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Message from the Editorial Desk

We are delighted to present the eleventh issue (March 2018) of *Karatoya*: North Bengal University Journal of History (ISSN 2229 4880, a Refereed and Peer Reviewed Journal, UGC approved, Serial no: 42512) for the readers, scholars, learners and researchers of history. It has incorporated sixteen research articles from different areas of history, reflecting the expansion and diversification that has occurred in historical research in India in recent years. History no longer is the representation of the past with stories of kings and kingdoms and wars and truce, but it is the profundity of the past to comprehend the foundation of the socio-economic and cultural milieu of the present. The journal examines the regional and national history with this perception, pays attention to the neglected areas of India's past, and keeps into consideration the new directions of history by adopting an interdisciplinary approach. It provides a forum for well-known researchers, faculties of reputed institutes and budding scholars of history.

We are thankful to all the contributors for bringing up important historical nuances across the local and national boundaries. A special thanks is given to Prof. Mary Hanneman, Fullbright Nehru Visiting Scholar at the Department of History, University of North Bengal in 2019, for contributing a well-researched article of academic excellence. All the articles in the journal explore a wide range of newly emerging paradigms of historical research which consist of urbanization, power and society, labour issues, industrialization during the post-independent period, environmental history, plantation economy as part of the capitalist economy, post-structuralism, national movement, identity formation, subaltern history, communalism, partition, municipal administration, art, architecture and regional history. We are hoping that all these articles will provide new

perceptions of the social, economic and cultural dimensions of history to the researchers and academic society.

We convey our deep gratitude to the Honourable Vice-Chancellor, University of North Bengal, The Registrar, and The Finance Officer for their support on this academic endeavour. We are grateful to the cooperation and encouragement provided by the colleagues of the Department of history in publishing this journal. A heartfelt thanks to all the reviewers who have taken the responsibility of reviewing the articles in spite of their busy academic schedule. We express our appreciation for all those who have directly or indirectly helped in the publication of this volume. The unfailing cooperation and help of the officials and staffs of the North Bengal University Press are greatly remembered for publishing the journal within a short span of time.

The editors have worked as a team in editing, processing and proofreading as required in the publication of the journal. The facts, opinions and conclusion reached in the articles are solely the concern of the author and the editor-in-chief or the associate editor of the journal does not accept any responsibility for the same.

Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya (Editor-in-Chief)

Dr. Amrita Mondal (Associate Editor)

A Survey on the Unique & Composite Temples of Cooch Behar from (17th to 19th century)

Dr. Sudash Lama¹ & Arka Acharjee²

Abstract:

Temple in India is considered as an abode of God Almighty, a centre of reverence. The Hindu temple, in more than one sense, epitomises the numerous sides and complex processes of the cultural development of Hinduism through its architecture. The major temple styles listed and described in the “Vāstuśāstra” texts are the Nāgara, Drāvida and Vesara. All the available texts are agreed on the point that the Nāgara style was prevalent in the region between Himalayas and Vindhya. So, geographically Bengal belongs to the school of Nāgara style and Bengal temple architecture in its initial phase chiefly followed the Nāgara style though the process of the consequent development of Nāgara style can be traced through various regional schools, of which the major ones were Orissa (Kalinga style) & Central India (Mahoba style). But from the 17th Century, the history of Indian temple architecture witnessed the beginning of a distinct Bengal school which consisted of a series of parallel unique temple styles by which Bengal hold an important status in the architectural atlas in India. From the 17th to 19th Centuries Bengal may be categorised as a province that behold several innovative architectural styles. In this connection a noticeable point may also be noted here that though Cooch Behar is a part of Bengal, stylistically this part also shows its architectural uniqueness by consuming and admixing various local and also general attributes. By undertaking field survey at Cooch Behar district the author tried to trace these distinguishable features of these temples.

Keywords: Regionalism, Pluralism, Hybridism, Composite, Amalgamation.

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Early Temple Styles:**“Architecture is the matrix of civilization”**-Lethabyⁱ

The Practice of erecting sanctuaries probably goes back to the Pre Christian era apparently built in perishable materials (for example-the stone dolmen). Those stone dolmens which first appeared in the megalithic period were undoubtedly regarded as the earliest prototype of the flat roofed temples in India.ⁱⁱ

The Gupta period marks the beginning of structural temple architecture. As evident from the extant monuments, there was experimentation in a number of forms and designs, out of which two significant temple styles evolved, one in the north and the other in the south. The following well defined types may be identified: 1) flat roofed, square temple with a shallow pillared porch in the front. 2) Flat roofed, square temple with covered ambulatory around the sanctum and preceded by pillared porch, sometimes with a second storey above. 3) Square temple with a low and squat *Śikhara* (Tower) above. 4) Rectangular temple with an apsidal back and a barrel vaulted roof above and 5) circular temple with shallow rectangular projections at the four cardinal faces.ⁱⁱⁱ

The second and the third type of Gupta temple is to be called “*Vimana*” (Storeyed) and “*Śikhara*” (cruciform) types. In the following centuries, these two types supposedly underwent further improvements and crystallized to form two distinctive temple styles respectively in the South and North.^{iv}

Emergence of later temple Styles (Nagara, Dravida and Vesara):

The major temple styles listed and described in the “*Vāstuśāstra*” texts are the *Nāgara*, *Drāvida* and *Vesara*. All the available texts are agreed on the point that the Nagara style was prevalent in the region between Himalayas and Vindhya. The Dravida country is well known and the texts rightly confine the Dravida style to that part of the country lying between the river Krishna and cape Kanyakumari; while the *Vesara* style is sometimes associated with the area between the Vindhya and Krishna River.^v Hardy points out that *Nāgara* and *Drāvida* should be understood as architectural languages, in the sense that

they provide a vocabulary, a range of elements and a family of forms which can be put together in different ways.^{vi}

Bengal Temple Architecture: Initial Phase:

The history of temple architecture in Bengal suitably categorized into two periods: I. 'Early Hindu' (up to the end of the 13th century) & II. 'Hindu Revival' (16th to 19th century) mainly by eminent expert in this field David J McCutcheon^{vii} and also supported by Tarapada Santra.^{viii} In the first phase Bengal temple mainly known as one of the counterpart of the *Nāgara* style. The temples in this period have mostly disappeared but from the remains of the few structures we knew that the chief style prevalent in this period is the square sanctum cella with the common north Indian *latina Śikhara*.^{ix} Bengal temples in this period were mainly built under the royal patronage of the Pala & Sena rulers (8th -12th century C.E.). Siddhesvari temple at Barakar in Burdwan can be considered as the chief example of the earliest temples belonging to this group.^x

Bengal Temple Architecture: Revival Phase with some unique features:

Temple architecture of Bengal received a new impetus in its later phase (popularly known as 'revival phase') by the emergence of unique Bengal school which comprises of a series of analogous distinct temple styles. In this phase Bengal temple differentiate itself from the mainstream North Indian *Nāgara*, style by incorporating some local and foreign attributes. The key elements which are mainly responsible for these innovative diverse stylistic trends in Bengal are regionalism, pluralism & hybridism. These elements played a very crucial role to set the background which finally helps to achieve a culminating phase of the distinct Bengal temple school. This was best illustrated by the origin of two completely new styles of temple in Bengal- I. *Hut* or *Chālā* style inspired by the secular village house made by bamboo with sloping thatched roof and II. *Ratna* or *Pinnacle* style is inspired by the Islamic architecture.^{xi} Specifically in the *Chālā* style undoubtedly we found the local architectural expressions corresponded with traditional Bengal cultural life. In addition to the regional identity from the 16th century onwards Bengal temple architecture showed its uniqueness by the successful amalgamation of two parallel different trends in a single architectural project (for instance combination of *Hut*

& *Pinnacle* styles).^{xii} From early to later phase Bengal temples can be classified on the basis of roofing structure into the following types:

1. ***Rekha*** or ***Nāgara*** or ***Latina*** type: Similar with the temples of this particular form in Orissa, the chief characteristics of this type of temples are the smooth curvilinear tower or ‘*Śikhara*’ with its finial crowned by the ‘*Āmalaka-Śīlā*’^{xiii} – which caps the tower and carries the kalasa (pitcher) on the top.^{xiv}
2. ***Pīṭhā*** or ***Phāmsana*** or Tiered type: Akin like the Jagmohan of Orissan temples, this type of temples is mainly recognised by its horizontal tiers progressively diminishing in upward direction finally capped by the ribbed ‘*Āmalaka-Śīlā*’ on its narrow beki.^{xv}
3. ***Valabhī*** or ***Khakhara deul*** type: This type of temple is generally consisted with a rectangular plan for the shrine. From *Pabhaga* to *Varandika* is similar like *Latina* shrine.

But this particular type of shrine differentiates itself from *Latina* shrine in *shikhara* and *mastaka* part which was eminent by its barrel-vaulted elongated roof on top.^{xvi}

4. ***HUT*** or ***CHĀLĀ*** type: This type of temple mainly consists with the slanting curvilinear thatched roof inspired by the thatched huts in rural Bengal. This type of temple style recognised as one of the innovative and unique temple style of Bengal.
5. ***RATNA*** or ***PINNACLA*** type: This type of temple mainly considered as the hybrid form of hut and rekha type with the installation of miniature turrets on the roof. Ratna style of temple also counted as another type of exceptional temple style of Bengal.^{xvii} Apart from these five major types of temple other minor styles of temple but unique in importance are- 6. ***DOMED*** Roofing, 7. ***SPIRED*** Roofing, 8. Flat-roofed (***DALAN/CHADNI***), 9. ***RĀSMAÑCHA***, ***DOLMAÑCHA & TULASĪMAÑCHA*** & 10. **Miscellaneous** types.^{xviii}



Siddhesvari temple at Barakar

*[Source: <https://1.bp.blogspot.com/> -retrieved on 05/08/2018 at 7 p.m.]

Cooch Behar is located in the north-eastern region of Bengal from very ancient times. Its geographical position is also very unique and interesting. Architecturally temples of this zone also demonstrated firmly its innovativeness along with fusion of different styles from late medieval times. Socio-cultural-political context & geographical condition chiefly exerted its influences on the style of temple architecture in Cooch Behar. Categorically temples of Cooch Behar are miscellaneous in nature. Before initiating a study about the distinguishable features of the temples of Cooch Behar, it is however, important to look into the contemporary socio-political status quo in understanding the background on which Cooch Behar has produced such ‘unique style’.

Geographical background of Cooch Behar:

The geographical area of modern day Cooch Behar is originally a part of the *Kāmarūpa* which recognised as the medieval nomenclature of Assam.^{xix} In *Kalikapurān* & *Yoginītantra* this terminology (*Kāmarūpa*) used many times. So, the early history of Cooch Behar actually belongs to the broader history of *Kāmarūpa* state. Ancient Kingdom of *Kāmarūpa* chiefly made up by four pithas- *Ratnapītha*, *Kamapītha*, *Subarnapītha* & *Soumarpītha*. Cooch Behar belongs to *Ratnapītha*.^{xx}

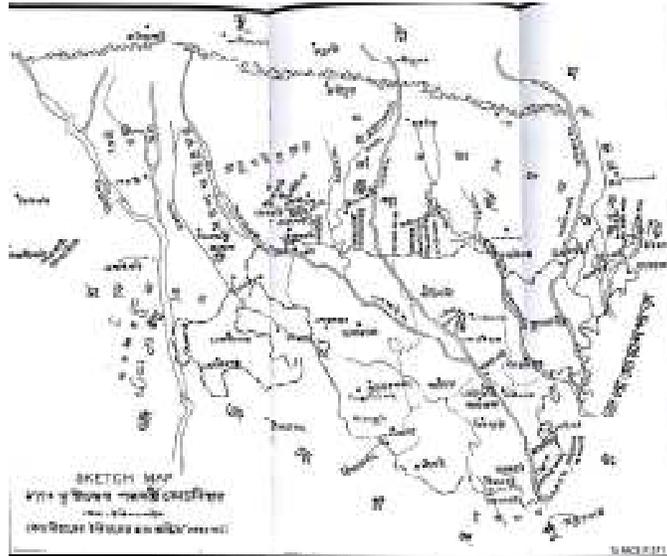


MAP: The Country of Kamarupa in the Puranas

*[Source: MAP-I- Ghosal, S.C. –*A History of Cooch Delhi*, Siliguri: N. L. Publishers, 1942]

Geographically Cooch Behar located in the North-eastern boundary line between Bengal and Assam. It lies between 25°47'40" and 26°32'20" latitude north and between 88°04'40" to 89°05'35", east longitude. This district encircled on the east by the Goalpara district of Assam and Parganas Gaibari and Bhitambar of Rangpur; on the west by the Kazirhat Pargana of Rangpur and Boda chakla of Jalpaiguri district; on the north by the western part of the Duars & on the south again bounded by the Parganas of Rangpur. Several rivers like Gadadhar and Sankosh in the east; Jaldhaka and Kaljani in the north & Dharla in the south constitute the natural boundary line for an extensive area. The natural area of this state cum district is near about 1,307 square miles (with its detached areas which popularly called as “*Chhits*”) which is approximately half of the size of Sikkim State.^{xxi} Undoubtedly on geographical point of view Cooch Behar is situated in very remote and peripheral part of Bengal. This part has many tracts of jungle mostly heavy grass and alluvial formation of soil with sandy and loose in nature which are to be seen for the most part in the north east corner of India and very few compact villages in comparison with southern part of Bengal.^{xxii} The prolonged distance of Cooch Behar from the south-western part of Bengal (especially Bankura, Bishnupur, Birbhum, Burdwan etc.) which can be considered as the place of ‘temple-hub’ in Bengal and the

comparative nearness with the adjoining state of Assam probably played a very important part for shaping the architectural form in Cooch Behar.



MAP: The Kingdom of Cooch Behar-17th Century

*[Source: MAP-IV- Ghosal, S.C. –*A History of Cooch* Delhi, Siliguri: N. L. Publishers, 1942]

Socio-Cultural-Political Context of Cooch Behar:

The history of the modern day district is well connected with the *Prāgjyotisha* (ancient terminology) or *Kāmarūpa* (medieval terminology) as because almost the whole of its area included in this ancient kingdom. So we cannot dislocate and neglect the historical development of *Kāmarūpa* in order to perceive the socio-cultural and political background of Cooch Behar. We have found the earliest references of *Kāmarūpa* in the two epics which indicates that it is a hilly country and stretched as far as the sea.^{xxiii} The earliest tradition regarding the history of *Kāmarūpa* is that this area was given to the infidel (*Osur*) Norok, the son of the earth by Krishna in order to serve as a guardian of the temple of Kamakhya over the region of desire (*Kāmarūpa*).^{xxiv} In the *Mahābhārata* there was a frequent mentioning of Bhagadatta, the king of *Prāgjyotisha* who had a host of Kiratas, Chinas and several other warriors that dwelt on the sea coast.^{xxv} That's why this land popularly known as *Kirāta Bhūmi* (i.e. the land of the *Kirātas* or the various ethnic and semi ethnic groups).^{xxvi} Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* informs us about the economic pursuit

and various commodities found in this region.^{xxvii} We have found another important reference i.e. the famous Allahabad *prasāsti* of Samudragupta which also mentions *Kāmarūpa* as a peripheral kingdom of India.^{xxviii}

The first ruling dynasty on the basis of available abundant historical sources is known as the Varmans founded by the *Puṣyavarman* in the 4th century C.E which marked the historical beginning of the history of *Kāmarūpa*.^{xxix} From the Nidhanpur copper- plate inscription (610 C.E) of King *Bhāskaravarman* we have found the chronology of the kings of the Varman dynasty from *Puṣyavarman* to *Bhāskaravarman* (4th century C.E – 7th century C.E). It is very interesting to know that from the time of Bhaskaravarman (7th century C.E) there were Brahmans and Kayasthas in this region indicating the early arrival of mainstream culture in comparison with the neighboring province of Gauda.^{xxx} After the demise of *Bhāskaravarman* (650 C.E) ‘by an adverse turn of fate’ the kingdom was taken by ‘a great chief of the Mlechchhas’ *Sālastambha*.^{xxxi} The word ‘mlechha’ undoubtedly indicates a semi ethnic group of people. A tribe of those people is still known by the name ‘Mech’ which is probably the abbreviated form of ‘mlechha’.^{xxxii} The last successor of this so called ‘mlechha’ *Sālastambha* dynasty was Tyag Singh who died childless (1000 C.E) and immediately after that in order to bring back Naraka’s race the people of this kingdom choose Brahma Pal as their new ruler. This incident actually ushered to establish the new dynasty in *Kāmarūpa* and it seems that Brhama in imitation of the Pala rulers of Magadha and Gauda, assumed the surname Pala and that’s why this dynasty was known as ‘Pala Dynasty’ of *Kāmarūpa*.^{xxxiii} The dynasty of the Palas came to an end towards the early part of the 12th century C.E by the annexation of *Kāmarūpa* by Rama Pal of Gauda. After that this area drops into a full state of disorder and anarchy which continued almost two and half centuries.

