CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ARAKAN, 1826-52

The British were quick to take advantage of the economic potential of Arakan. From a depopulated province infested with incessant warfare, it was turned into a "great rice-field of the world". In time, Arakan became the largest rice producer in the British empire, with Akyab as the major world exporter of rice in the 1840s and early 1850s, only to be superseded by Rangoon in the late 1850s. With the peace and stability which the British established in Arakan, a province extending to some 18,529 square miles, there was gradual growth in economic activity. Though the process was slow in the 1830s, by the early 1840s, there were definite signs of change brought by a significant growth in population and revenue.


I. ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

1. Paddy Cultivation

Paddy was the backbone of Arakan's economy even before British intervention. Peace, stability and proper management of revenue collection after the British occupied this province soon enhanced revenue from paddy cultivation.

Traditionally, and in fact during the British rule too, a single crop was cultivated in Arakan. The three types of rice produced were namely the Nacrensee, Laroong or Longphroo and the Latooree. The first kind was described as "a large, bold, barley grain, rather esteemed in the English market"; the Laroong was "a similar kind, but smaller and shade more transparent" while the Latooree was "a long, thin, fine grain, and more transparent than the others". As for their quality, it was said that:

.....they are larger, softer, and more mucilaginous than those of Bengal, they are much better for manufacturing purposes, and keep perfectly well during a voyage to Europe, either in the partially cleared or in the uncleared or cargo state.

Cultivation began every June, during the rainy season, when the fields were ploughed. Harvesting began in Novem-

3. Pinang Gazette and Straits Chronicle (hereafter Pinang Gazette), 10 July 1852.

4. Ibid.
ber and ended in January. Reaping of Laroong or Longphroo began at the end of November and went on till the end of December. Then followed the reaping of the Latooree in January, after which the Nacrensee was harvested. Then began the process of cleaning the grain. The process, involving "thrashing, husking and cleaning" is described to have been "very primitive and unsatisfactory, as it breaks and injures [the grain] without cleaning it thoroughly".

Between January to April, the paddy was exported mainly from the port of Akyab. The district of Akyab, being the most populous district, was also the main producer of paddy in Arakan. This was followed by the district of Ramree, Sandoway and finally An (Aeng). Table 3.1 shows that paddy cultivation constituted more than ninety per cent of the total area cultivated in each of the districts and was the major preoccupation of the indigenous populace. The low acrege of paddy cultivation in the An district was evidently due to the geographical nature of this province which was even in 1881, described as "a hilly and densely wooded country". In fact, in 1881,

5. Ibid.
Table 3.1

Acreage of paddy and other crops cultivated in Arakan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>1829-1830</th>
<th>1833-1834</th>
<th>1847-1848</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paddy</td>
<td>% of Paddy</td>
<td>Other crops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akyab</td>
<td>42,507</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
<td>2,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramree</td>
<td>18,203</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>1,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoway</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeng</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60,710</td>
<td>93.6%</td>
<td>4,122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

u.a. - unavailable in the original documents

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850
out of a total area of 2,883 square miles (1,845,120 acres) only some 10,923 acres or 0.5 per cent were under cultivation in this district.

Both the district of Akyab and Ramree contributed about ninety per cent of the paddy produced by Arakan and continued to do so into the late 1840s, whereas Sandoway and An district produced only some ten per cent of the total production of paddy in Arakan (see table 3.2). On the whole, from 1829 to 1852, Arakan witnessed a tremendous increase in the acreage of paddy cultivation which multiplied by some six fold.

Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>1829-1830</th>
<th>1833-1834</th>
<th>1847-1848</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akyab</td>
<td>42,507</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramree</td>
<td>18,203</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoway</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeng</td>
<td>u.a.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60,710</td>
<td>109,224</td>
<td>232,722</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.

