gap between the rent receiver and the agriculturalist being closed. The fact that in the most thriving districts like Meerut the largest cultivating holdings averaged no more than 40 acres set an inexorable limit to enlarging the scale of production and so of obtaining substantial farm incomes. No doubt under conditions of high prices, as in 1921, a holding of 50 acres of Jungle Wet I soil in Muzaffarnagar district could produce crops to the value of Rs 200 per acre and so reap a handsome profit, even after meeting rent at Rs 13 per acre and the living costs of as many as ten cultivators and their families at Rs 280 each.[40] Even in impoverished eastern Gorakhpur (later Deoria district) the net profit in 1919 after meeting all expenses was reckoned at Rs 40 per acre.[41] But such conditions were doubtless exceptional and could not in any event have been repeated again until the high prices of the Second World War. The Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929-30 conducted its proceedings in the onset of the great slump, and reported that an economic holding to support one cultivator and his family in Meerut district must be regarded as five acres or so.[42] On this basis there was little profit beyond subsistence for cultivators on all but the largest holdings. Hence the pursuit of agriculture threw up at the top a substantial peasant elite rather than a farmer class that could rival economically the larger rent-receiving landlords. The gap was closed only by the relatively few men who filled both roles and combined direct cultivation with a significant income from rental property.

The pattern of cultivating holdings seems to have been analogous in evolution and structure to the pattern of proprietary rights. The Zamindari Abolition Committee failed to obtain accurate figures of cultivating holdings, presumably because of the difficulty encountered by patwaris in tracing all the holdings of an individual and recording them under a single name. The consequence of double-counting was not only to inflate grossly the numbers of cultivators but to exaggerate the numbers of smaller holdings. Yet the progressive subdivision of cultivating holdings was a process that had long been observed and formed a subject for official concern many decades before the crisis of the 1930s when the sharp increase in population growth and fall in crop prices brought to public attention the full gravity of the agrarian problem. Concern to ensure that cultivators did not fall below the minimum 'economic holding' necessary for adequate subsistence led successive commissions of inquiry into an obsession with the average size of holdings, seemingly oblivious to the unrepresentative nature of the arithmetical mean.[43] There seems good reason for believing, however, as we have observed already in the case of proprietary holdings, that population pressure did not operate to reduce the size of cultivating holdings equally. Instead the latter appear to have remained stable at the upper level but to have undergone the most marked sub-division and fragmentation at the bottom. The strongest influence at work was the increase in the rural proletariat. The myth of the rise of the landless labourer has helped to obscure the fact that only a very small minority of the rural population was without cultivating rights of some kind, even though such plots were hopelessly inadequate without another source of livelihood. In 1919 D.M. Stewart estimated that only 11 per cent of the population in one of the most crowded parts of the U.P., Western Gorakhpur, were agricultural labourers pure and simple, and that the vast bulk of the rural poor crowded into the ranks of the lower tenantry.[44] The U.P. Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929-30 estimated these 'allotment holders' at some 5 per cent of cultivators, but the category needs considerable extension. The Zamindari Abolition Committee went to the other extreme and estimated that 37.8 per cent of cultivators had holdings of less than one acre (occupying 6 per cent of the area) and 81.2 per cent under five acres (occupying 38.8 per cent of the area).[45]

According to the Committee's figures, in Gorakhpur 91.6 per cent of the cultivators possessed holdings of under five acres and occupied as much as 54.5 per cent of the area. This contrasted with 79 per cent of such cultivators in Meerut occupying 36.6 per cent of the land.[46] The degree of exaggeration in these figures can be judged from contemporary settlement reports. In 1940 it was estimated that in Meerut only 32 per cent of cultivators had holdings under five acres and occupied no more than 12 per cent of the area.[47] For Gorakhpur there is no contemporary evidence, but the settlement report of 1919 is not without significance. In 1919, K.N. Knox abandoned the use of patwari returns because of the enormous extent of double-counting and attempted an estimate of holdings based on plough areas. In the most crowded area of Deoria he found that only 16 per cent

[40] *Muzaffarnagar Settlement Report 1921*, p. 9. Cost of cultivation is estimated from *U.P. Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report*, Allahabad, 1930, Vol. I, p. 25.

[41] *Gorakhpur (Padrauna, Hata and Deoria tahsils) Settlement Report 1919*, pp. 20-21.

[42] *Report of U.P. Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee 1929-30*, Allahabad, 1930, Vol. I, p. 25.

[43] These commissions of inquiry are briefly reviewed in *ZACR*, Vol. I, p. 10ff. Cf. Sir Manilal P. Nanavati and J.J. Anjaria, *The Indian Rural Problem*, Bombay, 1944, p. 39ff.

[44] *Gorakhpur (Western Portion) Settlement Report 1919*, p. 13.

[45] *U.P. Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report 1929-30*, Allahabad, 1930, Vol. I, p. 22. Neale, *op. cit.*, Table 27, p. 272.

[46] *ZACR*, Vol. II, pp. 34-39.

[47] *Meerut Settlement Report 1940*, p. 17.

of the area was taken up by cultivating holdings of less than four acres, and even in the worst tappas the figure rose no higher than 27 per cent.[48] Despite these findings, J.K. Mathur 12 years later used the patwari returns noted by Knox in his report to state the average size of tenant holdings in Deoria as 0.65 acres[49]; 30 years later the Zamindari Abolition Committee gave figures showing that 53.7 per cent of the new Deoria district comprised holdings of less than four acres. Even allowing for the worsening of the position since Knox made his estimates, it is difficult to believe that his personal observation of conditions could have been so wildly astray.

The Zamindari Abolition Committee stood at the end of a long tradition of U.P. Congress politics on the agrarian question. For its special purposes the Committee chose to give prominence to the extremes of the landholding structure—at one end the large revenue-paying landlords and at the other end the mass of petty agriculturalists struggling for existence on minute holdings. It passed over in silence the intermediate peasant elite. Exaggeration (through double counting) of the number of cultivators at more than 12 million led to the calculation of the average holding (in the 41 million acres odd of the cultivated area) at no more than 3.37 acres.[50] Yet even without such double counting the calculation of the average holding as an arithmetic mean was a wholly unreal process since it ignored the pattern of distribution. For the average was completely thrown out by the mass of small holders occupying a relatively small portion of the land. Even on the Committee's swollen figures 67.4 per cent of cultivators held under three acres and occupied 22.8 per cent of the cultivated area. If these are excluded then the average holding over 77.2 per cent of the area rose to over eight acres for the remaining four million cultivators. There is good reason to believe that it was in practice bigger than this. In Meerut in 1940 the settlement officer estimated that 36 per cent of cultivators held over ten acres apiece and commanded 60 per cent of the area. Even in overcrowded Deoria one may question how far the 31 per cent of the land cultivated in 1919 by families with two pairs of plough bullocks (8-10 acres), or as much as 55 per cent in such holdings north of the Gorakhpur-Hata-Kasia road in the Haveli pargana and possessed mainly by Saithwar (Kurmi) families, had been substantially reduced by 1948.[51] Zamindari abolition in 1951 left this peasant elite without serious rival in the countryside.

[48] *Gorakhpur (Tahsils Padrauna, Hata and Deoria) Settlement Report 1919*, p. 19.

[49] J.K. Mathur, *The Pressure of Population: Its Effects on Rural Economy in Gorakhpur District*, Department of Agriculture Bulletin, Allahabad, 1931.

[50] Cf. Neale, *op. cit.*, Table 27.

[51] *Gorakhpur (Tahsils Padrauna, Hata and Deoria) Report Settlement 1919*, p. 19.

APPENDIX I

CLASSIFICATION OF ZAMINDARS (PROPRIETORS) IN U.P. 1946-47 ACCORDING TO CATEGORIES OF LAND REVENUE PAYMENTS

	Numbers of zamindars and percentage of total district land revenue paid by each category												
	Rs Under 25		*Rs 25-250*		*Rs 250-1,000*		*Rs 1,000-5,000*		*Rs 5,000-10,000*		*Rs over 10,000*		*Total land revenue Rs*
	Nos.	%	*Nos.*	%	*Nos.*	%	*Nos.*	%	*Nos.*	%	*Nos.*	%	
DOAB													
Saharanpur	95,812	29.0	9,549	34.8	613	15.3	126	11.9	5	2.5	4	6.5	17,16,032
Muzaffarnagar	83,919	26.3	10,702	37.9	603	15.2	141	14.0	7	2.4	4	4.3	18,61,321
Meerut	145,126	31.2	20,603	40.8	862	13.8	157	9.6	12	2.8	4	1.9	30,33,203
Bulandshahr	65,761	13.2	8,382	25.9	838	18.2	206	15.5	24	7.9	18	17.5	22,24,563
Aligarh	47,336	14.7	8,451	24.0	954	17.2	244	18.0	24	7.3	23	18.9	25,57,422
Mathura	55,058	22.4	6,749	29.6	507	16.6	105	14.6	12	5.3	6	11.8	13,87,904
Agra	44,833	14.1	7,490	31.2	904	24.0	162	16.9	14	6.1	6	7.7	16,98,919
Mainpuri	25,987	11.9	5,203	32.4	610	23.8	91	15.0	8	5.0	7	12.0	11,71,671
Etah	34,855	11.4	4,449	23.7	435	15.4	90	13.0	7	2.9	9	33.7	13,80,626
Farrukhabad	39,072	13.4	5,884	32.0	493	18.4	97	16.5	12	6.0	2	14.6	11,84,206
Etawa	19,328	8.0	4,452	25.2	706	25.4	141	19.0	19	9.4	9	13.2	13,46,233
Kanpur	31,160	8.5	7,189	29.6	1,001	25.7	228	23.8	23	9.2	5	3.5	19,04,777
Fatehpur	21,631	12.2	4,709	32.6	557	24.6	124	23.2	3	2.4	3	4.9	10,23,561
Banda	30,443	23.2	5,576	36.1	349	15.7	74	16.0	6	4.3	4	4.7	9,64,533
ROHILKHAND													
Bareli	30,628	11.0	8,982	39.7	822	22.2	172	20.8	6	2.3	4	4.0	16,83,675
Bijnor	52,469	13.6	5,169	25.6	642	19.0	174	22.4	4	1.9	9	17.6	15,71,385
Pilibhit	6,165	5.7	1,812	23.0	364	23.4	95	24.6	3	2.7	7	20.6	7,05,962
Budaun	50,546	17.6	7,179	35.5	786	24.2	143	17.7	9	4.3	1	0.9	14,31,450
Moradabad	70,632	14.3	8,056	28.0	1,353	27.5	225	20.3	10	3.2	6	6.9	22,42,275
Sahajahanpur	30,945	12.8	4,879	30.7	566	21.6	120	20.4	12	6.6	4	8.0	11,68,726

APPENDIX 1 (Contd.)

OUDH													
Kheri	5,395	2.7	1,575	9.6	167	6.5	65	11.1	4	2.6	13	67.6	12,14,996
Lucknow	8,346	5.4	3,522	23.5	581	22.8	111	18.0	8	4.7	10	25.7	11,21,015
Unnao	22,868	13.9	6,118	34.8	538	19.6	111	16.7	10	6.9	6	8.4	12,34,594
Rae Bareli	8,044	3.2	22,225	9.9	295	8.0	94	11.8	11	4.7	27	62.5	16,33,985
Sitapur	6,249	2.4	3,232	12.2	544	12.2	171	16.8	14	4.8	20	51.5	21,07,720
Hardoi	28,469	15.0	8,136	34.8	570	14.8	90	9.5	9	3.9	10	22.1	16,50,900
Faizabad	15,451	5.3	2,933	10.3	186	4.6	64	3.4	13	4.4	15	67.0	18,56,162
Sultanpur	24,256	11.4	5,152	22.0	282	8.5	48	6.2	7	3.4	14	48.6	14,76,430
Partapgarh	9,476	5.1	1,436	8.0	333	11.3	42	7.0	15	8.8	14	60.0	12,45,097
Bara Banki	13,861	6.2	4,792	19.0	596	14.4	104	9.9	16	17.6	21	43.1	19,48,746
Bahraich	1,507	0.9	536	3.8	91	4.0	35	5.8	3	1.9	11	83.6	11,12,990
Gonda	20,742	5.8	2,866	11.2	170	6.1	59	7.9	7	2.6	10	66.4	16,46,543
EASTERN DISTRICTS													
Allahabad	36,613	7.5	7,419	20.4	835	15.0	215	17.7	14	3.7	24	35.7	25,81,583
Banaras	16,169	7.3	3,656	19.0	492	16.5	110	15.4	7	3.7	4	38.3	13,67,382
Jaunpur	31,508	18.3	5,539	31.7	380	15.6	74	10.7	1	0.4	5	23.2	11,32,042
Ghazipur	37,013	27.0	5,644	43.3	292	16.7	53	11.9	2	1.3	0	0.0	8,15,005
Ballia	31,596	28.4	3,121	31.6	216	14.9	30	8.3	0	0.0	1	16.8	6,18,233
Azamgarh	89,681	31.0	14,084	41.4	553	11.9	76	7.3	4	1.2	3	7.3	19,83,690
Gorakhpur	67,154	24.0	7,250	30.0	497	14.7	138	18.3	8	3.6	9	9.4	15,27,354
Basti	95,587	24.3	13,802	34.9	783	13.8	133	10.2	16	4.2	13	12.6	24,83,063
Deoria	64,611	22.4	8,379	31.4	541	14.2	94	9.7	4	1.8	11	20.6	16,84,280

SOURCE: *Report of the United Provinces Zamindari Abolition Committee*, Vol. II, Allahabad, 1948, pp. 12-17.

APPENDIX 2

TABLE SHOWING INCREASE IN NUMBER OF ESTATES (MAHALS) AND OF PROPRIETORS OR CO-SHARERS IN SELECTED U.P. DISTRICTS AS RECORDED IN LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENT REPORTS CONTRASTED WITH ZAMINDARI ABOLITION COMMITTEE'S FIGURES

AGRA	*1880*	*1905**	*1930*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,703	6,208	6,907		
total co-sharers	43,551	53,869	75,847		53,409
ALIGARH	*1882*	*1903*	*1943*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals		3,316	5,271		
total co-sharers	44,840	61,014	86,921		57,032
BAREILLY	*1874*	*1911**	*1942*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	3,236	6,486	7,328		
total co-sharers	23,122		77,812		40,614
BIJNOR	*1872*	*1899*	*1906**	*1939*	*ZAC 1948*
mahals	2,229	3,547	5,853	6,485	
	(3,364)	(5,260)			
total co-sharers				113,515	58,647
non-resident co-sharers				77,335	
BUDAUN		*1901*	*1930*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals		4,408	5,709		
total co-sharers		61,946	99,185		58,664
non-res. co-sharers			60,390		
ETAH	*1874*	*1905*	*1944*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,499	3,065	3,850		
total co-sharers	13,531	46,193	75,087		39,845
non-res. co-sharers		21,366	38,541		
ETAWAH	*1875*	*1911**	*1915*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,813	4,446	4,807		
total co-sharers	15,523		18,873		24,655
GORAKHPUR	*1891*	*1909**	*1919*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	8,463	14,586	14,661		(incl.Deora)
Total co-sharers	100,249		332,134		148,696
non-res. co-sharers			228,100		
KANPUR	*1848*	*1881**	*1907*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals		2,550	5,771		
total co-sharers	16,542		36,572		39,606
MAINPURI	*1875*	*1906*	*1944*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,435	2,600	3,417		
total co-sharers	21,295	37,143	53,868		31,906
MATHURA	*1883*	*1903**	*1926*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,375	2,684			
total co-sharers			82,793		62,437
MEERUT	*1874*	*1901*	*1940*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals			7,795		
total co-sharers	105,237	153,668	251,665		166,764
MUZAFFARNAGAR	*1860*	*1890*	*1921*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	1,061	2,992	8,033		

APPENDIX 2 (*Contd.*)

totalco-sharers				144,214	95,376
SHAHJAHANPUR	*1875*	*1901*	*1907**	*1943*	*ZAC 1948*
mahals	3,063	3,558	3,783	4,584	
total co-sharers				88,288	36,526
UNAO	*1895*		*1931*		*ZAC 1948*
mahals	2,784		5,366		
total co-sharers	28,455		57,963		29,651

SOURCE: *U.P. Land Revenue Settlement Reports.*

Years indicate date of publication of settlement report not year of verification.

*H.R. Nevill (ed.), *District Gazetteers of U.P., 1903-11*, Allahabad, 48 vols. or E.A. Atkinson (ed.), *Gazetteer N.W.P., 1874-86*, Allahabad, 14 vols according to date.

Except in case of Gorakhpur these figures take no account of district boundary changes between given dates.

Land Market in Eastern India, 1793-1940 Part II : The Changing Composition of the Landed Society

BINAY BHUSHAN CHAUDHURI
Department of History
Calcutta University

With the growth of a land market the old landed society ceased to be a closed community, and its composition inevitably changed over the years. Recent researches, however, call for a revision of the popular notions about the change. According to the popular version, two broad developments occurred: first, the old aristocracy had everywhere been largely eliminated and, secondly, the persons who replaced them were mostly connected with the new trade and commerce, i.e. persons who made fortunes by participating in various ways in the new economy.

I. EXTENT OF DISPOSSESSION OF THE OLD ARISTOCRACY AND THE 'FATE OF THE DISPOSSESSED'

The old landed aristocracy undoubtedly greatly suffered from the enforcement of the sale laws. A number of old families in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa were wiped out. In Bengal proper it was the big zamindars, such as those of Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Nadia, Bishnupur, Birbhum who suffered worst. So did some ancient zamindari families of Midnapur. Of the big zamindars, only that of Burdwan survived the convulsion and, indeed, eventually improved his position. The catastrophe was perhaps worse in Orissa, where out of about 3,000 'proprietors' of the first "settlement' of 1804, only 1,449 survived till 1818. 51.6 per cent of the old proprietors were thus eliminated,[1] and the estates remaining unaffected by the auction sales during the same period paid only 21.5 per cent of the land revenue fixed in the first settlement.

The precise extent of such reverses of the old zamindars would not be fully known without more detailed researches. However, such reverses were not evidently universal. In Bengal proper the fate of some of the oldest and big-

[1] Bengal Territorial Revenue Department Proceedings, 17 July 1818, No. 16; Ewer's Report of 13 May 1818, para 76.

gest zamindari families has misled us into assuming that the disaster was nearly universal. Beveridge, Collector and Magistrate of Bakarganj, examined the question with special reference to that district. The popular notion about the ruin of the old zamindars, he concluded, was

> true of the larger zamindars, but it is not applicable to the taluqdars. . . . The smallness of their estates, and the great number of them must also have enabled them to escape, for the Collector could not know, or even guess at the real value of their properties. . . . It may generally be said that the owners of the backward and less known zamindaries fared better than those of which the resources had been developed and were supposed to be accurately known. . . . This remark applies to more districts than Bakarganj, and perhaps accounts for the light assessment and great prosperity of the zamindars in such remote districts as Mymensingh and eastern Bengal generally. It was not merely, or even chiefly that the collectors know less about the eastern districts when they did about Burdwan or Nadia, but because cultivation was much more backward in former districts.[2]

In general, the Bihar zamindars also suffered much less than the big ones in Bengal. The worst sufferer was perhaps the Shihuar Raj of Champaran. In terms of the land revenue due from the estate its size diminished by about 77 per cent between 1791 and 1800.[3] Most other big families survived, some even prospered—for instance, the Darbhanga family in the district of Darbhanga, the Hutwa family in Saran and Chamaparan, the Tikari and Deo families in Gaya, the Dumraon family and the family of Bhupnarain Singh in Sahabad. The findings of an investigation into the question by Stevenson-Moore, with particular reference to the old district of Tirhut, show that the new revenue system of 1793 was not necessarily equally severe everywhere. Between 1793 and 1798 (which were admittedly the worst years for the Bengal zamindars in point of immensity of the auction sales of estates) the amount of arrears for which the defaulters' estates were advertized for sale in Tirhut did not in any year exceed 2 per cent of the total revenue demand of the district, and only 6 per cent of the total number of estates were thus affected. In fact, the number of sales that eventually took place was much smaller, as indeed it was always the case. In fact, the arrears 'were mainly due, not from proprietors, but from farmers [temporary leaseholders] and estates held *khas*, that is, from those estates for which, under the circumstances then existing, it was not worthwhile to engage permanently owing to initial over-assessment or

[2] H. Beveridge, *The District of Bakarganj*, London, 1876, pp. 60-61.
[3] *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement in the District of Champaran, 1892-99,* para 135.

subsequent deterioration of the land'.[4] The survival of such zamindars seemed all the more surprising because of the well-known incompetence of most of them in managing their estates. Bathurst, Collector of the district at the time of the making of the Permanent Settlement, was amazed to find that most of them 'never occupy themselves except in hunting and only request that the Collector would see their *Malikana* [the usual allowance towards their maintenance] secured to them'. This was true even of the biggest zamindar of the district—Madhu Singh of Darbhanga, who was described as 'a man in every way incapable of managing so extensive a farm, or indeed any farm at all'.