It is very important to know that in late medieval period the western part of *Kāmarūpa* whose western boundary was Karatoya, have formed a single kingdom named as *Kāmatā*. The process of the art and architectural movements commenced from one of the important dynasty in this area i.e. the *Khyān* or *Khen* dynasty in 15th century A.D. Before the emergence of this newly empire in *Kāmarūpa* - *Kāmatā* region, the total area in a state of full disorder and was infested by various tribes like Koch, Mech, Garo,

Kacchhari, Nepcha, Tripuri who were far away from Brahmanism and Bengali culture and language.^{xxxiv} At this critical junction of time a dynasty was established by a vigorous cowherd named Kanta Nath with the help of his Brahman master who later become his spiritual guide. This new king belonged to the Khen tribe. To what race the Khens are originated is still unknown. But most of the experts stated that they are belonged to Tibeto-Burman family of Indo-Chinese group but after ascending on the throne on the 1st half of the 15th century Kanta Nath assumed the title- **Niladhvaj**, embraced Brahmanism under the guidance of the said Brahman and made him his chief minister.^{xxxv} He also brought many Brahmans from Mithila, re-established the worship of Vedic gods with his family deity Komotesvari, the aboriginal tribal goddess in character who delighting in blood sacrifice.^{xxxvi} The development of Hinduism and Brahmanical culture also commenced positively since that time in this zone. From that period (2nd half of the 15th century) at first by the active patronage of the shortly ruled Khen rulers the extensive process of synthesize, amalgamation, unification, hybridism and composite character of temple architecture begun (example: Komotesvari temple) which finally culminates after that by the prolonged rule of Koch kings from 16th to 19th century (example: Baneswar, Sidheswari temple). The amalgamation of socio-cultural aspect in this area set the stage for the introduction and continuation of unique type of artistic movement which attract the attraction of the visitor and experts.^{xxxvii}

In addition with this from medieval period this region recognized as the centre of religious tolerance. Several religious reformers came to this area and preach their valuable religious and moral doctrines. The first notable person among these is “**Guru Goraksanatha**”, founder of the **Nathpanthi** religious sect. From the local song and popular talk in Northern Bengal, it is to be known that the birthplace of this pious man is to be near of Jalpesh in the 12th century A.D. Another two important reformers namely **Sona Ray & Rupa Ray** also visit this place before Mahomedan invasion but the actual timings of their visit is still obscure. Guru Nanak (originator of Sikh religion) Teg Bahadur (reformer of Sikh religion) also had visited **Kamarupa** in 16th and 17th century respectively. It is also stated that in the first half of the 16th century **Chaitanyadeva** (founder of the Gaudiya Vaisnavism), **Sankardeva** (initiator of Assamiya Vaisnavism)

and his two disciple **Madhavadeva** & Damodardeva had also preached the doctrines of Vaisnavism here. Apart from the various sects and sub sects of Hinduism these zone also the centre of preachers of Islam. From the 13th century onwards the preaching of Islam had begun in this area. Various notable preachers of Islam came in this place and advocate their doctrines. Among these **Torsa Pir, Pagla Pir, Ismail Gazi, Satyapir** are very important. Not only Mahomedan their moral doctrines also attracted several people of different communities of Hinduism.^{xxxviii} So from this discussion undoubtedly it is proved that this region is notable for the melting centre of various religious sects and sub sects which clearly marked by the amalgamated-composite-hybrid style of temple architecture in this region.

A Survey on the unique temples of Cooch Behar and there characteristic features:

Komotesvari Temple at Gosanimari: Cooch Behar recognized as an important Saktipitha in North Bengal. From earlier discussion it is to be known that Komotesvari is the family deity of Khen rulers. **Niladhvaj**- the founder of this dynasty first erected a temple for their family deity within the citadel area of his capital. But in 1493 C.E. during the invasion of Hussien Shah this temple was demolished. Subsequently Visvasinha-founder of the Koch Kingdom reestablished this deity and temple but again during the attack of Kalapahars and Mirzumlas, the temple and the icon was again destroyed in 1553 & 1665 C.E. respectively.^{xxxix} The present temple was constructed by the famous pious and learned Koch king **Maharaja Prannarayan** in 1665 C.E. This new temple was erected at a distance of 1.5 km. from the previous one. Present temple is encircled with well-built wall having two gateways. Western gateway is now considered as main gateway. Apart from main temple there were also small four two-storied minarets temples influenced by Islamic dome. The icons of these temples are- Vishnu, Tarakesvara Śiva, Vairabhi, Laksmi-Sarasvati and also one aniconic Śiva linga.

The main shrine is square in shape with approximate 45 feet in height and 28 feet 9 inches in length and width. It is a prominent example of Indo-Islamic architecture. The top of the temple is surmounted by half cut dome which resembles like Islamic mosque. The shape of the *bāḍa* part of the temple appears like bent bamboo including haunches, artificial doorway and window. The main revered object in the sanctum-sanctorum of this

temple is the aniconic amulet which represents Devi Komotesvari but the icon was stolen in 1964.^{x1} However, this temple is a perfect example of the unique temple architecture of Cooch Behar and also oldest in comparison to other temples of Cooch Behar district.



Komoteswori Temple at Gosanimari (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Bhitarkuthi Terracotta Śiva Temple: Patronage for the construction of the Cooch Behar temples came from two sources. - I. from royal authorities & II. with personal initiative. The construction of Bhitarkuthi terracotta Śiva temple belongs to 2nd category. This temple was built by Gourinandan Mustafi approximately in 1720-1735 C.E., who was worked as a “Khasnobis” under Cooch King Maharaja Upendranarayan (1714-1763 A.D.) & later as a “Prodhan Karbari” (i.e. Prime Minister) under Maharaja Devendranarayan (1763-1765 A.D.). The temple is approximately 30 feet in height and there is an amalgamation of Bengali traditional *Charchālā* style surmounted by Islamic dome with unique octagonal projection. This temple is a finest representation of Indo-Saracenic architecture as because the shape and structure of the dome is very unique and

also considered as a sole representative in this periphery. A *Śiva linga* was also installed in this temple by Gourinandan Mustafi himself.^{xii} Another unique feature of this temple is its unique 93 quadrangular terracotta plaques which depict the relief sculptural panel of Brahmanical gods and goddesses. In these terracotta plaques the influence of religious, legendary and also folk elements are quite prominent. By the calamitous earthquake in 1897 the four-cornered decorative pillars on the top of the *Charchālā* roof (3 feet in height), broke into pieces and the temple also fell down to 8 feet. Since 1949 (after Cooch Behar merged with India) this temple actually became an enclave of Bangladesh. But after the famous “India-Bangladesh enclave agreement” in 2015 this temple is now a part of India.^{xiii}



Bhitarkuthi Terracotta *Śiva* Temple (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Banesvar *Śiva* Temple: One of the most important *Śiva* temples in Cooch Behar district on the basis of popularity is the Banesvar *Śiva* temple, located 10 km away from Cooch Behar town in the middle of Cooch Behar-Alipurduar high road at Banesvar Village. The name of the provenance is also Banesvar, christened after the name of the sacred temple at the site. From the account of Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed it is to be known that the famous Puranic giant *Banasur* installed the *Śiva linga* by his name and Khen king Nilambar erected this temple. *Kalikapurana*, *Yoginitantra* and *Lingapurana* also mentioned the name of Banesvar *Śiva*.^{xliii} But according to H.N. Chowdhury, the present temple of Banesvar was built by Koch King Maharaja Pran Narayan (1625-1665 C.E.) approximately in 1665 C.E.^{xliiv} The present temple has been renovated from time to time.

The disastrous earthquake in 1897 heavily affected this temple and its dome has been cracked at this time. The wall and floor of this temple including the sacred *linga* is now leaned towards east.^{xlv}

The present temple is square in shape (both inside and outside) and the west faces a well-planned entrance doorway. The top of the temple is surmounted by a half cut egg shaped dome which is approximately 40 feet in height. Its base has Brahmanical elements like *amalaka*, *kalsha* and *trisula*. The length and width of this temple are equal - 31.5 feet with 8 feet thickness of the walls and height is approximately 35 feet. On the outside below the dome of the temple, its cornice has uncanny resemblance with of a bent bamboo.^{xlvi} There is a tank to the south of the main shrine excavated by the King Pran Narayan which is popularly known as Mohandighi. The tank is the habitat of tortoise known as ‘Mohan’, as named by population. The sanctum-sanctorum, which thrust about 10 fit below the ground level, houses an aniconic *Śiva linga* (made of black basalt rock) with *gouripatta* as the principal object of worship. Apart from main aniconic *Śiva linga* there are also the icons of Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Ganga, Yamuna, Ardhanarisvara and these are in active worship. However, undoubtedly the architectural style of this temple bears the testimony to its uniqueness and composite features.



Baneswar *Śiva* Temple (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Devi Siddheswari Temple: This temple is considered as one of the Saktipitha in Cooch Behar. It is very near from the famous Baneswar *Śiva* temple, near about 3 km in south-east direction. The village adjoining the temple is also known as Siddheswari. According to H.N. Chowdhury, this place is recognised to be a significant “Pitha-sthan” and second

in position after the famous temple of Kamakhshya.^{xlvii} We found the reference to the Devi Siddheswari in Kalikapurana where the goddess has been considered as a counterpart of Jalpeswar *Śiva* and both formed the age-old concept of *Purusha-Prakriti*.^{xlviii} Chaudhuri also stated that this temple was built by Maharaja Pran Narayan during same time when Baneswar *Śiva* temple was renovated by the Koch King.^{xlix}

The temple is about 32 ft in height with concrete floor in front having a height of about 2.5 ft. The temple with its unique octagonal wall is surmounted by a half cut Islamic dome. The latter is capped by ribbed *amalaka*, *kalsha* and *trisula*. This temple is devoid of *beki* as the octagonal walls of the temple make a convenient base for the dome to rest. This temple is a sole representative of its type in this district and also in the total region of Northern part of Bengal with its exclusive innovative architectural features like Octagonal projection of wall, Circular Monumental typed pillars (this type of pillars are very unique in this part as because those type of pillars has been noticed in various churches and monuments of India in the primary stage of British rule) etc.¹ The sanctum sanctorum of this temple is 5 feet below from the ground level and the main object of worship is the Octo-alloy icon of Bhagavati with the aniconic stone *gouripatta*.



Devi Siddheswari Temple (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Harihara *Śiva* Temple at Haripur: This temple is located in Haripur village which is 10 km away from Cooch Behar town and 1.5 km away from the adjacent famous Madhupurdham Temple. This temple is west-facing and is made of bricks.

Architecturally this temple shows its uniqueness for its *chālā* type but surmounted by diminishing pyramidal roof instead of domed roof.^{li} The present height of this temple is approximately 16 fit and the thickness of the wall is 5 ft. The sanctum sanctorum of this temple thrust 8 fit down the ground level. The terrible earthquake in 1897 has also heavily affected this temple and as a result, it subsided about 8 ft in ground and became slightly recumbent.^{lii} The *linga* installed in the sanctum (*garbhagriha*) popularly known as *Harihara Śiva* and this aniconic object is the prime object of veneration.

Though Saktism was the state religion in Cooch Behar but during the reign of Koch King Nara Narayan (1555-1587 C.E) Vaishnavism was rapidly developed and gained popularity by the influence of Sankar Deva.^{liii} He at first tried to propagate his views in Ahom kingdom but due to the enmity of Brahmans and Ahom King who were the ardent followers of Sakti cult, finally forced him to leave his native land and went to the Barpeta where under the generous rule of Nara Narayan he broadcasted his new faith.^{liv} The name *Harihara* clearly signifies religious and cult synthesis and fusion in Cooch Behar under the benevolent Koch Kings.^{lv} It is a much debatable issue that the patronized this magnificent temple. Some experts opined that it was built by Maharaja Upendra Narayan (1714-1763 C.E). But on another opinion, the present temple was erected by Maharaja Dhairyendra Narayan (1765-1770 C.E).^{lvi} However, this temple also exhibits an important example of the architectural uniqueness in this region.



Harihara *Śiva* Temple at Haripur (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Rajmata Temple: This temple is located on Raj Rajendra Narayan Road on the southern bank of another important lake in Cooch Behar Town, popularly known as “Rajmata Dighi”. This temple is south facing with a triple multi foil arched doorway. Architecturally this temple is exclusive in comparison to Anathnath and Hiranyagarbha *Śiva* temples. It is the first representative of flat-roofed (*DALAN/CHADNI*) typed temple in this zone surmounted by Islamic half cut egg shaped domed roof. The latter is elongated by lotus, *amalakasila* and *kalasa*. The “*Radhabinod/Radharaman*” icon is the main object of worship in this shrine. The founder of this temple was **Dangor Iye Kameswari Devi**- the chief queen (**Dangor = chief; Iye = queen**) of Koch King Maharaja Shibendra Narayan (1839-1847 C.E.).^{lvii} Under her direct supervision this unique masterpiece was raised in the last quarter of 19th century.



Rajmata Temple (Photograph taken by the Author himself)

Madanmohan Temple: The last but most popular temple in Cooch Behar is the Madanmohan temple which is situated on the northern bank of another famous lake “Boiragi Dighi” in the heart of Cooch Behar town. Madanmohan is the family deity of the Koch Kings. This temple was erected by the Koch King Maharaja Nripendra Narayan in 1889 C.E.^{lviii} The main shrine is encircled by a high wall and the south facing entrance gateway surmounted by a “*Nahabatkhana*”. Architecturally the main shrine is very unique because primarily it looks like a fusion of traditional Bengali *Charchālā* type

surmounting by Islamic domed roofing in peak. However, an influence of flat-roofed (**DALAN/CHADNI**) style made this temple quite unique in nature. The peak of this temple is elongated by *lotus*, *amalakasila* and *kalasa*. Two Madanmohan (Popularly known as **Bara & Choto Madanmohan**) icons made of Octo-alloy are the principal object of worship along with subsidiary *Katyani*, *Joytara*, *Mangalchandi* icons. There is also an important shrine in the temple compound apart from main temple. This south facing shrine is located on the eastern side of the main shrine and popularly known as **Bhabani Temple**. The height of this shrine is 28 ft approximately and it is also an example of the amalgamation of *Charchālā* type which is intermixed with Islamic domed roofing. Red coloured **Bhabani Devi** (1'6" in height) is the prime revered icon in this shrine. According to popular belief it is an iconic representation of Devi Komoteswori^{lix} - the most ancient goddess in this region.