7. Ibid.
Total acreage under paddy rose from 60,710 acres in 1829 to 281,334 acres by 1852. This constituted an increase of 220,624 acres or some 363% in just about twenty-three years (see table 3.3). The most impressive increase was between 1835-1839 where the total acreage under paddy rose by 79,000 acres or 62.6% when compared to the total acreage under paddy in 1835, and that was just in about four years. This was due mainly to the return of large numbers of Arakanese refugees from Chittagong. Most of them began to return in the 1830s, mainly during the latter part of that decade when conditions in Arakan were more settled, although some were still returning as late as the 1840s.
Table 3.3

Growth in Acreage of Paddy Cultivation in Arakan from 1829 to 1856

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Acreage of Paddy</th>
<th>Increase in Acreage</th>
<th>Percentage of Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1829</td>
<td>60,710</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>18,290</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833/34</td>
<td>109,224</td>
<td>30,224</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>126,000</td>
<td>16,776</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1839</td>
<td>205,000</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>226,000</td>
<td>21,000</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847/48</td>
<td>232,722</td>
<td>6,722</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>251,000</td>
<td>18,278</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>281,334</td>
<td>30,334</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>362,000</td>
<td>80,666</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the shortage of labour in Arakan, particularly during the paddy harvest every November, there was a regular influx of seasonal labour from East Bengal, mainly from the district of Chittagong. However, it is difficult to ascertain the actual number of seasonal labourers although one source, in 1841, stated that there was an annual influx of coolies from the Chittagong district who came to Arakan in search of better wages. A report in 1852 stated that "the demand for coolies has led to so great an influx from Chittagong that sufficient accommodation cannot be provided for them". The labourers not only assisted in the harvesting of paddy but were also said to be "the chief carries of grain from the interior to Akyab".

A large proportion of Arakan's rice was exported to the Coromandel Coast, especially Madras, Coringa and Masulipatam. It was said that:

The extension of grain cultivation was inadequate to meet the needs of the [Madras] Presidency, and it required to be supplemented by increasing imports of [Arakan] rice.

9. Ibid.
10. Pinang Gazette, 10 July 1852.
11. Ibid.
From the Madras Presidency, Arakanese rice was re-exported to Ceylon, at least until 1847, when the latter began direct trade with Arakan. Other ports of destination for Arakanese rice were the Bourbon and Mauritius and, by 1847, it was also selling in the British market, at two shillings per cwt., and at other European ports. On the whole, Arakanese rice fetched lower prices than Bengal rice.

Arakan's rice was exported both in the form of husked and unhusked rice. In 1840/41, some 15,970 tons of husked and 75,255 tons of unhusked rice, to a total value of 114,220 pounds sterling, were exported. The reason for the greater amount of husked rice exported was obviously due to the unavailability of rice mills in Arakan, with the first mill introduced only in 1871. It was also mentioned that from Madras, Arakan's rice was reshipped to other destinations as 'Madras' rice. From table, 3.4 it can be seen that, for the five years from 1835 to 1840, the amount of rice exports increased by a total of 75,255 tons, with an increase in value amounting to 968,551 Rs.

13. Pinang Gazette, 5 June 1847. See also, Economist, 27 February 1847.


Table 3.4

Amount of Rice Exported from Arakan and Its Value for 1834/35 and 1840/41 (husked and unhusked rice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount of rice (In tons)</th>
<th>Value (In Rupees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1834/35</td>
<td>16,000 tons</td>
<td>Rs. 173,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840/41</td>
<td>91,225 tons</td>
<td>Rs.1,142,187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Phayre, "Account of Arakan", p. 711

By 1852, of the total area of 351,668 acres under cultivation, some eighty per cent constituted paddy, supporting a total population of 333,645. Other than the cultivation of 'wet' paddy, 'dry' or 'hill' paddy was cultivated by swidden-holding tribes in the interior though the amount was insignificant.

Overall, Arakan's paddy cultivation showed a yearly increase, an indication of positive response to conditions of peace and security. The quantity of grain exported between 1838/39 to 1852 was estimated at 64,459 tons annually. This meant that, over a period of thirteen years, Arakan exported a total of 902,426 tons. However, there were also obstacles towards the increase in acreage


17. Pinang Gazette, 10 July 1852.
of paddy cultivation. One source of frustration to the local cultivations was "the frequent occurrence of murrain among their cattle, by which thousands sometimes perish in a single year".