It has recently been argued, with particular reference to Benares, that though as a result of the auction sales some zamindars lost their zamindaries and were in a reduced economic state, 'such dramatic falls in economic and social status appear not to have been the norm'. 'In discussions, of social mobility and social change, we often tend to think in terms of closed systems. This model may be adequate for the study of isolated primitive societies, but not for India in the early 19th century . . . .Hence, unlike a hydraulic pump, the change in one part of the system, that is, the rise of one group or class, did not necessarily mean the concomitant fall of another'.[5]

This argument rests on two assumptions. First, the auction of landed rights did not necessarily mean that the seller was driven from his property. Legally, what was at issue were rights, not physical entities, and even after sale of his estate, the seller continued to live in his estate with his agnatic kin in his lineage, and there were a number of circumstances which largely prevented the auction purchaser from destroying the old social position of the seller. Secondly, the sale of landed rights did not result either in a complete desctruction of the seller's economic power, largely because of the continued possession by him of a considerable amount of rent-free private land (*sir*), which auction sales did not presumably affect, unless the owner chose to sell them, and where the owner succeeded in salvaging it the rising agricultural prices, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century, resulted in a considerable increase of his income.

The social power of some zamindari families occasionally survived the sale of a considerable part of their estates, particularly where such families had long been in existence and where in point of caste-ranking the old zamindars were superior to the newcomers. In such cases the old families themselves sought to resist as far as possible any invasion of their social privileges. Of the recorded cases of such a social conflict the following may be taken as a type.

[4] *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement in the District of Muzaffarpur, 1892-99,* paras 160 and 167.
[5] B.S. Cohn, 'Structural Change in Indian Rural Society' in R. Frykenberg (ed.), *Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History*, 1969, pp. 111-14.

This involved the ancient Seorafuli Raj of the district of Hugli and a new family belonging to the low *Tili* caste. The *Tili* family gradually acquired most parts of the Seorafuli estate, partly through auction purchases and partly through foreclosures of mortgages on the estate, which the family had held. Part of the mortgaged estate included a portion of the land which formed the endowment of the temple of Juggernaut at Puri. 'In an evil hour' the new zamindars decided to 'arrogate to themselves the honour of giving orders for the bathing of Juggernaut'. The indignation of the dispossessed Raja 'may be more easily conceived than described when he learned that the son of the hawker of thread [this was how the new family first made fortunes] had thus invaded the ancient privileges of his family. He rode up in haste to the temple, caused the chief priests to be bound. . . . and subjected them, for three days, to every possible indignity short of actual violence'. The intervention of some powerful zamindars in the neighbourhood led to their liberation, but only on the promise that they would not 'repeat the transgression or pay the slightest attention to the new men—a promise which they have since held sacred'.[6]

As far at least as Bengal was concerned the means by which the dispossessed zamindars in Benares could maintain their economic power, i.e. control over *sir* land, were extremely limited. The extent of rent-free land was once considerable, but most of it was a gift from the zamindars. Where the dispossessed zamindar happened to be one of moderate fortunes he lost to the purchaser whatever rent-free holdings on various pretexts was one of the means by which the auction-purchaser initially sought to increase the income from his new estate. Part of it was also resumed by the government, particularly where the titles were doubtful or where the owner failed to prove them.

II. The Prevailing Views about the Composition of the Newcomers

Regarding the characterization of the newcomers there are two principal views. According to the more widely known one, the land market was dominated by urban elements, by persons connected with the new economy of which Calcutta was the centre. Mill thus presented the more or less popular contemporary view: 'In one generation the ancient families had ceased to exist, and other families, mostly the descendants of Calcutta moneylenders, now occupy their place, and live as useless drones upon the soil'. The view went long unchallenged. Marx repeated it in his *Notes on Indian History*: 'The greater part of the province's landholdings fell rapidly into the hands of a few city capitalists who had spare capital and readily invested in land'. Such a view also seems to have considerably influenced at one time the

[6] G. Toynbee, *Administration of Hoogly District*, Calcutta, 1888, pp. 153-55.

thinking in regard to the alleged 'de-industrialization' in India. The security and other relative advantages of landed property, it was argued, lured capital from the non-agrarian sectors.

A more recent view[7] seems to have largely ignored the role of the 'new men' as auction-purchasers:

> the transformation took place within the existing framework. Estates changed hands from one group of zamindars to another. . . the brisk and sweeping sale of lands in the early years of the Permanent Settlement did nothing to cause a transfer of property from one class to another. On the contrary, this acted as a rationalizing process which gave land a wider base than ever before by a more ample distribution within the class itself and by absorbing in land a certain amount of capital which might otherwise have flown into non-agrarian channels.

In the present stage of our knowledge it is difficult to offer conclusive answers to the questions suggested by such views. While it is essential to know how land sales affected the multitude of estates, both big and small, the history of most of them is still unknown. However, the study of even limited source material makes one feel that the traditional view is only partially valid. Some conclusions of this study can thus be indicated. Part of the fortunes made through trade and commerce or through connections of various kinds with the Europeans or the English administration was undoubtedly transferred to the purchase of land at the public sales. However, despite the opportunities the Permanent Settlement had created for such a transfer, affluent urban families did not show any keenness to buy land. Without a quantitative study of all or most land transfers it is not possible to conclude whether the land market was dominated by urban elements, but the traditional view was undoubtedly wrong to the extent that it underestimated the role of other groups as auction-purchasers. Such groups, incidentally, were not by any means confined to the pre-existing class of zamindars.

III. An Examination of these Views, with Reference to the Growth of Some New Zamindar Families

Families making fortunes through connections with European traders and the new administration of the Company and subsequently turning into landed magnates make an impressive list. Only a few are studied here, with particular emphasis on the means by which they made fortunes. These are: the

[7] West Bengal District Records, Burdwan Letters (Received), Calcutta, 1956, Introduction by R.Guha, p. lxxiv.

two branches of the Tagore family, the Kandi family of Murshidabad, the Kasimbazar Nandi family of Murshidabad, the Ghosal family of Bhukailash, the Shovabazar family, the Pal Chaudhuri family of Ranaghat, the Dacca Nawab family, the Nasipur Raj, and also some other lesser families in different districts.

The Tagore family. Of its two branches it was the elder branch whose members first came into prominence as purchasers of estates at the public auction, and the real architect of its fortunes was Darpanarain Tagore who combined independent trade with service under the French in Chandernagore. The activities of its members as auction-purchasers were seen soon after the Permanent Settlement, when the large Rajshahi zamindari was being sold off. This branch later came to possess the largest estates in the district of Bakarganj, purchasing two of the biggest parganas, Idilpur in 1812 and Nazirpur in 1819. The first prominent name of the junior branch was Nilmoni Tagore, the younger brother of Darpanarain. Neither Nilmoni nor his three sons seemed to have made any fortunes by trade. Nilmoni supplemented his inherited wealth by his earnings as an employee of a district collectorate, and the real connections of his family with Calcutta started from his time. None of his three sons seemed to have been particularly distinguished, and during the childhood of Dwarakanath, Nilmoni's grandson (born in 1794), the family was far from affluent. The only notable possession of the family was the fairly big estate of Birahimpur pargana in the district of Pabna, which once belonged to the zamindar of Rajshahi. It was in fact Dwarakanath who built up the family fortunes, including the extensive landed property scattered in different parts of Bengal and Orissa—Rajshahi, Pabna, Rangpur, Burdwan, Jessore, and Cuttack. In the making of Dwarakanath's fortunes trade or commerce had initially only a small role to play. The management of his ancestral property created in him a taste for real property law, and he soon made a reputation as a law agent for very many noted zamindari families of Bengal. He not only earned a lot from this profession, but also the knowledge he thus came to acquire about the intricacies of the land system of Bengal later stood him in good stead, when he decided to invest part of his fortunes in the purchase of landed estates. Gradually, however, he made contacts with the European mercantile community, and provided from time to time indigo and silk, and during the short-lived indigo boom of 1822-24, he decided to establish some indigo factories, and later some silk factories. Even then, however, his main profession was his job as a subordinate to the Collector and Salt Agent of 24-Parganas for six years, 1823-1828 and from 1829 to 1834 as the Dewan to the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium. From 1829 onwards, however, his connections with trade, banking and finance provided him with a large income, though this was sharply depleted during periods of trade depression. Of the total capital of 16 lacs of the Union Bank established in 1829 he provided the largest part. Unperturbed by the crash of the commercial Houses of Calcutta between 1830 and 1835 he established in 1835 the firm of Carr and Tagore, 'which was for all practical purposes Dwarakanath's concern'.[8]

The Kandi family. The pattern of fortune-making was here somewhat different, and it perhaps provides a typical example of how some of the family-founders built up their wealth. The first fortunes were made, quite some time before the British took over, through moneylending and business in silk. This perhaps helped the family to establish contacts with the English Company. Later on, however, the connection with trade or banking became unimportant, and various jobs under the new administration provided them with the largest part of the wealth which they later transferred to the purchase of land.

Starting an humble career with moneylending, Hara Krishna Singh, the first notable member of the family, succeeded in building up a considerable business in silk. The Maratha invasions caused a setback, and the family migrated to the east side of the Bhagirathi. Contacts with the Mughal government in Bengal also seem to have started then. His son continued to be engaged in banking, but one of his three grandsons, Gauranga Singh, started a new phase in the career of the family: service under the Mughals. Gauranga Singh was employed in the Kanungo department, and before his death managed to acquire some landed property. After Plassey Radhakanta, who had worked in the revenue department under Alivardi and Siraj, continued to work in the same department, and as a reward for helping the English in making a fresh assessment of land revenue after the *Diwani*, he was made Collector of octroi at Hugli. This turned out to be quite a lucrative job. Connections with the administration became still firmer, and those with trade and banking weaker during the time of Ganga Govind Singh. A Persian scholar thoroughly acquainted with the intricacies of the land system, he so much impressed Hastings and other members of the government that he was made Diwan to the new committee of Revenue (1772), and in the making of the new 'farming' arrangement (1772-77) he had a vital role to play. His alleged peculations in the Dinajpur zamindari when he was sent there to administer it during the minority of the zamindar were usually believed to have largely added to his fortunes. (This was incidentally one of Burke's charges against Hastings.) Cornwallis made him *jamanavis*, an important official in the revenue department. Perhaps his influence with the English largely accounted for the employment of his grandson, Krishna Chandra Singh, as *Sheristdar* (keeper of records) at the Burdwan collectorate, and when Orissa was annexed (1803), as Diwan in charge of the new land revenue arrangement in the province. As we shall see later, it was mainly

[8] N.K. Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal, 1793-1848*, Calcutta, 1970, p. 119.

through dishonest means that he acquired an extensive landed property in Orissa.

The Kasimbazar Nandi family. The origin of the Kasimbazar family may be taken as another illustration of this type. Business in silk and cotton, i.e. providing such commodities for the European traders, formed the foundation of the initial fortunes of the family, and such activities were mostly concentrated in Kasimbazar, one of the main centres of English trade. However, the participation in the silk business even in this limited sense gradually declined, presumably as a result of the decision of the English (1753-54) to do without the local *dadni* merchants in the matter of procuring silk and other commodities. (This decision was partly a result of the clamour of the European private traders, whose power and influence was quite firmly entrenched by then, for a share in the 'business' which had for long been done by the dadni merchants.) The development is quite evident by the time of Kanta Babu who is usually looked upon as the real founder of the family. He really belonged to the administrative establishment of the Kasimbazar Factory, holding a more or less clerical job of a writer. Undoubtedly, his skill in testing the quality of silk goods and also perhaps the commercial credit he occasionally provided to Hastings in his capacity as a private trader influenced Hastings' decision, when he was the Commercial Resident at Kasimbazar, to employ him as a writer. His growing intimacy with Hastings was eventually to change the whole course of his career. The new 'farming' arrangement of Hastings (1772-77), resulting in the partial supersession of the old zamindars of Bengal, enabled Hastings to distribute favours among his favourites, including Kanta Babu. Kanta Babu managed to 'farm' some of the very valuable estates, including the rich Baharband pargana of Rangpur, which was in fact the first estate in Bengal to be permanently settled with a very low land revenue demand. The spoils of the farming system and the profits from the Baharband estate and also from a *jagir* at Ghazipur constitute the main means which enabled the family to make the first purchases after the Permanent Settlement.

The Ghoshal family of Bhukhailash. Here again, trade perhaps had a greater role, at least initially, in the making of the family's fortunes. Later, however, this became unimportant. The confused conditions of the time, say from 1760 to 1790, offered ample opportunities for getting rich quick to all those who had a control over the new administrative machinery. The founder of the family, Gokul Chandra Ghoshal, was a considerable trader in salt even before Plassey, and when the internal trade in salt was later being increasingly dominated by the English private traders Gokul Ghoshal seems also to have a share in the spoils, mainly because of his close relationship with Verelst, who later became Governor. When Chittagong was ceded to the English, Gokul accompanied Verelst to Chittagong, and was the Company's first

Diwan there between 1761 and 1764. This enabled him to increase his trade in salt, betelnut, and tobacco, and his role in the new land revenue settlement of the district provided him with further opportunities for making money. The particular means by which he made fortunes were first exposed by Duncan in the course of his enquiry into the universal complaints against him by the people of Sandwip, an extensive island in the Bay of Bengal, when Gokul served as *Wahadadar*—an officer in the revenue department. He monopolized the salt trade, gradually expropriating most other traders in the commodity. The revision of the land revenue assessment of the island, which Gokul supervised, provided means to him for dispossessing a number of local zamindars. Very many of their estates he eventually appropriated, though holding them under fictitious names. (Such high-handedness provoked the popular revolt of 1769, which was led by the injured zamindars.) The acquisition for his nephew Joynarain Ghoshal of the extensive waste land in Chittagong—known as the Taraf Joynarain—at a nominal revenue was as much a result of frauds as of the family's influence with the English administration. The beginning of the family's hold in Selimabad, one of the largest parganas of Bakarganj, was also the result of fraud. Sheo Narain, the zamindar of the pargana, lost it to a powerful claimant in one of those clashes between its proprietors and adventurers, which convulsed the pargana from time to time before the British took over. The Provincial Council of Chittagong, of which Gokul was the Diwan, intervened and restored the property to Sheo Narain. It was, however, a shady deal. Gokul exacted a heavy price from Sheo Narain, acquiring half of his restored property. The hold of the Ghosal family in the pargana which was thus acquired was consolidated by subsequent purchases.

The origins of the Nasipur Raj, the Shovabazar family of Calcutta and also of a lesser Calcutta family, the Kumartuli Mitra family illustrate more or less the same pattern. Raja Devy Singh, the founder of the Nasipur Raj, made fortunes mainly as a revenue 'farmer', particularly in the district of Dinajpur, and the basis of a considerable part of these was extortions from various rural groups, particularly the peasantry. (The revolt of 1783 was an organized protest against such extortions.) Raja Nabakrishna, the founder of the Shovabazar family, was closely associated with the administration of Clive and Verelst. He had his share in the 'loot of Plassey', and already by the time of the Diwani (1765) acquired an important position in the administration, in which his knowledge of Persian greatly helped him. In 1767 the Calcutta Board rejected a proposal of Nabakrishna and a member of the Ghoshal family to 'farm' the Calcutta towns for three years on the ground that 'Nubkissen's present situation gives him so great an influence in the country that the ryots might be alarmed and apprehensive of oppression'. Govindaram Mitra, the founder of the Kumartuli Mitra family, became wealthy also by dishonest means, mainly in his capacity as the 'black collector' of Calcutta, subordinate to the English Collector of Calcutta. The 'black collector' was 'a person accustomed by immemorial practice to supplement his inadequate salary by what he . . . considered as the perquisites of his office, emoluments, which on scrutiny would be regarded by his employers as embezzlements'.[9] Holwell, the first English Governor after Plassey, 'commenced his labours by an attempt to bring Govindaram to account'. He had also a share in the spoils of Calcutta after its conquest by the English.

There are of course instances, even during the first few decades after the Permanent Settlement, of transfer of fortunes made mainly through trade to the purchase of landed estates. Some of these will be noted later in our studies of the changes in the composition of landed society in some particular districts. Only a few of these are mentioned here.

The founder of the Dacca Nawab family, Maulavi Khwaja Abdullah, migrated from Kashmir, settled in Dacca at about the beginning of the nineteenth century, and gradually built up a large trade. According to tradition, which it is difficult to verify, the founder of the Pal Chaudhuri family of Ranaghat had a very humble start as a trader in betel leaves. By the time of the establishment of British political supremacy in Bengal, and subsequently, the members of the family were found to have been running an extensive business in salt. When after the Permanent Settlement the Nadia zamindari was fast disintegrating the family bought up a considerable part of it. In the district of Bakarganj a typical case of such auction-purchases by merchants, though not indigenous, occurred in the Dakhin Sahabazpur pargana. A large part of it came into the possession of some Armenian merchants, mostly engaged in salt trade, of whom the most prominent was Khawjah Michael. The foundation of the wealth which they later spent in purchasing estates at the auction was salt trade. The manufacture of salt at Dakhin Sahabazpur belonged to the Bhulua salt agency. Richard Barwell, Chief of Dacca, held the salt farm in 1774, and relet it and also the one at Rai Mangal to two Armenians, including Michael. The lucrativeness of such farms can be inferred from the willingness of the two Armenians to pay Barwell Rs 125,000, in addition to the usual amount payable to the Company, a fact Barwell later admitted. Two of these Armenian merchants, George Panioty and Alexander Panioty, also purchased about one-third (in terms of the revenue payable) of the largest pargana of Bakaranj, Chandradwip, when it was sold in 1799. The Datta family of Calcutta, one branch of which gradually acquired a large landed property, derived most of their income from 'business', run partly independently and partly in association with the East India Company. Madan Mohan Datta, the most conspicuous member of

[9] Firminger, *Historical Introduction to the Fifth Report*, Calcutta, 1917, p. lxxiii.

the family, was also a shipowner. Of the non-indigenous entrepreneurs, who invested in the purchase of land part of their income derived from trade and industry (mostly silk and indigo), the most notable was the Midnapur Zamindari Company. The purchases by the Company (composed initially of the members forming Messrs Watson and Company, which had an extensive business in silk and indigo) were mostly made in the second half of the nineteenth century, when in Bengal proper the cultivation of indigo was gradually dwindling to insignificance and the market for Bengal silk was also shrinking. A striking feature of the land purchases by the Company was the concentration of a large part of them in the relatively undeveloped regions and the policy, though not always necessarily a conscious one, later paid rich dividends when with the growth of population and the improving transport, cultivation there rapidly increased, and the Company made use of all the available legal means for increasing its income by raising the rent rates of the peasants.