Conclusion

So from the above all discussion it is clearly recognised that from the initial phase of the architectural history of Cooch Behar this peripheral part of Bengal is distinguished by the amalgamation of different traditional styles which ultimately paved the way for the introduction of distinct and composite typed temple architecture in this area. The general architectural features of most of the temples in this area were *Charchālā* type intermixing with Islamic art and structural decoration like the introduction of latticed window, *Mihrab* (i.e. semi-circular niche), hemispherical dome, haunches, arches etc. Not only two types but in one case we have found the intermixing of three different styles (*chālā*, *dalan* and also Islamic structural pattern) on in one architectural project of Cooch Behar which is a quite fascinating fact. Some key elements like regionalism, pluralism & hybridism are very much responsible for this unique and blended stylistic development in this periphery. In this context an important architectural feature also to be mentioned must. Professor Bagchi draws our attention by mentioning this noticeable feature i.e. the location of *garbhagrha* in some of the *Śiva* temples of Cooch Behar (like Banasvar and Harihara) are constructed underground. According to her it symbolizes the mother's womb and a devotee is resurrected to a new life after the visit to the divinity in the *garbhagrha* of these temples.^{lx} The architecture of Cooch Behar has also influenced the

adjoining Ahom architecture to such extent that this form of architecture popularly known as 'Nīlāchala' type in this area as because this type of architecture was experimented for the first time in the reconstruction of *Kāmākhyā* temple (1565 C.E).^{lxi} However, after discussing and considering all these facts certainly it can be said that the temple architecture of Cooch Behar did contribute impressively for the versatility & enrichment of Bengal & Indian temple architecture.

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Floral Depictions in the Coiffure of Ancient Indian terracotta

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Abstract:

India, world famous for its culture has a diverse, rich and elongated motifs tradition. In fact, the traditions of motifs in our country can trace their origin back, almost to about 5000 years ago, to the ancient Indus Valley and Mohenjodaro civilizations, and they have been created and developed through the ages against a background that is richly woven with the myths and imaginary of sign and symbol. The development of a particular motif is undoubtedly being the result of religion, customs, natural surroundings and social beliefs of the particular area to which its creator belongs. Though always speculative, the meaning of the motifs used in decoration of coiffure, Head-dress and hair dress may change with cultural context but the symbolic meaning of various motifs remains some whatever they are applied.

Key words: Ancient, Antiquities. Motifs, Religion, Symbols, Tradition.

History is generally deals with the exploits of the kings and their achievements in the field of administration, the rise and the fall of states and the social and economic conditions of the people. But such a history cannot be regarded as complete. It should present the story of the people and their life, thought and culture. It should record the characteristics as well as reactions of the people to physical and economic conditions. It should contain an account of their social institutions, beliefs and forms. It is, therefore, necessary to deal with history of costume, coiffure and ornaments. Head dress was a common item of male and female attire in ancient India which is still used by the people on ceremonial occasions or even when one goes out. The antiquities found from Harappa and Mohenjodaro¹ reveal that both men and women generally wore a fan like head dress, but in case of a nude male figure, it looks like cap curling into a point.

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In other parts of the country, however, the practice of hair-dressing was in vogue from very early times as is evident from the antiquities unearthed at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. These antiquities reveal that men had varied styles of hair-dressing². Their hair was taken back from the forehead and was either cut short behind or coiled in a knot or chignon at the back with a fillet to support it. A terracotta figure is of special interest because it shows curly hair. The discovery of combs at Mahenjodaro also testifies to the fashion of hair arrangement in the Indus Valley period. The terracotta of Mauryan period gives better picture of hair-dressing.

It appears from the antiquities of the Indus Valley that the females were very fond of arranging their hair in different ways. The head of a woman from Mohenjodaro shows curly hair hanging down at the back of the head. In the Vedic period women dressed their hair in various ways as is evident from the literature. It has been described by the terms *Stulka*, *Kurira* or *Kumba*, *Opasa* and *Kaparda*.³ These terms probably denote different styles of hair dressing.

In the Buddhist literature,⁴ there are references to the head-dress called *usnisa*. During the Mauryan period in the North Eastern India, it appears that the head dress was an essential item as evident from the terracotta and was used with much care and taste. Megasthenese says that, 'Indians wore an upper garment which they partly throw over their shoulders and partly twist in folds round their head.'⁵ Circular pendants or leaf-like designs are also noticed on the torque around the head and on the lateral chignons of the turban, as we found in the Basarh and Sarnath figures. The history of hair dressing in North Eastern India can actually be traced from the Mauryan period. The terracotta which has been ascribed to the Mauryan period is different from those of Sunga sculptures.

Regarding the arrangement of hair by women in the Mauryan period it is mentioned in the Arthasastra of Kautilya that they were not allowed to keep hair on their head, but at another place it is mentioned that they shall keep away the queen from the society of ascetics with shaven heads. It may appear from the above description that women were not very fond of hair dressing but the terracotta ascribed to this period reveal that women did arranged their hair in different ways. Of course, the use of head dress was more popular than the practice of arranging the hair among the female folk.

Sometimes the hair was combed at the fore-head with lateral discs or cones converted into flowers. The terracotta of the Sunga period found from various parts of North-eastern India also reveal some more types of head dresses. The turban with diagonal leaf pattern impressed on the band and top knot is also very interesting because it enhances the beauty of the figure. The literary sources like *Natyasastra*⁶ and *Divyavadana*⁷ refer to the use of turbans by the people, but it appears to be confined to a particular class such as kings, minister, soldiers and priests.

The head dress has had always been forming an important adornment of the women's outfit. In the beginning the head dresses were fairly simple, but gradually they became more and more elaborate and decorative. In the Sunga period it appears the necessity of the use of head dress was felt by the people. According to Motichandra⁸, ladies generally wore a long piece of cloth to cover their head, but turban was also used on special occasions. A terracotta male figure from Patna showed hair has been combed into forehead with lateral dices or cones converted into flowers. The fragmentary head from Sarnath⁹ is remarkable for it is framed by a number of conventional spiral curls. A floral wreath of a pattern common in Sunga art appears above the curls and there is also a crenellated crown of the Persian design. Men generally kept long hair tied in a top knot around which the folds of the turban were arranged¹⁰ further, musicians, soldiers and charioteers wear curled locks of hair falling on either side of the face.

In the Sunga period, most of the female figures shown on their railings of Bodhagaya wear some sort of head-dress but as such it is difficult to trace the arrangement of their hair. A very good example of the complex arrangement of their hair is noticed in a terracotta head from Bulandibagh. The head appears to be that of a female. In this case some of the locks of hair have been shown of the left side of the head, while one or two locks have been shown hanging on the right side.

In the study of male hair-dressing in India during Kusana period, there is the beginning of a new Helmet, i.e. the Hellenistic element in the domain of Indian art. One may say that in the Kusana period one finds on one hand continuance of the same fashions of hair arrangement which are noticed in the Sunga period, while on the other hand some new methods also appear to have been adopted which bar the Hellenistic

influence. In the Kusana period, we come across with different types of hair arrangements. The stone sculptures of the Kusana period found from Mathura, Bihar and Bengal also testify to the practice of arranging the hair in different styles. Some arranged their hair in pig-tails too.¹¹

The literary, foreign and archaeological accounts of the Gupta period afford ample material for the study of hair-dressing. In Amarakosa there are further references that men had long hairs in which they wore flowers. It may also note that men in the Gupta period delighted in wearing their hair in wig-like fashion. The practice of arranging the hair prevalent in the Gupta period must have continued to survive in the succeeding periods. This fact may be corroborated by the literary, foreign and archaeological accounts of the post-Gupta periods.

The people of Gupta period appear to have particular attention to their costume, coiffure and ornament. The hair of women during the period was arranged in various ways. Not only was the hair adorned in different styles but was also decorated with flowers and ornaments in order to make it more attractive and beautiful. Literary sources, foreign accounts and archaeological finds are very helpful for the study of coiffure. Regarding the female hair dressing, Kalidasa says that women grew long hair; combed, parted and then knitted them in long tresses. They wore flowers, pearls and gems in their long hanging tresses and on the parting line. In the *Abhijnanamsakuntalam*, it is mentioned that Sakuntala appeared before the king with a band in the shape of a bun which was to the length of the hair and was finally decorated with flowers. In the *Kadambari* Bana has mentioned that hair net¹² was also used by the females to make it more attractive. In the *Raghuvamsa* he said that, the hair was tied up in some kind of knot, so as to stand perpendicularly with a pearl string intermixed with flower-garland; there upon was fixed a resplendent jewel.¹³ Further, the term *mauli* corresponds to *dhammila*¹⁴ according to *mallinatha*. The Kirta-mukuta represented on the head of Buddha in the Patna museum is made up two slanting rectangles joined above with a coping having floral designs.

Bana, the author of *Harsacharita* and the *Kadambari*, has furnished many interesting information as regards the hair dressing of the males and the females.¹⁵ As

regards the arrangement of the hair by males, he says that, Bhandi, the son of queen Yasovati's brother, had side locks of curly hair at the age of eight, the chief who had come to visit Harsa, had peacock's feather stuck in the top knots. The practice of keeping long hair appears to have been popular in this period as well. Bana's friend Sudrasti wore a thick bunch of flowers in his short top knot. According to G.H. Ojha¹⁶ and C.V. Vaidya¹⁷ people during the period, c.600 to 1200 A.D., used to give special attention to hair dressing. They wore long hair which might have been arranged in coils, either at the back or at the top of the head.

So, it is clear from the description that the floral motifs or flower motifs played an important role in the head-dressing, hair-dressing and garments of ancient Indian terracotta, which reflects through various instances of different periods of ancient Indian art which is an important expression of the Cultural Revolution.

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Legitimization Process in Tripuri State Formation: Accommodating Sanskritization & Primordial Culture

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Abstract

Researchers since the second half of the 20th Century have been emphasizing on the importance of legitimization as a causative behind early state formation. The present paper tries to examine the way the Tripuri kingship and the Tripura kingdom acquired legitimacy. Like similar other early states of India (including North East India) and South East Asia, sanskritization played its part as a legitimizing ideology in this early state too. Bestowing the kṣatriya status upon the Māṇikyā kings, building Hindu temples, digging ponds, donating lands to the Brahmins, patronage given to the Bengali and, to a lesser extent, Sanskrit languages, etc, are instances of this process. However, one unique feature of the legitimization process in Tripura was the co-existence of the Hindu and primordial/tribal beliefs, and this is the most important theme of the present paper.

KEYWORDS: *Sanskritization, Hinduisation, legitimization, Shaivism, Tripura*

Introduction

Since the formulations of Marx and Engels in the Mid-19th Century on the subject, especially since the mid-twentieth century, a number of new ideas have been emerging in study of state formation. One of such is the role of legitimacy in early states. Marc J. Swartz, V. Turner and A. Tuden were among the first to point out the importance of this causative behind state formation¹. Henry J. M Claessen and Peter Skalnik too included legitimization as one of the factors for the rise of early states². State power is essentially a coercive authority. This was more so in the case of early states. But the loyalty of the ruled cannot be ensured by force alone.

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Thus, it is seen in the early states arising out of tribal bases in India and South East Asia that to acquire ruling authorities patronized ideologies pertaining to religion and other aspects of culture — mostly belonging to groups outside the tribal ones from which these states emerged. Often these ideologies or beliefs belonged to the groups which were the chief sources of tax or surplus for these states. These helped in raising the status of the ruling class (of the tribes) and drawing consent from the ruled. The present paper attempts to study this phenomenon in the Tripuri state formation in North East India.

In the Indian context historians like Ram Sharan Sharma³, Romila Thapar⁴, B.P Sahu⁵ and B.D Chattopadhyaya⁶ brought out the importance of ideology in legitimizing various ruling dynasties in Ancient and Early Medieval India. Of particular importance here are the works of Hermann Kulke and his associates in relation to the Indian and South East Asian early states⁷. All these have put forward the importance of sanskritization/Hinduization⁸ as the legitimizing ideology in these regions. These studies are all the more interesting since some of these historians belong to the Marxist school of historiography. With the coming of Islam, a new ‘sanctifying’ ideology arose in Medieval India, as is seen during the Turko-Afghan and Mughal rules. However, this type of legitimization was not relevant for the Kingdom of Tripura.

In the North East Indian context Surajit C. Sinha was one of the first to identify the importance of cultural factors behind the early state formations in the region⁹. J.B. Bhattacharjee did some important works in theorizing about the role of sanskritization (termed *Pan-Indian Culture Continuum* by him) as the legitimizing ideology in the North East Indian early states¹⁰. As regards Tripura, the present paper is the first attempt in this respect. The traditional historical works of the Tripura Kingdom, e.g. Rājmaḷā¹¹ and Rājaratnākara¹² have been used as the primary literary sources for the present study. Some archaeological sources too have come up for discussion. Secondary sources on the general histories of the state have been referred to in the relevant sections. Secondary sources related to the legitimation in other regions of India and South East Asia (some already mentioned in this paper) have also been of use for this study. Besides, some

personal experiences of the present author regarding the tribal religious customs in Tripura too have been put in use.

Legitimization and the Kingdom : Sanskritization/Hinduization

As in other parts of North East India and other regions of India as well as in South East Asia, sanskritization/hinduization played a pivotal role in legitimizing the Tripuri state under the Māṅikya kings too. The present study has identified some phases in this process. The **first phase** was during the pre-kingdom/pre-state period, i.e. before the mid-15th Century C.E. The Rājāmālā account of this period¹³, though full of mythical elements, apparently does contain the distant memories of this time when the Tripuri tribe was still not settled permanently. Though the Kingdom was not established, the divide between the ‘ruler’/chief and tribal commoners, in howsoever rudimentary form, had been established by this time. ‘King’ Chemthum Phā’s conquest of Meherkul in the plains to the east of the river Meghna (c. early 13th Century C.E)¹⁴ or the reference to Dāṅgar Phā’s residence in North Tripura¹⁵ point to such stratification.

It is natural to assume here that the ideological justification for this exalted position of the tribal chief was given during this period itself. The present paper argues that sanskritization was part of this ‘justification’ even in this early period. The reference to the formal establishment of the cult of *Caturdaśa Deva* (literally meaning the fourteen gods, the tutelary deity of the Māṅikya Dynasty) during the mythical King Trilocana’s reign alludes to such possibilities¹⁶. The Hinduization of this cult started, in whatever rudimentary form, during this phase. It was the Śaiva religious ideology which was the earliest form of ‘Hindu’ influence on the Tripuris. When the tribe was in the Barak Valley or in North Tripura, they probably came under this influence, for the adjoining areas of Sylhet (in the present Bangladesh) were strongholds of Shaivism during the early medieval era. The archaeological remains of Unakoti in North Tripura give evidence of the Śaiva influence in the region during this period. The Tripura-Trilocana episode¹⁷ or ‘King’ Kumāra’s devotion to Śiva¹⁸ symbolizes this influence. Later, Chemthum Phā’s conquest in the present south-eastern Bangladesh brought the tribe further into the contact of the ‘mainstream’ culture of the plains.

The **second phase** of this sanskritization was reached during King Ratna Māṇikya I's reign. His rule marked the establishment of the Tripuri Kingdom. He was the first Māṇikya ruler to issue coins from which the first definite date of Tripura's history (Śaka 1386/1464 C.E) is known. His coins bear invocations of Hindu gods, i.e. Durgā, Śiva and Nārāyaṇa as well as of the Hinduized *Caturdaśa Deva*. The latter cult had been sanskritized or Hinduized, at least partially, by his time. The Kingdom had two parts --- the plains and the hills. By invoking both the Hindu and tribal Hinduized deities Ratna Māṇikya I was apparently trying to make his exalted royal authority legitimate to his subjects in both these areas.

His coins bear similarities with those of the Bengal Sultanate, but the Islamic style thereon was given a new 'Hindu' interpretation. The influence of the coins of Rājā Gaṇeśa/Danuḥamardanadeva and Mahendradeva, the early 15th Century C.E 'Hindu rebels' of Bengal, too are visible¹⁹. All these may have been due to a conscious effort on the Tripuri King's part to position himself as a 'champion/protector of the Hindu ethos'. This might also represent his symbolic declaration of 'independence' from the control of the Bengal Sultan who had 'helped' him in capturing the 'throne'.