II. Salt Production

As most houses in Arakan were situated close to salt water courses, the early administrators assumed that this article must have been of some importance to the people. Based on this, the early administrators of Arakan saw the province's potential as a major salt producer for the Indian market. With a view to developing it, in March 1826, the Government of Bengal appointed Richard Hunter, Secretary to the Board of Revenue in Bengal, as Salt Agent in Arakan for investigating into the manufacture and export of salt. Further, a Salt Department was also created in Arakan.


19. Although the early British administrators admitted that the information on salt was not reliable, yet they reached on such a conclusion, see Foreign Misc. 194, Explanatory notes to draft of Salt rules in Arakan, Clause D, Drawn up by the Governor-General-in-Council, 10 July 1828.

Hunter and Charles Paton, who were both Joint-Commissioners in Arakan, had big plans for turning Arakan into a major salt producer, in addition to rice cultivation. Consequently, in 1826, seventeen large nallah/nullah (inland water courses) of salt were farmed out. The production of salt was made a government monopoly and an arrangement made with several kyouk and thugyi for production. Each of them was responsible for sending their villagers to the government salt-refineries where for the production of each maund of salt they were paid four anna. These rates were not sufficiently attractive to the people so that the plan was not entirely successful. The system, at the same time, brought about negligence of village land. This led the indigenous officers to request the government for the importation of coolies from Chittagong.

The Bengal Government, however, was against both the local manufacture of salt and its sale at Calcutta. They feared that imports of Arakan salt would threaten Bengal's production. Also, the boat charges or transportation charges from Arakan to Bengal, calculated to have amounted to around 10,000 Rs. per annum, was found to be too high. How much salt was produced is difficult to ascertain, but the value of revenue earnings from salt were as follows:

### Table 3.5

**Value of Salt produced in Arakan During 1826/27**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Value of Salt</th>
<th>% of each District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akyab</td>
<td>Rs. 18,405</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramree</td>
<td>Rs. 199,000</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoway</td>
<td>Rs. 85,600</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheduba</td>
<td>Rs. 10,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taung Khwong</td>
<td>Rs. 40,000</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rs. 353,005</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** *Foreign Misc. 194, No. 29, To Swinton from Hunter & Paton, 25 Apr. 1827.*

Ramree Island was the main producer, followed by Sandoway and Taung Khwong. In fact, Ramree Island's salt production constituted more than half the total salt produced in Arakan. However, by the following year, 1827/28, the total value of salt contracts in Arakan had depreciated greatly, earning no more than 100,250 Rs. compared to 353,005 Rs. earned in 1826/27. This meant a fall of 252,755 Rs. or seventy-one per cent.

In 1828, the Calcutta authorities announced their policy of non-interference in the exportation of salt.

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from Arakan to either Bengal or Ava thereby opening up a new source of revenue for the province. Arakanese salt was exported through the An (Aeng) and Talak passes which were important trade routes between Arakan and the rest of Burma. As an additional incentive, in 1828, the government raised the price paid at its refineries from four to seven anna. At the same time, to check overproduction, no individual was allowed to possess more than fifty maund (4,200 lbs.) of salt at any one time. The Commissioner and his assistants were given orders by the higher authorities to purchase as much salt as possible to enable the government to form a more precise estimate of Arakan's total supply of salt.

The prevalence of smuggling discovered by Bogle (1834-49) during his administration suggested that the increased prices offered by the government as of 1828 were insufficient. Salt reached Chittagong and Calcutta from Arakan, via the Mayu river. To circumvent this problem, Bogle, in agreement with his predecessor, raised the purchase price of salt to eight anna per maund, and declared it a government monopoly. As for the smuggling of salt,

24. Ibid.
he assigned a gunboat to patrol the Mayu river. However, the Calcutta authorities instructed that in the event of failure to suppress smuggling, production of salt be totally banned. It was clear from the stand taken by the higher authorities that they were in favour of restricting Arakan's salt production in the interests of protecting the Bengal industry.

