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The Evolution of Administration of Princely State: A study of Cooch Behar, 1773 to 1949

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Abstract

This study of the administration of the Princely state of Cooch Behar explores the evolution of the administration of 'Cooch Behar' State from 1773 to 1949. The study examines the transformation of the state's administration from a traditional monarchy dominated by British colonial rule to a modern bureaucratic system. As a result of the treaty of 1773, when the Princely state of 'Cooch Behar' became a tributary state of the British colonial power. Explores 1814-1858, when 'Cooch Behar' became a princely state under British colonial rule. Analyzes the administration of the state in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when significant modernization took place in Princely Cooch Behar and various reforms were carried out by the British colonial powers. This study shows that the administration of Cooch Behar has undergone significant changes during the study period. As such, the traditional monarchy of the state was transformed into a modern bureaucratic system by introducing new administrative institutions, laws and regulations. The study also highlights the role of British colonial rule in shaping the administration of the state, particularly in fact, the study reveals that Princely Cooch Behar faces significant challenges in implementing reforms and modernization of administration, especially in the areas of education, healthcare and infrastructure development. The study provides insight into the challenges faced by princely states in implementing modern reforms, and the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of administration in Cooch Behar from 1773 to 1949 through the traditional monarchical system and modernization. The study highlights the important changes that took place in the Administration of Princely Cooch Behar during this period and provides insight into the continuum of administrative evolution.

Key words: Evolution, Administration, Princely State, British Colonialism, Transformation

Introduction:

The role of the administration in maintaining the security and peace of the state is undeniable. The state cannot be governed without administration, because the development and progress of a country depends on a well-organized administrative system. There is administration in every sphere of socio-economic and political life. Therefore, various laws and regulations are enforced by the administration for the purpose of providing maximum service and security to the people. That is, administration is a well-regulated and well-thought-out action plan. But the Nature of administration depends on the nature of the state itself. For example, during the colonial period there were broadly two types of administration one was the British Indian administration

another was the administration of the native princely state. The difference of the nature of Administration on two different types of culture, economy and also politics.

The Princely State of 'Cooch Behar', which is presently a district in the state of "West Bengal" started its journey in the year 1510. Since then till 12 September, 1949 it was an independent state. But since the treaty of 1773 'Cooch Behar' became a 'tributary' Princely state allied with the British Administration in Bengal. It is interesting to note also that the treaty of 1773 Changed the nature of Administration of the pre-treaty period.¹ The present study therefore seeks to analyze the revolution of the Princely state of Cooch behar with a special focus on the period between 1773 to 1949. So in order to clarify the implications for the evolution of administration of the princely state of Cooch Behar, I chose this topic. Detailed surveys Will be conducted in the field of study to develop better knowledge.

Literature review:

In the case of the state system and society, the role of administration is very important in building a nation of well-organized and well-mannered people. Because the responsibility of maintaining law and order is entrusted to the administration. The system of government is the supreme body and authority of a state through which the state is governed. We are all familiar with the nature and form of work of the three main departments of government legislative, executive and judiciary. One of these three divisions is the executive and the functioning of the executive is commonly known as administration. In any form of governance, however monarchical, democratic or autocratic - the administrative aspect of government is present everywhere. Not only that, the administrative aspect of the government always touches the lives of the people in one way or another. So in the evolution of administration of Princely State : A study of Cooch Behar is important.

The following is a review of the literature in the field and it's allied areas:

Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed (1936)in his book "History of Cooch Behar"(Bengali) provides valuable insights into the political and administrative affairs of Cooch Behar. Such as: a detailed description of the organizational structure of the Cooch Behar administration, including the roles and responsibilities of various officials. Also, the book by Khan Chowdhury Amanatullah Ahmed, a royal official of Cooch Behar, throws light on various aspects of the Cooch Behar kingdom. Such as the royal kingdom of Cooch Behar was a great patron of diplomatic administration. Before the rise of the Koch ruler, Cooch Behar witnessed a political and administrative crisis. In the early 16th century, the tribal leader Hariya Mandal established his own dynasty. Hariya Mandal's son and successor Biswa Singh ascended the throne of the Cooch kingdom in 1515 AD. During Biswa Singh's reign, the Cooch kingdom emerged as a powerful kingdom on the political map of India. But after the death of Maharaja Rajendranarayan, after much resistance and protest, Nazir Khagendranarayan made a treaty with the Company to rescue King Dharendra Narayan and his state prisoners who were imprisoned in Bhutan, otherwise it is doubtful whether the Cooch Behar State would have existed. Then the British temporarily took over the rule of the Cooch Behar State to save it from destruction. However, as soon as the king became fit, he would be given back his independent rights as per the terms of the treaty of 1773. However, apart from matters related to governance and revenue management, the book also discusses the political, social and economic policies implemented by the Cooch Behar administration, which gives a glimpse of the