Legitimation is one of the causatives of early state formation. This process used to continue even after the formation of such states and contribute to their sustenance. The Tripuri Kingdom under the Māṇikya rulers was no exception in this respect. Thus, the **third phase** of the hinduization process started after Ratna Māṇikya I's reign and continued till the state's merger with the Indian Union. King Dhanya Maṇikya's rule (1490 C.E – c. 1515 C.E) saw the consolidation of the kingship and some successful military clashes, both defensive and offensive, against Bengal. Together with these, this was also an era of more sanskritization. 'On being directed by the Mother Goddess (*Bhagavatī/Kālī*) in his dreams'²⁰, the King brought the idol of the Goddess from Chittagong and established it in a temple in his capital (presently Udaipur). Known as the Tripureśvarī Temple, this shrine is considered to be one of the fifty one sacred centres (*pīṭha*) of the Śakti/Śākta cult. Sustained royal patronage added to the prestige of this shrine, and the highly sanctified status of the latter contributed to the legitimacy of the

Māṅikya authority. Dhanya Māṅikya is also credited with founding the old *Caturdaśa Deva* Temple in Udaipur.

The Tripuri rulers used to perform the *Durgā Pujā* festival every year, though the time this tradition started is not known. Although the Mother Goddess cult had been in vogue in Ancient and Early Medieval India, in Medieval Bengal the celebration of *Durgā Pujā* started as a mark of defiance against the curbs imposed on the Hindu religious practices during the Turko-Afghan rule. The invocation of this deity on Ratna Māṅikya I's coins speaks of the *Durgā* cult's importance in the Tripuri state's legitimization process. On the night of *Vijayā Daśamī* (the last day of the *Durgā Pujā*), the Māṅikya kings used to host a dinner (*Hasam Bhojan*) in which the subordinate hill tribal chiefs from remote areas used to take part. On the following night the royal officials used to hold a parley with these tribal chiefs regarding the situation in the remote areas of the Kingdom. Apart from redistributing the surplus and performing other administrative functions, this was a classic example of using religion to sanctify royal authority.

Kaliprasanna Sen informs²¹ that the Māṅikya kings initially were followers of the Śaiva and Śākta creeds, but later Vaishnavism began to get more royal favour. Vaiṣṇava influence had been there in the Kingdom right from Ratna Māṅikya I's period, as attested by the invocation of Nārāyaṇa inscribed on his coins. Kings like Rājadhara Māṅikya I and Yaśodhara Māṅikya had Vaiṣṇava leanings. But it was from Rāmadeva Māṅikya's reign (c. 1676 – c. 1685 C.E) that the Vaiṣṇava influence became the paramount one over the royal family. This king was formally initiated by a Vaiṣṇava saint named Rasikānanda Gosvāmī. The latter was a descendant of the famous Bengal Vaiṣṇava saint Nityānanda, a close associate of Caitanyadeva, the 'arch patriarch' of Bengal Vaishnavism. Gradually a tradition of Nityānanda's descendants occupying the position of *Rājaguru* (spiritual guide of kings) set in. But initiation to Vaishnavism was not mandatory for all the members or rulers of the Dynasty. The kings never persecuted the Śaiva and Śākta cults, and continued to pay due devotional respect to them. The traditional celebration of the *Durgā Pujā* festival is a pointer in this regard. Temples dedicated to various Hindu deities came up throughout the history of the Māṅikya Tripura. These are important markers of religious history and sanskritization.

Like some other similar early states of North East India as well as of other parts of India, land donations to Brahmins, temple building, digging of wells/big water reservoirs and royal pilgrimages to Hindu religious centers were means of legitimating in Medieval Tripura too. The first of the historically (and almost unanimously) accepted land grants in the Tripuri Kingdom was made by Vijaya Māṇikya I in Śaka 1410/1488 C.E²². Such donations, along with pond-digging and pilgrimages, functioned in various ways to strengthen the royal authority.

Firstly, as land donations and ponds were all in the plain areas, these works helped, like in some other neighbouring early states, the hill tribal ruling class of Tripura to officially stamp their authority on those areas and earmark the territorial boundaries of the Kingdom.

Secondly, one of the features of such land donations in Early Medieval India was to spread Hinduization in new and remote areas. A number of Rājput and other dynasties donated lands to the Brahmins and Hindu temples in lieu of which they were assigned with mythical origins by their beneficiaries. These kingdoms also acted as bulwarks against 'Non-Hindu' cultural and political dominance. The land donations in Medieval Tripura, along with the temple-building, pond-digging and pilgrimages, played the same role. These also showed the religious leanings of the donors.

Thirdly, pond-digging was considered as an act of religious merit. Thus, these ponds were often linked to some religious establishments. Besides, these were also sources of water for the common subjects. These might have been used for agricultural purposes too, though it is not known how much of the water of the ponds dug by the Tripura kings were used for irrigation or whether these were at all used for this purpose. Nevertheless, these water reservoirs were often the places near which new human habitations arose. This trend, one may assume, also contributed to the expansion of agriculture and craft in the realm. Most importantly, by providing water and, indirectly, new habitations the kings were legitimizing their own positions in the eyes of their subjects.

Coins²³ and **inscriptions**²⁴ of the Tripura kings, apart from having other functions, were tools of sanskritization too. As has been shown earlier in this paper, right during Ratna Māṇikya I's reign the coins began to perform this role. The epigraphs too

show signs of this acculturation. The invocations of Hindu (or Brahminical, if one wants to say) deities, use of Śaka era, pattern of poetical compositions in Sanskrit epigraphs, use of Bengali and Sanskrit – all show the Medieval Tripura coins and inscriptions following a pan-Indian cultural pattern.

Adoption of an Indo-Aryan language or a language of the non-tribal plainsmen, an integral part of legitimization in the early state formations in India and South East Asia, can be termed as **linguistic sanskritization**. The use of Bengali and Sanskrit for administrative and cultural purposes in the Tripura Kingdom is an example of such process. In fact, the Māṇikya rulers did not give patronage to any tribal language. Linguistic sanskritization was in operation at the time of the Kingdom's establishment itself, and it continued till the Māṇikya princely state's merger with the Union of India in 1949. The royal chronicles were all composed in Bengali (in Sanskrit, in the case of Rājaratnākara). Patronage to the Bengali language became more prominent from the second half of the 19th Century, i.e. from Birchandra Manikya's time.

However, all these influences were on the royal and upper official circle. The royal historical chronicles linked the Māṇikya Dynasty with the Lunar Dynasty (*candravaṃśa*) of Mahābhārata. The economic importance of the plains and the urge to get linked to a pan-Indian cultural tradition probably led the Tripura royalty to patronize sanskritization, but the Tripuris as a whole never got transformed into any caste within the Hindu society. Gradually, though, some steps were undertaken in that direction. For example, Birchandra Manikya extended the *kṣatriya* (warrior Hindu caste) status to the Tripuri tribal commoners, hitherto reserved exclusively for the kings and their kinsmen. But despite these efforts, the Tripuris remained, as they still are, a tribe.

Discussion on sanskritization/Hinduization will not be complete without some words on **art** and **architecture**. Worshipping full idols is not a feature of the tribal culture in Tripura. But the acceptance of the Hindu cults required the worship of full images. While the royal class followed such practice, its role in the common tribal cultural milieu was marginal. Hindu temples were built wherein full idols were the objects of worship. In temple architecture the four-roofed (*cārcālā*) Bengal style was in

use. However, the evolved Buddhist dome-like (*stūpa*) structure surmounting the temples was the special feature of the state's temple-building²⁵.

Legitimization & the Kingdom : 'Negotiating' Primordial Culture

One interesting aspect in the formation of the early states (especially of India) arising out of tribal bases is the place accorded to the primordial tribal culture therein. This was all the more important in the Kingdom of Tripura where the hill tribes continued to follow their primordial beliefs, and the influence of hinduization over them was (and, to a great extent, still is) superficial. The Tripuri royal class did not disturb this *status quo* and patronized some of the tribal cults. This approach had its role in the legitimation process. Two tribal cults that were important in this respect were those of **Caturdaśa Deva** and **Ker**.

As has been discussed earlier, the *Caturdaśa Deva* (meaning fourteen gods) cult had probably been instituted in its pristine form before the Kingdom was established. The religious festival associated with this cult is known as **Khārci Pujā** which is held in the month of June-July every year. Though some particular deities belonging to the *Caturdaśa Deva* pantheon were and still are worshipped separately in their pristine domestic forms by the hill tribes, the *Caturdaśa Deva* is a deity in collective form. And in this form the deity was to be worshipped exclusively by the royalty. The latter were the ones who had the exclusive right to organize **Khārci Pujā**. Evidently this right put the 'ritual status' of the royalty above the common tribesmen. It was the tutelary cult of the Tripuri royal dynasty. As has been referred to earlier, traditionally Trilocana, a mythical king belonging to the pre-state period, is credited with establishing this cult. This tradition probably alludes to the role this cult played, in whatever rudimentary form, in raising the status of the Tripuri chiefs in the pre-Kingdom period. King Dhanya Māṇikya built the first *Caturdaśa Deva* temple in the capital Ratnapura (presently Udaipur). Later, Kṛṣṇa Māṇikya (1760 C.E – 1783 C.E) re-established the temple in Old Agartala.

The *Caturdaśa Deva*, as the name suggests, includes fourteen gods --- Hara (Śiva), Umā (Durgā), Hari (Viṣṇu), Mā (Lakṣmī), Vāṇī (Sarasvatī), Kumāra (Kārttikeya), Gaṇapā (Gaṇeśa), Vidhi (Brahmā), Kṣmā (Pṛthvī/earth god), Abdhi (Samudra, the sea god), Gaṅgā, Śikhi/Agni (the fire-god), Kāma/Kāmadeva (the god of lust) and Himādri

(Himālaya). Despite the claims on the contrary, these are not the original names of the deities. Tribal gods were identified with Hindu puranic deities to put a veneer of sanskritizing influence on the cult. Their original tribal names are --- *Matai Katar* (the Supreme God), *Matai Katarmā* (the Supreme Goddess), *Nakcu Matai* (the tutelary family spirit), *Akhtra* (the sea god), *Gariā* (the god of war), *Kālāiā* (the ancestor spirit), *Māilumā* (the earth goddess), *Sāṃgrām* (the hill god), *Tuimā* (water goddess), etc ²⁶.

Surja Phujā Khelāimāni²⁷ (literal meaning – *to worship the sun-god*), a Kokborok text of tribal religious rituals, gives another list of tribal names for these gods, viz. *Subrāi Rājā/Cibrāi Rājā* (the Supreme God), *Sāngramā* (the Mother Goddess), *Hābuṃ Bubāgrā* (the earth god), *Taibubāgrā* (the water goddess), *Naukhantāi Bubāgrā* (the guardian deity of family), *Bāsuā Bubāgrā* (the custodian of evil), *Māneṃphā* (the god granting life), *Mināṃphā* (creator of creatures), etc²⁸. As the text was written in the Śaka 1621/1699 C.E, the list given by it can claim much reliability in describing the cult's features during the medieval era. The essentially tribal character of the cult is further proved by the fact that unlike the Tripureśvarī or other fully Hindu cults, **Khārci Pujā** requires the tribal priests, viz. *cantāi* and *deorāi* to perform the main rituals associated with it, not the Hindu traditional priests (*purohita*).

Instead of full idols, only the head images of the deities are found in the *Caturdaśa Deva* Temple. Kailas Chandra Simha²⁹, one of the earliest writers on Tripura's history, refers to an old saying regarding this. It says that having been defeated in the fratricidal war, King Dakṣiṇa (pronounced *Dakkhin* in Bengali, one of the mythical 'kings' belonging to the pre-Ratna Māṇikyā I period) brought the heads of the original full images of the fourteen gods to his new seat of power in the Barak Valley. From that time onwards his descendants were worshipping those head-images. This may lead one to assume that these head-images were the outcome of an intra-tribal or inter-tribal clash during the pre-state period.

However, no historical source, not even Rājmālā, refers to any such saying. It is argued in the present paper that the absence of the full images of the deities may have been due to Tripura's traditional tribal religious practice of worshipping bamboo symbols of deities, instead of full earthen or metallic images. Thus, initially the fourteen gods too

were perhaps worshipped in the forms of bamboo symbols like in **Ker** or other tribal cults. This argument becomes pertinent in view of the fact that some of the gods of this pantheon (with their original tribal names) are still worshipped in the tribal villages in this way. Later probably this custom was sanskritized, and metallic head-images were introduced as a 'compromise'.

But while in the case of **Khārci Pujā** the traditional tribal beliefs are mingled with Hindu religious customs and motifs, **Ker Pujā** is a totally tribal religious affair. The latter is performed on the first Saturday or Tuesday after two weeks of Khārci Pujā, though in the hills it takes place more than once at different points of a year. Unlike the Khārci Pujā, it used to be performed both in the royal circle and in the tribal villages. Royal Ker Pujā used to be organized in the Capital, a custom still followed by the Govt. of Tripura. Typical of the tribal culture in the state, a bamboo symbol is the object of worship in **Ker Pujā**. The solemnity and secrecy associated with its rituals together with the fact that even the literary sources desist from Hinduizing or detribalizing this cult speak of its pristine primordial nature. The performance of the **Ker Pujā** in the royal circle helped in the legitimization process. It was a unique example of using a totally tribal religious ideology to elevate kingship in an early state and asserting the tribal link of the ruling class, with no negotiation/mediation by Hinduization.

The Rājṃālā reference of 'King' Śikṣma unknowingly taking cooked human flesh³⁰ in all probability points to the prevalence of cannibalism and its corollary custom of human sacrifice in the early Tripuri society. In the medieval era some of these elements merged with the Tantric religious customs to give different impetus to this trend. The Tripurāsundarī/Tripureśvarī and *Caturdaśa Deva* cults initially involved large scale human sacrifice, along with animal slaughter. Dhanya Māṅikya tried to put restrictions on human sacrifice. Later at some point of time in the medieval era itself the custom of human sacrifice was discontinued. The growing Vaiṣṇava influence and increased sanskritization probably effected this change.

Religious history is not the subject matter of this paper. Thus, only those aspects of religion, especially the tribal religion, which had bearings on the legitimization process in the Māṅikya state have been discussed here.

Land grants were made to the Muslim saints and religious establishments too. According to Kailas Chandra Simha, the Muslim Bengalees outnumbered the Hindus in the state³¹. Whether this was the case throughout the Kingdom's history is not known. But these grants recognized the importance of this section of the subjects. Grants to Muslims in Tripura were unique, if compared with other early state formations in North East India. The administration set up by Ratna Māṇikya I had Indo-Muslim influences. But all these did not disturb the main contours of the legitimizing ideology in the Kingdom.

Maintaining relations with other states ensures **external legitimacy** for any state, whether early or modern. The relation with the Bengal Sultanate facilitated the establishment of the Māṇikya Kingdom. Matrimonial relation with the Meitei Kingdom of Manipur, established from the time of Rājadhara Māṇikya II (1785-1804 C.E), was another form of such legitimacy. The Āhom King Rudra Siṃha sent two envoys named Arjundās Bairāgī and Ratna Kandalī Śarmā to the Tripura royal court in the early 18th Century C.E. But the scope of the present work does not permit a more detailed discussion on these external relations.

Conclusion

It has been shown in the present paper that while sanskritization was the major cultural medium of legitimization in Tripura, it was the active patronage given to the tribal cults by the Māṇikya rulers that lends uniqueness to the state formation here. Like similar early states of India and South East Asia, Hinduization/sanskritization was the dominant cultural influence patronized by the Tripuri royalty. This trend had started before the time when the state was established and taken a definite shape by the time Ratna Māṇikya I founded the Kingdom. The process continued throughout the time the state existed, as is seen in the shape of land grants, coins, inscriptions, temple-building, pond-digging, patronage given to the Bengali and Sanskrit languages, etc. However, unlike similar early states, tribal cults were actively used to sanctify the royal authority in the Tripura Kingdom. Hinduization had to negotiate with primordial elements, and sometimes pristine tribal beliefs had to be accepted in the legitimization process in *toto*. Apart from sanskritization and patronage to tribal cults, the Tripuri rulers also granted lands to the

Muslims and incorporated some Indo-Islamic features in the administration. But it did not influence the Kingdom's mainstream cultural orientation. Besides, there was the role of maintaining relations with other states, which earned external legitimacy. However, the latter aspect is of marginal importance for the present study.

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Nrisimha Temples in Cooch Behar: Religious Pluralism against aggressive imperialism?