By the late 1830's and the 1840's, not much was mentioned regarding Arakan's salt trade. A report in 1839, estimated Arakan's annual production at twenty to thirty lakh maund, all of which was taken to Chittagong. Perhaps resulting from the failure to control the production and sale of this article, the government eventually lost interest in it.

iii. Other Economic Activities

Crops other than paddy were planted mainly for local consumption. These constituted tobacco, cotton, betel-leaf, indigo and fruit trees. Tobacco cultivation was concentrated in the district of Sandoway which was said

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25. Ibid., 17 April 1838, No. 56, To the Sudder Board from Bogle, 19 October 1837.
26. Ibid., 27 July 1841, No. 95, Extract of a letter from the Revenue Dept., 13 July 1841.
27. Pinang Gazette, 9 February 1839.
to produce the best in Burma. It was also noted in the
1840s that the district of Sandoway, in Arakan, was famous
for its tobacco. Tobacco was also the second principal
produce, after rice, on the Island of Cheduba. What
the extent of cultivation was is difficult to ascertain;
but presumably it was not sufficiently important to re-
ceive mention in official correspondence. By 1856, it was
an article sold at the Calcutta market and the Sandoway
tobacco leaf, as it was called, priced at 10 Rs. per
maund.

Other minor agricultural produce were indigo, sese-
mun, betel-leaf, cotton, hemp, sugar-cane, chillies, peas
and various other vegetables as shown in the table below.

28. Albert Fytche, Burma, Past and Present, With Personal
Kegan Paul & Co., 1878, p. 116. He was in the
1840s, the Deputy Commissioner at Sandoway.

29. Ibid.

30. Edward P. Halstead, "Report on the Island of Chedoo-

31. Pinang Gazette, 22 December 1856,
Some of the Minor Agricultural Produce of Arakan and the District where it was cultivated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Crops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akyab</td>
<td>Chilly, betel-nut, coconut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramree</td>
<td>Betel-leaf, indigo, hemp, tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoway</td>
<td>Sugar-cane, sesamun, cotton, tobacco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aeng/An</td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.

One report in 1847/48, stated that the cultivation of certain articles had shown an improvement. The cultivation of betel-leaf increased by a hundred per cent, attributable to the general increase in indigenous population, as well the immigranton of Indians who were in the habit of chewing betel-leaf. For the same reason, there was a five hundred per cent increase in the cultivation of chillies; a three hundred per cent increase in tobacco cultivation and an eight hundred per cent rise in banana planting. Until 1839, all these articles were subjected to a tax between 16 Rs. and 20 Rs. per doon (6

32. Ibid., 23 February 1850.
33. Ibid.
1/4 acres) but subsequently, the rate was standardized at 16 Rs. per doon.

Along with the growth in population, the demand for attap, used for roofing, also showed an increase. Attap procured from the nipah palm (*Nipa fruticans*) which grew wild in the swamps, was obtained in all the four districts of Arakan, but chiefly at the Akyab district. By 1847/48, the collection of this article is said to have increased by eight hundred per cent which matched the population growth and a proportionate increase in fires which were common in Arakan and Tenasserim. To cite a few examples, one fire broke out in Akyab on 5 January 1847 and consumed a row of houses and godowns. Another three broke out in Moulmein between September 1847 and February 1849. The frequency of fires also indicated urban conurbation and the increased density of population with the proximity of buildings of combustable wood and palm.

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35. The *attap* is also procured from the palmyra (*Borassus flabelliformis*) which was said to be cultivated mainly in South India and Ceylon, see Yule and Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson*, p. 664.


The hill tribes who practiced the *taungya* were subject to a tax of 2 Rs. per annum per family. Most of them paid this tax in kind in the form of cotton, ivory and other raw materials. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of their cultivation as the tax charged was per family and not on the acreage of cultivation. In 1855, there were 5,355 families practising the *taungya* cultivating rice, maize, millet and buckwheat at the same time as they engaged in the collection of jungle produce such as ivory, bees' wax, hides and horns, rattan and dammar.

Because of Arakan's long coast, numerous creeks and rivers, fishing was an important preoccupation of the indigenous populace of Arakan. Above all, the *ngapi* (dried salted fish) formed a staple diet of the indigenes, attracting many into the production of it. A look at the taxes collected from fisheries show, however, a decline from 7,660 Rs. in 1831/32 to 4,273 Rs. in 1847/48, constituting a decline of some 3,387 Rs. or forty-four per cent. This need not necessarily indicate a decline in actual production but, rather, the evasion of tax arising from the general increase in the taxes

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42. Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.
payable. Up to 1835, the indigenous populace were obliged to pay a capitation tax and a tax on their lands. In addition to this, every thirty houses paid an annual tax of 2 Rs. for fishing rights on ponds, lakes or rivers while, on the other hand, fishing nets and stakes were assessed according to their size and extent. It is possible that under the burden of heavy taxation the populace paid the 2 Rs. tax per thirty houses faithfully while, at the same time, it avoided the declaration of large nets and stakes used for open sea fishing and liable to a further tax.