administrative approach of the state, under the interference of the British colonial power towards the governance and development of the Cooch Behar State.²

Fisher, Michael H. (1991) *Book Indirect Rule in India: Residents and the Residency System*

(1764-1858) is an important study of the British residency system in India during the colonial period. The book explores how the British East India Company and later the British Crown exercised indirect control over Indian princely states using the residency system, allowing them to retain power without direct annexation. Fisher's work provides valuable insights into the complexities of British colonial rule in India, the relationship between British residents and Indian rulers, and the evolution of indirect rule as a key component of British imperial policy.³

Bhagobatcharan Bandhyapardhya (2006) in his book **COOCHBEHAR-ER ITIHAS**, (Bengali) Discuss mutual relations and disputes between Cooch behar and Bhutan. Not only that, the activities of the kings of Cooch behar and how Cooch behar became a tributary state of the colonial government are known. As a result, extensive and significant effects on the administrative system are observed. Also the administrative system of Cooch behar state such as executive - legislative - judiciary and the terms of the 1773 agreement which played a special role in the evolution and changing of the administrative system.⁴

Harendra Narayan Chowdhury (1903) in his book "The Coochbehar State and its land revenue Settlement" discusses that the system of administration from Maharaja Naranarayan to the reign of Nripendra Narayan is very important in the evolution of state administration in Cooch Behar. The most significant part of Harendra Narayan's writing is the complete history of land revenue and survey of the state of Cooch Behar. Maharaja Biswa Singh strengthened the system of administration to make his rule permanent. There was no coordination or real subordination from top to bottom in any part of the administration. Every officer did what was right in his own eyes and did not acknowledge any authority of the state. Before the appointment of a British Commissioner, the Cooch Behar government was in a precarious situation. But since the agreement with the British Government, it has been working vigorously with European ideas. There were many complaints against the administration at that time as there was not much government resources. The only source of significant revenue was land, and even taxes were not paid properly. Colonel Hutton, however, achieved very satisfactory results in a short period as administrator.⁵ He greatly improved the resources at the state level, established a regular budget system to control receipts and expenditure, introduced thorough reforms in the administration of justice and established a good policing system. State Police Reforms In 1864, Colonel Hutton initiated a police reform for the Kotwali. In 1866, not only the new police that Colonel Bruce had established, but also a small intelligence unit were established. As a result, the administrative system gradually became stronger. Individuating, Choudhury's work is a significant contribution to the field of land revenue studies and provides valuable insights into the history and administration of the Cooch Behar state. Choudhury provides a detailed and comprehensive history of the Cooch Behar state, including its establishment, growth, and eventual merger with the Indian Union. In-depth analysis The author offers a thorough analysis of the land revenue system in Cooch Behar, including its strengths and weaknesses.

William Wilson Hunter's "A Statistical Account of Bengal" is a seminal work, published in 1875–1877. The book is a comprehensive statistical account of Bengal, providing detailed accounts of various aspects of the region's society, economy, and administration, such as climate, population, agriculture, industry, trade, education, and governance. As a British administrator, Hunter provided valuable insights into the administrative system and policies of the British Raj in Bengal. Overall, "A Statistical Account of Bengal" is a seminal text that provides valuable insights into the society, economy, and Administration of 19th-century Bengal. Although the book has its limitations and biases, it remains a significant historical source and a testament to the importance of statistical analysis in understanding social and economic phenomena.⁶