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Cooch Behar became a feudatory state by virtue of the Treaty of 1773. Maharaja Dharendranarayan, on whose behalf the Treaty was concluded by the Nazir Deo¹ Khagendranarayan and the English East India Company, was the first king of the country to acknowledge his subjection to the will of the Company. After the untimely death of Dharendranarayan, his father Dhairyendranarayan became the King for the second time. In 1783, Dhairyendranarayan died and his younger son Harendranarayan ascended the throne at the age of three years and nine months. During the minority of the King, 'Queen Regent' Kameswari Devi would direct the state administration as the sole guardian of the state² as per the will of the late king. Attaining majority in 1801, the full ruling power was assumed by Harendranarayan. He was one of the ablest rulers (and also the last powerful king) of the Koch dynasty. He died in 1839, thus reigning for the longest period among the Koch Kings.

Harendranarayan was a typical Hindu with immense devotion to gods, goddesses and Brahmins. He used to give the daily burnt offering, listened to the recital of the *Puranas* and gave out rice and gold to the people. From sectarian point of view, he was a sincere and devout Sakta, who loved to sing self-composed songs to the goddess Kali at the conclusion of the daily worship. His peculiar religious faith enjoined seclusion, which necessitated him in the later days to adopt ascetic habits.³ Desiring to breathe his last in the holy city of Kashi, the king went there in 1836. It is the belief of the Hindus that death in Varanasi brings salvation, as it is closely associated with the Ganges as well as Siva or Mahadeva (Great God). He spent large amount of money in Benaras in charity and stayed there until his wish of death life was fulfilled in 1839.

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The reign of Harendranarayan was glorious for the religious literature. It also witnessed the construction of a large number of temples and installation of images of various gods and goddesses. Needless to say that temple is always considered as the symbolic representation of God. Moreover, a Hindu temple is also regarded as a *tirtha* made by art.⁴ Temple-building has, therefore, always been looked upon as a sacred act that is to enhance one's fame and renown in this world and one's eligibility for a place in Heaven. *Brihatsamhita*, an early text, lays down that "Let him who wishes to enter the worlds that are reached by meritorious deeds of piety and charity build a temple to the gods."⁵ *Bhavishya Purana* also goes on echoing the same thing.⁶ For a ruler like Harendranarayan, who wished death in the holy city of Varanasi obviously for salvation, it was quite but natural to devote himself to the construction of temples to augment his eligibility for a heavenly abode.

The temples which were constructed during the reign of Maharaja Harendranarayan⁷ may be mentioned here sect-wise. (A) Saiva temples: (i) Hiranyagarbha Siva temple (Cooch Behar Town), (ii) Yajneswar Siva temple (Abuyar Pathar), (iii) Krotswar⁸ Siva Temple (Abuyar Pathar) and (iv) Mahakal Siva image (Bhavani Temple, Abuyar Pathar); (B) Sakta or Devi Temples: (i) Anandamoyee Kali Temple (Madanmohan Temple complex, Cooch Behar town), (ii) Bamakali temple (Gosainganj), (iii) Temple housing images of Jayatara, Annapurna, Chandi and Patdevati (Gosainganj), (iv) Siddheswari/Bhagavati temple (Siddheswar village), (v) Brikshodvaba Thakurani/ Kamakhyarupini (Kamrangagachh, Siddheswari temple complex) and (vi) Ghurneswari temple (Chamta); (C) Vaisnava Temples/images: (i) Images of Krishna, Balaram & Lakshinarayan (in the inner apartment of old palace, Cooch Behar town), (ii) image of Govardhandhari (Nrisimha Bari Pally, Cooch Behar town), (iii) images of Radharaman & Radhavinod (Near inner apartment of old palace, Cooch Behar), (iv) Dindayal/Krishna image (Madanmohan temple of old palace, Cooch Behar Town), (v) Nrisimha Temple (Nrisimha Bari Pally, Cooch Behar Town). (vi) Nrisimha temple (Takagarchh Pally, Cooch Behar), and (vii) Jagannath temple (Patkura Pally, Gosainganj).

To have constructed Saiva or Devi temples by a devout Sakta king Harendranarayan is not unexpected or unnatural. But His erection of Vaisnava temples, especially of the two shrines of Narasingha, one of the ten *avatars* of Visnu in half-man, half-lion form, cannot be without much significance. The present paper, admitting the factor of eclectic religious inspiration, attempts further to attribute the construction of these two temples to the political tug-of-war between the independence-loving and religious-minded king Harendranarayan on the one hand and a nakedly imperialist power like the English East India Company on the other.

We would now look at these two temples for a short while. The first Nrisingha temple⁹ is situated in Nrisinghapally at Pacharangi More near Magazine Road in Cooch Behar town. It is said that Maharaja Harendranarayana had established the temple¹⁰ and installed the images of Nrisimha and Govardhana in its sanctum along with making provision for the expenses of daily worship. It may be noted that an inscription claims its construction in the year 1868 A.D., which falls in no way in the period of Harendranarayan's reign. It is, therefore, reasonable to think that on the very ruins of the old temple a new temple was re-constructed, though no relics of the old shrine is traceable. The present temple made of brick and square in shape with flat roof and veranda faces the west. The image of Nrisimha is worshipped daily inside the temple. On the occasion of Dolpurnima, special *puja* is also offered. In course of time, god Nrisingha has become a family deity of the family members of the former priests, who take care of the maintenance of the temple.¹¹ The second Nrisingha temple¹² stands at Takagachh or Srirampura Dham about a mile west of the present royal palace. The presiding deity Narasimha was installed by Maharaja Harendranarayana¹³ along with construction of a temple for the deity. Arrangement was also made for the daily worship. Besides the idol of Nrisingha, those of Radha-Krishna, Gopal, Narayanashila, etc. are also installed in the sanctum. In addition to daily worship, special *puja* is also offered to the god Nrisingha during annual festivals of *Dolpurnima*, *Amavasya Samkranti*, etc. The temple is square in shape, having four sheds of corrugated iron. It is an aided temple, maintained by the heirs of the former priest.

We would now look to the background of Nrisingha incarnation of Visnu to hint at an analogous situation in Kamta-Koch kingdom during the reign of Harendranarayan. Hiranyakasipu, a demon king mentioned in Book 7 of the *Bhagavata Purana*, hated Visnu like anything as his younger brother Hiranyaksha was slain by Varaha, the boar avatar of Vishnu. He, therefore, decided to kill Visnu by dint of mystical powers granted by Brahma because of his many years' austerity and penance. Hiranyakasipu's son Prahlada was, however, a great devotee of Vishnu, much to his father's disappointment.¹⁴ Hiranyakashipu eventually became so angry and upset at his son's devotion to Vishnu that he decided to kill him.¹⁵ But each time he attempted to kill the boy, Prahlada was protected by Vishnu's mystical power. When asked, Prahlada refused to acknowledge his father as the supreme lord of the universe and claimed that Vishnu is all-pervading and omnipresent. Hiranyakasipu, pointing to a nearby pillar, asked if 'his Vishnu' was in it. Prahlada then answered, *He is in pillars, and he is in the least twig*. Unable to control his anger, Hiranyakashipu smashed the pillar with his mace. From the broken pillar appeared Visnu in the form of Narasimha in defence of Prahlada and disembowelled the demon to death by using his nails as weapons.¹⁶ The tale of Hiranyakasipu depicts the futility of desiring power over others and the strength of God's protection over his fully surrendered devotees (in the case of his son Prahlada).

We should now turn our attention to the Visnu-Hiranyakasipu-like relation between Harendranarayan and the Government under the English East India Company. From 1789 to 1801, the whole administration of the Cooch Behar State was under the English Commissioner, who conducted all the affairs in the name of the minor king. During this period, land reform and revenue, zamindari system, amount of tribute, excise, public offices and courts of law, police and military, postal mail and other miscellaneous matters including works of public utility were reorganized by the commissioner.¹⁷ In the year 1801, Maharaja Harendra Narayan came of age and the state administration was left in the hands of the Maharaja by removing the Commissioner. It may be mentioned here that carefully educated by private tutors under the supervision of the British Commissioner Henry Douglas, Harendranarayan was the first of his line to receive a modern education. Anyway, after receiving administrative power the king sought to affirm the right of minting as the issue of Narayani coins was almost stopped by

the Company during the minority of the King although the right of coinage was kept open by the Treaty of 1773. The right was rightly admitted by a Resolution of Govt. Dated the 26th August, 1802.¹⁸

Surprisingly in the next year, i.e. 1803, again a commissioner was appointed at Cooch Behar by the British Govt. with a view to establishing law and judiciary departments. However, the next year he was removed on strong repugnance of the King, who insisted on his right as an independent ruler of his own territories.¹⁹ Again in 1805, the British Government appointed a commissioner in order to introduce the Regulations, and establish tribunals on the Government models, though under the King's own officers. Interestingly, in the same year the separate office of the Resident Commissioner was done away with and the duty of communicating with the Maharaja was vested in the collector of Rangpur. In a letter in 1805 addressed to the Company, Harendranarayan again sought the right of issuing coins, because the privilege was a cherished one, both of the ruler and of the people. However, the Company declined to affirm the right of minting in apprehension of serious inconvenience.²⁰ During the period from 1805 to 1813, the Collectors of Rangpur and ex-officio Residents for Cooch Behar, carried away by exparte statements of the Nazir Deo and Dewan Deo, interfered in small matters of internal administration, unduly aggrandised the position of the Dewan Deo and went on dictating humiliating terms to the King as usually applicable to a zaminder of lower Bengal. To add to worse, the Government of Lord Cornwallis, determined upon exercising a thorough interference in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar on the pretext of eradicating the evils of the Cooch Behar administration, revived the post of Resident Commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1813. The newly appointed Commissioner Norman Macleod repeatedly interfered in the internal administration, encouraging all sorts of anti-King but improbable reports. In 1815, he even went to the extent of levelling serious but totally baseless charges against the King of having secret intrigues with the Subhas of Buxa and Chamurchi Dooars in Bhutan and with the Government of Nepal and was, therefore, taken to task by the Government.²¹ Upon the Dewan Deo's complaint in October 1816, of dispossession of certain lands belonging to his Estate by the Maharaja, Mr. MacLeod pressed the Government for an investigation on the subject. These and other circumstances convinced the Government to adopt the policy of abstaining from all

interferences except in the form of advice and representation in the unlimited management of the affairs of Cooch Behar.

In A.D. 1821 the Maharaja again raised the issue of minting coins. The Government, however, took much more unfavourable attitude on the question and informed that 'to allow this coinage to be renewed, after it has been for 21 years prohibited, will be opening the door to abuses not easily controlled, besides being on their accounts objectionable. Since therefore, the Raja cannot claim it as a matter of right and is not entitled by his late conduct to any favour or indulgence.'²² The king's jurisdiction of power was once more encroached upon when in 1827 prohibition was imposed on behalf of the Company to the King's realizing tools from plying boats on the Tista and the Sankosh rivers.²³

As regards the coins, the King was in no way even prepared to think of giving up the right of striking coins. The Government were again addressed in 1828 in the matter but the British refused modify their stand under any circumstances.²⁴ Moreover, they urged Harendranarayan to stop the use of Narayani coins. On 4th July 1829, law was passed by Lord William Bentinck banning the rite of *Suttee* even in the Cooch Behar State, though Cooch Behar had its own law of her land and judiciary. In 1830, a dispute arose between the Maharaja and the Nazir regarding the limits of the Jaigir of Balarampur, but it took long four years for the British to appoint their representative to settle it and another three years to resolve the issue.²⁵ In 1834, when the Government planned to introduce the Furakkabad coins in Cooch Behar, Harendranarayan strongly objected to this through a representation. The next year (1835), it was even threatened to make Furakkabad and Company's rupees legal tender in Cooch Bihar. However, the strong dislike and tough opposition of the king to the measure could thwart the British plan till his life time. In the same year, the tribute that was paid in Narayani rupees, was ordered by the Government to be paid in standard coins of the British India. But again in face of the King's representations and utter repugnance to the measure, which was obviously derogatory to his rank and position, the order could not be implemented so long as Harendranarayan lived.

In 1836, the British Government issued orders prohibiting the minting of coins in Cooch Behar.²⁶ And this was the final nail put in the coffin of the long-cherished hope of Harendranarayan to rule as a truly independent king with the right of minting coins. Consequently the King was no longer left with any more interest not only in administration but also being alive. To die in the holy city of Kashi as noted earlier, the king went there in 1936 leaving the management of the state in the hands of joint princely *Sarvakaras* and finally breathed his last there in 1939. This reminds us of a few lines of a patriotic Bengali poem written by Rangalal Bandopadhyay (1855-1918) in the backdrop of an anti-British movement: *Swādhīnatā-hīnatāy kē bānchitē chāy hē kē bānchitē chāy?*²⁷

It is thus evident that since the assumption of power by Harendranarayan in 1801 to his final retirement to Benaras in 1836 there had been a constant tussle between him and the British Government on the one and only basic issue: who was the supreme authority to conduct all the affairs of the state. Through the Resident or ex-officio Commissioner, the British Government wanted to manage almost every sphere of the internal administration with a pretention of supreme authority in complete disregard of the *de jure* supremacy of the King as guaranteed by the Treaty of 1773 while the same sense of supremacy impelled the king to oppose the British at their every encroaching step, securing frequent success too. It was as if Hiranyakasipu in the form of the British attempted to kill Prahlada in independence form, which was somehow protected each time by Visnu in the form of Harendranarayan. To maintain his independent and thus supreme position, Harendranarayan continually sought to affirm the right of striking Narayani coins till 1836 while the British posing as an overlord in sheer violation of the 1773 Treaty simply played a dirty game over the issue. In view of contested relation with an aggressive power like the British, the King most probably thought to strengthen his popular base in the state by rallying people of different religious denomination behind him in his tooth and nail fight against the unjust British authoritarianism. This is clearly reflected in the construction of temples and installation of images of deities of different Hindu sects along with *pucca* building of the *mazar* (grave) of the celebrated Muslim Faqir or Pir named Torsa-Baba or Torsa Pir, covered by the char-chala tinned roof.²⁸

In view of above, we may now dig out the other impulsion or inspiration than the religious one behind the construction of Nrisimha temples. Harendranarayan, besides being a wrestler, strongman, accomplished horseman and rider of elephants as well as a skilful archer and good shot, was a scholar of his days well versed in Persian, Bengali and Sanskrit. He wrote several books in verse, both original and translation of *Sundarkanda* of *Ramayana*, *Santiparva*, *Aishikaparva*, *Salyaparva*, *Sabhaparva* and *Khandavadahan* of *Mahabharata*, *Madhyakhanda* and *Uttarkhanda* of *Brihaddharma Purana*, *Brahmottara Khanda* and *Kashi Khanda* of *Skandapurana* and *kriyayogasara* from original Sanskrit.²⁹ His court was always adorned by a galaxy of twenty-five twice-born poets, who rendered translation of all the books (*kandas/parvas*) of two epics as well as of different *Puranas*. Among the *Puranas* translated is included the *Nrisingha Purana* both by Dwija Braja Sundar and Dwija Ramanandan.³⁰ Harendranarayan's scholarly knowledge of Epics and *Puranas*, presence of a large number of twice-born poets in the royal court, translation of *Nrisingha Purana* by two poets and construction of two *Nrisingha* temples by the King are no scattered phenomena. Rather, they combined to impress upon the King that by worshipping the god *Nrisingha* in image form in the shrine, he could gain the blessings of the god as well as the mystical powers to control the demonic British to his wish and rule the country with full independence.

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Understanding the ‘*mofussil*’ and the ‘ditch’ in early colonial India

Varun Kumar Roy¹

Abstract

At the beginning of the 19th century, the term Mofussil meant 'outside the limits of Calcutta' since the limit was for a while the Maratha Ditch dug around Fort William in the 1740s. Europeans (missionaries, merchants and planters) who lived in Calcutta they were called ditchers and those who lived outside the Maratha Ditch were known as Mofussilites. However with the passage of time the meaning of the term got changed and it could be studied in juxtaposition to rural-urban dichotomy. In this research article, the origin of the term Mofussil is investigated and how the original connotation has changed with the passage of time in the early 19th century. Mofussil always stood in contrast to bigger cities like Calcutta but it was always linked to the cities through the Zilla Sadar towns.

