

## *The Impact on the State and Society of the Delay in Implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act, 1950*

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**Abstract:** The Zamindari Abolition Act of 1950 was momentous and at the same time revolutionary in the history of land reform legislation in Bengal. The importance of this Act was far-reaching in establishing ownership and proprietorship on land by the peasantry in the post-colonial period. Peasants dreamed that this Act would free them from long-term exploitation and deprivation. It was hoped that it would end the exploitation and oppression of the landless peasants. However, reality was not as expected. On the one hand, the formulation of the Act dragged on for a long time, while on the other hand, even after the formulation of the Act, it took too long to implement. As a result, the peasants were deprived of the benefits of the Zamindari Abolition Act. This article will review the consequences of the delay in implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act, 1950. Based on a qualitative methodology, data gathered from archival documents and other sources was used to write this article. The historical research approach has been used to analyze sources. The article concludes that impact of the delay in implementing this Act was mostly negative on the state and society. Exploitation-free society dreamed by the people of East Bengal could not be established.

**Key Words:** Zamindari Abolition Act, Congress Party, East Pakistan Provincial Government, State Acquisition Department, Charitable Institutions, Landless Peasants.

### **Introduction**

It is generally believed that the Zamindari Abolition Act was enacted in 1950 and implemented in the same year. But the reality was that on April 10, 1947, the then Muslim League government introduced a historic bill called 'The Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Bill, 1948' in the Bengal Provincial Legislature of undivided Bengal. However, the bill did not make any progress due to the Partition and the *Tevaga* movement. On April 7, 1948, 'The East Bengal State

Acquisition and Tenancy Bill, 1948' was raised in the East Bengal Provincial Legislature to abolish the zamindari system. The bill was referred to a Select Committee. It is interesting to note that out of 45 members of the Select Committee, 20 were zamindar members. It did not make any headway mainly for the Muslim League's policy of appeasement towards the Zamindar class. The bill was placed again in the Provincial Legislative Council on 13 December, 1949. Despite protracted discussions and opposition from zamindar-influenced Congress party members, the bill was finally passed in the East Bengal Provincial Legislative Council on 16 February, 1950, and on 18 May, 1951, the bill was passed and came into effect as the Zamindari Abolition Act. The acquisition of interests of zamindars and other rent-seekers under the Zamindari Abolition Act was completed in 1958 and the acquisition of *devottars*, *waqfs* etc. was finally completed in 1964 with payments of compensations.<sup>1</sup> For a long time, the implementation of the Abolition of Zamindari system faced various obstacles which have been elaborately dealt by the present researcher.<sup>2</sup> However, none of the historical research dealt on the issues related to the impact of the delay in implementing this Act.

Scholars have discussed this issue in piecemeal fashion while writing articles or books on Bangladesh. Badruddin Umar in his book titled *Permanent Settlement of Bangladesh Peasants* mentioned about the long delay in the enactment of the Zamindari Abolition Act, but does not discuss the impact on the society and state caused by the delay in the implementation process.<sup>3</sup> Kamal Siddiqui's discussion on this issues in *Land Reforms and Land Management in Bangladesh and West Bengal: A Comparative Study* followed the same pattern.<sup>4</sup> Kabeedul Islam's book titled *Land Revenue System of Bangladesh 1947 to 2000*, discussed in detail about the issues related to land. But discussion on this delaying process is absent in it.<sup>5</sup> T. Hussain in his book *Land Rights in Bangladesh: Problems of Management* very briefly mentions the cases of zamindars in the Dhaka High Court and Pakistan

Supreme Court but he does not include the impact of the delay.<sup>6</sup> Shawkat Ali in his article titled 'Land Reform Measures and Their Implementation in Bangladesh' mentioned the case of zamindars, but he does not discuss the impact of the Act on the society and state at that time.<sup>7</sup> This article tends to fill up this gap and will discuss the political and socio-economic impact of the delay in the implementation of the Abolition of Zamindari Act to reassess the history of land reform in Bangladesh. Following the qualitative approach the primary and secondary sources used in the article have been analyzed by the historical research methodology.