Ratna Roy in his work discusses **British relations with Cooch Behar state - 1772-1839**. There he showed that the year 1773 was a turning point for the kings of Cooch behar, because the long-standing aspirations of the company in the 1773 agreement had a great impact on the state of Cooch behar. The British provided military aid to Cooch behar as a condition of the Treaty of 1773, and by defeating Bhutan, control of Cooch behar was transferred to the Company. The British provided military aid to Cooch behar as a condition of the Treaty of 1773, and by defeating Bhutan, control of the Cooch behar was 'transferred' to the Company. However, the kings of the state of 'Cooch beha'r were neutral in the administration and authority of the state of Cooch behar. After, 1839, 'Cooch behar' became a friendly state to the British. Although the kings of Cooch behar surrendered to the British thinking of future problems, their uniqueness remained. As a result, along with the security of the state, the economic structure is well organized and modernized both administratively and politically.⁷

Research Gap:

After Reading many important books, articles and journals carefully, I found that - the Bhutanese 'Cooch behar' dispute led to the weakness of the Koch kings. As a result, an agreement was signed between Cooch Behar and "East-india Company" in 1773. Due to the weakness of the Raj kings of the tributary Princely state of Cooch behar, no well-planned system of government was implemented. As a result, the Administrative system of 'Cooch behar' was greatly affected both economically and politically. At that time the colonial government delegated all powers to the commissioner to govern Cooch behar. Colonel Hutton joined the commission in 1864, and he handled the smallest matters of Administration with full justice. He reformed the judiciary and the political system and developed the economic system. Therefore, at that time, the state of Cooch Behar was under the exclusive control of the colonial government but under the rule of the 'Cooch Behar' kings. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss how the evolution of administration of Princely state of Cooch behar took place from 1773 to 1949 and what was the role of the colonial government in the administrative evolution and what was the administrative system then.

Although there has been a lot of discussion about the royal issues of Cooch Behar till date. But so far no one has shed light on how the administrative evolution of the Cooch behar took place from the time of the Raj kings of Cooch behar. So, the present study seeks analyze the evolution of administration of the princely state : A study of Cooch behar.

Objectives:-

The present study will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To analyze the evolution of the administration of the princely state of Cooch behar.
2. To find out the nature of administration of Cooch behar during the period 1773 -1949.
3. To investigate the impact of colonial system of the administration of Cooch behar during 1773 - 1949.

Research Question :

As the 'research problem' has been highlighted the present study seeks to investigate the following research question :-

1. How did the administration of Cooch Behar evolve?
2. What was the nature of the administrative system of the Princely state of 'Cooch behar' during 1773 - 1949?
3. What has been impact colonial system the 'Administrative evolution' of Cooch Behar?

Research Methodology:

The study based on documentary analysis and approach of the study is qualitative. Data collected from official documents and publications, books, articles and journals etc. The research is conducted at different stages such as analyzing the existing theoretical literature. Through this, the then administrative activities of 'Cooch behar' were studied. Not only this, it is also possible to get the idea of administrative evolution. The rule of the kings of Cooch behar and their administrative activities are undeniable in terms of administrative evolution. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss the administration of Cooch behar through the administrative evolution of the 'Princely state of Cooch behar'.

Significance of research:

This study is very important for administrative evolution. The security of the country, the protection of the essential rights of the individual and the basic life support elements, will think deeply about these issues in various important problem solving projects. Because the main foundation of the country is administration. It is important to discuss how the 1773 to 1949 administrative evolution of Cooch Behar took place, namely the time of the kings of the state of 'Cooch Behar'. Which is established through creative thinking and policy framework. In that case, the future will help to create a suitable environment for future people to live a beautiful and healthy life.