The evidence that has been cited here thus suggests that only a small part of the capital accumulated through 'business', or of the so-called 'urban capital', seems to have been transferred to the purchase of landed property, particularly during the first few decades after the Permanent Settlement when the largest number of land sales occurred. A study of the families which are often cited as examples of the process of this alleged transfer clearly shows that quite a large part of the fortunes subsequently spent on the purchase of land was made through connections with the new administration, connections not necessarily involving any participation in the new trade and business. It is surprising to find the prominent dadni merchants of the 1750s, mostly *Setts* and *Basaks*, usually absent in the list of the new purchasers after the new sale laws came into force. Of the prominent *banians*, Banarasey Ghose acquired some estates, but this was mainly in his role as an *ijaradar* of some portions of the estate of Raja of Burdwan. His acquisitions in the Nadia zamindari did not result from auction purchases, but usually from the foreclosure of mortgages. Akrur Datta, Hirdayram Banerji, and other prominent banians seemed to have been little attracted to the purchase of landed property.

It may be argued that despite some obvious attractions of auction purchases of landed estates, the Permanent Settlement by itself did not automatically result in the diversion of mercantile or urban capital to the purchase of land, and the circumstances which later encouraged such a diversion only partly existed immediately after the Settlement. (Some of the attractions of auction purchases and also the circumstances which tended to discourage such purchases have been noted in Part I of this paper.) The attitude of some wealthy families of the time may be taken as an illustration of the limited diversion of mercantile capital, distinguishable from the fortunes made through connections of various kinds with the new administration.

The indifference of the communities of Setts and Basaks to the purchase of land has been noted. Some families acquiring wealth later were also not much interested in land. Ramdulal De, a millionaire, went to the extent of binding his children by an oath never to purchase zamindaries. 'He told them that they could take advantage of the fluctuations of the market, but not of the weakness of the ryot'.[10] Some other opulent families, such as the Laha family, the Mullick family, and the Seal family, came into possession of landed estates mostly as a result of foreclosure of mortgages on such estates. Radhamadhab Banerji, one of the richest businessmen of the time, did not go in for purchase of any estate, except one in Cuttack.

It is also striking that the diversion of mercantile capital, even where it occurred, was seldom done at the cost of the 'business' concerned, and there are instances where the owner of the 'capital' decided to divert part of it to the purchase of landed property mainly because of a pervasive feeling of insecurity in the business world. At the time of his death in 1806 Raja Davy Singh owned numerous houses of business in Murshidabad and Calcutta, and had also considerable investment in Company's papers and securities. Dwarakanath was one of the most outstanding examples of entrepreneurship, preferring not to choose the relatively comfortable career of a zamindar even in face of serious reverses in business. The establishment of the firm of Carr and Tagore took place at a time when the business world was shaken by commercial failures. He invested in coal business also at a time when it was far from attractive, and even the coming of the first wave of commercial crisis in 1840 scarcely reduced his ardour. However, the commercial failures of the 1830s destroyed the faith of the indigenous businessmen in the British style of business, and led some opulent business families to decide in favour of a larger investment in the purchase of landed estates. The growth of the zamindari of the Mukherji family of Uttarpara in Hugli may be taken as an illustration.[11] The foundation of the family's fortunes does not seem to be business, but the share of one of its members, Joy Krishna Mukherjee, in the spoils of the plunder of Bharatpur (1827). (Mukherji was employed under the 14th Regiment of Foot which besieged the fort of Bharatpur.) Joy Krishna's father scarcely invested any part of the fortunes thus made in the purchase of land, and decided to go in for business. He 'carried on trade in European merchandise, and had also opened accounts with the principal Agency Houses in Calcutta on whom he used to draw Bills of exchange'. Unlike the upcountry bankers Mukherji issued Bills at reduced rates and could thus

[10] Sinha, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

[11] Joy Kissen Mukherjee, *Autobiography*, published in *Calcutta Review*, January-February, 1951. The autobiography was written in 1886.

attract business to himself. The failure of the Agency Houses, wiping off a large part of the family's fortunes, marked a turning point, and the purchase of land was then considered a more secure investment. Landed property suddenly depreciated as a result of the commercial crash, while on the other hand, the number of sales considerably increased. As Record Keeper at the Hugli collectorate, Joy Krishna Mukherji could know of the actual value and conditions of all the estates that were thus brought to sale. 'By purchasing estates which thus went for a song Joy Krishna Mukherji laid the foundation of his position as one of the largest landholders of the district'.[12] This is also partly true of the later growth of the zamindari of the elder branch of the Tagore family. Prosonna Kumar Tagore had once invested in indigo, but his losses in this, aggravated by the unskilful handling of his cases in the courts, were largely responsible for his increasing indifference to business and the eventual concentration on his legal profession (from which he derived an enormous income) and on the careful management of the increasing number of his estates, which he gradually purchased out of this income. (He was one of the few zamindars who decided to manage estates directly instead of letting them out on perpetual or temporary leases. He also spent a considerable amount towards an improvement of the internal navigation of the districts in which his estates lay.)

IV. COMPOSITION OF NON-URBAN AUCTION-PURCHASERS

The role as auction-purchasers of the existing zamindars, of the members of the zamindari bureaucracy and also of the employees under the new administration, particularly during the first few decades after the Permanent Settlement, has usually been underestimated. Of the zamindars as purchasers the most notable was the Raja of Burdwan. He himself bought up, presumably under ficitious names, quite a number of his own estates when put to sale. Burdwan was remarkable in having the largest number of sales between 1793 and 1796. Through a clever device the Raja succeeded in retaining his most valuable estates and indeed added to them. He let the overassessed parganas fall into arrears, and when the assessment was eventually reduced he hastened to buy them up once again (particularly where he succeeded in dissuading other purchasers). Sometimes, intending to get rid of the uprofitable estates, he deliberately defaulted, spending his prior rental income from such estates on the purchase of more valuable ones in other districts. The Mandalghat estate was thus sold off, since the land revenue assessment was far disproportionate to its actual assets, which inundations further depleted from time to time, and with the sale proceeds he bought up the Barahazari *mahal* belonging

[12] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

to the zamindari of Bishnupur. When in 1806 the whole of the remaining portions of the Bishnupur zamindari was put to sale the Raja of Burdwan was the main purchaser. He also purchased the ancient estate of Sujamuta in Midnapur. The Nawab of Murshidabad similarly purchased estates on a large scale, particularly in the forest parganas of Midnapur. In Midnapur the Brahmin lady zamindar of Mysadal ably managed her estates, added to her fortunes by money-lending, lent a large amount to the Kalibaria Raja Birjanand of Mynachura on the mortgage of his estates, and eventually acquired most of them. A Settlement Officer of Dinajpur examined the available statistics relating to land sales in the district during the two decades after 1793 and found that four important zamindari families enlarged their possessions by auction-purchases. Of the different matters on which the district officers were asked (1801) by the Government of Wellesley to report the social and economic origins of the auction-purchasers were one, and the replies emphasize the role of the existing zamindars, at least in some districts.[13] In Sahabad, 'zamindars residing in the district are principally the purchasers of estates at public sales'. In the district of Bihar the purchasers were 'either persons who having amassed money by service wish to find their property in landed estates, or zamindars, possessed of small profitable taluks having inclination and ability to enlarge their possessions'. In Tirhut the purchasers were 'either people of respectability and chiefly proprietors of land'. The Collector of Sylhet found that most of the auction-purchasers were the 'Chowdhures of the parganas in which the *taluks* are situated'. In Mymensingh 'the purchasers are in general the proprietors of the nearest estates to those sold'. In the 24-Parganas, 'the purchasers of lands are in general agents sent by the zamindars whose property may be put to sale'. Why this happened has not been explained. Given the familiarity of outsiders with the conditions of the estates to be sold, the main reason why they chose not to purchase was perhaps the fear of the hostility of the old zamindars.

Persons once belonging to the zamindari bureaucracy or somehow connected with it were perhaps no less significant as auction-purchasers. This is hardly surprising in view of the proverbial incompetence of the zamindars in managing their estates. Most of them were 'ignorant of the common forms of business, and of the modes of transacting it . . . . The business in general is exclusively transacted by the zamindar's servants. Nothing can be more evident than that he must be exposed to endless frauds and impositions'.[14]

Zamindar's servants, enriched as a result of such frauds, readily took full advantage of the economic distress of their masters, and managed to purchase large portions of the estates when they were put to sale, in which their

[13] These were recorded in Bengal Judicial Civil Progs., 8 July 1802.

[14] Shore's Minute of 18 June 1789, paras 169-171, 5th Report, Vol. 2.

superior knowledge of the actual value of such estates greatly helped them.

This happened in some of the biggest zamindaris of Bengal though the way it did varied from case to case. In Birbhum as the district Collector tells us (1802), 'the greatest part of the purchasers of lands . . . are persons who have held situation under the Raja, the rest are merchants and persons that have been in the service of different zamindars'.[15] In view of the particular way the Raja managed his estate this was not an unexpected result. 'The whole tenor of his conduct' wrote the Collector in 1794, 'exhibits proofs of folly and weakness and in no instance are [they] more clearly manifested than in the selection he had made of official servants'.[16] In the same year the Raja's brother attributed the family's misfortunes to the intrigues of the manager of the estate, who 'encouraged in every way the extravagance of the zamindar, giving him loans whenever he wanted'. The Manager pursuaded the Raja to execute a mortgage bond for some of the best lands, and it was obviously to his interest that these lands were sold.[17] In most such cases 'the purchase was made with means not always fair'. The growth of the Hetampur Raj whose founder had once served the Raja had a slightly different story. The ancestors of Radharaman Chakravarty, the founder of the family, had for long been connected with the Raj, and it was through this connection that the first fortunes of the family seem to have been mainly made. The real opportunities for the family came when the Raj began to disintegrate, and the intimate knowledge of Radharaman about the relative resources of different estates helped him choose the ones he preferred to retain as a purchaser, while selling off with a big margin of profit the other estates which he had previously purchased.

Of the families founded by officials once serving the Rajshahi zamindar the most famous was the Narail family of Jessore.[18] The zamindari, the largest one in Jessore, was entirely the creation of Kalisankar, who was introduced to the Rajshahi zamindar by his father, himself an agent at the Nawab's court for the family. Kalisankar worked his way up, and on the eve of Permanent Settlement became the dewan of the zamindari. A completely unscrupulous man, Kalisankar abused his power as the supreme revenue official of the zamindari, and when the estate was falling to pieces he acquired one estate after another, mainly between 1794 and 1798. After his death in 1834 his son, Ram Ratan Rai, added to the family fortunes through several means, such as careful management of his estates, purchases of new estates, indigo business (he was a terror to the European indigo planters) and an extensive rice trade. However, after his death rot set in, and the fortunes of the family rapidly declined.

[15] Bengal Judicial Civil Progs; 8 July 1802.

[16] B.B. Mukherji, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement, Birbhum, 1924-32*, p. 50.

[17] Bengal Board of Revenue Progs., 7 November 1794, No. 25.

[18] Westland, *Report on the District of Jessore*, Calcutta, 1874.

The growth of the Dighapatiya Raj, founded also by the officials of the Rajshahi Raj, was however a somewhat different story. Part of it took place during Mughal rule. The exceptional services by Dayaram, the founder of the family, to the Rajshahi Raj and also to the State, were rewarded by grants of zamindari rights. The family continued to serve the Rajshahi Raj even after Plassey, and part of the fortunes thus made were later spent on auction-purchases of estates. The family, well-established already by the time of the Permanent Settlement, consolidated its position by later purchases.

Two other important zamindari families of Bogra, which at the time of the Settlement mostly belonged to the Rajshahi Raj, also owed their origins to connections with the zamindari bureaucracy—the Giri Goshain family and the Tarafdar family. The Giri Gosains made their fortunes as managers of the Dighapatiya Raj, and Anupchand Tarafdar, the founder of the Tarafdar family, worked as a Persian clerk under the Rajshahi Raj.[19]

The Dinajpur Raj similarly suffered from the perfidy of its servants. In 1810 the Magistrate of Dinajpur characterized the new purchasers as 'low people' who were formerly dependents on the Raj.[20] A later official report recalled that 'stories circulate that the servants of the Raja did well by buying up lots'. Krishna Kanta Roy, brother of the Dewan Ram Kanta Ray, was 'one of the biggest purchaser of lots'.[21]

A similar instance of bad faith ruining an old zamindar and enabling a faithless servant of his to grow into a landed magnate occurred in the Chanradwip zamindari of Bakarganj, which was the biggest estate in the district before the Permanent Settlement.[22] A petty shopkeeper at first, Ramkanta Mudi, the founder of the new family, succeeded in becoming a trusted official of the Chandradwip zamindar. After the sale of the estate in 1799 Ramkanta was found to be in possession of nearly half of it. There are different versions of how this happened. According to one, he purchased this share with his ill-gotten fortunes. Other purchasers of the estate, however, complained to the Collector at the time that Ramkanta was not the real purchaser, but merely an agent of the old zamindar for the purpose of buying up the largest share of the estate under a fictitious name. The zamindar, according to this version, was let down by Ramkanta, who eventually got into the actual possession of the share.

The way connections with the zamindari bureaucracy helped some persons acquire landed estates was slightly different in Midnapur and Burdwan. For instance, as the Collector of Midnapur reported in 1802, four persons who

[19] W.W. Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bogra*, pp. 189-90.
[20] Bengal Judicial Criminal Progs., 24 August 1810, No. 6.
[21] F.O. Bell, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement in the District of Dinajpur, 1934-40*, para 56.
[22] Beveridge, *op. cit.*

acted as pleaders for a number of big zamindars in the district bought up very many of their estates under fictitious names. Having the 'suggestive appellation' of *Char Yarees* (four boon companions) they 'by defrauding their masters could manage to purchase almost the whole of the zamindari' of Kasijora and Shawpur when it was first sold in 1796.[23] In very many cases, in both Midnapur and Burdwan, it was the temporary leaseholders who replaced their masters, and eventually acquired zamindari rights in the estates once leased to them. Such cases had a more or less uniform pattern. Such leases were scarcely a new development. They did exist long before 1790, the first year of the Decennial Settlement. However, the exceptional rigidity in the collection of land revenue, particularly since 1793, led the zamindars, particularly the owners of big estates, increasingly to rely on a group of energetic intermediaries, since the slightest delay in the collection of rent from the far-flung estates would expose their owners to the risk of losing them. The leaseholders, however, soon learnt how to betray their masters. They duly collected rent but withheld a large part of it. The usual legal process against the leaseholders was of little help to the zamindars in distress, since it was notoriously tardy. When as a result the zamindars' estates were put to sale such leaseholders used the amount thus fraudulently withheld in purchasing them, usually the very ones which had been leased to them. The social and economic position which such leaseholders could acquire in the regions under their control, particularly where the leases had been held for long, perhaps helped them in discouraging other persons from competing with them at the auction. Some of the principal purchasers of the portions of the Burdwan zamindari which were sold in 1797, such as Dwarakanath Singh of Singhur (the founder of the Singhur family), Chhaku Singh of Bastara, the Mukherjis of Janai (the ancestors of the Mukherji family of Telinipara) were originally leaseholders under the Burdwan Raj.

Persons connected with the revenue and judicial establishment of the government were also auction-purchasers in not a few cases. They were perhaps the first to know of the estates which were about to be sold and also of the real value. A ban on auction purchase by the officials of the government led them to adopt underhand devices. However, cases of occasional detections suggest that they were practised on a large scale. Such cases in Orissa will be noted later. The widespread commotion resulting from these in the Ramgarh Raj of Bihar necessitated official intervention.[24] A member of the Board of Revenue, Vanderhiyden investigated the whole question on the spot, and restored some of the Raj properties. The Court of Directors writing of the evil to the Bengal Government in 1817 went as far as to say: 'numerous evasions

[23] Bengal Board of Revenue Progs., 15 January 1802, No. 7.
[24] *Ibid.*, 2 April 1799, No. 1.

of just demands of Government were mostly due to the fact that the native officers employed in the judicial and revenue departments possessed by purchase or by fraudulent means considerable tracts of land whereby their interests were placed at direct variance with their duties.'[25] The purchases in the 1830s by Joy Krishna Mukherji, zamindar of Uttarpara, were undoubtedly helped, as noted earlier, by his connections with the Hugli collectorate.

The available evidence thus suggests that the two prevailing views about the nature of the auction-purchasers after the Permanent Settlement are only partially valid. The size of the so-called 'urban' capital that was transferred to the purchase of landed estates seems to have been exaggerated. Even where such transfers occurred the Permanent Settlement alone did not cause them. Such transfers did not also necesssarily adversely affected the business interests of the purchasers, and a large part of the wealth that was spent on auction purchases was not formed out of the normal profits of business, but was derived in ways quite unconnected with such business. Ill-gotten fortunes, which were not employed in business, were part of this wealth. It would also be wrong to minimize the role of other groups as auction-purchasers. The view that the 'transformation' which the extensive land sales had caused in the composition of the landed society 'took place within the existing framework', meaning that 'estates changed hands from one group of zamindars to another', a process also involving the absorption in land of 'certain amount of capital which might otherwise have flown into non-agrarian channels' is also of doubtful validity. Some zamindars did add to their estates by purchases from other zamindars, but other groups, without any previous connections with landed estates, now acquired them as well on a large scale. It would be wrong to ignore the complex origins of the new zamindars after the Permanent Settlement.

V. SOME REGIONAL STUDIES OF THE CHANGES IN THE COMPOSITION OF THE LANDED SOCIETY

Intensive regional studies of the changes that land transfers brought about in the composition of the landed society of the province would perhaps have much better illustrated this complexity. At the present stage of our researches such transfers in individual zamindaries, and also the instances of the subsequent re-transfers, are difficult to identify. We therefore intend to concentrate on some particular districts, trying to trace the origins and growth of some established zamindari families there. (The choice of such districts is largely determined by the availability of the relevant material.)

[25] Revenue letter, 29 October 1817.

Orissa

The prevailing view in regard to the origins of the new zamindars in the province tends to emphasize the role of the so-called 'Bengali adventurers' and 'absentee Bengali millionaires'. This view also seems to suggest a dominance of urban elements, particularly the moneyed people of Calcutta, in the local land market.

Very many new zamindars, particularly those coming into existence during a period of about three decades after the annexation of Orissa (1803), did belong to Bengal, but it would be wrong to describe them as 'millionaires'. In fact, in view of the low prices offered at the time at the auction sales, the purchasers need not have been millionaires, and did in fact include very many persons of modest means.

The available statistics[26] suggest that during these years it was the *amlahs* connected with the various departments of the new government that dominated the land market. Out of 232 estates owned by Bengalis in 1817 as many as 155 or 61.5 per cent belonged to the amlahs.

This was partly due to the predominance of the Bengalis in the bureaucracy of the new government in the province, apart of course from the initial advantage which such connections with the bureaucracy gave the amlahs in the land market. Such predominance was a recent development. Aliens including Bengalis had an important place in the bureaucracy even before British rule. The Bengali, however, became a particularly strong element since the British had taken over. 'An almost systematic exclusion of the genuine Hindu natives of Orissa from every situation about the courts, in the police, in the revenue and salt departments had prevailed from the very beginning'. The British preferred the Bengalis partly because of their familiarity with the new style of British administration which had been first introduced in Bengal sometime ago. The British on their part did not care in the least to train the local people for such jobs, and it is curious that for long not a single regulation was translated into the vernacular languages of the province.