Keywords : *Mofussil*, urban, ditch, *sadar*, *zilla*

Introduction

The word *Mofussil* gives an impression of Islamic origin but the word also has a colonial background and its origin.¹ *Mofussil* is an anglicised version of the Persian word *mufassil* meaning “detailed” and derives from the Arabic root which indicates separation or division. *Mufassal*, in Arabic, is the past participle of *fa-sa-la*, and as such means "divided" or "separated", and in this instance, of the city.² The Persian term give the impression to have penetrated administrative language by the eighteenth century, in the sense of “subordinate,” for instance to ‘distinguish landholders’ gross revenue collections (*Mufassal Jama*) from what they owed the government (*Sadr jama*), and to differentiate

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the revenue official at the level of the *pargana* or subdistrict (*Mufassal qānūngo*) from his superior at the *sarkār* or district level (*Sadr qānūngo*).³

The term *Mofussil* was, perhaps, taken from the British vocabulary. The *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*, The first newspaper in English uses this term very often. Let's give two examples of daily use of the term in 1781. On March 31, the *Gazette* reports the arrival of a gentleman "Come from *mo [ff] ussel*".⁴ On June 30, again, the *Gazette* reports what would now look like a funny story about "[a] gentleman in the *Mofussil*, Mr. P., [who] fell from his float and broke his leg"⁵. The British, however, used the word as a locative category of undetermined coordinates: whoever was not from the city of Calcutta was a "gentleman *Mofussil*". Even a century later, in 1886, we found in *Hobson-Jobson* a description of the *Mofussil* in the same tenor:

'Thus if, in Calcutta, one talks of the *Mofussil*, he means anywhere in Bengal out of Calcutta; if one at Benares talks of going into the *Mofussil* he means going anywhere in the Benares division or district (as the case might be) out of the city of Benares. And so over India...'⁶ In 1824, Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay - writer, editor, journalist, one of the leaders of the conservative association of the Hindus of Calcutta, the *Dharmasabha*, a polyglot who used to speak Bengali, English, Sanskrit, and Persian with the same development, and also an old employee of the *British Company of East Indies* - tried to address one of the first definitions of *Mofussil* in the Bengali language in his book *Kalikata Kamalalaya*.⁷ The first original prose work of Bhabanicharan, namely *Kalikata Kamalalay*, which S.K. De describes as Bhabanicharan's most important work'. Published in 1823, it is principally a study of the urban life of Calcutta in the second decade of the 19th century. It was written in the form of dialogues between a city-dweller and provincial, and it 'professes to be a manual of etiquette for country people-who come for the first time to Calcutta and find them bewildered by its strange manners, customs and speech.' This dialogue device provided Bhabanicharan with a framework within which he could set forth differing views on Hinduism and oh the practices which were permissible to Hindus. At the beginning of the book, 'Bhabanicharan explained the significance of the title: Calcutta resembles an ocean. This is why the title *Kalikata Kamalalay* has been chosen. The word *Kamalalay* means 'ocean,' the residence of

Kamala Laksmi, the Hindu goddess of Fortune. In keeping with the title, *Kalikata Kamalalay* was designed to be completed in four ‘waves,’ i.e., four volumes. The title *Kalikata Kamalalay* implying as it does a survey of the whole of Calcutta society is, to some extent, misleading. Bhabanicharan was clearly concerned only with Hindu society. Muslims and other religious communities in Calcutta were excluded from consideration.

Stewart Macpherson gives a different understanding of the term ‘*Mofussil*’ he says that to the Briton in India the words “Calcutta” and the “*Mufassal*” convey much the same significance as “London and the Provinces.” True, in strict parlance, one ought now to say “Delhi and the *Mufassal*” but many years are bound to pass before these words become a familiar phrase connoting the same ideas. The word “*Mufassal*,” however, has further used—each Province has its Capital and its *Mufassal*, each Division has its Divisional headquarters and its *Mufassal*, even each District has its District headquarters and its *Mufassal*. *Mufassal* is, therefore, a relative term, e.g. Hooghly is *Mufassal* with reference to Calcutta, but with reference to the Burdwan Division and to the Hooghly District, it rises to the dignity of a headquarters station as opposed to *Mufassal*. The *Mufassal* in which my experience has lain has been entirely away from Calcutta and chiefly within the province of Bihar, Chota Nagpur and Orissa.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the term *Mofussil* meant 'outside the limits of Calcutta'⁸; since the limit was for a while the Maratha Ditch dug around Fort William in the 1740s. Europeans (missionaries, merchants and planters) who lived in Calcutta they were called *ditchers* and those who lived outside the Maratha Ditch *Mofussillites* as discussed in the Asiatic Journal that, in Bengal, “the *Mofussil*” means the provinces and that “the Ditch” is the sobriquet bestowed upon Calcutta by those who desire to disparage the city of palaces.

In more troublous times, it was necessary, for the defense of the infant colony, to dig a ditch around the principal settlement, in order to prevent the incur boundary line, which, like the city-wall of London, encloses certain privileges, and subjects the persons living within it to authorities different from those which preside outside.

“The *Mofussillites* and the Ditchers have agreed to hate each other with great cordiality.⁹ This dislike originated, in the first instance, in the arrogance and assumptions

of the Ditchers, who despised the *Mofussillites* as barbarous and uncouth, living entirely out of the pale of civilized society; while, as the *Mofussil* widened, and its Anglo-Indian population increased, they, priding themselves upon their better acquaintance with the country, laughed at the Ditchers for their ignorance. This hatred was and is—for it still exists, though there are influences at work which will tend to weaken, if not to remove it altogether—somewhat of a lofty character, devoid of meanness, and totally free from all personal spite and vindictiveness. If a Ditcher happened to travel into the *Mofussil*, he was received with open arms; the *Mofussillite* was with equal warmth welcomed within the Ditch; but the hostile feeling increased on either side, and when the *Mofussil* waxed stronger and was able to come to blows—when it set up a press of its own, and ink could be shed upon the occasion, war, to the topmost feather of the grey goose-quill, was declared on both sides. With this wordy war, however, fortunately, we have nothing to do; our business, as delineators of manners, consisting only in marking the characteristics which distinguish the *Mofussil* from the Ditch, and to show how this hostility has grown up between them.”¹⁰

During many years, the Ditch maintained proud and undisputed supremacy; it was the seat of Government, the centre of everything that could be called luxurious, refined, and intellectual. The habitations in the provinces, hastily constructed upon the first occupation of a newly-acquired territory, were mere wigwams when compared to the present commodious bungalows—in which there is usually nothing unsightly but the exterior—and being ill-supplied with elegances common in Calcutta, both civil and military residents were obliged to content themselves with rough-hewn substitutes, and to adopt a mode of life suited to their circumstances, living, according to the phrase still current, “camp-fashion.” Calcutta, on the contrary, rose like the city of a fairy queen, all-glorious from the jungle; her merchants were princes, and her rulers vied in magnificence with the satraps they had succeeded. It was in these days that the fair residents were constellations of jewels, gleaming in gems and gold, and each eager to purchase the whole investment of a ship, in order that her rivals might not possess themselves of duplicates of the ornament, either of dress or decoration, in which it was her ambition to outshine them all. Then the wife of a member of council could trail after her, as she walked in her garden, a muslin robe trimmed with lace at five guineas a yard; and when

her companions lamented that it should be endangered by the dust from the pounded brick which is the substitute for gravel in Calcutta, enjoyed the proud gratification of declaring that it was no matter, is only a day's wear, as she never appeared in washed lace. These were the days of rivalry, in which the unhappy woman, who had bought up, as she thought, every inch of a peculiar kind of brocade just imported, and had paid a ruinous price for it when sweeping into the opposing party's drawing-room in triumph, was struck with consternation and despair at seeing the native attendant of the mistress of the house, herself simply attired in white muslin, in a petticoat of this precious stuff. The *Mofussil* was not at this period sufficiently important either to be hated, or even despised; it might be pitied, perhaps, but as persons who live in an atmosphere of self-conceit must have something to look down upon, the dwellers in Fort William formed the objects of supreme contempt.

In consequence of the number of its settled residents, and of the floating community always to be found there, the metropolis of the *Mofussil* possesses a large class of very useful personages, namely, that of European soldiers, or shopkeepers, farmers, and provisioners, who, as their capital increases, engage more largely in business, and are in a situation to avail themselves of the advantage of the trade brought from remote countries. These valuable members of the community live in a much more primitive manner than their brethren of the Ditch, who are tempted into all kinds of expense and pay comparatively little attention to their own interests, or those of their customers.

The stubborn and turbulent nature of the *Mofussillites* is of course very offensive to the community of the Ditch, who, though by no means prone to flatter their brethren of the provinces, would be glad to have their support in any scheme propounded at the capital for its especial benefit. When such a thing is required, papers are circulated very industriously throughout the whole country, containing exceedingly plausible arguments in favour of any measure which the powers below are anxious to carry. These papers are sometimes sent anonymously, and occasionally great confidence is expected from the parties to whom they are addressed, who are directed to send the sums to be subscribed for the proposed object to the agents or bankers employed without any signature; and

there can be little doubt that jobs of this nature have been very successful, individuals promising to advocate certain measures at home having pocketed a lac or two of rupees for the purpose. It is rather an amusing thing to witness the reception of any very startling proposition in its progress through the *Mofussil*. The amazing eagerness with which it may be received at first, and the certainty that, at the cost of so many rupees, some gentleman who has managed to bolster up an extraordinary reputation in India, but who is absolutely nobody at home, will procure the redress of all grievances, real and imaginary. Presently a skeptic, possessed of the spirit of incredulity, examines the document, and appends to it a few marginal notes, which act like magic. The whole thing appears in a new light, the supporters drop off, and the scheme perhaps falls to the ground; though so great is the perseverance of many who volunteer to procure the abolition of any enactment displeasing to the Anglo-Indian community, and so sanguine are they that their representations if properly backed, will be attended to, that more money is thrown away in this manner than the *Mofussil* can in reality afford.

Though, as we have before stated, a *Mofussillite* is generally cordially welcomed in the Ditch, unless he should take up his abode there in some public capacity, he does not usually become reconciled to it. He feels that he hangs loosely upon society, having no stake upon any of the cards played by persons who are actively engaged in some scheme of public or private utility; and he is mortified by a want of importance which is not felt in smaller communities. Habits have been contracted which it is difficult to overcome, while so strong is the force of prejudice, that even when benefiting from the great advantages attending upon change of scene, and the variety produced by an enlarged circle of society, the *Mofussillite* will continue to rail against the Ditch and return rejoicing to the provinces, where he fancies he enjoys greater freedom of action and a better climate. After a residence in England, however, many who could not endure Calcutta previously to their departure from India, are anxious to procure an appointment there upon their return: they have learned to appreciate its advantages, and setting its climate aside, which, for seven months out of the twelve, is certainly deplorable, those who judge calmly and dispassionately must allow that it is a very superior place of abode. The means of getting up the country so quickly by steam upon the Ganges, the comparative facility of visiting the hills, and the opportunity of going to sea at any time,

obviate nearly every inconvenience which was formerly sustained. Most assuredly, the Ditch seems determined to avail itself of the communication to places formerly beyond its reach, and in its improved acquaintance with the *Mofussil*, will soon prove itself undeserving of the taunts to which it has been so long subjected to the score of ignorance. Its increasing size, the establishment of public opinion through the medium of a free press, the advantages afforded by its libraries, and the easiness with which congenial society may be found, are circumstances so favourable to the Ditch, that it must always be preferred to any *Mofussil* station inferior to Meerut.

Intellectual atrophy was another fear of some Europeans in the *Mofussil*: “in very truth individuality is a nuisance up-country; mental culture is *de trop*; broad views of the world beyond one’s petty world are knocked out of the head; and one exists—not lives.”²⁹ Agastya, the indolent narrator of the postcolonial novel *English, August*—the title taken from the nickname his Anglophilia has earned him—spends his days as a civil servant in a *Mofussil* town by reading Marcus Aurelius; similarly, his professional if not genetic forebears were urged to read St. Augustine to stave off lethargy and the “deadly and, we must add, demoralizing effects of *Mofussil* exile.”¹¹

To colonials, the *Mofussil* was simply “the up-country as opposed to the city[,] the vast area of townships on which European civilization has not yet had time to imprint its veneer of shops and tramways, gas lamps, and conventional streets, and... where the kerosene oil tin is still practically the only visible and tangible sign that the Western civilization is abroad, save that little group of thatched bungalows far away from the native city’s hubbub—dubbed a station—where the English rulers live.”¹²

Also in the understanding of *Mofussil*, Appadurai’s¹³ idea about the *ethnoscape* is very useful. Appadurai uses it as an adjustable formulation to the raw facts about the 20th-century world “Central among these facts,” he says, “is the changing social, territorial, and cultural reproduction of group identity. As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects, the *ethno* in ethnography takes on a slippery, non-localizable quality, to which the descriptive practices of anthropology will have to respond. The “Yet [the] dimensional aspect of locality,” Arjun Appadurai tells us, “cannot be separated from the actual settings in and

through which social life is reproduced. To make the link between locality as the property of social life and neighbourhoods as social forms requires a more careful exposition of the problem of context. The production of neighbourhoods is always historically grounded and thus contextual.^{14,}

Notes and References

- ¹ Edward Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, London, Williams and Norgate, 1863, s.v. "fassala"; Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary, Including the Arabic Words and Phrases to Be Met with in Persian Literature*, London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1892, s.v. "mafsil."
- ² *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Volume IX, second edition, 1989. In his comments Sudipta pointed out that the English word *mofussil* comes from the Persian *mufassal*, which denotes something that is divided or separates, as in an administrative division. In a purely administrative context, it is about separation in the country of the centre of government - or more specifically the centre of revenue collection (then cultivation > *fasal* > lo which is divided; the Mughals used the term *ghalla* more often) the *sadr* (Sadar in Bengali). The root is Arabic phrase or *fasala* which also means division. Hindustani (also in Urdu) not only separates the village from the countryside but also it means details or particularities of a country: then *mufassal kahna* or *mufassal bayan karna*.
- ³ David Sol Boyk, unpublished PhD thesis, *Provincial Urbanity: Intellectuals and Public Life in Patna, 1880-1930*, University of California, Berkeley, 2015, p- 23. Also see J. Reginald Hand, *Early English Administration of Bihar, 1781-1785*, Calcutta, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1894, pp-52-53; B.H. Baden-Powell, *The Land Systems of British India: Being a Manual of the Land-Tenures and of the Systems of Land-Revenue Administration Prevalent in the Several Provinces*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, vol. 1 p-302; Shirin Akhtar, *The Role of the Zamindars in Bengal, 1707-1772*, Dacca, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 1982, pp.- 59,66-67.
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- ⁶ *Hobson-Jobson: a Glossary of Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*, eds. Henry Yule and AC Burnell, first print 1886; new edition 1985, p- 570. This is only part of the definition contained in the glossary.
- ⁷ Bandyopadhyay, Bhabanicharan, *Kalikata kamalalaya*, in Sanat Kumar Gupta (ed.). *Rashorachonashamogro*, Calcutta, Naboparto Prokashon, 1987, p-12. For a detailed Disclosure on the life and work of Bhabanicharan, see the introduction of the book of Sanat Kumar Gupta "Bhabanicharan Bandyopadhyay".
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- ⁹ The Mofussil and the Ditch, op cit., p. 36
- ¹⁰ *Asiatic Journal*, 1839, vol. 38, p-36
- ¹¹ Upamanyu Chatterjee, *English, August: An Indian Story*, Boston, Faber and Faber, 1989; “The Confessions of St. Augustine,” *Calcutta Review* 88, January 1889, no. 175, p- 99.
- ¹² An English Barrister Practising in India, “With a Stuff Gown in the Mofussil,” *The Green Bag* 12, no. 4 , April 1900, p- 200
- ¹³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis and London, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, p- 182.
- ¹⁴ Appadurai, A., “The production of locality”, in *Sociology of Globalization: Cultures, Economies, and Politics*, Taylor and Francis, 2018, pp. 107-116.