Unlike Tenasserim which became the major teak supplier in the British empire, in Arakan efforts were made though unsuccessfully, to prospect for minerals. In the early years of British rule, small amounts of teak were obtained from the interior, mainly the upper reaches of Kuladan and Mayu rivers. But this was very short-lived due to the high cost of bringing down the timber to the seaports.

Arakan had some mineral resources in the form of iron ore, coal, coral-lime, petrified wood and petroleum but revenue from this source was limited. In 1833, Lieutenant


44. Ibid.
W.M. Foley discovered coal at Kyaukpyu on the Ramree Island. This enabled the island to become an important coaling station for the British navy around the Bay of Bengal until 1838, when it was superseded by Moulmein.

Through the efforts of Lieutenant Foley, iron ore was discovered at Ramree and Cheduba Island, petrified wood at Nagadong (probably the Nga Thanok Island, south of Ramree) and coral-lime all along Arakan's coast. No efforts however, were made to develop these resources.

The only source of revenue from mining, according to a report of Lieutenant Foley, was petroleum at Ramree and Cheduba. These wells were farmed out by the government to the highest bidder at 120 Rs. each. In 1833, six wells were being farmed out, each producing about 5,750 pounds of oil annually. It was sold at bazaars for lamp fuel. Ramree Island was also said to have abundant oil, reputedly purer than that produced in Cheduba.

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47. Foley, "Notes on the Coal", p. 597.

Further, exploitation of the potential for petroleum was not pursued, evidently because of meagre returns and concentration of labour on cultivation of paddy which remained the major revenue earner.

II. REVENUE

The greatest task shouldered by the early administrators of Arakan was the creation of a viable system of revenue which could finance the administration and substantiate growth in Arakan. This was no easy task because the British knew very little of the country to be able to organize resource exploitation immediately. Every possible means was devised to ensure economic activities on the most liberal principles.

The main taxes levied by the government were on grain, garden produce, forest produce and fisheries. Only by the end of 1826 and early 1827 did Richard Hunter and Charles Paton survey the country for revenue settlements with the chiefs. One source gives the total revenue earnings between from 1826 to 1830 as amounting to 371,310 Rs. or an average of 92,827 Rs. per annum.


50. Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.
Only in the 1830's were the revenue statements more clear, showing a pronounced annual increase. The main revenue earner was capitation tax or poll tax. Other sources of revenue were salt tax, fishing tax, tax on forest produce and port dues. By 1852 the revenue had increased to almost three times that collected in 1830. As the main source of revenue came from tax on agriculture, Akyab with its largest population, earned the highest revenues. As agriculture was the main occupation of the indigenous people, taxes obtained from all agriculture pursuits formed the backbone of Arakan's revenue. This is not to say that the economic activities of the indigenous populace were solely confined to agriculture. There were also other activities like logging, trade and cottage industries, but were of nominal significance.

Table 3.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item of Taxation</th>
<th>1833/34</th>
<th></th>
<th>1847/48</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitation Tax</td>
<td>Rs.242,054</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>Rs.254,496</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Tax</td>
<td>Rs.176,045</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>Rs.502,480</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries Tax</td>
<td>Rs. 7,660</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Rs. 4,273</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc. Tax</td>
<td>Rs. 61,863</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>Rs. 76,477</td>
<td>00.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rs.487,627</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Rs.837,726</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pinang Gazette, 23 February, 1850.
Revenue was obtained under four main categories namely capitation or poll tax, land tax (paddy lands), fisheries tax and 'miscellaneous tax'. The last covered a number of items including taungya and cash-crops like betel-leaf, indigo, sugar-cane, tobacco, orchards and vegetable gardens which brought considerable earnings. Miscellaneous tax amounted to about a third in value of the tax earned from paddy land (see table 3.7). None of these crops were exported but were for home consumption.