The Bengali amlahs, particularly those connected with the revenue department, had undoubtedly an advantage over other purchasers. They presumably knew better than others about the time of sale of estates and their actual worth, and in the initial period of confusion when a large number of estates were suddenly put to sale this was no small advantage. Dubious means had also a role to play in the success of the Bengalis in acquiring landed estates at the auction, or otherwise. The initial purchases by one of the largest landowning families in Orissa, the Paikpara family, may be taken as an illustration. The zamindar who was eventually ruined by the intrigues of this family was the famous Jagbandhu, Commander of the army of the Raja

[26] G. Toynbee, *A Sketch of the History of Orissa, 1803-1828*, Calcutta, 1873, p. 54.

of Khurda and also the owner of extensive landed estates.[27] (He was one of the prominent leaders of the Khurda revolt of 1818.) The family was connected with the new British administration from the very beginning. One of its members, Krishna Chandra Singh, was the dewan of the first Collector of Cuttack, but resigned in 1806. His 'relation and dependent' Chandra Prasad Singh later became *Sheristadar* (Record-keeper), and held the office till 1811, when he was removed 'on charges of dishonesty and peculation'. One of his brothers was employed in the Puri collectorate. Krishna Singh, though out of office, continued to stay in Cuttack and, in fact, planned the elaborate intrigues that eventually ruined Jagbandhu. This 'crafty and corrupt set' skilfully arranged the 'farming' of several estates including Jagbandhu's, the ostensible former Lakshmi Narain being only a 'creature' of Chandra Prasad's. When in 1810 these estates were sold Krishna Singh managed to purchase them all.

The circumstances under which an old local family was completely ruined were perhaps not universal, but such dishonest practices of the amlahs widely prevailed. A very common one was to show a zamindar a defaulter, while in fact he was not and when his estates were sold, the amlahs sought to possess them through adroit manipulations. Ewer, who investigated the causes of the Khurda revolt of 1818, 'presumed, from a knowledge of the practices and character of the amlahs in the district that many of the ignorant, infatuated Orriah zamindars have been at different times fooled and cheated out of their estates, to which cause should be partly ascribed their very extensive dispossession'.[28]

The role of the aliens (including Bengalis, both amlahs and the so-called 'millionaires' unconnected with the state bureaucracy) as auction-purchasers was however mostly confined to Cuttack, at least during the first two decades of British rule. For them the states in Balasore had then little attraction. Balasore was not a separate district till 1828, with its revenue administration before that year being centred at Cuttack.

> It was natural that the Bengali *amlahs* being residents of Cuttack should prefer the acquisition of estates near their homes. . . the flocks of Bengali *amlahs*. . . having plenty of opportunity for the acquisition of estates near at hand did not turn their attention further afield. . . . When Balasore was thrown open to them the opportunity was gone for the extensive scheming that had taken place in Cuttack. . . . It was natural that their wealthy absentee countrymen, to whom they communicated their information and with whom they often acted in concern should also have their attention

[27] Bengal Territorial Revenue Progs, 17 July 1818, No. 16; Ewer's Report, *op. cit.*, para 14.
[28] *Ibid.*, para 81.

> drawn to Cuttack and Puri [where the proximity to the famous temple of Juggarnath was a powerful attraction] rather than to Balasore.[29]

However, the significance of the amlahs as auction-purchasers considerably declined later. The diminishing number of auction sales naturally restricted the scope for their monoeuvres. This resulted also from the increasing control with time over the amlahs—a control rarely exercised in the early period. However, the amlahs still occasionally succeeded in their intrigues, even in the new district of Balasore. 'It is a matter of common knowledge that by obvious methods of intrigue they were enabled first to bring the estates upon the sale list and then to purchase them by a *banami* transaction at the auction'. For instance, the half share of the extensive zamindari of Ankura purchased first by the dewan of the Salt Department was immediately transferred to the Bengali treasurer of the Collectorate. Again, large shares of two big estates, Mubarakpur and Arang, first purchased by 'a capitalist of the town' were subsequently transferred to collectorate officials.[30]

From the 1830s onwards the land market in Orissa was developing new features : the land sales continued but the auction sales formed only an insignificant portion of them; the number of the amlahs who purchased estates gradually diminished the importance as purchasers of some local families including religious institutions and particularly of the families which made fortunes through trade and commerce considerably increased; and the non-Bengali elements tended to become increasingly dominant in this new group of moneyed persons.

Between 1836, the year of the first elaborate land revenue settlement in the province, and 1896, the year of the revised settlement, land sales continued on a large scale. In Balasore, for instance, of the total number of 1,417 estates; found in existence in 1896, only 584 (42 per cent) were in the possession of the families holding such estates since 1836. Judging by the size of the estates actually transferred the Settlement Officer of Balasore concluded that such transfers had affected 'almost half the proprietary rights in the district'. In Cuttack two-thirds of the estates changed hands during this period.

Such sales were mostly private sales—a fact indicative of the economic distress of a large number of old zamindars whom the British found in possession in 1836. Those zamindars, who had no sources of income other than lands, naturally suffered most. In Balasore the percentage of such zamindars fell from 61 to 44 during the 60-year period. On the other hand the percentage of zamindars, who were also moneylenders or traders, had increased from nine to 15. 'About one-third of them are persons who in addition to

[29] *Survey and Settlement Report, Orissa, 1892-98*, Vol. 2; *Balasore Final Report*, pp. 410-11.
[30] *Ibid.*, para 53.

being proprietors have some money-lending business, and the balance are professional mahajans with whom ownership of estates is subordinate to their business as money-lenders. Both classes are purchasing estates, but the latter most freely'.[31]

The increasing investment in land by the group connected with 'business', i.e. with trade and commerce or moneylending, was partly because of the disappearance of the initial confusion in the land revenue administration, and partly because of the new settlement of 1836, which fixed the revenue demand for a period of 30 years. Even in the remote district of Balasore, where before 1828 very little urban or mercantile capital was attracted to the purchase of estates 'trade interests had drawn a considerable body of Bengali merchants, and after 1828 these began to turn their attention towards the acquisition of estates'. The leading families of Raja Baikuntanath De, the Kars and Bhagwan Chandra Das of Balasore town 'date their rise as zamindars from this period'. The importance of zamindar-mahajan families as new purchasers in Balasore has been noted earlier. The other community that grew at the cost of the old proprietors in Balasore was that of the *tili* and *tamili* merchants—oil merchants and traders in betel leaves. 'The former are the largest holders of ready money and do a thriving business as mahajans, having thus special facilities for purchase'. The most prominent of them were the family of Bhagwan Chandra Das, and that of Chandrapara in Adarapeya. 'The increase in the Tamilies is also due to purchases, and chiefly to those of Raja Baikunta Nath De, and the Kar family'.

In the district of Puri generally 'where ownership has passed from the old zamindar families of the last settlement (1836), it has fallen into the hands of the great religious foundations and the priestly classes of Puri, or into the hands of the large mahajan families of the district and Cuttack',[32] and the Settlement Officer estimated that 'one-half of the zamindari interest in the district has passed to the religious and usuring classes'. The story of the Kotdesh estate, one of the largest estates in the district, illustrates the process. The family of the owner, quite an ancient one and founded by Trilochan Patnaik during Maratha rule, largely escaped the violent changes occurring soon after the British conquest of the province. In fact, it prospered and succeeded in buying a number of intermediate interests and smaller zamindaries. The rot set in from about the mid-1850s, and by the 1880s, things greatly worsened. 'Debts accumulated and were increased by renewed bonds and other artifices of the mahajans. When 15 years' possession had raised a debit account of nearly 10 lakhs, the estate was put up for a two years' arrears of revenue, and purchased by the chief bondholders of the old zamindars . . .

[31] *Ibid.*
[32] *Ibid.*; *Puri Final Report*, para 106.

the Bhagats of Cuttack, the Choudhury Dases of Bhigarpur and the Mohant of Puri'.

The composition of the leading zamindari families also shows the predominance of these two groups: religious institutions and 'usuring' classes. To the former belonged the Raja of Puri, the Superintendent of the Temple of Juggernath, the *mohants* of the Imar *Math* and other *maths* (temple), and the Khuntias, a family of the Puri *pandas* (pilgrim guides). To the latter belonged the Chowdhury Dases of Bingarpur, an Uriya family of Brahmin mahajans; the Chowdhury Sahus of Kerlo, an Uriya family of Teli mahajans; the Panis of Kotrahang, an Uriya family of Brahmin mahajans; the Bhagats of Cuttack, another mahajan family and Behari Lal Pandit, a Kashmir Brahmin mahajan. Of the total revenue demand from Puri (excluding the government estates) amounting to about Rs 2,20,000 the zamindars belonging to these two groups paid Rs 1,58,000 (71.8 per cent). Of the latter amount the mahajan zamindars paid Rs 82,000 (51.8 per cent).

Changes in Cuttack were not of a uniform kind. In central and eastern Cuttack where 'almost all the big estates' were owned by Bengali families such as the Tagores (in Bolubisi), Raja Digambar Mitra (in Patamundi), Mrs Annapurna Devi (in Sukai), Nagendranath Ray Chaudhuri (in Kendrapara), and a few others, few changes of ownership occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century. Among 'the most marked changes of proprietorship' in south Cuttack, the Settlement Officer of Orissa particularly noted the 'gradual absorption of all the small estates by the mahajan families, the Chowdhuries of Bhinjarpur and Gajrajpur and by the *mahant* (priest) Raghunandan Das'.[33] In Northern Cuttack, where the zamindars were mostly the local people, 'the most noticeable feature is the tendency of the estates to pass into the hands of proprietors drawn from cultivating classes with infinite subdivision of lands and shares'. This was also happening in Balasore where between 1836 and 1896, the percentage of zamindari families drawn from cultivators had increased from ten to 24, 'owing to numerous purchases generally of petty shares'.

Purnea

The landed society of the district was only slightly affected by the operation of the sale laws, and even where estates did change hands, the composition of the new purchasers was rather simple.[34] Partly because of the limited number of auction sales in the district and partly because of the relative underdevelopment of the district the role of non-local capital in the land market does not seem to have been significant. The principal purchasers were

[33] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, para 273.
[34] *Purnea District Gazettee*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 161-64.

the old zamindars and 'businessmen', indigo planters, and bankers.

The chief landholders of the district at the time of the Permanent Settlement were: Rani Indrabati, daughter of the Darbhanga Raja, owning estates occupying about one-half (2,000 square miles) of the district; Raja Madhu Singh of Darbhanga with estates covering about 1,000 square miles, or about one-fifth of the district; the zamindar of Surjapur with an area of 729 square miles; Bakaulia, zamindar of Badaur with an area of 284 square miles; Sibnath and Gaurinath, joint proprietors of Tajpur, which is about 197 square miles, and Dular Singh, zamindar of Tirakharda, having an area of 75 square miles.

Only two of them, Rani Indrabati and the Surjapur zamindar, suffered from the enforcement of the sale laws and lost a considerable part of their property, but this did not happen soon after the Permanent Settlement. The first major break-up of Rani Indrabati's zamindari took place as late as 1850 when two prominent bankers of Murshidabad, Rai Lakshmipat Singh and Rai Dhanpat Singh, purchased a large part of it. These bankers did not keep all the properties, selling the paragana Sultanpur to an indigo planter, A. Forbes, and the paragana Haveli Purnea to a banker of Purnea, Dharam Chand Lal. Palmer, a prominent indigo planter of the district, had already acquired proprietary rights in four paraganas belonging to the Rani, though not through pure auction-purchases. He was given the farms of some estates, presumably as a condition of lending to the Rani a considerable sum, and this enabled him later to purchase the estates at the auction. This also probably happened in the case of the purchases by the Murshidabad bankers. Zamindars of other estates had very little share in the purchases of the Rani's estates, the important exception being Lilanand Singh of the Baneli Raj. Of the two families of bankers the Murshidabad family did not seem to have prospered. The Purnea family continued to thrive, and by the beginning of the twentieth century, was considered 'the wealthiest resident zamindars' of the district.

Another zamindar who suffered as such was the owner of Suryapur, and the Purnea banker family gradually entrenched its position also here. Other families suffered only minor reverses, and the persons who profited by these were mostly the other zamindari families, like the Darbhanga Raj.

Jessore

We have selected only four of a number of ancient families, whose disintegration through auction and private sales led to the emergence of new zamindari families—the Nator Raj, the Naldanga zamindari, the Chanchra zamindari, and the Isafpur zamindari.

'The new purchasers of the large zamindaries were for the most part men of business from Calcutta', observed a chronicler of the history of Jessore.[35] Such a view has been tested with reference to other districts. As far as Jessore was concerned auction-sales of estates did attract a considerable amount of non-local capital, some of it having originated in Calcutta. However, only a small part of the capital that was thus transferred to the purchase of estates was made from pure business.

Some of the prominent families of the district growing at the cost of the Nator Raj, in which a considerable part of the district was included at the time of the Permanent Settlement, have been mentioned earlier. The Narail estate, which gradually grew so much as to become by the end of the nineteenth century one of the ten largest estates of the district, was mostly the making of Kalisankar. He became Dewan to the Raj by whatever means and exploited this position to the full. The lease of the extensive Bhushna estate (which commenced in 1793) helped him most. Once in power he indiscriminately increased the rent rates of ryots, collected as much as possible of the increased demand, mostly by unscrupulous methods ('violence and oppression, as the Commissioner of Bhushna later described them, which occasionally endangered his position by provoking the ryots to organized resistance'), misappropriated a large part of the collections (succeeding in getting away with it for quite some time, though eventually to be imprisoned and thus forced to return to the Raj part of his ill-gotten fortunes), and purchased under fictitious names large portions of the estate when this was sold at the auction. The income from such early purchases gradually enabled him to add considerably to his estates.

The other families that purchased portions of the Nator Raj estates in the district were the Paikpara family, the Pal Chaudhuri family of Ranaghat, the Tagore family of Calcutta, and the Jan Bazar zamindars of 24-Parganas. The Paikpara family, whose origins have been described earlier, purchased at the auction the large Naldi pargana in 1798. In terms of area and also of the revenue demand, this was the largest estate in the district, and the Paikpara family continued to hold it. The Pal Chaudhuri family's purchases (the Sator Pargana) may be taken as typical auction-purchases by the so-called men of business. So are those of the Jan Bazar family. As noted earlier, the Tagore family's fortunes were not entirely made from 'business'. The Pal Chaudhuri, unlike the Paikpara family, later lost much of its importance as a landowning family. This resulted largely from the quarrels within the family, the resultant suits continuing for about 30 years (from 1821 to 1850). The litigation proved so ruinous to the family's finances that Mackintosh, an indigo planter, who had advanced large funds to the family with which to carry on the litigation, obtained a large decree against it, and came into

[35] This study relating to Jessore is based on Westland, *op. cit.*

possession of half of the Sator pargana in about 1861-62. Its troubles did not end there, and the family had again to sell half of the remaining portion to Thakur Dass Gosain of Serampur. One of Thakur Dass's ancestors, Ramnarain Gossain, 'made money by trading with the Danish merchants at Serampore, and purchased various zamindaris in Burdwan, Purnea, and Midnapur'. His son, Kamal Lochan, also made fortunes while serving in the Commissariat and purchased more lands in Hugli. Thakur Dass, his son, further added to the family property. Mackintosh, however, did not for long keep his share, and sold it to a merchant family of Dulur in Faridpur. The Jan Bazar zamindars, who came into possession of the large Mokimpur pargana, were initially a family of traders. They did not purchase it at the auction directly from the Nator Raj but from two cloth traders—Sibram Sanyal and Dulal Sirkar. The first fortunes of Sanyal and Sirkar were the result, according to a local tradition, of big windfall gains from their purchase of an extensive cloth godown at Calcutta. Once fire broke out in the godown, and the government, assuming that it had been badly burnt down, condemned it, and the family purchased it at a nominal price, only to find most of its content in a very good shape. They spent much of these fortunes on purchasing three estates including Mokimpur. Mokimpur, however, proved a bad bargain because of the continual hazards to its cultivation from inundations, and they sold it to a member of the Jan Bazar family, Prit Ram. Prit Ram succeeded in minimizing losses from his purchase by exporting to Calcutta 'large quantities of reeds, bamboos, wood and fish—the produce of the marshy region about him'. Dangers from the inundations, however, gradually receded with the local river opening out. 'Immense quantities of silt brought by the river began to raise the land. The pargana became more and more fertile, and the estate became a valuable one'. The purchases of the Tagore family (the elder branch) were confined to two not very big estates, Dihi Kaneshpur and Dihi Swaruppur.

Of the other old zamindaries that similarly came to grief the most important was the Muhammadshahi zamindari, also known as the Naldanga zamindari. The finances of the family were in a desperate state even before 1793. No wonder therefore that two of the three branches of the family were completely destroyed within a decade after the Permanent Settlement. One branch somehow managed to survive, gradually retrieved its fortunes, and added to its zamindari by fresh purchases, so that by the end of the nineteenth century it was counted as one of the ten largest zamindaries of the district. It was to its creditors that the family lost very many of its estates, dependence on such creditors having been unavoidable because of the acuteness of the family's financial difficulties. Of these creditors the most important were Baranasi Ghosh, a famous Calcutta *banian*, and Radhamohan Banerji, perhaps also a moneyed man from Calcutta. The creditors evidently depended not a little on dubious means for their success as auction-purchasers. The surviving branch of the family did in fact win a suit against Radhamohan, eventually resulting in the restoration to the family of a considerable part of the estates that Banerji had earlier purchased. However, the creditor families failed to keep their properties for long, and all these passed into the hands of the Narail family. It was not without much difficulty that the third branch could survive, and the administration of its estates by the Court of Wards, beginning in 1813, had a large role to play in this survival. It is however striking that while the Narail family directly managed its properties in the Muhammadshahi pargana, and consequently improved their resources, the Naldanga estate was let out in *patnis*, mostly to the indigo planters.

The Chanchra zamindars suffered as much as the Muhammadshahi family. The first purchasers of their estates at the auction soon after the Permanent Settlement are difficult to identify. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century two prominent families were found to be in possession of a large part of such estates: the family of Ananda Chandra Chaudhuri of Bagchar, and the Naupara family. One of the members of the first family was a trader at about the time of Plassey. Whether the family continued to trade later is unknown. Ananda Chandra, the founder of the family, seemed to have derived part of his main income from a different source, service under the Naldanga zamindars. 'He served as treasurer to the Raja of Jessore for six years and as the treasurer's function was to lend the Raja money, he obtained some wealth in this way, and more by his own commercial dealings, which he carried on at the same time. After that, from 1847 to 1865, he was treasurer of the Jessore collectorate—a position which, then at least, gave considerable prominence, and brought business to a merchant. The treasurer of the collectorate is the man to whom needy zamindars naturally apply when they have no money to meet the government demand, and their necessity being very urgent the treasurer can make his own terms'. The Naupara family was an ancient one, though owning only small properties before British rule. 'They appear to be one of those families who, in the time of large zamindars, possessed the small zamindaris . . . and were therefore a prey to their larger and more wealthy neighbours. . . they are an instance where one of the zamindar families of modern days happens to be also a representative of a British family that had possessions in olden times'. Their further acquisitions during rule, consisting mostly of small bits of property scattered over different places, were undoubtedly the result of their connections with the Naldanga Raj. (Some members of the family served the Raj as *naibs*.)

The process of dismemberment of the Isafpur zamindari, largely resembles that in the Muhammadshahi estate: the family encumbered with big debts evidently got off to a bad start when the Permanent Settlement came into force; it was mainly through large-scale borrowing that it sought to avoid sales of its estates; debts fast accumulated as a result; when its estates were being sold one after another it was the creditors who were the main purchasers, and the family, suspecting foul play on the part of such creditors in regard to their purchases sued them in the court, and some sales (for instance, those to a creditor called Durga Charan Mukherji) were eventually annulled, though the ruin of the family could not be averted thereby.