Objectives wise analyse the document and find out:

1. To analyze the evolution of the administration of the princely state of 'Cooch behar'.

The 'Cooch Behar' was a Princely state ruled by the 'Koch dynasty'. However, over time, Cooch Behar gradually became a region in present-day West Bengal, India. The Cooch Behar state, ruled by the Koch dynasty, underwent significant political and administrative changes under British influence. The Cooch Behar State signed a treaty with the British government in 1773, seeking protection from the Bhutanese, who were controlling the region. At that time, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, "Dharendra Narayan", appealed to the 'British' for help in restoring his kingdom. However, the British 'Governor-General'

“Warren Hastings” rejected the initial terms and instead proposed a treaty in which the Maharaja would pay an annual salary to the British East India ‘Company’ in exchange for protection. This treaty marked the beginning of British influence over Cooch Behar, and the state became a princely state under British rule. The involvement of the British East India Company helped drive out the Bhutanese forces, but it meant that Cooch Behar had to surrender some of its independence and autonomy.⁸ For example:

1. The King shall deposit 50,000 money with the Collector of Rangpur at once to meet the expenses of the troops who will come to the aid of Cooch Behar.
2. If the expenditure of this money is not sufficient, the excess shall be paid by the King; if the whole amount is not spent, the remainder shall be returned to him.
3. If the King is rescued from the enemy, he shall accept the submission of the East India Company and his kingdom shall be considered as a province of the Bengal Division.
4. The King shall pay half of his revenue to the Company every year.
5. The property shall remain for him and his heirs. They shall be able to enjoy it forever if they remain obedient to the Company.
6. The King shall give the revenue papers to such person as the Honorable Chairman and the Council may deem fit to determine the actual revenue, and the amount of revenue to be paid by the King shall be determined by him.
7. The revenue fixed by any person sent by the Company shall be permanent.
8. If necessary, the Company shall assist him with troops, but the King shall bear the cost of the troops.
9. This treaty, shall remain in force for a period of two years, or until the English Court of Directors issues a letter of authorization to the Council to ratify the treaty.⁹

As a result of the agreement signed on 5th April 1773, the ‘Cooch Behar State’ became a ‘tributary’ state of the British colonial power. Which was the main basis of administrative evolution. Due to the internal and external problems of the ‘Cooch Behar’ state, the British East India Company (1772–1873) established a protectorate over Cooch Behar, controlling its foreign policy while the ruler retained internal control. Later, through various administrative reforms, the British colonial government introduced a modern administrative structure, including a district collector, courts, and police. And the British implemented the Permanent Settlement of 1793, which created a new landowning class. However, in 1947, after India's independence, ‘Cooch Behar’ was merged with the state of “West Bengal”. That is, British influence changed the political and administrative landscape of Cooch Behar, introducing modern institutions and changing the role of local rulers.¹⁰

2. To find out the nature of administration of ‘Cooch behar’ during the period 1773 -1949. The administration of Cooch Behar from 1773 to 1949 was characterized by British indirect rule, which allowed the local ruler to maintain some autonomy while still being under

British control. This system was devised by the British to sustain their influence over the region. The state was initially ruled and administered by the feudal Koch Rajas, with the Maharaja of Cooch Behar holding all the power. But later, due to the aggressive attitude of Bhutan and the internal political crisis of the Princely Cooch Behar State, the “British East India Company” established a protectorate over ‘Cooch Behar’ in 1773, which marked the beginning of British influence on the administration of the state.¹¹ However, even though Cooch Behar was under the British, the independence of the Raj Rajas continued. The British established a Council of Ministers to advise the Maharaja on administrative matters, which helped modernize the administration of the state. And they took necessary measures to maintain law and order in the state. For example, they established a judiciary and a police force. The British also introduced a modern revenue administration system, which included tax collection and land record maintenance.

The British government played a significant role, in the modernization of the educational policy of the Cooch Behar Raj. However, before going into details, it can be said that the dynasty founded by Biswa Singh was very backward in education. Although this dynasty became the most powerful during the time of Maharaja Nara Narayan, it could not improve in the field of education, the early rulers of the dynasty only encouraged Sanskrit-based education. They patronized scholars with deep knowledge in Sanskrit literature. One of the main features during this period was that education was limited to the elite class only and not for the masses or common people of the state. Education for the common people began during the reign of Maharaja Bir Narayan. He was a great patron of education and established schools in various parts of his kingdom. Among the later rulers, Prana Narayan, though interested in education, could not popularize it among the masses. There may have been slow progress in the field of education in Cooch Behar till the nineteenth century. A mother tongue school was started in Cooch Behar town in 1857 for the education of the royal children of Maharaja Narendra Narayan Bhup Bahadur during the minority period. This can be said to be the first step taken towards popular education in the state. In recognition of the good services rendered by Colonel during the minority period of Maharaja Narendra Narayan, an the English, school was established in, 1861 and named “Jenkins School”. herefore, the British colonial power also brought modernization to the educational culture of the Cooch Behar state.¹²