Table 3.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Increase in Rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Rs.371,310</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1832</td>
<td>Rs.452,554</td>
<td>Rs. 81,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1833/34</td>
<td>Rs 487,623</td>
<td>Rs. 35,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835</td>
<td>Rs.488,279</td>
<td>Rs. 656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>Rs.629,572</td>
<td>Rs.141,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847/48</td>
<td>Rs.837,726</td>
<td>Rs.208,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>Rs.904,501</td>
<td>Rs. 66,775</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Increase from 1830-1850 Rs.533,191

Sources: Harvey, "Burma, 1782-1852", p. 564; Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850; and Foreign Misc. 252, 8 March 1831, No. 31, Report by Halhed 24 January 1831 and Ibid., 2 June 1835, Report by Dickinson, 6 March 1835.

51. Pinang Gazette, 23 February 1850.
The capitation tax increased steadily as the population grew and was superseded by land tax. The capitation tax was 9 Rs. per family, 4 Rs. for widows and widowers, and 3 Rs. for bachelors. At least until 1835, the capitation tax was the chief mode of taxation because, until that year, land had not been surveyed, and land tax was based on the number of ploughs used for cultivation. Two ploughs were computed to cover one doon (6 1/4 acres) of cultivated land. After 1835, when lands had been surveyed, land tax became the chief mode of taxation. By 1840, bachelors above the age of eighteen were no more required to pay the capitation tax which on the whole was gradually reduced. Before 1835, capitation tax formed almost half the total revenue but, after 1835, and significantly by the 1840s, land tax became the chief mode of taxation contributing to some two-thirds of the total revenue of Arakan. Rates payable for capitation tax were, in fact, reduced in 1830 so that despite the overall increase in population, the tax from this source amounted to only 12,442 Rs. or an increase of a mere 5.1%. This was indeed a small increase over a thirteen year period covering 1833/34 to 1847/48.

52. Foreign Misc. 252, 20 July 1830, No. 33, Report by Halhed, 16 June 1830.

For tax purposes, rice lands were divided into three categories based on productivity. For the first category of the highest yielding variety producing some 1000 to 1200 baskets of paddy per acre, a tax of 10 Rs. to 12 Rs. was levied for every hundred baskets produced. The second and third category lands were liable to lower taxes. Rates for tax on garden lands, however, was much higher than on paddy lands. Garden lands were liable to payment of 16 Rs. per doon (about 6 1/4 acres).

The hill tribes who practised the taungya were liable to payment of 2 Rs. per family annually, to be made in cash or kind. They cultivated cotton, sesamun, tobacco and 'dry' paddy and collected a variety of jungle produce, among which were ivory, bees' wax, hides and horns. By 1837/38, taxes on forest produce, nets, houses, sugar presses as well as craftsmen and bachelors were abolished. This was due to increased revenues derived from cultivation and the uneconommic nature of taxing miscellaneous items earning insignificant revenues.

54. Ibid., p. 695.
55. Ibid., p. 711.
56. Ibid.
Total revenue earnings shows that Arakan was a profitable acquisition for the British unlike Tenasserim, which was a financial burden, at least in the initial years. These circumstances were assisted as well by Arakan's population and economic growth within the first twenty-six of British rule from 1826 to 1852.

III. SOCIAL FACILITIES

Revenue extraction was not however, concomitant with improvement in social services. A frank appraisal of the poor social services despite the sharp rise in revenues is reflected in the following 1892 source:

We have held Akyab for sixty years, during which time we have taken from the land a comparatively much heavier revenue than from other parts of [Burma], and yet one can travel far and wide through the district without seeing indications of a single rupee ever having been spent for the improvement of the people.

As a matter of fact, although Akyab was the greatest rice port in the world, it did not have a jetty until 1844. Communication remained poor and river transport,


economical for the movement of bulk goods, was not supported by a subsidiary system of road transportation to service the growth of commerce. The total mileage of roads for the district of Akyab in 1881 was only 83 miles and there were no railways.