Different Meanings: a Brief Trajectory of the Concept of Difference

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Abstract:

The Anglo–American literary criticism (especially mid 1960s/70s) gives us an impression that the term ‘difference’ must have originated in the structuralist model of analysis in the works of Ferdinand de Saussure. The arrival of poststructuralism dealt with the concept of difference in a different parlance in Derrida’s Writing and Difference or in Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition. However, the fundamental problem of the concept of difference has been central to the fundamental problems in philosophy and the concept has had an intriguing genealogy beginning in pre- Socratic Milesean and Pyrrhonist philosophy that came to be rooted in the idea of identity with Aristotle. The paper attempts to trace briefly the trajectory of the concept from the Milesean philosophers upto the middle of twentieth century.

Key words: *Difference, Pre-socratic, Plato, Aristotle, Structuralism*

It was during the first half of the twentieth century that the popular usage of the concept of difference transformed our understanding of ourselves and that of the world. The concept was applied in almost every branch of literary and cultural studies. Ferdinand de Saussure's most influential work, *Course in General Linguistics (Cours de linguistique générale)*, was published posthumously in 1916 by former students Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, based on the notes taken from his lectures.¹ Saussure proposed linguistic relativity. There can be no linguistic expression without meaning, but also no meaning without language. Saussure's key contributions, to simplify things down to the simplest terms, include the concept of the bilateral signs as consisting of the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’, and the concept of the structure of language as founded on the

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principle opposition. Saussure used the analogy of a game of chess, explicating that the game is not defined by the physical attributes of the chess pieces but by the relation of each piece to the other pieces.²

Jacques Derrida's 'Différance' was first used in his 1963 paper "Cogito et histoire de la folie" [Cogito and the History of Madness]. Derrida's 'Différance' is a deliberate and perhaps mischievous misspelling of difference that plays on the French word *différer* meaning "to defer" and "to differ". The misspelling was also meant to underline the fact that the written words cannot be perfectly pronounced and, therefore, the term also served to subvert the traditional privileging of speech over writing. "Since the difference between 'difference' and 'différance' is inaudible, this 'neographism' reminds us of the importance of writing as a structure" (Spivak xliii).³

But the concept of difference has a long history and it did not quite originate in structuralism. The Cambridge University Dictionary defines 'difference' as the 'way in which two or more things which one compares are not the same.' Difference signifies the route or assets by which one individual is distinguishable from another within a given conceptual system.⁴ To understand one, one needs to understand the difference. The concept of difference crystallizes with the concept of sameness since meanings are not self-contained but rather manufactured by their associations with each other or their difference. There exists a dichotomy between the relational and referential view of linguistic meanings but one can never position oneself outside the structure of language.

The idea of difference was rooted in the idea of identity for Aristotle. 'Sameness' and 'identity' are both antonyms of 'difference' but identity includes both 'sameness' and 'difference'. If we refer to the Dictionary again, it defines identity as i) "who a person is, or the qualities of a person or group that make them different from others" ii) "who a person is, or information that proves who a person is, for example, their name and date of birth."⁵ Identity, then, means the property of absolute sameness between separate entities and it also means the unique characteristics of difference of the singular entity. It may be argued that every noun is marked by this kind of dialectic identity for, a noun effectively does two things: i) it asserts a difference, ii) at the same time it denies a universe of difference. For instance, if we say 'flower' we utter a common denominator which distinguishes flowers from fruits but also does injustice to the rich variety of flowers. In a sense every noun is a category or generalization, a potential

collective identity and a potential stereotype. Most nouns involve this double process of sameing and differentiating, a positing common essence between the members of one genus and at the same time marking them different from other species. We must note that ‘difference’ is a property of the objective world as much as it is a property of language, the tool that we use to describe the world. The concept of difference is a critical and a problematic idea in philosophy. Its full lineage lies in the advent of the problem of identity and beginning of creation in the philosophy of several centuries.

Since its primary stages, ancient Greek philosophy had endeavored to propose a rationally unified picture of the process of creation that stood in contrast to the mythologically oriented worldview of a cosmos that was largely subjected to the fleeting and conflicting whims of various imagined deities, who were gods because they possessed two basic characteristics, even if sometimes no virtues-- that of power, and, that of immortality.

Each of the early Milesian philosophers sought to unravel and pinpoint a first principle or *archê* among the five primitive elements that they believed the cosmos was comprised of, namely, earth, water, air, fire, and ether. Thales argued that water was the primary principle of all things, while Anaximenes voted and argued in favor of air and Anaximander insisted that the *apeiron* or the infinite was the beginning of everything.⁶ Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BCE) thought it was Fire. He attempted a rudimentary explanation for the turns of fire. Heraclitus’s fire carried an ontological significance only in a very restricted nous:

“When earth dies, it becomes water; water, air; air, fire; and back to the beginning.”⁷

Thus we find an important point of departure in Heraclitus from his Milesian predecessors. Fire is one of the classical elements but it is of a dynamic nature. It creates and also destroys. Heraclitus insisted on its transformation.

Heraclitean fragments say:

“You cannot step twice into the same rivers; for fresh waters are flowing in upon you.”⁸

“We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not.”⁹

Heraclitus emphasized the apparently paradoxical nature of the cosmos. On the one hand there is an eloquent logic in the proposal in which one may step into the same river twice, step out and step in again. The body of water is marked as the same body by its flow between the two banks, if they are the same land markers they are the same flow. But here is also the paradox: the water that one stepped into for the first time is completely gone by the next moment. The river flows. It is replaced by an entirely new arrangement of particles of water. Here lies the meaningful sense of one cannot step into the same river twice. It is the particular flowing between the particular landmarks that makes the river a particular river. Its identity, therefore, like the identity of the human who steps in, is a fizzy temporariness. We see things around us — rivers, men, women, animals, trees and so forth — but everything is transitory, and we are left deceived. The true nature of nature continuously eludes us.

“Men are deceived in their knowledge of things that are manifest.”¹⁰

Heraclitus is known as the great thinker of ‘becoming’ or ‘flux’. The being of the universe, the most crucial datum of its nature is in its becoming; for its only permanence is its impermanence. We may look at Heraclitus as the first philosopher of difference, for while his predecessors endeavored to identify the one embryonic element out of which everything emerged, Heraclitus thought of the world to exist in a permanent state of flux.

Parmenides of Elea (c. 515 BC-?) was likely young when Heraclitus was an active philosopher. Parmenides’ views came down to us from the extant fragment of his poem titled *On Nature*. The poem was originally divided into three parts: i) A proem (preamble), which introduced the entire work, ii) a section titled "The Way of Truth" (aletheia), and, iii) a section titled "The Way of Appearance/Opinion" (doxa).

The proem is a narrative sequence in which the narrator travels beyond the paths of the mortal to receive a revelation from an unnamed goddess (Persephone or Dikē) on the nature of reality. “Aletheia”, most part of which is extant, and “doxa”, most part of which is lost, are the spoken revelations of the goddess. Parmenides explicitly objected to Heraclitus’s critical diagnosis that human beings in a delusory way perceive permanence in a universe where change is the only permanent reality. Parmenides believed that all beings are One, and denied the absolute possibility of change. He believed that the cosmos is full (not void),

uncreated, eternal, indestructible, unchangeable, immobile sphere of being, and all sensory evidence that perceive of change is illusory. A Parmenidean fragment states, "Either a thing is or it is not," meaning that creation and destruction is impossible.¹¹

A paper on science may take a different turn from here. This argument for the one rules out the argument of becoming and passing away as the nature of things. We will refer to Patricia Curd, who in *The Legacy of Parmenides* clarifies that,

The crisis at the heart of Parmenides' argument, "is or is not," rules out any candidate for an ultimate entity in an explanation of what there is that is subject to coming-to-be, passing-away, or alteration of any sort. Such an entity must be a whole, complete, unchanging unity: it must be a thing that is of a single kind ... But it does not follow from this that there can be only one such entity. Parmenides' arguments allow for a plurality of fundamental, predicationally unified entities that can be used to explain the world reported by the senses.¹²

Thus Parmenides seemed to have claimed that permanence did exist, but it was precisely what most people, including Heraclitus, missed out for remaining preoccupied with the mundane. The being of the cosmos was, in the present is, and is not in its becoming, as Heraclitus had thought.

The Pyrrhonist philosophers (3rd – 1st Century BC.) include Pyrrho of Elis (c. 360-c. 270 BC, who is customarily credited with founding the school of skeptical philosophy), Sextus Empiricus, Aenesidemus and Agrippa. The core practice of the Pyrrhonist was setting arguments against arguments to achieve an *epoché*, or a suspension of judgment. To their benefit Aenesidemus and Agrippa developed sets of stock arguments that underline the concept of relation and difference. The ten tropes of Aenesidemus that have come down to us are:

Different animals manifest different modes of perception.

Similar differences are seen among individual men.

For the same man, information perceived with the senses is self-contradictory.

Furthermore, it varies from time to time with physical changes.

In addition, this data differs according to local relations.

Objects are known only indirectly through the medium of air, moisture, etc.

These objects are in a condition of perpetual change in colour, temperature, size and motion.

All perceptions are relative and interact one upon another.

Our impressions become less critical through repetition and custom.

All men are brought up with different beliefs, under different laws and social conditions.

Superordinate to these ten modes stand three other modes:

- I: that based on the subject who judges (modes 1, 2, 3 & 4).
- II: that based on the object judged (modes 7 & 10).
- III: that based on both subject who judges and object judged (modes 5, 6, 8 & 9)¹³

Superordinate to these three modes was the mode of relation. Owing to the "circumstances, conditions or dispositions," the same objects appear different to different beings, animals and humans and to the same human from time to time. The same temperature may feel different after extended exposure to extreme temperature, the same honey may taste bitter. Even the passage of time is relative. Our perceptions vary based on positions, distances, locations, beliefs, dogmatic conceptions. Since all things appear relative, the Pyrrhonist philosophers proposed suspension of judgement about what and how things absolutely and really exist.

Plato (428/427 or 424/423 – 348/347 BC) attempted a synthesis of the Heraclitean and the Parmenidean hypothesis in his theory of forms. Throughout his *Dialogues*, he unswervingly gives credibility to the Heraclitean observation that all things in the material world are in a constant state of flux. The Parmenidean inspiration is also evident in Plato's philosophy that genuine knowledge must concern itself only with the eternal and the unchanging. Given the transient nature of material things true knowledge does not apply to the mundane world but rather to the Forms which are eternal and unchanging of which these material things are

only representations. For Plato, everything that existed in the physical world partook both in being and in not-being. Every circle is a circle to the extent that we recognize its resemblance, but is not a perfect circle or rather the absolute embodiment of the circle because if it is manifested it cannot be perfect. Manifestation is, therefore, grounded in difference from the Platonic form.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) in *Metaphysics* made a conceptual distinction between difference and otherness. Aristotle spoke of ‘continuity,’ ‘wholeness’ or ‘unity,’ of ‘number’ and ‘kind.’ In the organic sense a wo/man is one, s/he is also numerically one, her/ his living body institutes one wo/man, as different to many wo/men. Aristotle used the concept of otherness to characterize existing things which have not one ‘difference’. He applied the term difference only when there was some definite sense in which two things may be said to differ, which required a higher category of identity within which a dissimilarity might be drawn:

Evidently, then, 'other' and 'unlike' also have several meanings. And the other in one sense is the opposite of the same (so that everything is either the same as or an other than everything else). In another sense things are other unless both their matter and their definition are one (so that you are other than your neighbour). The other in the third sense is exemplified in the objects of mathematics. 'Other or the same' can therefore be predicated of everything with regard to everything else-but only if the things are one and existent, for 'other' is not the contradictory of 'the same'; which is why it is not predicated of non-existent things (while 'not the same' is so predicated). It is predicated of all existing things; for everything that is existent and one is by its very nature either one or not one with anything else.¹⁴

Differences in genus are evidently pronounced, while differences within species are minute but a special contrariety is complete, embodying an affirmation or negation of a particular given quality by which genera are differentiated into species. In Aristotle's view, first, there is the identity that two different things share within a common genus and, second, there is the identity of the characteristics by which two things are differentiated. For instance: material versus non-material, living versus non-living, sentient versus non-sentient, rational versus irrational, and so forth. This difference then is a way in which a thing that is A is an A, is not like a thing like B which is B, while both belong to a higher category of identity (genus). He specified that the other and the same were

opposed but difference is not the same as otherness. Aristotle thought of difference in terms of identity.

Following Gottfried Wilhelm (von) Leibniz's (July 1646 – 1716) *Principles* the concept of difference in western philosophical thought was traditionally viewed as being opposed to identity. Of the seven fundamental principles proposed by Leibniz the first two include Identity/contradiction and identity of indiscernibles. The second principle, also referred to as Leibniz's Law states that:

If every predicate possessed by x is also possessed by y and vice versa, then entities x and y are identical; to suppose two things indiscernible is to suppose the same thing under two names.¹⁵

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) argues that it is necessary to distinguish between the thing in itself and its appearance. Even if two objects have absolutely the same properties, if they are at two different places at the same time, they are numerically different. Thus two things of the same constitution if located at different places at the same time are numerically different. By common sense, they are obviously different entities.

For one part of space, although it may be perfectly similar and equal to another part, is still without it, and for this reason alone is different from the latter It follows that this must hold good of all things that are in the different parts of space at the same time, however similar and equal one may be to another.¹⁶

We may briefly refer to Simone de Beauvoir's (1908 – 1986) *The Second Sex* where she referred to the category of the 'Other' saying that alterity is fundamental category of human thought. She explained that no group can ever identify itself as one without setting up an opposite group. It takes only three travellers to catch up in a train for the other co-passengers to become others. She was, of course, advancing her theory of women as the 'Other'.

The concept of difference thus travelled its own history before surfacing within the context of Structuralism. Within the praxis of Structuralism the concept of difference originated in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) whose lectures were collected and published posthumously as *Cours de linguistique générale* in 1916 and available in English translation as *Course in*

General Linguistics in 1959. Structuralism casts the concept of difference into another important philosophical valence.

There are two broad characteristics of twentieth century philosophy that are reflected in Saussure – first, the focus considerably shifted from things in themselves to the relationship between things, and second, that philosophical problems in the twentieth century began to be seen as problems about language. A laconic expression of both of these philosophical tendencies can be found in Saussure's proposition that "in language there is only difference and no positive terms".¹⁷

Reading Saussure might produce a wonder in us because of his technical use of the word 'difference'. Saussure used the term 'value' to express the way in which meaning is generated by difference. One of Saussure's basic propositions is to view the linguistic sign as a two-sided inescapable entity – the 'signifier' and the 'signified.' The value of a sign is generated by difference between words. There is no extralinguistic veracity to confirm the meaning of words. The relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary and there is no reason for attaching a particular signifier to a particular signified except in rare cases such as in onomatopoeic signs in which the signifier actually sounds like the signified and is therefore motivated rather than arbitrary. But it is only convention that repeatedly attaches a particular signifier to the signified and the association gains force through repetition. Meaning exists on a network of differences. Saussure's synchronic study indicated the 'presentia' and 'absentia' and 'syntagmatic' and 'paradigmatic' relationship of words.

In order to elucidate the importance of the system of differences that assign value to a sign, Saussure invoked analogous questions of identity. His famous analogy is that of the train under synchronic identities. Saussure pointed out that trains, much like signs, are systems of differences without positive terms. He pointed out that the identity of 8.45 from Geneva to Paris is not substantial but relational. The coaches and the engine that make up the physical train may be changed from time to time but it would remain the 8.45 from Geneva as long as the difference with, say a train running at 7.45 from Geneva, was maintained. As long as the difference is maintained the identity of the train will remain secured. The 8.45 train will be perceived as the same train also regardless of which day of the week it departs.