### **The Impact of the Zamindari Abolition Act on State and Society**

The Zamindari Abolition Act had far-reaching impacts on the state and society of East Bengal. The people of East Bengal hoped that the Act would be implemented at the earliest but that did not happen. It was assumed that people will be benefitted with a quick implementation of the Act. But it failed. The delay created a complex scenario in post-1947 East Bengal, various aspects of which are discussed below.

### **Increased Expenditure of Public Money**

The implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act cost the East Pakistan Provincial Government a huge amount of money. On October 2, 1956 in the East Pakistan Provincial Legislative Assembly, the Minister of Revenue and State Acquisition Department reported that as remuneration, Rs 39,938 was paid to British lawyer Mr. D. N. Preet, Rs 42,000 to A. K. Brohi along with his juniors, Rs 2,750 to M. Asir, Rs 1,100 to S. R. Pal, Rs 1,100 to Abdullah, Rs 1,100 to Mirza Gulam Hafiz, Rs 1,000 to Asrarul Hossain and Rs 1,100 to A. Gani. The minister added that no money had been paid to Mr. Baker so far as the remuneration was not fixed. A total of Rs 90,188 was paid to the above mentioned 9 lawyers from the government revenue. In response to a question regarding why the government appointed so many junior lawyers in the state

acquisition case of East Pakistan, Provincial Legislative Council member Iqbal Anwarul Islam, the Minister of Revenue and State Acquisition Department said that the government had appointed all these lawyers as it felt necessary at that time. In response to a question regarding the reason why Mr. Baker's remuneration was not fixed in the Legislative Council, the Speaker responded that since he was the Advocate General of East Pakistan, it would take time to determine his remuneration and pay him.<sup>8</sup>

### **Financial problems of various institutions of the acquired Zamindari Estate**

The deliberations of the East Pakistan Provincial Legislative Council revealed that 44 lakh people suffered due to the Zamindari Abolition Act. About 90 percent of people in rural areas were affected by this Act. Members of the Legislative Council were of the opinion that zamindars and *jotdars* would have no income due to the acquisition of state land under the Act. With the efforts and help of these zamindars and *jotdars*, numerous schools, mosques, and madrasas had been established and many boys and girls were studying there. Doubts were expressed about the future of these institutions due to the implementation of the Act. Members of the Legislature requested the government to consider the distress of the affected people and the fate of these educational and religious institutions.<sup>9</sup> After a long debate, the government decided to provide financial support to the institutions and charitable organizations running in the betterment of mass people. As it was reflected in *Patuakhali District Gazetteers*:

A large number of charitable and educational institutions that used to get contributions from the ex-rent-receivers whose estates were acquired faced financial difficulties as the ex-rent-receivers stopped the payment of contributions. The Government was not legally bound to continue payment of contributions to those institutions. But in view of the utility of these institutions to the people in general, the government decided to continue payment of all existing

contributions pending taking over of the management of these institutions by the Departments concerned, viz., the Education and Health Departments.<sup>10</sup>

It should be noted here, like the colonial rule, during the Pakistan period, if the zamindari fails to rule, if the owner of the estate considers himself incompetent or if the zamindar is a minor or female, his/her zamindari estate was taken under the government-run Court of Wards. Within the colonial structure such system allowed the government to appoint the guardian of one's property when it could no longer protect it. During the Pakistan period, a condition imposed that any mismanagement of a zamindari estate would go to the Court of Wards. On November 1, 1952, the then Finance and Revenue Minister told the Provincial Legislature that a total of 104 zamindari estates had been acquired, of which 19 were private zamindari estates and 85 Court of Wards estates.<sup>11</sup> The Act was to collect rent from these Court of Wards estates managed by the government and giving the zamindar's due share after keeping the government revenue. But due to various reasons, the government during the Pakistan period did not give the zamindars their due share. Even the government did not fulfill the condition of providing financial assistance to the educational institutions and charitable organizations established by the zamindars. As a result, many landlords faced financial distress during the Pakistan period. For example, since 1917, the zamindar of *Dhankura* estate was helping a school by paying Rs 200 per month. Since his estate went to the Court of Wards during the Pakistan period, no further financial aid was given to the school. The proprietor of the estate, however, did not forbid the money to be given to the school. The school secretary had made numerous requests to the Court of Wards but to no avail. In *Dhankura Kachari*, about 20,000 rupees were collected annually, but due to the government management of the Court of Wards, that financial aid to the school stopped.<sup>12</sup> However, the zamindars used to collect fees for educational institutions and charitable institutions or schools and