Dinajpur

'The greater part of landholders are new men, who have purchased their estates within these few years'. This conclusion of Buchanan's, based on his personal observations in the district when he visited it (1808-10), seems to suggest a very large-scale replacement of the old zamindars by new. The reverses of the Dinajpur Raj perhaps influenced the contemporary judgment on the point. However, the contemporary descriptions of the Raja's plight seem overdrawn. For instance, a letter from the Collector of Dinajpur (January 1801), soon after the Raja's death, reads: 'He died in such a state of poverty as to be kept as a prisoner in his house, by his creditors, who were bent on seizing him and throwing him into the common jail'. The Raja did considerably suffer, but succeeded in salvaging some of the valuable estates through various devices, such as purchases under fictitious names. Even Buchanan admitted that 'indeed the Dinajpur family still retains the largest possession', and to these the family later added by purchases.

A number of other families, which had acquired landed property before 1793 (some during British rule), largely escaped the misfortunes of the Dinajpur Raj. Some of the most important of these estates were the following: Kantanagar, acquired by the famous Kantoo Babu, the private dewan of Warren Hastings; Radhaballavpur, acquired by Gangagovinda Singh at about the same time; Mushida, purchased in 1777 by Dulal Roy of Lalgola in Murshidabad: Swaruppur (transferred to Dinajpur in 1798), purchased by Darpa Narain Tagore in 1787; Khalora or Haripur, acquired by one Jagat Ballabh, a kanungo of the area called Tajpore, sometime in the first half of the eighteenth century; Maldwar, acquired by the same family; and Jehagirpur, also belonging to an ancient family.

Buchanan thus classified the auction-purchasers after the Permanent Settlement: they 'formerly were either merchants, manufacturers, agents of landholders, or officers of government'. The so-called 'manufacturers' are difficult to identify, and Buchanan does not provide any details. The number of auction-purchases by government servants also seems to have been insignificant. A later report could trace only three of them: the Ahia family which, according to tradition, was founded by Syed Mahmud, '*a Kazi* [an officer in the judicial department] or official of some importance'; a family founded by Manik Chand, who belonged to the Records Department of the collectorate shortly before the Permanent Settlement, and another family tracing its descent to Munshi Masitulla, 'a clerk in the collectorate' at the time. Buchanan also found that instances of government servants purchasing estates were not 'numerous'.

The popular impression that the 'agents of landholders' were also considerable purchasers persisted for long. 'Stories circulate', according to a Settlement Officer of the District 'that servants of the Raja did well by buying up lots'. However, these again were mostly unstable possessions. The most successful of them was Krishna Kanta Roy, brother of the Dinajpur Raja's Dewan Ram Kanta Roy. According to an official report, he was 'one of the biggest purchasers of lots'. Other lesser persons, except a few, perhaps lost their possessions later.

The land market in the district, particularly immediately after the Permanent Settlement, seems to have been dominated by two groups: the pre-existing zamindars and the 'mercantile' group. A later official report recorded four instances of large-scale purchases by this group, the most important being the purchases by Baidyanath Chaudhuri.[36] The family, however, lost some of its properties, particularly the big pargana of Santosh, half of which eventually passed into the hands of a famous banker and businessman Pratap Singh. 'Among the most prominent of the purchasers of the Raj lots [estates belonging to the Dinajpur Raj]' were the members of the Nahar family—a Marwari family of Ajimganj with connections at Dinajpur. Another businessman to succeed as an auction-purchaser was Thakur Das Nandi, described by Buchanan Hamilton as the leading salt dealer of the Dinajpur town.

Midnapur

The social and economic origins of the auction-purchasers in the district, particularly during a period of about ten to 15 years after the Permanent Settlement, is extremely difficult to trace. With the exceptions of about ten big estates Midnapur was largely a district of petty holders, and the notorious over-assessment in the district ruined them as much as the big ones, so that as a result, countless sales and resales of such petty estates occurred. District officers naturally found it difficult to keep track of the multitude of newcomers. The wild speculation in land occurring soon after the settlement, which could also be largely related to the excessive land revenue demand, added to the difficulty. T.H. Ernst, Collector of Midnapur, describes the phenomenon in a letter of 4 April 1800 thus:

> Several persons in this district appear to have made it a sort of profession to speculate and commit all sorts of frauds in the purchase of lands at the

[36] *Survey and Settlement Report, Dinajpur, op. cit.*

public sales. They have brought them in the names of their relations and dependants or in fictitious names, and having embezzled the greater part of their collections, and caused the lands to be brought to sale again for the recovery of the arrears which in consequence arose . . . have purchased them a second time in other names; and sometimes having again fallen in arrears have repeated the same practice three or four times in the course of the year.[37]

The great number of the sales that thus took place, and the underhand practices with which such sales were associated frustrate any attempt at identifying the purchasers at such sales.

Ernst, in another letter (29 September 1802), however ventured a guess about the composition of at least a section of the purchasers:

Most of the frauds in the purchase and management of lands which have come to my knowledge appear to have been planned or matured within the precincts of the Dwanny jail by several persons who have been in confinement there since the year 1205 [1797-98]. These persons were formerly vakils to most of the landholders and having had their hands full of business some time ago when they were sued for a large debt for which in consideration of a considerable premium they had jointly become securities, they did not choose to preserve their liberty and lose their livelihood by running away, but they deliberately resolved to go to jail and there pursue as well as they could their customary occupations.[38]

Even during their long confinement of four years 'they have been very extensively engaged in farming and in buying and selling lands either for themselves or other persons in other names, real or fictitious'.

All such purchases were not, however, pure speculations, and the purchasers eventually retained some of them. When with time such a state of confusion tended to disappear, even the speculative vakils became keen on some genuine purchases, and thus, as noted earlier, they acquired large portions of the zamindaris of Kosijora and Shawpur.

A striking feature of the auction-purchases of estates in the district, at least during a period of about four or five decades after 1793, was the relatively small share in these of the members of the mercantile and 'business' group, and the predominance of the members of the zamindari bureaucracy, including the members of the legal profession who were employed by the zamindars.

[37] Quoted in Jameson, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement, Midnapur, 1911-17*, para 73.
[38] *Ibid.*

The mercantile group did not initially find such purchases much attractive because of a number of circumstances. Though the Midnapur soil was far from unproductive, recurring inundations made sustained cultivation a difficult process. Such hazards were non-existent in the forest parganas in the west of the district, but cultivation there was ill-developed largely because of scarcity of labour. On the other hand, the land revenue demand in the district as a whole, particularly in the central parganas, was notoriously excessive, and as if this was not enough, the government ruthlessly resumed much of the rent-free private lands of zamindars, which normally included some of the most productive lands in the village. The smallness of most of the properties was perhaps another reason. Moreover, where the big properties were being broken up the members of the mercantile group were usually no match for the resourceful servants of the zamindars, particularly at a time when permanent institutional arrangements designed to make land sales a 'free' operation were mostly lacking. Outsiders also chose not to purchase estates at the auction, particularly where the local zamindars, because of their ancient origins, and the consequent length of association with the peasantry, continued to have a hold on them, even after they had been partially dispossessed. This particularly happened in the Jellasore estate owned by Oberam Chaudhuri. 'It is stated as a curious fact that, although many bond-debts have been decreed against him and his family, and execution ordered upon his landed property, no one could obtain possession in the spot of any such landed property; the ryots being so completely under his influence, from his profuse liberality to them, that they swear their master's villages are not his; and no property can be identified or a decree successfully sued out'.[39] The members of the mercantile and business group who did eventually acquire some portions of ancient zamindaris usually belonged to three sections: salt merchants, particularly in the initial period; the creditors of some zamindars; and the Europeans, connected with the manufacture of silk and indigo. The European sphere of influence was mostly confined to the forest paraganas.

Of the three distinct divisions of the district—the forest parganas in the west, the parganas in the centre of the district, and the parganas in the south-east, usually known as the salt parganas—the third one remained relatively free from the convulsions caused by land sales.[40] The number of auction-sales was also very small in the forest parganas. By the Midnapur standard the land revenue demand was far from excessive, and in fixing the demand the government took into consideration the relatively undeveloped agriculture of the region at the time of the Permanent Settlement. However,

[39] Bayley, *A Memorandum on the District of Midnapur*, Calcutta 1884, p. 24.
[40] The following account is based on Bayley.

whatever the reasons (of which perhaps the commitment to pay a fixed revenue demand in the context of the very low technical level of cultivation was one), the forest zamindars fast ran into debts. Even where estates were not formally sold as a consequence the creditors in not a few cases exercised a considerable degree of control over them, and the main motive behind admitting Europeans, indigo planters, and silk manufacturers, into their estates as lease-holders of portions of these, was the relative ease with which the proprietors could borrow from them.

Despite this, most of the forest zamindars continued to possess their properties till long, though under some constraints imposed by their creditors. Some of the most affected estates were Bogri, Gugneswar, Kaluri, and Narangachur.

The Bogri zamindar did not lose his estate to an auction-purchaser or a creditor. The government confiscated his property (1816-17) because of his alleged complicity in the rebellion by the local people called *Chuars*. The Raja of Burdwan then bought it. In his default it passed into the hands of a Calcutta man—Sambhu Chandra Mukherji, who however gave it in patni to Messrs Watson and Company. Much waste land was reclaimed by them and valuable cash crops introduced, particularly date-sugar and indigo. Gugneswar, an important centre of silk production, was purchased by a government Vakil, Harinarain Datta. So was Kaluri with two other estates. The sons of another government vakil, Jadavendra Banerji, purchased them when sold under a decree of court. Narangachur passed into the hands of another forest raja, the Satpati family of Naraingarh.

The purchasers of countless small taluks in central Midnapur are difficult to identify. However, owners of some big estates lost much to their own servants. The intrigues and perfidy of the latter did not always result in auction-sales of their masters' estates. In such cases estates were privately transferred to the zamindars' servants. We have noted earlier how the vakils to the zamindars of Kosijora and Shahpur let them down (and indeed very many others), and managed to purchase a large part of their estates at the auction. The zamindars of the Midnapur estate and the Mynachur estate were also ruined, mainly by the intrigues of their servants. The Midnapur estate came under the control of the government when the owner refused the terms of the ten-year settlement. In 1800 an agent of the owner Ananda Lal Khan, being also in his own right the proprietor of Narajole, got the government to recognize him as the proprietor of the estate by producing a deed of gift purporting that the previous owner had transferred to him the whole property. A protracted suit followed when the deed was challenged by the original owner. Ananda Lal eventually lost it, but succeeded in inducing the owner to transfer to him a considerable part of it. This was contested by a member of the owner's family, and the result was a further crop of litigation. This was such

a great strain on the resources of the estate that in 1837 the owner defaulted, and lost the estate for some time, Messrs Watson and Company then took a farming lease. The family, however, got it back in 1840, on condition that Messrs Watson and Company would continue to hold the jungle parganas included in the estate. It was however soon lost for ever. The impoverished family mortgaged it to a Calcutta businessman Ashutosh De, who foreclosed the mortage in 1847. The subsequent history of ownership of the estate was complicated. By 1850 it passed into the hands of the Nawab Nizam of Murshidabad, with the original family retaining only small portions.

The Mynachur estate fast disintegrated after the Permanent Settlement. The owner, however, sought to salvage as much as possible by purchasing under ficitious names portions of the estate when put to sale. The illegal deal was later exposed, and many of such purchases were consequently cancelled. However, it was found that many of these later passed into the hands of the zamindar of Sujamuta, who was guardian of the Mynachur Raja during his minority. 'Much too of the minor's personal property was made away with by the same guardian'. The Mynachur zamindar had more reverses to face, though from a different source. An agent of the Raja of Tamluk, to whose daughter he was married, was appointed his guardian, only to be dismissed after some time on ground of misappropriation of the money. In 1848 he attained his majority, but by then the family borrowed a large sum from the dewan of the Mysadal estate. The creditor got a decree, though the Sadar Court later set it aside.

Chittagong

Unlike in most other districts of Bengal the growth of new landed families in the district[41] had a rather simple pattern: the initial predominance of what may be called the 'clerical families' belonging mostly to the Baidya caste, the subsequent decline of some of them, and the increasing importance with time of the 'mercantile families'. Unlike in Orissa the clerical families were, except in a few cases, not newcomers. Some of them served the Mughals and had acquired considerable landed property, to which they added later mainly by virtue of their connections with the British administration. Some of the prominent clerical families with extensive landed property were the Srijukta family of Noapara, the Kanungo family of Paraikora, the Rai family of Paraikora, the Mojumdar family of Barama, the family of Rajaram Chaudhuri of Kuipara, and the Ghoshal family of Joynagar. Two members of the Kanungo family, Gauri Sankar and Baidyanath, were 'well-known *dewans* at Chittagong'. The 'best known member' of the Rai family

[41] Allen, *Final Report on the Survey and Settlement in the District of Chittagong, 1888-1898*, part I, Ch. IX; Part II, Ch. 3.

'was *dewan* in the service of the Company' from 1784 to 1790. Ganga Ram of the Mozumdar family was a 'treasurer in the service of the Nawab at the time of the British occupation', and worked in a similar capacity under the Company. The origins of the Ghoshal family have been described earlier.

The importance of some of these influential families later declined. Of the eight large properties, three remained in the hands of the original zamindars till the end of the nineteenth century, two were purchased by Chittagong merchants, two by 'Calcutta men', and one was split up and divided among a large number of petty co-sharers. 'Profits made by traders at Chittagong', the Settlement Officer of the district found, 'are commonly spent in the purchase of lands. Properties are usually acquired at auction sales for arrears of revenue, but there are some money-lenders on a large scale who make advances to landed proprietors, and thus succeed in eventually obtaining their estates by foreclosures of mortgages'. Of the landowners belonging to the mercantile families the best known were Golak Chandra Rai and Ram Kamal Saha. None of them originally belonged to Chittagong. Both migrated from Noakhali.

It is thus clear that the making of a 'zamindari settlement' did not by itself result in a large-scale transfer of mercantile and urban profits to the purchase of landed property, and at least initially the land market seems to have been dominated by other people, such as frugal and well-to-do zamindars, persons connected with the zamindari 'bureaucracy', and persons belonging to the various administrative departments of the government, particularly the departments of land revenue and justice. The creation of a considerable part of the new landed gentry of Bengal and Orissa was thus the result of a new mode of employment of largely ill-gotten fortunes which the system of auction sales of estates now provided. However, with time the declining influence of the amlahs in the land market was increasingly evident everywhere, and with the gradual disappearance of the old elements of 'imperfections' in the land market, the scope for a safe transfer of mercantile profits to purchases of landed property tended to increase. Another distinct development was the increasing importance of 'professional' groups as purchasers of estates. This is evident from the available statistics of registered private sales. Of the various purchasers of privately sold estates a fairly large group was called 'others' and the officers connected with the Registration Department had an impression that the group was composed mainly of the members of various professions. According to Paul, Inspector-General of Registration, the group 'others' referred to '*muktears*, pleaders and the general public other than mehazuns'. Bourdillon, who held the same office, also believed that 'the "others" are most probably members of the rising class of native advocates, pleaders, judges, magistrates, doctors, etc. who, it is believed, have a great

predilection for this class of property as a medium of safe investment of their savings'. The group was most prominent as purchasers of interests intermediate between tenures and rights of occupancy or holdings at fixed rates.[42]

[42] (*a*) *Report on the Administration of the Registration Department, Bengal 1880-81*, para 18.
(*b*) *Ibid.*, *1884-85*, para 55. Also see the author's 'Agrarian Economy and Agrarian Relations in Bengal, 1859-1885' in *History of Bengal*, University of Calcutta, 1967, Section on 'Structure of Landed Property'.

The Economic Consequences of Indirect Rule in India*

JOHN HURD II
Oakland University

When the British departed from India in 1947, they left behind a subcontinent in which there were wide disparities in economic development. These disparities probably had many causes. Ecological, social, and economic factors all played a part. But one possible cause that has rarely been discussed is the political factor.

In India, as in many other European colonies, part of the country was governed under a system of indirect rule. Indirect rule could not fail to have economic consequences. Significant differences in economic development existed between those areas of India which were ruled directly by the colonial government and those parts which the British ruled indirectly. In this paper, I will show that these differences were caused, in part, by the political system.

Before exploring the extent of the regional economic disparities, it is necessary first to describe the political structure which brought them about. During the British period, indirect rule affected a considerable part of India— 45 per cent of the total area and about 25 per cent of the population. Scattered throughout the subcontinent were some 584 princely states[1] governed by semi-autonomous native rulers. The rest of India (British India) was, on the other hand, ruled directly as one unit by a centralized colonial administration.

British India had a single ruler, the Viceroy, and one bureaucracy, which was responsible to the Viceroy through a clear chain of command. Those who staffed the upper levels of the bureaucracy were products of the British

*The research for this paper was made possible by grants from the Foreign Area Fellowship Programme and Oakland University. My research assistant, James C. Mosely, helped with the calculations. An earlier version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, New York, March 1972.

[1] The actual number of states is difficult to determine because authorities disagree. Their disagreement is due largely to the sheer number of small states. According to one source, 202 states had areas of less than ten square miles each, 139 had areas of less than five square miles each, and 70 had areas of less than one square mile. See *What Are the Indian States?* (Allahabad, Shandi Dhavan, 1939), which is also the source for the figure of 584 states. Most writers place the number somewhere between 550 and 600.

educational system, and they tended to think in terms of British interests. Moreover, their transfer from region to region limited their possibilities of forming local ties. The laws that were passed in Simla or New Delhi could be made to apply in all of British India. Effectively, the system of government in British India was one of centralized control in which policy could be consistently carried out. Regional units had some freedom of action, but their autonomy was in no way comparable to that which prevailed in the princely states.

The so-called native states, although having no control over their external affairs which were conducted by the British, did have considerable autonomy in their internal affairs. They passed and administered their own laws, levied and spent their own taxes, and maintained their own bureaucracies and police.[2] The civil servants of a state usually served only that state and were responsible to the prince. For the most part, the states' officials were locally educated. Rulers, officials, and subjects alike were often linked by marriage, caste, and religious bonds. Thus, there were many social as well as educational ties that tended to make the ruling members of a state locally oriented. Laws also were local and extended only to a state's borders. Finally, but of great consequence, the ability of each state to borrow money was based solely on its own credit rating, whereas in British India public borrowing by units of government below the all-India level was backed by the central government.[3]

Theoretically, then, the states were autonomous. The British sent representatives to the states, but these Agents, Political Officers, and Residents were instructed—officially at least—to observe scrupulously the states' traditions when dealing with princes or their heirs.[4]

De facto, however, the position of the states was not so clear-cut. The Government of India interfered in internal affairs to varying degrees, depending upon the particular state, its history, current condition, and the personality of the ruler. There were several ways in which the British

[2] This degree of autonomy relates to the large states in which the bulk of the population resided. The Government of India had, in theory, the right to interfere directly in the affairs of smaller states. For example, a prince's government in a small state may not have had the right to execute criminals. For a discussion of the rights of states, see Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads*, 3rd edn., Compiled by C.U. Aitchison, Calcutta, Office of Superintendent of Government Printing, 1892-93, 11 v.

[3] See John Hurd II, 'Some Economic Characteristics of the Princely States of India, 1901-1931', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1969, pp. 65-69, 76-83.

[4] Government of India, Political Department, *Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Political Department of the Government of India*, New Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1924, Introduction and pp. 166-68.

exercised control. At times, states were persuaded or forced to employ civil servants from the Government of India's Political Department, the only department which dealt with the states, or from the Central or Provincial Civil Services.[5] Most of these men not only differed in training and point of view from the local people, but their allegiance was bound to be primarily to British interests. A more direct influence came from the imposition of uniform statutes throughout the subcontinent for certain activities. This resulted in the institution of a number of laws from British India in the princely states.[6]

The British could intervene in other important ways as well. When a prince flagrantly abused his subjects, defaulted on his creditors, or contravened the wishes of the Government of India, the British could depose him, and in a number of cases did.[7] Moreover, succession to the throne (*gaddi*) was subject to the approval of the British. Often, when a prince was deposed or if the prince was a minor, British officials took over the administration of the state and made all of the major decisions. In some instances, they undertook major reforms.[8] Nevertheless, in spite of British influence and control, whether potential or actual, the Government of India rarely tried to force princes to alter their political systems to any significant degree.[9] Thus, due

[5] These loaned officials assumed a wide variety of positions, from *Dewan* (State Prime Minister) to Superintendent of Forests.