3. To investigate the impact of colonial system of the Administration of ‘Cooch behar’ during 1773 - 1949.

The colonial system of administration in Princely Cooch Behar during the period 1773–1949 had a profound impact, leading to significant administrative, economic, social, political and cultural changes. Because of the treaty signed by Princely Cooch Behar with the British colonial power, Princely Cooch Behar became a tributary state under British colonial rule. This had a profound impact on the administrative and political context of Cooch Behar. Since the British colonial power diplomatically dominated Princely Cooch Behar due to Cooch Behar's external and internal turmoil, as a princely state, the power of the king was largely dependent on the British power. As a result, Cooch Behar was subordinate to the British colonial power, but was not directly ruled as part of British India. This led to a heterogeneous system of governance, where the British colonial power exercised control over the foreign affairs of the Princely Cooch Behar state, but maintained some autonomy for the local kings.¹³ The British colonial power introduced various

reforms, including the formation of a Council of Ministers to advise the Maharaja on administrative matters. For example, the colonial power introduced new administrative systems, including district administration and police. The British also introduced a Western education system, which had a positive impact on the local people there. However, these changes actually led to some erosion of local ruler power and consolidation of British colonial control or dominance. Though the British colonial government implemented various reforms in the 'Cooch Behar' state, But they also exploited the 'Cooch Behar' state for their own interests.¹⁴

The administration of the Princely state of the 'Cooch Behar' was managed by the British, as it was almost impossible for the adult king to exercise his power over the state, and disputes arose over this issue. Then the British colonial government took over the rule of the state temporarily to save the state of Cooch Behar from ruin. And the British colonial government said that when the king became competent, full ruling power and all independent terms and rights would be unanimously returned to the king of 'Cooch Behar' in accordance with the terms of the treaty. In similar circumstances, they later took that charge of the administration of the state and the education of the minor king. They always felt that a great responsibility had been placed on their shoulders since the Company's sovereign rule over the Cooch Behar kingdom was recognized. It is difficult to say what would have been the outcome of the Cooch Behar kingdom if the authorities had been content to send only military aid in times of need, as stipulated in Article 8 of the treaty. After the treaty, almost every new king has had a disturbance on his accession to the throne, and it has been settled only by the timely and proper mediation and intervention of the Government.¹⁵

Conclusion:

This study explores the evolution of the administration of Cooch Behar state from 1773 to 1949. Through a comprehensive analysis of primary and secondary sources, the study has revealed the significant changes of that took place in the administration of the state during this period. The study shows that the administration of Princely Cooch Behar was transformed into a modern system by evolution from a traditional monarchy influenced by British colonial rule. The study highlights the role of British colonial rule in shaping the administration of the state, particularly the British colonial authorities introduced modern administrative institutions, laws and regulations, which modernized the administration of the state. However, the study identified several challenges that arose during the modernization process, including the tension between the traditional monarchy of Princely Cooch Behar and the modernizing influence of British colonial rule. The study also highlighted the difficulties faced by the state in implementing modern reforms especially in education, healthcare and infrastructure development. Despite these obstacles, the study found that the administration of Cooch Behar underwent significant modernization and reforms during the study period. Studies have shown that the administration of the state has become more centralized, bureaucratic and efficient with the introduction of modern administrative institutions and practices. This study contributes to an in-depth analysis of the evolution of administration in princely states during the British colonial period. The study provides insight into the challenges faced by monarchical states in implementing modern reforms and contributes to the implications of modernization by the evolution of

traditional monarchical administrative systems. The research has significant implications for our understanding of the 'multifaceted' nature of British colonialism and its impact on Indian society. The study highlights the need for further study of princely states and their role in shaping the course of Indian polity. But this study has provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the administration of 'Cooch Behar' state from 1773 to 1949.

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