dispensaries established by them.<sup>13</sup> But it was generally propagated that the zamindars took these measures to benefit the peasants as philanthropists. During the implementation of the Abolition of Zamindari Act, this campaign was further promoted because the public welfare activities of the zamindars had been stopped in favor of the peasants. After widespread criticism within and outside the Legislative Council, the government announced that it would provide financial assistance to the educational institutions and charities established by the zamindars. The Government made the following allocations to the various educational institutions and charitable organizations of the acquired zamindari estates.

### **Grants for Various Institutions of Acquired Zamindari Estates, 1956-57**

<b>Name of Institutions</b>	<b>Acquired estates</b>	<b>Amount of monthly allowance (Rs.)</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Approved total amount (Rs.)</b>
1. Bhadun H.E School	Bhawal Estate	20	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	120
2. Kapasia H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	75	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	450
3. Sarajubala Girls School	Bhawal Estate	5	March'56 to February'57 = 12 months	60
4. Chandana Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	5	March'56 to February'57 = 12 months	60
5. Kamaria old Scheme Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	5	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
6. R.M.H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	5	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
7. Sripur H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	10	March'56 to February'57 = 12 months	120

8. Baria Primary Girls School	Bhawal Estate	10	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
9. Durbati Islamia Senior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	10	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
10. Khirati J.M. Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	10	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
11. Icharkandi H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	10	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	60
12. Aralia Keramatia Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	3	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	18
13. Arial Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	5	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	30
14. Barchapa H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	13	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	78
15. Pashi Girls School	Bhawal Estate	5	December'56 to February'57 = 3 months	15
16. Binnabaid Junior Madrasha	Bhawal Estate	10	March'56 to February'57 = 12 months	120
17. Dulalpur H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	10	March'56 to February'57 = 12 months	120
18. Ruhitpur Fishari School	Bhawal Estate	5	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	30
19. Hazratpur K.M.H.E. School	Bhawal Estate	35	September'56 to February'57 = 6 months	210
20. Hazratpur K.M.H.E. School	Banglabazar Estate	50 (Yearly)	1956-57, Yearly	50
21. Rugpanj J.C. Charitable dispensary	Murapara Estate	-	February'57	200
<b>Grand total</b>				<b>2041</b>

**Source:** *File No. 18S-1/58, Bundle No. 237, BNA Serial No. 224.*

From the above table it is clear that when numerous educational institutions and charitable organizations in the zamindari estates were acquired by the government, they were facing a severe economic crisis and about to be closed down due to the delay in the formulation and implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act. The government kept the institutions running by providing them with the required financial assistance. During the period from 1956 to 1957, the government provided Rs. 2041 to these institutions.

### **Increased Number of Land Owners**

The partition of the country in 1947 and the abolition of zamindari in 1950 led to the decline of the zamindar class. After the partition, Hindu landlord families started leaving the country. Many of them had homes in Kolkata long before the partition. Therefore, after the abolition of the zamindari system, they sold their land and migrated to Kolkata, India. The buyers of their land were primarily the merchant Hindu families of the East Bengal villages, the newly educated wealthy Muslim families and the emerging Muslim business families.<sup>14</sup> This led to an increase in the number of landlords in East Bengal after the Zamindari Abolition Act. For example, in 1951 the number of land owners in Jessore district was 3,65,668 and in 1961 it increased to 4,78,728. Within a decade the number of land owners increased by 30.92%.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in 1951 the number of land owners in Rajshahi district was 4,12,794 (of which 4,08,362 or 98.93% were engaged in agriculture) and in 1961 it increased to 5,95,535 people or 44.27%.<sup>16</sup> From 1951 to 1961 the number of land owners also increased in other districts of East Bengal. It is easy to comprehend that after the Zamindari Abolition Act of 1950, the wealthy landowners in the village sold their surplus land and many peasants bought land with a hope of ownership. Consequently, the number of land owners increased. After the enactment of the abolition of zamindari system, traders and newly educated



rich families bought land and joined the *jotdar* class. Therefore, their influence and prestige in the socio-economic sphere increased.