Traditionally, all Buddhist males, at an early age were to attend monasteries for several years. Here, they received religious instructions and also learnt the Pali script as a preliminary to acquiring reading skills. Monastic education, was deeply rooted in this society. Thus, the concept of literacy was not new in Arakan, the British were in fact, slow in introducing western education in the province. Compared to Tenasserim where mission schools had sprung up immediately after British occupation, the first government Anglo-vernacular school in Arakan was established only in 1833, some five years later. In 1838, two government Anglo-vernacular schools were established, one each at Akyab and Ramree. By 1875, thirty-seven years later, the first government high school was established and only because the local


authorities in Arakan were anxious to produce qualified Arakanese to man the government clerical service. But even as late as 1881, there were only three government schools as against 114 'Private Inspected Schools' with a total enrolment of 2,454 students. In addition, there were also several 'Private Uninspected Schools' run by the sangha.

According to a report in the 1880s for Sandoway district, "little education has, till lately been given except by the Buddhist monks". In 1883/84 for example, there were twenty schools with 683 students in the Sandoway district, most of these being maintained by the sangha. Although by 1840, Sandoway had become the "base of operations" for the American Baptist Mission, their activities were targeted on the bordering Burmese province of Bassien. The tribal fringes which did not

64. "Private Inspected Schools" were run by Christian missionaries or the sangha but under the inspection of the local authorities, while "Private Uninspected Schools" were normally run by the sangha without any supervision from the authorities.
66. Ibid.
come within the preview of government controls, was open to missionary activity begun in 1840.

There was greater government concern over health than education because of the ravage of malaria and the vulnerability of the European community to the disease in the face of an epidemic. This attitude was typical of British policy in other areas, such as the Malay Peninsula till the early twentieth century.

In Arakan, malaria is said to have taken the lives of twenty-two European officers, temporarily incapacitating another eighteen out of a total of seventy-nine European officers who served between 1826 and 1852. In 1837, Akyab was described as "a mere barren, treeless swamp, reeking with malaria, and obtaining the sad renown of being the grave of Europeans". The problem of malaria


68. A good example was when, in 1907, malaria ravaged amongst the Europeans in Kuala Lumpur, only then were serious attempts undertaken towards establishing a proper system of drainage whereas this system had been invented by Dr. Malcom Watson, the District Surgeon in Klang/Kelang, in 1901, but not put in use due to the high cost involved in its establishment. See J.M. Gullick, The Story of Kuala Lumpur (1857-1939), Singapore: Eastern Universities Press (M) Sdn. Bhd., 1983, pp. 146-147.


70. Hay, Arakan, Past, Present and Future, p. 11.
affected Arakan generally, but efforts to eradicate malaria were confined to Akyab. A continued effort was made by the local authorities, particularly during the Commissionership of Bogle. In 1837, on assuming duties as Commissioner, he embarked on a plan for reclaiming the swamps around Akyab such that by the 1850s, malaria was no longer a threat in this district and generally the province. There was a general decline in malaria for Arakan as a whole by the mid-century and this could have been due to "natural development" rather than any specific programme for areas outside Akyab. With the tremendous growth in paddy cultivation, the swamps infested with malaria mosquitoes (Anopheles umbrosus and Anopheles maculatus) were drained and turned into paddy fields which greatly reduced the disease.

Barring one or two rebellions, British presence proved a catalyst to economic growth. This once war-torn province, was within two-and-a-half decades of British rule, turned into a vast paddy field. On the progress in Arakan, Kaye comments:

71. Ibid.
72. Ibid., p. 5.
They who had seen the wilderness which passed into our [British] hands in 1825, were delighted on visiting the country some fifteen years afterwards, to find themselves in one of the most prosperous and well-governed provinces under the Bengal Presidency.

That it was one of the most prosperous provinces within the British Indian empire is attested by its rapidly increased revenue earnings. Arakan was soon able to pay its way and fill the Imperial Treasury leaving a surplus of twenty lakhs, annually. Evidently Htin Aung's comment that "the cost of administration of Tenasserim and Arakan proved a heavy charge on the resources of the East India Company", claims modification. Although it is true that Tenasserim proved a loss at least until 1845, in the case of Arakan it was, as one writer puts its, "a very paying dependency of the empire" from the start.

Economic progress was not matched by rapid social improvements. These came only gradually and were motivated, typically at this stage of British imperialism, by unaltruistic interests.