[6] See J. M. Macpherson, *British Enactments in Force in Indian Princely States*, Calcutta, Central Publication Branch, 4th edn, 1930.

[7] See, for example, G.O.I., Foreign, 107-110, May 1908; G.O.I., Foreign, 2-3 July 1908; and G.O.I., Foreign, 80-82, January 1911.

[8] The official policy of the G.O.I. was that officials were not to undertake major reforms during minority administrations. See *Manual of Instructions to Officers of the Political Department of the Government of India*, pp. 57-66.

De facto, however, reforms, such as the establishment of modern administrative departments and the putting in order of a state's finances, were sometimes carried out during minority administration and during takeovers due to maladministration. When a prince was invested with full powers after either type of administration, he was frequently enjoined not to alter these reforms. Examples of reforms undertaken during periods of British control are: G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 119, May 1906; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 98-111, June 1906; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 55-57, April 1907; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 69-74, February 1908; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 107-110, May 1908; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 110-118, June 1908; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 57-58, March 1909; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 47-48, May 1909; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A, 10-12, September 1909; G.O.I., Foreign, Internal A 23-24, December 1909; G.O.I., Foreign Internal A, 29-31, December 1909; G.O.I., Foreign and Political, 126-128, October 1918; G.O.I., Foreign and Political, 80-86, December 1919; G.O.I., Foreign and Political, 3-26, July 1920; and Records of the Crown Representative, file number 1160, Internal/Secret, 1922.

[9] I came to this conclusion during a search in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, of the relevant records of the Political Department of the Government of India. The period searched covered the years 1860-1933.

to a deliberate policy on the part of the British, the princely states were allowed to retain a distinct political character which was very different from that of British India. With two political systems existing side-by-side, economic consequences were inevitable.

METHODOLOGY

To test my hypothesis that divergent political structures and policies were among the major causes of economic variations within India and to measure the extent of their role, I held constant as far as possible the influence of factor endowments, another principal cause of economic variations. In India, those areas which were ruled indirectly were geographically contiguous and sometimes even intertwined with those ruled directly. Consequently, it was possible to compare units with similar soil, topography, water supply, and cultural patterns. In so doing, the possible effects of ecological and social variables were largely eliminated, leaving only economic and political factors as possible causes.

Because most of the princely states were small, I have restricted this study to a comparison for the year 1931[10] of the 28 states with populations over 500,000[11] (Table 1) and 31 nearby British districts.[12] Each state was matched with a district or districts with similar factor endowments[13] (Table 2).

The following variables were chosen to measure the economic differences between states and districts: (*a*) percentage of male workers employed in non-agricultural jobs; (*b*) percentage of males born outside the political unit; (*c*) percentage of males literate; and (*d*) percentage of population living

[10] This study is a cross-sectional analysis for one year—1931—the last year for which comprehensive census economic data is available for the princely states.

[11] These 28 states together covered 61 per cent of the total area of the princely states and contained 58 million people, i.e., 71 per cent of the population under princely rule.

[12] The total area of the sample districts was 153,849 square miles, 18 per cent of British India. The total population of the sample districts was 29,843,704, 11 per cent of British India in 1931.

The sample states and districts together constituted 26 per cent of the population and 37 per cent of the area of India (excluding Burma and Aden).

[13] Since some large states had more than one type of physical, linguistic, or cultural region a single district was not deemed sufficiently representative. To solve this problem, the following methods were used: for Kashmir, Bikaner, Bahawalpur, and Jodhpur, two districts were selected and the unweighted mean of the two was used as the value to match the state; in Hyderabad, Baroda, and Gwalior, the different sub-divisions of the state were matched to British districts and the percentage of the state's population living in each subdivision was then used as a weight in order to produce a composite figure for the British areas. The latter method is illustrated below for the state of Baroda.

British district	*Percentage of population of Baroda living in subdivisions matched to British district (weight)*	*District value for variable X*
Broach	33.7	11.3
Surat	16.6	8.2
Ahmedabad	49.7	20.9
Total	100.0	weighted mean = 15.6

Types of data used for selection of the British district(s) and the sources from which they were obtained are the following: (*i*) rainfall statistics from material supplied by the Department of Meteorology, New Delhi; (*ii*) information on soil from a map supplied by the Soil Survey of India, New Delhi; (*iii*) material from gazetteers; and (*iv*) proposals for dividing India into regions from: (*a*) O. K. H. Spate, *India and Pakistan*, New York, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1960; (*b*) L. Dudley Stamp, *Asia*, London, Methuen and Company, 1950; (*c*) Daniel and Alice, Thorner, *Land and Labour in India*, New York, Asia Publishing House, 1962; (*d*) *Census of India*, 1951; and (*e*) Joseph E. Schwartzberg, 'Cultural Regions of South Asia', unpublished map and accompanying key, Philadelphia, 1963.

In cases of ambiguity, priority was given to cultural criteria. Thus, tribal states were put with tribal districts, Tamil-speaking states with Tamil-speaking districts. (In one instance, a district was selected which appeared to have the most marriage ties with the state, as measured by female migration data, quantitative proof of the cultural ties between them.) For some states, there were no contiguous British districts. For these and other reasons, the matches were better for some pairs than for others. But, because non-quantifiable criteria were used as factors in the selection, it is impossible to rank the states by the quality of the match.

in urban areas.[14] These variables were chosen because empirical studies of other countries and also of India after independence have shown them to be significant indices of levels of development.[15]

RESULTS

A t test was used to determine whether the differences between the states

[14] Data for the indices was obtained from the *Census of India, 1931*, Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1933. My restructuring of the job categories for the states and districts is based on a scheme used in the 1961 Census of India. See B.R. Kalra, 'A Note on Working Force Estimates, 1901-1961', *Census of India, 1961*, Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1962, paper no. 1 of 1962, pp. 389-413. Kalra was extremely helpful in providing me with information on labour force data.

[15] For example, I have found that in 273 districts significant correlations existed between estimated per-capita income in 1955 (the year in which the first India-wide estimates for districts were made) and the percentage of males born outside, the percentage of male workers employed in non-agricultural jobs, and the percentage of the population in urban areas. See Hurd, pp. 10-45, for a full discussion.

and matching districts were statistically significant;[16] that is, not due to chance. I found that differences were not statistically significant for the percentage of males literate or the percentage of population living in urban areas, but they were significant at the .05 level for the percentage of male workers employed in non-agricultural jobs and for the percentage of males born outside the given political unit (Table 3).

Despite the lack of statistical significance for literacy and urbanization, the fact is the majority of princely states fell below their matching British districts for all four indices; that is, the average difference (state minus district divided by the total number of states) for each variable was less than zero. For the percentage born outside, the average difference was —.04; for the percentage in non-agricultural jobs,—.04; for percentage urban,—.035; and for percentage literate,—02. For each indicator, the number of the 28 states which ranked below their matching districts is as follows: 22 below for percentage in non-agricultural jobs; 18 for percentage literate; 18 for percentage born outside; and 16 for percentage urban. These results show that approximately two-thirds of the states were less developed than their matching districts and thus relatively backward in comparison with comparable parts of British India. One must conclude that the populations of these states would have been better off (in a relative sense) had the princely states not existed.

In the distribution of the differences between states and districts, a few states stand out conspicuously at either end. These states are either substantially above or substantially below the average difference.[17] Of the states which fared much worse than their matching British districts, Rewa and Udaipur were more than one standard deviation lower than the mean for all four indices; Jaipur was lower for three, Junagadh for two; and Mayurbhanj, Jodhpur, Bhavnagar, Bhopal, and Patiala for one.[18]

Eight states registered more than one standard deviation above the mean.

[16] The formula for t is as follows:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_D - O}{\hat{\sigma}_{\bar{x}_D}}$$

Since there is inherent pairing between the elements in the two samples, the formula for t differs from that used when the two samples are not paired. The formal null hypothesis is that $\bar{x}_D$ is the mean of a random sample from a population of differences having a mean of zero. Since the samples are paired, one degree of freedom is lost.

[17] Substantial is defined as having a difference of more than one standard deviation from the mean.

[18] We must be cautious concerning the states in Kathiawar (Bhavnagar and Junagadh) where there were no nearby British districts that were good matches. See O.K.H. Spate, *India and Pakistan*, New York, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1960, pp. 596-604.

Cutch and Cochin were above for three out of the four indices; Bikaner for two; and Hyderabad, Indore, Kolhapur, Cooch Behar, and Travancore for one. Some caution must be used in considering the impact of princely rule in Cutch because this state was unique ecologically and culturally.[19] But there is no question about states such as Cochin and Bikaner. A huge percentage of Cochin's revenues (47 per cent) was spent on social overhead capital;[20] this amount exceeded by far that expended in British India as a unit (20-25 per cent).[21] It also surpassed what was spent in states which had a reputation for progressive rule, such as Mysore which spent 38 per cent and Baroda which spent 25 per cent. Bikaner, spending 44 per cent, ranked second to Cochin in the percentage of revenue spent on social overhead capital. Moreover, Bikaner's average yearly expenditures on social overhead capital per capita from 1900 to 1931 (5.04 in constant rupees) far exceeded those of Cochin (Rs 2.48), Baroda (Rs 2.16), and Mysore (Rs 1.80). States such as Cochin and Bikaner, which benefited from princely rule, were exceptions, however. For as we have seen, the great majority of princely states had lower levels of economic development than comparable British districts.

Indirect rule affected the economies of all the states regardless of whether or not they profited or suffered from their administrations. My findings show a consistent pattern of differences in the levels of economic activity, differences which followed political boundaries.[22] Hence, by preserving the princely states as separate political units, the British contributed to the disparities in economic development in India.

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 597-602.

[20] The estimates for the percentage of state revenues spent on social overhead capital, 1901-1931, are from Hurd, pp. 239-42.

[21] See M.J.T. Thavaraj, 'Rate of Public Investment in India, 1898-1938', *Contributions to Indian Economic History*, Calcutta, K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963, II, pp. 42-46. Using Thavaraj's statistics, I estimate an average annual investment for British India of Rs 2 per capita. See Hurd, p. 90.

[22] My current research suggests that the relative backwardness of the States may have been a phenomenon that developed after World War I. See Hurd, pp. 54-64.

TABLE 1

SAMPLE STATES

States	Area in square miles	Population in 1931	Number of persons per square mile in 1931
Bengal States			
Cooch Behar	1,318	590,886	448
Bihar and Orissa States			
Mayurbhanj	4,243	889,603	210
Patna	2,399	566,924	236
Kalahandi	3,743	513,716	137
Bombay States			
Kolhapur	3,217	957,137	298
Central Provinces States			
Bastar	13,062	524,721	40
Surguja	6,055	501,939	83
Madras States			
Cochin	1,480	1,205,016	814
Travancore	7,625	5,095,973	668
Central India Agency			
Indore	9,518	1,318,237	138
Bhopal	6,902	729,955	106
Rewa	13,000	1,587,445	122
Punjab States			
Patiala	5,942	1,625,520	274
Bahawalpur	15,003	984,612	66
Rajputana Agency			
Bikaner	23,317	936,218	40
Marwar (Jodhpur)	35,016	2,125,982	61
Mewar (Udaipur)	12,694	1,566,910	123
Jaipur	15,579	2,631,775	169
Alwar	3,158	749,751	237
Kotah	5,684	685,804	121
Western India States Agency			
Cutch	8,250	514,307	62
Junagadh	3,284	545,152	166
Bhavnagar	2,961	500,174	169
States Not in Agencies			
Baroda	8,164	2,443,007	299
Gwalior	26,367	3,523,070	134
Hyderabad	82,698	14,436,148	175
Jammu and Kashmir	84,471	3,646,243	43
Mysore	29,312	6,423,189	219

TABLE 2

STATES AND MATCHING DISTRICTS

States	Matching British districts(s)[a]
Bengal States	
Cooch Behar	Rangpur
Bihar and Orissa States	
Mayurbhanj	Singhbhum
Patna	Sambalpore
Kalahandi	Sambalpore
Bombay States	
Kolhapur	Satara
Central Provinces States	
Bastar	Vizagapatnam Agency
Surguja	Ranchi
Madras States	
Cochin	Malabar
Travancore	Malabar
Central India Agency	
Indore	Nimar
Bhopal	Hoshangabad
Rewa	Jubbulpore
Punjab States	
Patiala	Ludhiana
Bahawalpur	Multan+Thar Parkar
Rajputana Agency	
Bikaner	Hissar+Thar Parkar
Marwar (Jodhpur)	Ajmer-Mewara+Thar Parkar
Mewar (Udaipur)	Ajmer-Mewara
Jaipur	Ajmer-Mewara
Alwar	Gurgaon
Kotah	Jhansi
Western India States Agency	
Cutch	Thar Parkar
Junagadh	Ahmedabad
Bhavnagar	Ahmedabad
States Not in Agencies	
Baroda	Ahmedabad (50%)+Broach (34%) + Surat (17%)
Gwalior	Jhansi (38%)+Nimar (33%) + Jalaun (22%)+Saugor (7%)
Hyderabad	Kurnool (52%)+Sholapur (15%) + Yeotmal (11%) + Bijapur (8.5%) + Bellary (6.5%)+Ahmednagar (6.5%)
Jammu and Kashmir	Hazara+Kangra
Mysore	Dharwar+Bellary

[a]When the value for the matching British area is the mean of values for two districts, it is ignified as follows: District A+District B. When the value for the matching part of British ndia is derived by the weighting system outlined in n.13, the weights are given in parentheses ollowing the Districts as : District A (60 per cent)+District B (40 per cent).

TABLE 3

ECONOMIC INDICES FOR STATES AND DISTRICTS: TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE

Economic indices	*t Statistic*	*N*	*Mean of the difference*	*Standard deviation*
% Born Outside	−2.536	28	−.0359	.0749
% in Non-Agriculture	−2.478	28	−.0391	.0834
% Urban	−2.018	28	−.0350	.0918
% Literate	−1.756	28	−.0211	.0635

TABLE 4

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MALE LABOUR FORCE EMPLOYED IN NON-AGRICULTURAL JOBS, 1931

	State	*District*	*Difference*
Bastar	.08	.16	−.08
Sirguja	.09	.16	−.07
Jaipur	.35	.45	−.10
Jodhpur	.34	.36	−.02
Udaipur	.29	.45	−.16
Bikaner	.22	.24	−.02
Alwar	.28	.27	.01
Kotah	.27	.30	−.03
Rewa	.13	.33	−.20
Indore	.33	'26	.07
Bhopal	.29	.34	−.05
Patiala	.27	.38	−.11
Bahawalpur	.28	.35	−.07
Junagadh	.40	.52	−.12
Cutch	.42	.26	.16
Bhavnagar	.45	.52	−.07
Kolhapur	.22	.17	.05
Travancore	.37	.45	−.08
Cochin	.45	.45	.00
Mayurbhanj	.18	.31	−.13
Patna	.12	.15	−.03
Kalahandi	.12	.15	−.03
Hyderabad	.46	.27	.19
Mysore	.20	.28	−.08
Jammu-Kashmir	.19	.21	−.02
Gwalior	.24	.27	−.03
Baroda	.31	.39	−.08
Cooch Behar	.13	.14	−.01

TABLE 5

PERCENTAGE OF MALES BORN OUTSIDE STATES AND MATCHING DISTRICTS, 1931

	State	*District*	*Difference*
Bastar	.04	.01	.03
Sirguja	.04	.02	.02
Jaipur	.01	.17	−.16
Jodhpur	.01	.15	−.14
Udaipur	.01	.17	−.16
Bikaner	.18	.10	.08
Alwar	.03	.06	−.03
Kotah	.08	.10	−.02
Rewa	.02	.15	−.13
Indore	.22	.23	−.01
Bhopal	.07	.10	−.03
Patiala	.10	.13	−.03
Bahawalpur	.15	.13	.02
Junagadh	.07	.21	−.14
Cutch	.01	.12	−.11
Bhavnagar	.08	.21	−.13
Kolhapur	.05	.03	.02
Travancore	.03	.01	.02
Cochin	.06	.01	.05
Mayurbhanj	.05	.14	−.09
Patna	.04	.04	.00
Kalahandi	.04	.04	.00
Hyderabad	.02	.07	−.05
Mysore	.05	.07	−.02
Jammu-Kashmir	.02	.04	−.02
Gwalior	.06	.14	−.08
Baroda	.11	.16	−.05
Cooch Behar	.17	.03	.14

Table 6

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS, 1931

	State	*District*	*Difference*
Bastar	.02	.01	.01
Sirguja	.00	.04	—.04
Jaipur	.17	.32	—.15
Jodhpur	.13	.18	—.05
Udaipur	.08	.32	—.24
Bikaner	.24	.08	.16
Alwar	.10	.10	.00
Kotah	.09	.21	—.12
Rewa	.03	.20	—.17
Indore	.18	.17	.01
Bhopal	.13	.13	.00
Patiala	.10	.17	—.07
Bahawalpur	.04	.07	—.03
Junagadh	.22	.40	—.18
Cutch	.17	.03	.14
Bhavnagar	.31	.40	.09
Kolhapur	.14	.10	.04
Travancore	.11	.08	.03
Cochin	.17	.08	.09
Mayurbhanj	.01	.12	—.11
Patna	.01	.03	—.02
Kalahandi	.01	.03	—.02
Hyderabad	.11	.11	.00
Mysore	.14	.21	—.07
Jammu-Kashmir	.09	.04	.05
Gwalior	.11	.17	.06
Baroda	.21	.30	—.09
Cooch Behar	.03	.03	.00

Table 7

PERCENTAGE OF MALES LITERATE, 1931

	State	*District*	*Difference*
Bastar	.01	.03	—.02
Sirguja	.01	.05	—.04
Jaipur	.06	.17	—.11
Jodhpur	.07	.12	—.05
Udaipur	.06	.17	—.11
Bikaner	.07	.06	.01
Alwar	.06	.06	.00
Kotah	.08	.12	—.04
Rewa	.05	.15	—.10
Indore	.13	.14	—.01
Bhopal	.05	.15	—.10
Patiala	.07	.16	—.09
Bahawalpur	.04	.07	—.03
Junagadh	.16	.21	—.05
Cutch	.16	.06	.10
Bhavnagar	.22	.21	.01
Kolhapur	.12	.12	.00
Travancore	.34	.23	.11
Cochin	.38	.23	.15
Mayurbhanj	.06	.08	—.02
Patna	.03	.09	—.06
Kalahandi	.02	.09	—.07
Hyderabad	.07	.11	—.04
Mysore	.15	.15	.00
Jammu-Kashmir	.06	.07	—.01
Gwalior	.07	.13	—.06
Baroda	.28	.26	.02
Cooch Behar	.11	.10	.01

Weighted Price and Revenue-Rate Indices of Eastern Rajasthan (c. 1665-1750)

SATYA PRAKASH GUPTA
SHIREEN MOOSVI
Aligarh Muslim University

The large number of the documents known as *arhsattas* preserved at the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, contain much statistical information that can be used for tracing the movements of prices and land-revenue rates (such as fixed in cash) in Eastern Rajasthan during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They retain their temptation for economic historians in spite of the difficulties involved in interpreting them properly, owing to gaps of years for which *arhasattas* are not available and the large areas of information that are left uncovered.