### **Increase of Employment**

During the colonial period, large zamindars employed numerous employees, including many *naib-gomstas* to manage the zamindari, while many others did not.<sup>17</sup> Small zamindars did not have any employees. The deliberations of the members of the East Pakistan Provincial Legislative Council on March 5, 1953, revealed that there had been an increase in expenditure on the management of zamindari estates and court of wards estates managed by the government. This is because, after the Zamindari Abolition Act came into force, the recruitment of government employees increased by an excessive extent. For example, in Mymensingh *Maharaja's* Estate, there was only one manager earlier, but under governmental management 7/8 Managers, Assistant Managers were appointed. Most of these recruits were ex-employees of the zamindars. When the government's attention was drawn to this, the finance minister reported that skilled people were not available. Therefore, retired people were re-employed by the government.<sup>18</sup> It can be remarked that the Zamindari Abolition Act created employment opportunities. This opportunity for employment was important as the Act came into effect. On October 2, 1956, in the Legislative Council regarding the number of posts and appointments in the State Acquisition Department, the Minister of Revenue and State Acquisition Department, informed that a total of 5882 officials in the State Acquisition Department from June 1955 to October 1956 in various posts, the employees recruited include 93 as gazetted officers and 5,789 as non-gazetted officers. Moreover, the appointment of 865 people had been suspended by the order of the High Court. Minister also said that out of the 234 posts of survey inspectors appointed, 203 were Pakistani citizens by birth, 8 were Pakistani citizens by residence, 4 were from

Malda, 1 was from Murshidabad and 1 was from Assam. The number of people that came from Cachar region was 1.<sup>19</sup>

On March 12, 1957, the Finance Minister in a budget speech in the Legislative Council said that the zamindari acquisition plan was now in its final stages. A large organization of high-ranking and low-ranking employees had been created. They were busy correcting records and preparing the compensation due list. He also said that despite the exclusion of the big landlords due to the usurpation of rent-receivers properties, a section of people, especially the middle class, faced dire economic hardship.<sup>20</sup>

### **Peasant's Ownership of Land**

As a result of the Abolition of Zamindari Act, all middlemen were abolished in the country and the peasants became direct subjects of the state. Peasants got a permanent inheritance and the right to transfer and use their lands freely.<sup>21</sup> The then Minister of Revenue and Acquisitions commented that the main purpose of the Act was to assure land rights to the cultivators, which will lead to self-control. The aim of this Act would be successful only if the government officials and employees can make the farmers aware of their new status and were able to treat the farmers fairly and considerately. The new status of the farmers should be made real and clear. In other words, giving the status of land owner to the farmers was the real purpose of the Act.<sup>22</sup> T. Hussain commented regarding the ownership status of the farmers as:

The cultivator, now called *malik*, has a direct proprietorship of his land held under the Government. Every tenant, irrespective of his former status, will now enjoy a permanent, transferable and heritable right to his land.<sup>23</sup>

### **Increased Tax and Peasants Suffering**

In reaction to the Abolition of Zamindari Act, members of the zamindar-dominated Congress Party Legislative Council declared that the condition of peasants in zamindari estates

has become extremely deplorable under government management. It may be noted that the process of land acquisition started immediately after the enactment of the Act. In the first phase large zamindari estates were acquired. On October 31, 1951, the Provincial Council of Government was informed that 183 estates out of 267 estates sold in Tripura district had been purchased by the Government due to arrears of revenue and cess in 1949-50. On November 1, 1952 the Finance and Revenue Minister informed the East Bengal Provincial Legislature that a total of 104 zamindari estates had been acquired, including 19 private zamindari estates and 85 Court of Wards estates. It may be noted that even before the enactment of the Act, numerous zamindari estates were sold in different districts of East Bengal due to revenue or other tax arrears; most of which were purchased by the government.<sup>24</sup>

