

**ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RAKHINE  
UNDER BRITISH RULE (1860-1885)**

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## ABSTRACT

Rakhine became a province of British India in 1826 with the tide of British imperialist policy in India. The British Government tried to introduce the commercial economy into Rakhine based on the existing potential circumstance of its agriculture background. For the development of agriculture sector, the definite land tenure system and the expansion of cultivated land were introduced. The geographical closeness of the Chittagoing District of Bengal also enables to fill the need of agriculture sectors in Rakhine. The encouragement of the British to improve the agriculture sectors in Rakhine proved to be successful that Sittway, the main sea-port in Rakhine Province, became the most leading rice exporting port in the world in the early 1840s and the production of rice became steadily growing before the British transformed the Ayeyawady Delta into the most rice producing area after the second Anglo-Myanmar War. The British also attempted to maintain the native salt producing industry and pottery but their *golah* scheme was unable to maintain for the existence of these industries that the people lost their indigenous professions and migrated to the fertile Sittway District. The other prospective enterprises such as timber extraction and oil extraction could not make as the flourishing enterprise because of the difficult circumstances of health and transportation. Although they tried to establish ports for trade to facilitate their administration need and commerce, the land routes in the Rakhine Province were in the state of poor condition. Among the land passes, Ann, Dalet and Taungoke Passes contributed a significant role for the trade especially for the people of Kyaukphyu and Thandwe Districts. By conducting for the improvement of agriculture sectors and other subsidiary enterprises, the British could accomplish the main goal of revenue collection in Rakhine. Apart

from the main sources of revenue items such as land revenue and capitation tax, they tried to introduce things such as opium, ganja and liquors, and gained taxes on them. On the whole, the experience of Rakhine's economic conditions especially the transformation of commercial agriculture became an epitome for Ayeyawady Delta to become a leading rice producing area in the British colonial period.

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