The *arhsatta* of each pargana gives the prices of different agricultural products under *jinsi*; and rates of various crops under the *zabt* system of assessment.[1] An attempt has been made here to calculate the yearly weighted price and revenue-rate indices from this information. For this purpose six contiguous parganas, viz., Amber, Bahatri, Chatsu, Dausa, Lalsot, and Malarna, have been selected. The period covered is 1665-1750, though with gaps of years, different in case of different parganas. And for a number of years, information is not forthcoming for any pargana whatsoever. Our source material is the same as used by S. Nurul Husan and S. P. Gupta in 'Prices of Food Grains in the Territories of Amber (c. 1650-1750)'; *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Patiala Session (1967). What we have attempted here to do is to take into account all crops, and not simply the major crops, as in that paper, and to introduce a further quantitative refinement by compiling weighted indices.

The information is offered in our documents under two heads: *jinsi* and *zabti*. Under the head jinsi, the quantity of various crops realized in payment of land-revenue, with details of *bichoti* (the quantity sold, and amount in cash realized for it) and *anya* (the quantity left with the state) are given. In some cases, the prices in terms of quantity per rupee are directly quoted.

[1] *Zabt* signified assessment of land-revenue of cash rates separately fixed on each crop per *bigha*. It implied previous measurement of the land sown with the crops on which these rates were fixed.

Under zabti, the area under different crops and the amount of revenue realized from each crop, together with the rates per bigha, are stated.

But there are certain inadequacies in the available information. As noted already, *arhsattas* for the same years in all the six parganas are not available. The quantities are given in maunds per rupee; and there are fluctuations in the number of seers going to a maund.[2] For the standpoint of our study there are some other shortcomings in evidence. Quite obviously, the crops differ from pargana to pargana; and even in the same pargana the crops which figure on the *arhsattas* of one year do not necessarily occur in those of other years (see Table 1). Moreover, there are some stray cases when a few crops occur under jinsi in one year and under zabti in another (see Table 1).

In our computations, the prices have been calculated in rupees (*taka* being converted into decimal fractions of rupee)[3] by dividing the amount realized from sale by the quantity of bichoti, and rates by dividing the amount of revenue received by the area in bighas. Thus what we actually obtain are the average prices and the average rates, though in fact, as can be seen from the details in the *arhsattas*, the prices and rates slightly vary from village to village and even within a village. As mentioned earlier, maunds of different weights are used in the records; but for the sake of uniformity in calculation, all maunds have been first converted into those of 40 seers (Man-i-Shahjahani).[4]

TABLE 1 (a)

JINSI CROPS

Amber	*Bahatri*	*Chatsu*	*Dausa*	*Lalsot*	*Malarna*
Bajra	Bajra	Bajra	Bajra	Bajra	Bajra
Barley	Barley	Barley	Barley	Barley	Barley
Jowar	Jowar	Jowar	Jowar	Jowar	Jowar
Wheat	Wheat	Wheat	Wheat	Wheat	Wheat
Til	Til	Til	Til	Til	Til
Gram	Gram	Gram	Gram	Gram	Gram
Moth	Moth	Moth	Moth	Moth	Moth
Baijhri	Baijhri	Baijhri	Baijhri	Baijhri	Baijhri
Sarso	Sarso	Sarso	Sarso	Sarso	Sarso
Mung	Mung	Mung	Mung	Mung	Mung
Chola	—	—	—	—	—
Gunwar	Gunwar	Gunwar	Gunwar	Gunwar	Gunwar
Sali	Sali	Sali	Sali	Sali	—
Indigo	—	—	—	—	—
Seed Indigo	—	—	—	—	Seed Indigo
Gochani	Gochani	Gochani	—	—	—

[2] The maunds were of different weights in different parganas. The number of seers going to a maund in Amber and Chatsu was 40, in Dausa and Lalsot was 30, and in Bahatri and Malarna was 28.

[3] In the documents the amounts are given in rupees. For smaller fractions takas (some time also called *muradi*) are employed. The number of takas in a rupee is not fixed but changes from year to year and pargana to pargana. Each taka was further divided into probably 50 fractional pieces (see Table 3).

TABLE 1(*b*)

ZABTI CROPS

Amber	*Bahatri*	*Chatsu*	*Dausa*	*Lalsot*	*Malarna*
Vani	Vani	Vani	Vani	Vani	Vani
Varh	Varh	Varh	Varh	Varh	Varh
Chola	Chola	Chola	Chola	Chola	Chola
Barti	Barti	Barti	Barti	Barti	Barti
Madhwa	Madhwa	Madhwa	Madhwa	Madhwa	Madhwa
Maka	Maka	Maka	Maka	Maka	Maka
Cheena	Cheena	Cheena	Cheena	Cheena	Cheena
Vegetable	Vegetable	Vegetable	Vegetable	Vegetable	Vegetable
Tobacco	Tobacco	Tobacco	Tobacco	Tobacco	Tobacco
Afoo	Afoo	Afoo	Afoo	Afoo	Afoo
—	Indigo	Indigo	Indigo	Indigo	Indigo
Kodon	Kodon	Kodon	Kodon	Kodon	—
Sunn	—	Sunn	Sunn	Sunn	Sunn
Ajwain	—	Ajwain	Ajwain	Ajwain	Ajwain
—	—	—	Gunwar	Gunwar	—
—	—	—	Ralo Kogni	—	—
Kheera	—	—	Kheera	—	Kheera
Kakri			Kakri		Kakri
Sarso	Sarso	—	—	—	—
Shakar-kand	—	—	Shakar-kand	—	—
—	—	Raee	Raee	—	—
—	—	—	Til	Til	Til
—	—	Chimoli	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	Lal Haro
—	—	—	—	—	Kada
—	—	—	—	—	Sali
—	—	—	—	Bajra	—

[4] It has been assumed that these variations were all calculated in terms of the Shahjahani maund of 40 seers, each seer equal in weight to 40 copper *dams* (cf Jahangiri maund, of 40 seers, each of 36 dam-weight, and Akbari again of 40 seers, each of 30 dam-weight). Given the Shahjahani maund, as standard, it would be immaterial if another maund say, Akbari or the one used in Dausa and Lalsot, was described as equal to 40 seers, each of 30 dam-weight, or as equal simply to 30 (Shahjahani) seers.

The years 1715 and 1716 are the only two consecutive years in which *arhsattas* are available at least for one of the two years in all the six parganas. We have taken 1715 as the base year. Information for 1715 is not available in case of two parganas, viz., Bahatri and Chatsu. For these, however, we are fortunate in having prices and rates for 1716. In order to have a common base year for all the parganas, hypothetical figures for 1715 for parganas Bahatri and Chatsu have been worked out by assuming that the prices and rates in these parganas moved between 1713 and 1716 according to the average change represented by prices and rates in pargana Amber and *Malarna*, for which figures of both 1715 and 1716 are available. The hypothetical figures for 1715 are then treated as the base figures for Bahatri and Chatsu. The year 1715 is a reasonable one for the purpose because there is every indication that this, as well as 1716, was a normal or at least not an abnormal year.

In compiling the indices we have convered all the crops barring a very few which are not significant quantitatively and occur only in a few years, like *mehndi* and *methi*, etc., which never contributed more than 0.5 per cent of the total revenue.

In compiling the indices the weights used are the respective amounts of the revenue received from each crop, since this is a measure which may be assumed to correspond to the value of output of various crops. Owing to the fluctuations in magnitude of various crops in different years, no standard weighting could be used: the current-year weighting has been employed throughout. The index number weighted by current-year values and written for any given year (as year *a*) relatively to the base year (year 0) is

$$\frac{\Sigma P_{ia}\, q_{ia}\, (P_{ia}/P_{io})}{\Sigma P_{ia}\, q_{ia}},$$

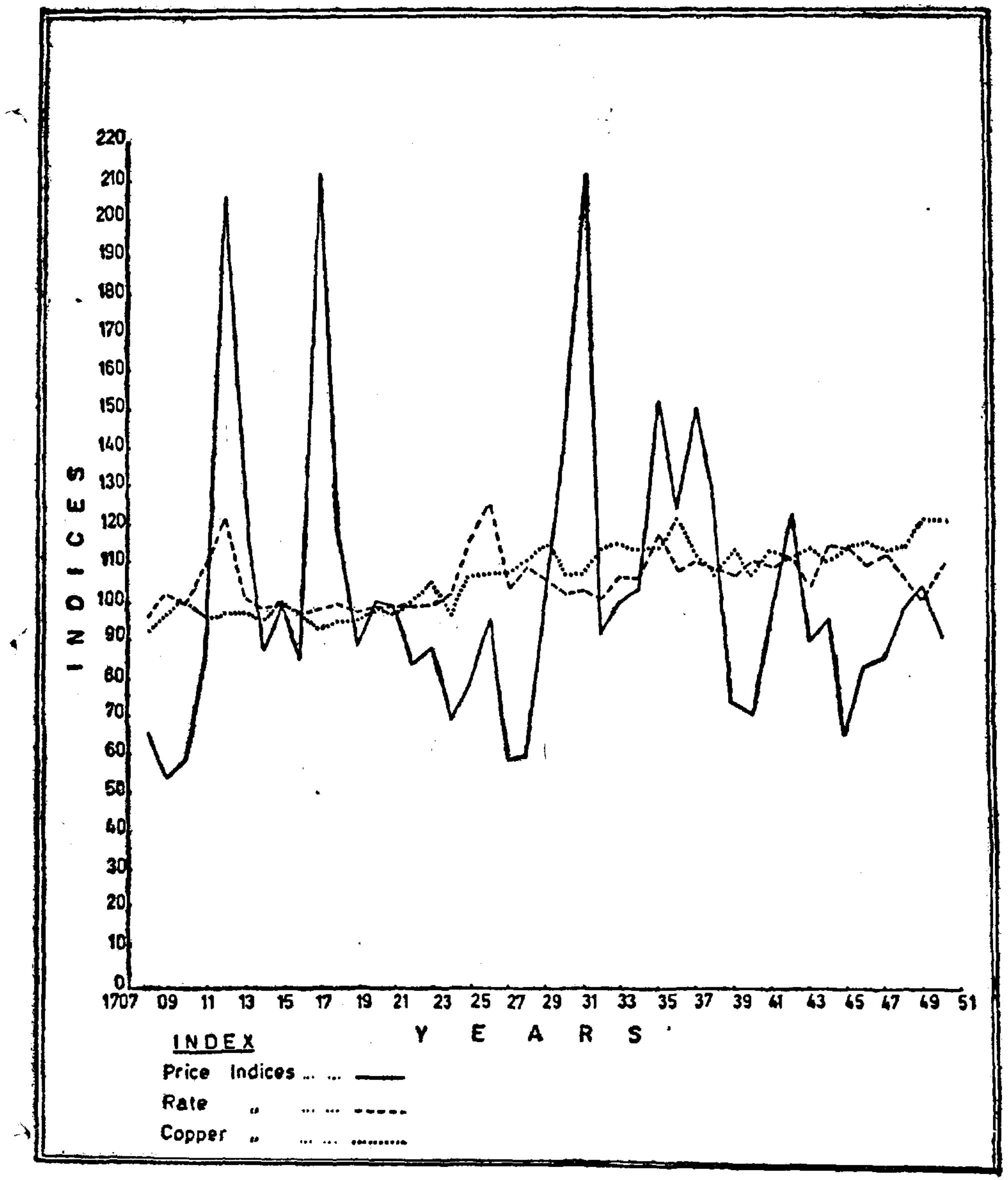
where P_{ia} and q_{ia} are the prices and quantities of year *a*, P_{io} the prices of the base year, *i* runs over all crops.

The price and rate indices for all the six parganas have been computed in this fashion,[5] and scattered diagrams (see Figs. 2-3) been plotted out of these, then the mean for the six parganas has been evolved for each year (see Table 2). We have also worked out the rupee value of taka, yearwise, and have prepared an index table taking the year 1715 as base (see Table 3). And have plotted the indices (see Fig. 1).

It appears from the tables as well as from the graphs that the rate indices in general remain uniform while the price indices fluctuate far more sharply. The range of rate indices is 94.06 in 1696 to 126.43 in 1726. Unfortunately, the gaps are considerably large in the information available for the latter half of the seventeenth century and it is not possible to say anything definite

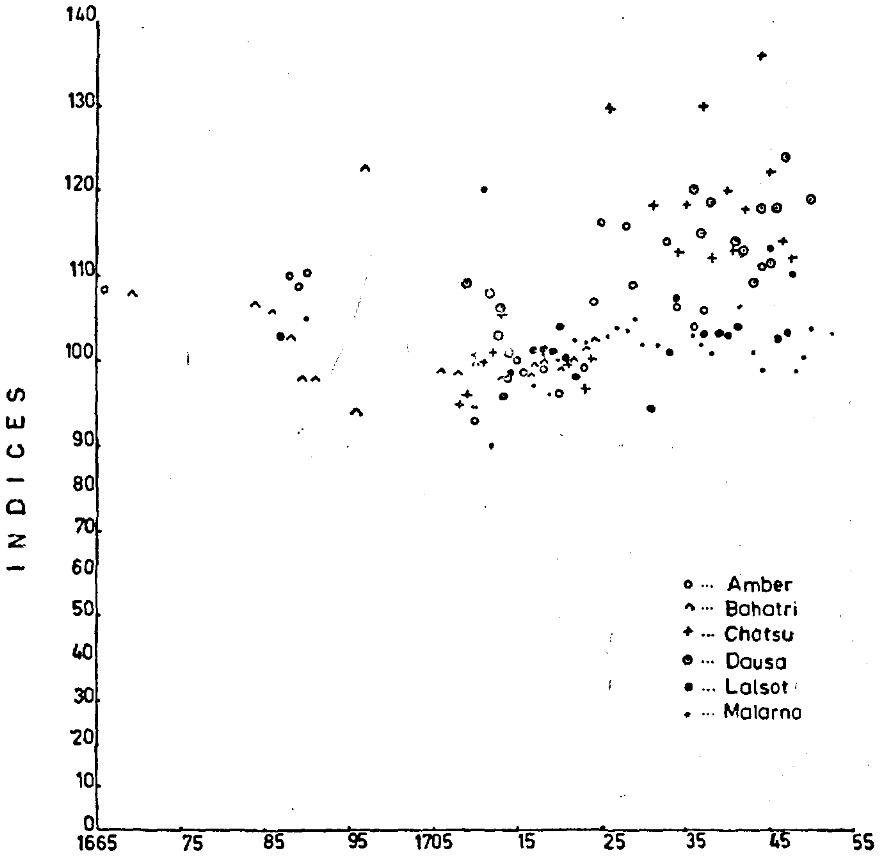
[5] The whole tedious calculations have been done on computer.

FIGURE 1



WEIGHTED PRICE AND RATE INDICES, COPPER INDICES

FIGURE 2

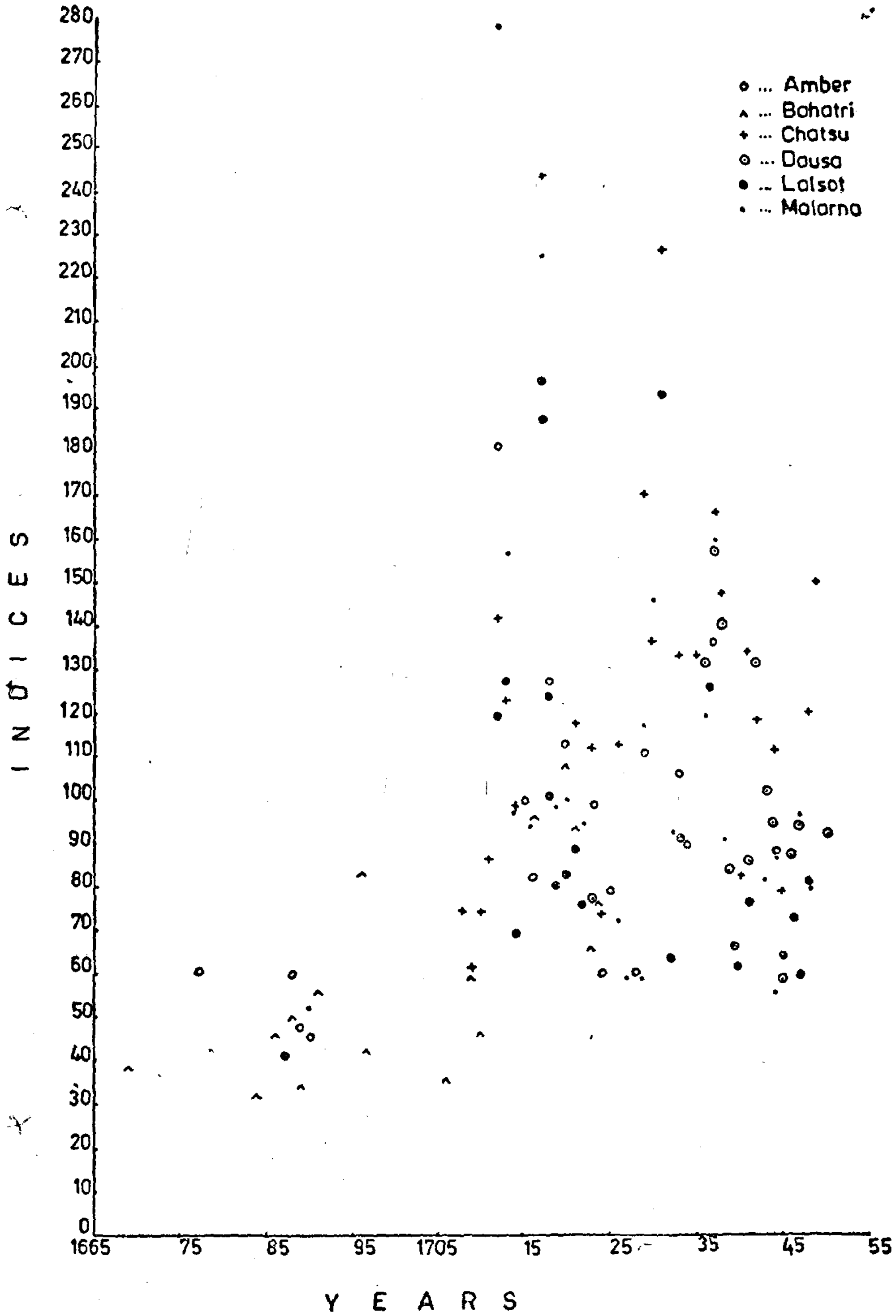


WEIGHTED RATE INDICES OF SIX PARGANAS

about that period. However, it seems that the rates and prices both were less uniform than in the succeeding period. Indeed, there is a marked stability in rates from 1713 to 1724. Thereafter, there is a sharp rise and then some fluctuations. As far as the prices are concerned, the range between the upper and lower limit is much larger, from 31.84 in 1684 to 215.41 in 1731 and the trend is very unsteady. There is an unusual rise in the years 1712, 1717, 1731, 1735, and 1737. There is, however, no distinct upward or downward trend, in general.