The purpose of the Act was to spend the rent collected from the peasants for the welfare of the peasants and to distribute all the acquired surplus land among the landless. It was hoped that this would lead to positive changes in the quality of life of farmers along with increased agricultural production. But as a result of this Act, the condition of all the lands that came under the management of the government became very deplorable. One of the reasons for this was an increase in the amount of rent and other land taxes. After the enactment of the act, it was said by the government that the government shall determine the land revenue rationally and that it shall in no case exceed  $1/10^{\text{th}}$ . The provision of this Act further stated that the farmers shall pay a fair and equitable rent to the government, and the rent shall be  $1/10^{\text{th}}$  of the total annual produce.<sup>25</sup> Revenue of Rs 3.60 per acre was fixed on all types of agricultural land.<sup>26</sup> It may seem that this resulted in the exemption of the peasants from rents and various additional taxes. But no, it didn't. Rather, after the Act, all classes of land rents were doubled.<sup>27</sup>

The government levied and collected many other additional taxes related to land along with the increase in land rent immediately after this Act. These additional taxes included land development tax, additional land development tax, education tax, local tax, relief tax, additional relief tax, etc.<sup>28</sup> The government also imposed a tax on gross income per peasant. Members of the Legislative Council and political leaders strongly reacted against it.<sup>29</sup> The statements of the members of the Council revealed that in many cases, the rents of the people were increased excessively. Where the fare was Rs 30, it was made Rs 300, where it was Rs 70, it was made Rs 700. The statement of the members of the East Pakistan Provincial Council also revealed that 14 types of taxes were levied in 1958, including fishermen tax, dam tax, drug license tax, road and pool tax, boat tax, electricity tax, additional education tax, printing tax and bicycle tax etc. These taxes were very oppressive to the poor masses and farmers.<sup>30</sup> According to the statements of the members of the council, the revenue of East Pakistan in 1947-48 was Rs. 16 crores. In 1962 it had quadrupled.<sup>31</sup> According to Abdullah Farooq, the total land revenue of the government in 1960-61 was Rs 24.20 crore and the realization was Rs 10.97 crore. In 1969-70 the demand for land revenue increased further and at the same time the realization of land revenue increased to Rs. 18.50 crore.<sup>32</sup> The land revenue demand and realization increased continuously, almost every year, during Pakistani rule. As a result, peasants were subjected to extreme exploitation. In many cases, people failed to pay land rent and other taxes even after selling their lands.<sup>33</sup>

### **Effect on the Transfer of Land**

Due to delay in the formulation and implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act obstacles were created in the transfer of land. In 1951, the government passed three Acts<sup>34</sup> to control the transfer of land. The main purpose was to prevent zamindars from taking up the opportunity to sell their zamindari holdings until the implementation of the Act. In the

East Bengal Provincial Council it was stated that the purpose of these Acts was to take over all the zamindari in the hands of the government and to create a 100 *bigha* zamindari by reducing the existing large zamindars; taking 100 *bighas* of additional land from the big landlords and distributing it among the landless poor.<sup>35</sup> The zamindar-influenced Congress Party members<sup>36</sup> in the Legislative Council also complained that these Acts were enacted to prevent the transfer of land before the Act came into force.<sup>37</sup> The Act set the land limit at 100 *bighas* (33.3 acres) per family or 10 *bighas* per family member whichever was greater, with a maximum of 10 *bighas* for homesteads. The Act had provisions which empowered the government to acquire additional lands. The provision of the Act also mentioned that the land in excess of the prescribed limit would be distributed to various classes of people including landless peasants.<sup>38</sup>

The zamindar-dominated Congress Party members in the Legislative Council alleged that the main purpose of these three laws enacted in 1951 was to prevent land transfer. If someone wanted to sell land for urgent needs, he faced many adverse problems. The registry office faced difficulties in registering the sale of a certain amount of land. Especially the Hindu community, which had more property and was willing to hand over some land for emergency financial crisis, was facing difficulties. Therefore, they alleged that due to these acts, particularly the minority Hindu landowners faced more difficulties. Although the Act stated that land could be sold with the collector's permission, most Hindus did not obtain the collector's permission to sell land.<sup>39</sup> The act stated that the permission of the Magistrate would be required to sell more than 10 *bigha* land but in fact it was seen that the permission of the Magistrate was required to sell even one *bigha* land.<sup>40</sup> The members of the Legislative Council were of the opinion that prohibition of land sale for an indefinite period would be an injustice to the people.<sup>41</sup> They opposed it mainly because the zamindars were likely to suffer.<sup>42</sup> They

even complained that the Hindu community would suffer due to these Acts and they would be uprooted from East Bengal.<sup>43</sup> The Congress Party members' statements show that the seeds of communalism were embedded in these Acts.

### **Impact on the Distribution of Acquired Surplus Land Among the Landless**

One of the objectives of the Zamindari Abolition Act was to acquire the land beyond 100 *bighas* allotted to the zamindars and distribute that land among the landless peasants.<sup>44</sup> But the delay in the implementation failed the objectives of the government. Despite the various obstacles the transfer of land continued even after the enactment of the Act. Even during this period the governmental *khas* land was also transferred. In March 1951, it was known from the East Bengal Provincial Legislature debate that prominent zamindars of Faridpur had been given government *khas* land nominally under *nazrana*<sup>45</sup>. After this settlement that zamindar of Faridpur evicted the old farmers of his zamindari and settled the land of new farmers with higher amount or increased rate of *nazrana*. Members of the Legislative Council complained about that the example of settlement of *khas* land in Faridpur. They doubted that the government would bother to distribute *khas* land to the landless farmers as promised. Therefore, the government's purpose of distributing *khas* land would fail. On October 20, 1951, members of the East Bengal Legislature complained that despite government restrictions, large landowners were selling land in Bogra rather than small plots.<sup>46</sup> On March 19, 1953, Congress members of the Council admitted that all those who had land above 100 *bighas* were handing over their surplus land. They proposed that the additional land of 100 *bighas* should have been taken by the government as soon as the Act was passed. Due to the delay, the land was getting lost. As a result, the government would not be able to give land to the landless.<sup>47</sup> In the interim period between the enactment and implementation of the Act, many zamindars took the opportunity to secure illegal interests through fraud, conspiracy and deception.<sup>48</sup>

On March 19, 1953, the members of the East Bengal Provincial Legislature expressed that during the zamindari abolition movement it was said that 'the plough belongs to the land'. The same slogan was given by the Muslim League. The Abolition of Zamindari Act was enacted but the ploughman did not own his land. Landlords and *jotdars* were not touched. As the additional land of 100 *bighas* was not acquired with the passing of the Act and the delay in the implementation of the Act made it impossible for the government to give land to the landless peasants.<sup>49</sup> Discussions in the Council reveal that influential people in society and the state were repeatedly taking over the land settlement of *khas mahals*. For example, from the official account of land settlement of *khas mahal* in Noakhali district, it is known that two members of Noakhali District Board and the Chairman of South Hamchadi Union Board applied twice and received settlement of a total of 58.5 acres of *khas mahal*.<sup>50</sup> Generally when someone applied for *khas mahal* land settlement, the District Magistrate or *Mahakuma* officer sent the proposal to the Revenue Board to fix the amount of land in the name of those who he deemed eligible under the law assigned to him if everything was considered correct, the Revenue Board would give final approval. In fact, the district authorities used to take decisions in favor of the influential in the land settlement of *khas mahal*. The chairman and members of division, district, thana and union councils were very influential and they got priority in getting government *khas* land settlement. Generally, the amount of *salami* in *khas mahal* land settlement was equal to 5 times the annual rent.<sup>51</sup> On September 24, 1956, the members of the East Bengal Legislature opined that due to the government's failure to prevent mismanagement and corruption in the management of state-acquired estates and government *khas mahals*, it was not possible to distribute government *khas* land among the landless peasants.<sup>52</sup> Even then the small amount of *khas* land that was distributed was done anonymously in the names of relatives, brothers or wives of