There are two points which emerge rather sharply from our data. The first is, that the seventeenth century prices were substantially lower than those of the eighteenth century. This can be illustrated from both the general

FIGURE 3



WEIGHTED PRICE INDICES OF SIX PARGANAS

TABLE 2

AVERAGE PRICE AND RATE INDICES

Year	Price indices	Rate indices
1665	34.93	104.07
1666	—	107.10
1669	38.11	107.84
1677	60.57	112.16
1684	31.84	107.08
1686	46.41	106.12
1687	40.86	103.81
1688	55.35	106.61
1689	41.86	103.25
1690	49.45	108.07
1691	55.77	198.30
1696	82.94	194.06
1697	42.01	123.07
1706	34.60	99.26
1708	66.39	97.02
1709	55.46	102.81
1710	59.79	100.14
1711	85.55	110.28
1712	207.68	122.96
1713	130.42	101.58
1714	88.61	99.08
1715	100.00	100.00
1716	86.15	98.41
1717	213.82	98.73
1718	119.77	100.23
1719	90.03	98.34
1720	101.23	99.72
1721	99.73	99.60
1722	84.78	100.14
1723	88.83	100.20
1724	70.08	103.21
1725	79.60	116.48
1726	97.60	126.48
1727	59.23	104.35
1728	59.61	109.83
1729	116.49	107.29
1730	142.26	102.88
1731	215.41	103.59
1732	93.18	102.13
1733	101.56	107.54
1734	104.91	107.03
1735	154.99	118.72
1736	125.69	108.94

TABLL 2 (*Contd.*)

1737	153.26	111.46
1738	129.58	110.21
1739	74.97	107.81
1740	72.06	111.92
1741	100.08	110.31
1742	125.31	113.58
1743	92.17	105.04
1744	98.53	116.05
1745	67.51	115.21
1746	85.23	109.97
1747	88.34	113.41
1748	99.78	107.80
1749	115.54	101.50
1750	92.50	111.50

TABLE 3

INDICES OF COPPER

Year	*No. of takas in a rupee*	*Rupee value of taka*	*Indices of copper prices*
1664	17.00	.0588	101.379
1665	16.18	.0618	106.552
1666	16.50	.0606	104.483
1677	17.50	.0571	98.448
1684	18.50	.0541	93.276
1685	18.75	.0533	91.897
1686	20.00	.0500	86.207
1687	20.25	.0493	85.000
1688	19.00	.0526	90.690
1689	18.50	.0541	93.276
1690	18.50	.0541	93.276
1694	19.50	.0513	88.448
1696	19.50	.0513	88.448
1697	19.50	.0513	88.448
1706	19.00	.0526	90.690
1708	18.50	.0541	93.276
1709	17.50	.0571	98.448
1710	17.00	.0588	101.379
1711	17.83	.0561	96.724
1712	17.50	.0571	98.448
1713	17.50	.0571	98.448
1714	19.00	.0556	95.862
1715	17.25	.0580	110.000

TABLE 3 (*Contd.*)

1716	17.75	.0563	97.069
1717	18.25	.0548	94.483
1718	17.90	.0559	96.379
1719	18.00	.0556	95.862
1720	17.44	.0573	98.793
1721	17.50	.0571	98.448
1722	17.00	.0588	101.379
1723	16.25	.0615	106.034
1724	16.67	.0600	96.667
1725	16.00	.0625	107.759
1726	16.00	.0625	107.759
1727	16.00	.0625	107.759
1728	15.42	.0649	111.897
1729	15.00	.0667	115.000
1730	16.00	.0625	107.759
1731	16.00	.0625	107.759
1732	15.00	.0667	115.000
1733	14.85	.0673	116.035
1734	15.00	.0667	115.000
1735	15.00	.0667	115.000
1736	14.00	.0714	123.103
1737	15.25	.0656	113.103
1738	15.33	.0652	107.759
1739	15.00	.0667	115.000
1740	15.33	.0652	107.759
1741	15.00	.0667	115.000
1742	15.25	.0656	113.103
1743	15.00	.0667	115.000
1744	15.35	.0651	112.241
1745	14.88	.0672	115.862
1746	14.75	.0678	116.897
1747	15.00	.0667	115.000
1748	14.83	.0674	116.207
1749	14.00	.0714	123.103
1750	14.00	.0714	123.103

all pargana price indices as well as individual pargana indices. In the all pargana price index, the numbers between 1665 and 1706 range between 31.84 as the minimum and 82.94 as the maximum. But between 1707 and 1750, the minimum reached is 59.23 in 1725 and the maximum 215.41 in 1731. There is thus a rise amounting nearly to 100 per cent from the prices of the period 1665-1706 to those for 1707-50. The same trend can be seen most clearly in the figures for pargana Bahatri, which is richest in the statistics for the period before 1700, its average price index for 12 years, interspersed between 1665 and 1710 (inclusive), being 46.35, while the average for eight years between 1713 and 1725 (inclusive) works out at 108.78.

The other point which emerges is an upward tendency, after the first quarter of the eighteenth century; which is prima facie established, from the movement of rate indices. Keeping in mind the large magnitude of fluctuations, we will be hardly justified to conclude anything on the basis of the simple arithmetic mean. The median, however, could indicate a measure of central tendency, fair enough to have an idea of the change in trend. The median of rate indices for the period of 1706-1725 (both the years inclusive) is 100, and that of 1726-1750 (inclusive) is 109.83, i.e. a rise, amounting to almost 10 per cent. As far as price indices are concerned, their median for 1708-1730 (inclusive) is 88.83 and for 1732-1750 (inclusive) is 99.78, indicating a hike again of about 10 per cent.

To test the above conclusion, we have attempted to trace a correlation between the rupee value of copper (based on Table 3) and the two sets of indices: prices and rates.

The similarity between the movement of rupee prices of copper and zabti rates is striking. While no general pattern could be traced for the latter half of the seventeenth century, due to scanty information, a strikingly parallel trend appears in the first half of the eighteenth century. Between 1713 and 1724, the rate index varies between 98.41 and 103.21; and the index of copper prices between 94.483 and 106.034; then there are rather sharp fluctuations down to 1736. During this period, the rate index reaches 126.48 as the upper limit, and the lower limit up to which it falls is 102.13. The two limit points for copper indices are 123.103 and 107.59. Although, the rate indices surpass copper prices at certain points, on the whole, they are unable to keep pace with the copper prices. The average of copper indices between the years 1725 to 1736 is 112.486 and for rate indices 109.61. From 1737 to 1748 copper indices too exhibit a rise of about 10 per cent. The index of copper prices thus also seems to confirm the general pattern of price changes that we have deduced from the revenue-rate and grain-price indices.

BOOK REVIEWS

APARNA BASU, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1974, Pp. 258, Rs 40.

This book has grown out of a doctoral thesis for the Cambridge University. As such it is thoroughly documented in both unpublished and published primary sources, and it is buttressed with maps and tables. It can be said at once that it is the scholarly production of a lively mind and that it merits the attention of all students of the subject and the period.

The book has, as I see it, two major themes. These are the Government of India's attempted control of education and the development of education under the social pressures of the time. Arising from these two are the effect of will, or the lack of it, upon governmental projects, and the deadening effect of bureaucracy upon all creative activity.

Dr Basu begins with Lord Curzon's survey of the Indian educational system and its assessment as delivered to the Simla Conference of 1901. The measures which followed embodied a governmental attempt to abandon the *laissez-faire* attitude of the recent past and also the original liberal objectives which had been transmuted into a supply of English-knowing government servants (from the British point of view) and western education for the *bhadralok* and South Indian Brahmin (from the Bengali and Madras points of view). Existing practices received a severe jolt, but the remarkable feature of the exercise was the almost complete failure of the most masterful viceroy since the Revolt of 1857 to effect any serious change. The further officialization of the Calcutta University Senate stirred up bad blood but achieved little if anything. College affiliation and student numbers were only temporarily checked. In the sphere of secondary education the story was the same. Recognition of schools under the officialized universities was no stricter than before; the attempt to control the prescription of textbooks and banish such works as Burke's *French Revolution* and Carlyle's *Heroes & Heroworship* by making Directors of Public Instruction chairmen of textbook committees wilted and faded away. A policy conceived in negation and nurtured in distrust went to earth in the dreary desert sand of bureaucratic procedure. It was the same with technical education. The attempt to distinguish between technical and technological education (encouraging the former at the expense of the latter) ended in little being done beyond lamentations of the literary character of Indian education.

The second major theme of development occupies Chapters 4 and 5. It is illustrated by many tables which clearly suggest that the running in Indian education was being made by powerful social forces rather than governmental direction. The middle classes outside Bengal and Madras had now awakened to the social potential of western education, so colleges proliferated whether the government liked it or not. But the middle classes had little interest in mass elementary education, so its proposal, though sponsored by the Congress leader G.K. Gokhale and supported by experts, never made much progress. Dr Basu considers that communal education (Chapter 6) can be best understood in a class context, which explains why Muslim education was backward in Bengal and the Punjab, where Muslims were mainly cultivators, and forward in the U.P. and Madras, where Muslim minorities contained upper class and ex-official elements. The same social urge called for the expression of cultural impulses in western forms. This is why Aligarh flourished and the Banaras University was founded against the better judgement of officialdom, who frowned almost equally upon its two chief sponsors, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviyya and Mrs Annie Besant.

Dr Basu agrees that the early nationalist movement was dominated by the western-educated classes. For her 1920 is the dividing line when wider forces and indigenous ideas began to influence and transform the movement. But what kind of transformation? I should see it as the extension and broadening of the original impetus rather than its supersession. The great transformer Gandhi, with his *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, was also a man of the west, while his successor Nehru was a man of the west understanding all too little the spirit of the East. Gandhi-Nehru nationalism was richer and fuller than the Bannerjee-Gokhale variety; its secret was that it clothed western concepts with Indian forms and then applied them to the great latent traditional forces of India.

There are two significant side-effects which emerge from this study. They are the loss of will in the British-Indian governing class and the decrepitude of the Indian bureaucracy. Curzon's initiatives could not be maintained, because the British agents lacked the conviction and will to carry them through. The water of purpose was so low in the river of Indian life that the state-barge of educational reform ran aground on the sands of obstruction and inertia. Bureaucracy was necessary but bureaucracy without purpose becomes an ingenious device for inaction. Both these developments were ominous for the future of British rule in India. When a foreign government's policy loses the name of action, dissolution is not far off. But let Curzon himself have the last word. The mechanism for ruling India, he wrote to the Secretary of State in 1902 (p. 95), was 'better adapted to rule a kingdom like Bavaria'; and again, the Government of India was 'a mighty miraculous machine for doing nothing'.

Dr Basu has put us all in her debt by her penetrating study of this subject,

and one hopes her book will receive the attention it deserves.

Selwyn College
Cambridge
T.G.P. Spear

Francis G. Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution: The Quit India Movement*, Delhi, Manohar Book Service, 1971, 376 Pp.

Dr Francis Hutchins's book is a welcome addition to the growing number of scholarly monographs on the last years of British rule in India. If by an unfortunate coincidence his book came out in the same year when the first two volumes on the Transfer of Power were published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office, that cannot be held to detract from the claim of this book to be considered an original contribution to knowledge. In the first place, the documents in the *Transfer of Power* series are the historian's raw material only, while Dr Hutchins's book bears the stamp of creative thinking and interpretative ability. Secondly, Dr Hutchins has used a large number of hitherto unpublished records from the Home (Political) files of the National Archives of India, as well as from private collections in the Nehru Memorial Library and elsewhere. In addition, he has interviewed a large number of participants of the 'Quit India' movement. Finally, while the documents, edited by Professor Mansergh, deal mainly with the official mind as reflected in notings and memoranda prepared in London and in the Viceroy's Secretariat in New Delhi, Dr Hutchins is concerned with the apparatus of imperial rule lower down in the administrative hierarchy, and with the thoughts and actions of Indian leaders themselves.

There is a lot of unnecessary padding which distracts the reader's attention from the real merit of the book, which lies partly in an analysis of the bureaucratic mind in the final desperate stage of imperial rule (pp. 179-217) and partly in an analysis of the behaviour of Gandhi and many middle-rank Indian leaders when faced with official violence (pp. 218-376). The first 136 pages deal with the nature of British imperialism in India and the limits of the concessions the British were prepared to give, the nature of Indian nationalism, and, more theoretically, a comparative historical analysis of revolutions in general. This definitely could have been abbreviated, as the statements of the author in these pages are largely derivative and sometimes trite. On the other hand, his analysis of the viciousness of Lord Linlithgow's administration in their efforts to crush the Congress as an organization is brilliant and revealing. It is corroborated by the letters of Linlithgow to Amery in January 1942 which have been published by Professor Mansergh. One of those letters shocked Attlee by its racial arrogance. Dr Hutchins shows that Linlithgow's attitude was shared by many members of the bureaucracy who had been planning a campaign against the Congress almost as soon as the war began.

As a general account of the Indian side of the revolt his book is in some ways an improvement upon the only other scholarly work on the subject—Professor Amba Prasad's. This is mainly because the Home Department records were not available when Professor Prasad wrote his study, and Dr Hutchins has been able to give more circumstantial details. There are some interesting insights on Gandhi's mentality, and on the way the violent nature of the rising was provoked after Leopold Amery justified taking extreme measures in the British House of Commons. 'What Amery claimed to have prevented, he instead helped to bring about' (p. 272). What the book fails to do, so far as the Indian side is concerned, is to make case-studies of the nature of grass-roots support to the movement in some of the liberated areas. One pioneering work is now under way so far as Midnapore is concerned under the direction of Professor Barun De. While Dr Hutchins has not delved that deeply, he nevertheless deserves our thanks for giving us a lucid account of the nature of official violence and the general pattern of Indian resistance to it.

PARTHA SARATHI GUPTA

MICHAEL STRACHAN and BOIES PENROSE (eds.), *The East India Company Journals of Captain William Keeling and Master Thomas Bonner, 1615-17*, University of Minnesota Press, Pp. 237, $10.75.

The English India Company required every captain, master, master's mate and purser in its employ to keep a journal which was to be handed in at the end of the voyage. These accounts were put to practical use in later voyages and it is partly because of that reason that only a few of them have survived. Two such early accounts, written during a voyage in 1615-17, have been transcribed and published in this volume. The fleet consisting of four vessels, the *Dragan*, the *Lyon*, the *Peppercorn*, and the *Expedition*, and commanded by Captain Keeling set sail from Tilbury on 3 February 1615 and reached Surat early in October of the same year. On 19 February 1616 the fleet sailed out of Surat and on the following day, the *Lyon* parted company for home. The remaining vessels headed south and established contact with the Zamorin of Calicut where a factory was established. Having rounded Ceylon, the *Expedition* parted company, while the rest of the fleet proceeded to Achin where it arrived at the end of April. The *Dragon* and the *Peppercorn* sailed from Achin on 9 July and arrived in Tiku road on 27 July to find the *Expedition* already there. After collecting a good cargo of pepper at Tiku and Bantam, the *Dragon* and the *Expedition* left for England in

October 1616 and anchored in the Downs on 13 May 1617. The *Peppercorn* sailed towards the end of February and arrived home at the end of August 1617.

While the journal of Master Bonner concerns itself almost entirely with navigational matters, that of Captain Keeling contains information on matters such as victualing, discipline, and health of the men during the voyage as well as on matters pertaining to trade. The authorities in Asia welcomed the English traders either to seek their assistance against the Portuguese (as in the case of the Zamorin of Calicut, who promised free accommodation and exemption from custom duties) or because of the additional customs duties the English trade would bring in [the Governor of Cambay sent sweets and other gifts to Keeling 'offering much friendshippe & requesting trade with us' (p. 109)]. When the Governor of Surat insisted that all the merchandise brought in by the English would have to be sold in Surat itself, Keeling only had to order the *Expedition* out over the bar as though she might attempt to sail for Broach, to persuade the governor to withdraw the order. One is also struck by the trading acumen displayed by the early English traders. When Peyton of the *Expedition*, for example, discovered that much too high a price was being demanded for pepper, he pretended that he had no intention of loading any. This brought the price down to a more reasonable level.

The two journals make interesting reading, but the information of interest to the economic historian available in them is rather limited.

Delhi School of Economics OM PRAKASH

M. S. RANDHAWA *et al.*, *Green Revolution: A Case Study of Punjab*, Delhi, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1974, Pp. 207, Rs 35.

Economics of Green Revolution, Papers read at the Indian Economic Conference, Gauhati, 1970.

To gain an insight into the process of agricultural growth, we require studies of different aspects of green revolution, its working in various parts of the country, and an assessment of its potential. The first book describes some aspects of agricultural growth in Punjab—one of the fastest growing regions of India. The contributors are mainly from the Panjab Agricultural University (P.A.U.) and the state government. The book is divided into three sections: (*i*) Development of World Agriculture; (*ii*) Development of Agriculture in Punjab; and (*iii*) Green Revolution in Punjab. The relevance of Section I is unclear.

Section II gives some basic information about agriculture in Punjab followed by an account of the economic loss suffered by and social problems faced by Punjab due to partition of the country in 1947. A response to this challenge is described in terms of the 'Human Element', i.e. the dynamism, mobility, skill, and enterprise of the Punjabi people. This background information is followed by an account of the consolidation of holdings and land-reform measures in Punjab, the factors which are held by the authors primarily responsible for paving the way for green revolution. The advantages of consolidation are enumerated and an increase of 25 per cent in agricultural production is attributed to this factor. Co-operative farming, it is contended, it not a practicable 'substitute' as the Punjabi farmers are extremely individualistic. It is not, however, understandable how the two (with entirely distinct motives) are considered to be comparable at all. The expansion of owner-cultivation (no statistical pitfalls in the measurement of this elusive factor are mentioned) is considered to be a positive result of land-reform measures. An attempt is made to build up a strong case against lowering of land-ceilings below 30 standard acres. Vague and unconvincing arguments are given in this context without presenting any substantiating empirical evidence.

The third and the last section begins with a description of the various government and autonomous institutions. The triple role of the Panjab Agricultural University as a base for education, research, and extension is highlighted. The contribution of the private sector is acknowledged in terms of the manufacturing of agricultural machinery and implements. Estimates of demand for certain inputs are also presented. On the whole, a rosy picture is painted, with no lacunae found in the organization and working of various institutions.

At the end, the impact of new technology on tenurial relations and employment of human labour is analyzed on the basis of data provided by a sample study and a few demonstration farms. A substantial decrease in the extent of crop-sharing is recorded alongwith an increase in cash-renting and sharing of inputs by the landowner. The favourable effect of mechanization on employment (via intensity of cropping) is underlined; shortage of labour (inferred mainly from rise in wages) is cited as supporting evidence. However, no alternative technology with greater employment potential is considered. The authors frequently stress the point that all sections of the farming community in Punjab have benefited from the green revolution. The inconvenient question of relative benefits, derived by larger versus smaller farmers and landowners versus landless labourers, is not raised. The book concludes with profiles of two villages.

The authors make bold demands for the diversion of considerable national resources to Punjab without concerning themselves in any way with the optimality of such decisions in the wider national context. They do not even pose the question whether it is more rewarding to intensify the application of new technology to selected areas (like Punjab and Haryana) or to cover a much larger area with somewhat diluted technology so that greater regional balance and equity may be obtained.

The book is mostly descriptive and many of the statements are in the nature of assertions without much support of logic or empirical evidence.

Economics of Green Revolution contains eleven papers presented at the Indian Economic Conference at Gauhati in 1970. Only three papers are reproduced in full while the remaining eight are briefly summarized. The first paper makes the simple point (with the help of forbidding diagrams) that supply of capital and risk-aversion of the farmers are two important factors limiting agricultural development. There is, however, no empirical counterpart to this 'theoretical analysis'. The second paper briefly goes into the response of the farmers of Raipur (M.P.) to various high-yielding varieties of seeds, fertilizers, and farm-protection measures. The authors point out the failure of the development agencies to provide adequate credit facilities to the farmers.

G.P. Mishra's paper on 'Some Aspects of Green Revolution in India' is decidedly a misnomer as it concerns itself mainly with the relationship between productivity per acre and per head, surplus labour in agriculture, and the famous size-productivity relationship. Surprisingly, 'capital' seems to be taken to mean only 'working capital', thus avoiding the question of impact of capital on employment of labour. The paper combines trite conclusions with confused thinking.

Unfortunately, all references to an increase in the inequalities of income and regional disparities (which are by far the most talked-about aspects of green revolution) are to be found in the summaries which also include pleas for progressive agricultural taxation and steps to extend green revolution to non-wheat cereals, small farmers, and backward regions.

School of Correspondence Courses
University of Delhi

CHANDER PRABHA

THE INDIAN HISTORICAL REVIEW

Volume 1 Number 2

It is a biannual journal of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, containing articles which, as far as possible, deal with one major theme and discuss its various aspects.

This issue contains:

Subscription Rates

Single Issue:	Rs 30 \$7.50 £2.75
Annual (2 Issues):	Rs 50 \$14 £5

Subscription and trade enquiries to

VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD
5 Daryaganj, Ansari Road, Delhi 110006