government employees or among the influential through corruption.<sup>53</sup> One of the main reasons for this was the long process in the implementation of this Act.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it can be stated that various problems were created in the society and the state due to the delay in the formulation and implementation of the Zamindari Abolition Act. The East Pakistan Provincial Government had to spent huge sums of money to deal with the landlords' cases in the High Court and the Supreme Court. The zamindars who used to provide financial support to educational institutions and charitable organizations before this Act, after the Act came into force, they said that they are unable to provide financial support to them. As a result, these institutions suffered financially. Peasants in zamindari estates were affected by government management. Government officials became highly corrupt during the implementation phase. Another objective of the Act was to reduce the country's food deficit by increasing agricultural production by distributing land among landless peasants. The objective to establish a society free from exploitation and discrimination was no longer possible. However, one positive aspect of this Act was that it gave the peasants the status of land owner. It can be concluded that the negative impact on the society and the state of East Bengal due to the delay in the formulation and implementation of the Abolition of Zamindari Act was not acceptable.

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- 34 These three acts were enacted in 1951, The East Bengal Ordinances Temporary Enactment and Re-enactment Act, 1951; The Court of wards (East Bengal Amendment) Act, 1951 and The East Bengal Transfer of Agricultural Land Act, 1951. See in details, Karim, *Emergence of Bangladesh and Politics of Land Conflict*, pp. 149-164.
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- 36 The landlord-influenced Congress party members in the East Bengal Legislature included Bhinod Chandra Chakraborty, Prabhas Chandra Lahiri, Munindra Nath Bhattacharya, Jotindra Nath Bhadra, Haran Chandra Ghosh Chowdhury, Purnendu Kishore Sen Gupta, Suresh Chandra Das Gupta, Govind Lal Banerjee, Munindra Nath Bhattacharya, Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Brajmadhav Das, Dharendra Nath Dutta, Manoranjan Dhar, Mrs. Ashalata Sen. See in details, *Assembly Proceedings*, Official Report, East Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol. VI, No. 1, Sixth Session, 1951, The 17th, 19th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th October, 1951 (Dacca: East Bengal Government Press, 1953), pp. 100-101.
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  - 41 *Assembly Proceedings*, Vol. V, No. 1, 1951, pp. 144-145; Karim, *Emergence of Bangladesh and Politics of Land Conflict*, p. 150.
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  - 44 Bari, *District Gazetteers: Jessore*, pp. 251-252; Bari, *District Gazetteers: Khulna*, p. 324; Talukdar, *Bangladesh District Gazetteers: Greater Jessore*, p. 249; Bhuiyan, *Land Tenure of Greater Mymensingh District*, pp. 64-65; Siddiqui, *The Political Economy of Land Reforms in Bangladesh*, p. 46.
  - 45 A kind of *abwab*. During the Mughal period [Murshid Quli Khan, (1722-1725), first introduced an *abwab* or additional revenue] the zamindar had to pay a sort of *salami*/tax/money during the annual meeting with the Nawab or Subadar. Similarly, when the peasants met the zamindar or when the zamindar or his *Naib Gomsta* came to visit the village, the peasants had to pay some sort of *salami*/tax/money. This was known as *Nazrana*. See in detail, Abdul Karim, *Murshid Quli Khan and His Times* (Dacca: Asiatic Society of Pakistan, 1963), pp. 78 and 85
  - 46 *Assembly Proceedings*, Official Report, East Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol. VI, No. 1, Sixth Session, 1951, The 17th, 19th, 20th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th October, 1951 (Dacca: East Bengal Government Press, 1953), p. 66.
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  - 48 Bhuiyan, *Land Tenure of Greater Mymensingh District*, pp. 67.

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- 50 Before and after 1949 Noakhali district board member Abdul Majeed Master 15 acres and Fazlul Karim Chowdhury 23.5 acres and South Hamchadi Union Board Chairman Hafz Sanaullah accepted 20 acres land settlement. See in details, *Assembly Proceedings*, Official Report, East Bengal Legislative Assembly, Vol. III, No. 4, Third session, 1949, the 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th April, 1949 (Dacca: East Bengal Government Press, 1952), pp. 188-189.
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