We assign identity, for instance, to two trains “the 8.45 from Geneva to Paris”, one of which leaves twenty four hours after the other. We treat it as the ‘same train’ even though probably the locomotive, the carriages, the staff etc. are not the same ... the train is identified by its departure time, its route, and any other feature which distinguishes it from other trains.¹⁸

Saussure established the same argument with an analogy of chess boards. Within the structure of the chess board the identity is attained by the relation and differences with other pieces. The real identity of the train or the chess pieces are effaced by the concept of difference. Applying the very idea to human beings we see that a wo/man’s cells are cyclically changed, s/he grows in height, gains or loses weight, wears different hairstyles and looks, acquires different skills, but carries the tag as the same person. It is therefore obvious that identity in general, the identity of a person, or that of a social group, might not so much be located on the identity of the body of an individual but rather in the relations between that person and others. A person might not even be defined by inherent characteristics, like forgetting or acquiring skills, learning new languages etc. but drawing from Saussure’s train or chess pieces her/his identity is to be understood through the relationship that the person has with other people, in a system of family, in friendship and in social groups. Such is the relational view of personal identity. The same might be said of collective identities like community or national identity. Claude Levi Strauss, an anthropologist (1908 – 2009) adopted the Saussurean model of language to his analysis of social relations in such a way that the analysis yielded structural homologies across cultural differences.

Edward Sapir (1884-1939) and Benjamin Whorf (1897-1941) have offered a culturally deterministic view that linguistic differences and cultural differences might be the same thing. For Sapir ‘Difference’ is a culturally relative way of making discriminations and the system of differences in a language system therefore becomes the reality of that culture.

The fact of the matter is that the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached. . . . We see and hear and otherwise

experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation." ¹⁹

When poststructuralism arrived, there must have been some surprise in store for those who viewed the concept of difference only as a structuralist issue. Derrida's *Writing and Difference* (1978) and Giles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1994) seemed only marginally related to structural linguists. Derrida's work where the concept of difference underwent some significant alterations made very little reference to Saussure. In Deleuze's major work *Difference and Repetition* there was only brief reference to Saussure. Critics like Brian Massumi pointed out that Deleuze's approach to language is more closely derived from stoic philosophers than from Saussure.

In *Positions* (1981) Derrida described the approach to deconstruction's binary oppositions as having three phases: the first phase is an exposure of hierarchy of the assumed superiority of one term over the other, the second phase is the reversal of that assumed hierarchy in order to promote the secondary and derivative term to the position of superiority, and the third phase was the reinscription of that opposition which involved the disruption of the arrangement of the difference between the two terms. Derrida argued that the privileged is nothing more than an inherited prejudice. The term 'difference' carried within it not only the structural relations of a word that linked it to a stable language system, but also to the temporal relations of the word to other words which preceded it and followed it. The Saussurean model had proposed that meaning be analyzed as a spatial structure. There may have been an interest in narrative time in theory, but in practice, the dimension of synchronic analysis was generally disregarded. Derridean concept of difference can be understood as an attempt to think about difference and time at the same time thus allowing a temporal dimension into the analysis of language. This model of difference brought to the fore a trace structure that implied that the relationships between the elements of a sentence were always in motion, that any sign was always qualifying those preceding it in the sequence, or waiting to be qualified by those that followed it. 'Protension' and 'retension' were hints of the future and 'traces' of the past which, he argued, constituted the present. When Derrida referred to the metaphysical concepts of meaning, time or history, he drew attention to this foundational illusion of presence. Thus, the Derridian sign is a structure of

exclusion. The whole idea of the sign as a carrier of meaning is based on the principle that its meaning could be fenced off from other meanings.

Gilles Deleuze (1925- 1995) is perhaps the most substantial philosopher of difference of the twentieth century. Like Derrida, his concept of difference does not begin with Saussure, but is rooted in a longer tradition of philosophers of difference such as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergeson and Heidegger. Difference is easily conceived as a kind of division of something singular and self-identical, as the identification of species within a genus in such a way that difference cannot be asserted without involving the existence of identity of the undivided at the same time. For Deleuze, difference is too often thought of as an inferior number in an opposition with the concept of identity. In *Difference and Repetition*, (first published in Paris, 1968,) he sets out the arguments that oppose difference to representation in general on the grounds that representation is the logic of mediating identities as static entities.

The immediate defined ‘sub-representative’, is therefore not to be attained by multiplying representations and points of view. On the contrary, each composing representation must be distorted, diverted and torn from its centre. Each point of view must itself be the object, or the object must belong to the point of view. The object must therefore in no way be identical, but torn asunder in a difference in which the identity of the object as seen by a seeing subject vanishes....Every object, everything must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences. Difference must be shown differing. ²⁰

Deleuze’s position can be understood not only in relation to structuralism but also to Hegelian dialectic thinking. Why, he asks, does Saussure at the very moment when he discovers that “in languages there are only differences” add that these differences are, “without positive terms” and equally negative? And equally he claims that a Hegelian (meaning a philosopher concerned with dialectics and contradictions, and therefore with binary oppositions) feels ill at ease in a “complex or perplexed differential mechanism...” in the absence of the uniformity of a large contradiction,

It seems to us that pluralism is a more enticing and dangerous thought: fragmentation implies overturning. The discovery in any

domain of a plurality of coexisting oppositions is inseparable from a more profound discovery, that of difference, which denounces the negative and opposition itself as no more than appearances in relation to the problematic field of a positive multiplicity. One cannot pluralize opposition without leaving its domain and entering a case of difference which resonate a pure positivity and reject opposition as no more than a shadow cavern seen from without.²¹

Deleuze is one of many poststructuralists whose work can be seen as a kind of opposition to opposition, or an attempt to liberate thinking from the structures of opposition and open it to multiplicity.

Cultural critics from diverse academic positions speak of alterity. It generally more or less involves, again to simplify in simplest terms, a general property of otherness that is the secondary identity in relation to which a dominant identity is structured. But there remains another aspect of alterity and otherness. Alterity often refers to a kind of other-worldliness to an ungraspable or indefinable quality of the Other. Jean-François Lyotard (1924 – 1998) begins his work *The Differend* (1983) with the following account:

As distinguished from a litigation, a differend [différend] would be a case of conflict, between (at least two) parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for the lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgement to both in order to settle their differend as though it were merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits the rule).²²

A 'differend' therefore is an actual and unsolvable dispute which is in a sense generated by unbridgeable cultural difference.

Thus we see that although the concept of differential ontology takes us specifically to Derrida and Deleuze, the problem of 'difference' is as old as philosophy itself.

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From Doro to Dock: Transformation of Haldia Port Complex

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Abstract:

In West Bengal an example of post-1947 industrialization is Haldia industrial zone that flourished in the verge of liberalisation and privatisation and this region was anticipated as one of the important centres of industrial resurgence in West Bengal. However, it was first developed as a river-port in late 1960s to reduce the burden of century old Calcutta port. This article is an attempt to investigate the genesis of Haldia port complex. It examines whether this port based urban industrial space was developed aiming at national requirement or to supplement the foreign interest and how far it changed the livelihood of local population.

Keywords: *Haldia port, Foreign aid, Underdevelopment*

Introduction

In West Bengal apart from Durgapur another example of post-independent industrialization is Haldia industrial zone and in the verge of liberalisation and privatisation, this area was anticipated as one of the important centres of industrial resurgence in West Bengal. Like steel in the case of Durgapur, the Haldia industrial zone was based on chemical and petrochemical based industry which was hugely publicised as 'sunrise' industry by the then State Government. Even in recent years, during the last Left Front regime, a chemical hub was proposed at Nayachar-Nandigram of Pruba (East) Midnapore, just opposite to Haldia region. The multibillionaire Salem Group, an ally of Junta Government of Indonesia, was invited for this project by the then communist government of West Bengal. The Chatterjee International, one of the major partners of the Haldia Petrochemicals Ltd., was acted as the middleman between the State Government and the Salem Group. This initiative generated much resentment among the civil society who pointed out the devastating impact on environment due to the proposed chemical hub.¹ On the contrary, the State Government promoted this project as essential for the industrial resurgent of the state and claimed that it would create thousands of new jobs for the unemployed youth of the state. To build confidence in favour of this Chemical Hub project Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, is reported to have asserted the success story of the Haldia and estimated that nearly 7000

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units of plastic product manufacturing, have come up in the state, ancillary to Haldia Petrochemicals.ⁱⁱ

However, the Haldia region was first developed as a river-port in late 1960s to reduce the burden of century old Calcutta port. Due to silting and sandbars the Calcutta port faced navigational problems for a long time and it needed an alternative way to carry on its shipping activities. Because of its proximity to Bay of Bengal, Haldia has been designed to transport larger ships by early 1960s. Later, several large and medium scale domestic and foreign private companies initiated their factories in this zone. It was first in its kind of a petrochemical hub developed in West Bengal and in entire Eastern India. Like Durgapur, public sector investment first started the development process in the Haldia industrial zone on which both the domestic and multinational companies build their empire. Here, the basic infrastructure was developed by the Government and capital was invested in many forms, like – Public Private Partnership (PPP), domestic private investment and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Thus, much before the adoption of the New Economic Policy (NEP) by the Central Government by early 1990s, Haldia was projected as an oasis for the private entrepreneurs and foreign capital.

In this background of self-proclaimed success story, this article tried to investigate the genesis of Haldia port. It examines whether this port based urban space was developed aiming at national requirement or to supplement the foreign interest and how far it changed the livelihood of local population.

Genesis of Haldia Dock Complex

The history of port in Bengal dated back to 14th Century and Tamralipta (modern Tamluk) was one of the most prominent among several ports of this region. Later in the initial stage of the advent of the European merchants, especially Portuguese, Saptagram or Satgaon (literary seven villages) began to flourish. In the first half of 16th Century due to some navigational difficulties to reach Saptagram the Portuguese anchored their ships near to Calcutta and founded the port of Hooghly. Later the merchants again shifted to Gabindapur and Sutanati village due to silting issue of Hooghly port and in 1690 the British East India Company established their trading headquarter there. At that time Calcutta offered by far the best anchorage among the all upriver locations for oceangoing vessels. Later In 1790, the first dry-dock was constructed at Banshall Ghat and almost a century later in 1870, the Calcutta Port Commissioner came into existence. Thus, the Calcutta port was developed by the British East India Company to promote British imperial interest throughout the colonial rule.ⁱⁱⁱ

Therefore, it became an important port of India and even immediate after the independence, the Calcutta port accounted near about 45 per cent of the total export trade of India.^{iv} But from mid-1950s the Calcutta port faced navigational problems due to siltation of water and several sandbars on the waterways of the river Hooghly. This

siltation issue causes many difficulties for the shipping companies that hampered overseas trade. As an effect repeated demands for dredging and construction of alternative port were raised from a section of both the Government and the shipping companies. In April 1955, eight representatives of the foreign companies publicly urged the Government for required measures otherwise the port would be lost within few years.^v The State Government also repeatedly appeal to the Centre for intensive dredging on river Hooghly and early implementation of the Ganga Barrage Scheme since 1954-55 for inflow of fresh water. Dr. B.C. Roy also personally urged to the then Prime Minister Pandit Nehru for immediate completion of this scheme to save the Calcutta port in various letters.^{vi}

In the meantime, the State Government also considered the possibility of setting up a subsidiary port of Calcutta. In the initial period, the then Chief Minister Dr. B.C. Roy selected Geonkhali as a suitable place for setting up a satellite port of Calcutta and also planned for linking it with Kolaghat by rail connectivity for better transportation.^{vii} Despite various efforts of the State Government, the Geonkhali scheme did not materialise but alternatively Haldia was selected as the subsidiary port of Calcutta. It was located on the deep water navigable channel and more nearer to sea than the proposed Geonkhali area; fairly straight navigational approach and only three sandbars on the way to Haldia.^{viii} It was situated on the right bank of the river Haldi and 104 K.M. downriver from Kolkata. These favourable conditions became decisive for the selection of the Haldia as a satellite port of Calcutta. In 1959, the project report for the new port was prepared but delayed due to some technical problems.^{ix} In the mean time, as an immediate necessity of an oil jetty was felt for transporting crude oil and petroleum products required for the Barauni Refinery, in 1965 construction of an oil jetty was commenced which was completed in 1968 along with a connecting pipeline with the refinery.^x The master plan envisaged a trident type dock system with two entrance locks, 47 berths, two river side jetties and two large size dry docks. Yet, in the first phase, only 7 berths and a single oil jetty were taken under construction and civil construction was started for the dock in 1967.^{xi} Ultimately in 1977, the Haldia Dock Complex got the momentum with the commissioning of the Haldia Port.

Thus, a new deep-water modern dock system was initiated at Haldia with an aim to promote trade and industry by handling large cargos and oil tankers. It was the first all-inclusive port project in India, operating composite cargo handling facilities and lending support to the growth of port based industry. It was anticipated Apart from crude oil and petroleum products, the Haldia port handled various other products like rock phosphate and sulphur, food grains, iron ore, coal, salt, and other general cargos. However, from the very beginning, the Haldia Port faced various problems related to navigational issue. To understand the problems we have to closely look into the matter of foreign interest in selection of Haldia.

Role of the Foreign Interest: *Capitalist Intervention through 'Aid'*

Like other public sector units developed in India after independence, Haldia Port was also an instance of India's dependence on foreign collaborators. From the very beginning, the port consultant Rendell Palmer Triton (hereafter RPT) of UK and Port of London Authority were closely associated with the Calcutta Port Commission regarding the formation of the Haldia Port.^{xii} The RPT, consultant of the Calcutta Port, prepared the project report of Haldia Dock Complex in 1959.^{xiii} It was anticipated that in coming future Haldia would transform into an industrial urban centre which would engage migrant rural population of eastern India. The outline of this initial project report was approved by some international experts including Posthuma DG of Rotterdam Port who was associated with the Government of India as advisor of the port development. The river navigational capacity was examined by a Dutch Hydraulic expert Jansen and the harbour engineering section was reviewed by a French expert named Larras.^{xiv}

Initially, for financial assistance the port authority approached the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), Washington. After initial conversation, IBRD asked for a complete master plan of the proposed dock complex. Accordingly, after consulting with the Port of London Authority, the master plan was published in 1962.^{xv} In 1963, to cover the foreign exchange component, the Haldia project report was placed before the World Bank which showed interest in this project and recommended for a detail techno-economic report. Contextually, according to some media reports at that time Japan was dependent for iron-ore export from India for its own steel projects in which World Bank invested heavily. Thus, World Bank's interest in Haldia project was reinforced by Japan's need for a port in eastern India which could effectively operate iron-ore export. Apart from this, the British lobby of tea and jute exporters was also in favour of Haldia.^{xvi} So, from the very beginning of the Haldia project, international capitalist interest was closely associated with it which further strengthened under the policy transition of 1990s.

However, according to the recommendation of the World Bank, the Haldia Survey Commission was formed under the chairmanship of V.G. Bhatia, Director of Transport Research in the Ministry of Transport. After examining the traffic potential and financial viability of the project the Commission submitted its report in 1965.^{xvii} The report recommended construction of 8 berths with a cost estimation of Rs. 40 crores at Haldia and expected that the port would handle 21 MT goods by 1975-76.^{xviii} It also projected that industrial complex, fishing harbour, free trade zone would be developed at Haldia in near future and it would convert to a prosperous urban centre of eastern India. After receiving the report of the Commission, the World Bank sanctioned its financial aid to the Haldia project which again absorbed by the foreign companies involved in construction of the port.

Stages of Development

Finally, the Commissioner of Calcutta Port approved the proposal of Haldia Dock Complex on 26th September 1966.^{xxix} It proposed that the construction of the Haldia Dock would be conducted in two stages. The first stage was estimated with Rs. 40 crores including foreign exchange of Rs. 7 crores. Under this first phase of construction the following components were estimated: land acquisition (Rs. 2 crores); lock entrance and approach jetty with pumps and other machinery (Rs. 5.5 crores); coal, ore and phosphate berths (Rs. 1.6 crores); two general cargo berths, one heavy lift berth and one grain berth (Rs. 2.95 crores); an oil jetty (Rs. 2.66 crores); coal and ore loading equipments, wagon tippers, trimmers and conveyors (Rs. 3.5 crores); cranes, forklifts and other cargo handling equipment (Rs. 1.3 crores); locomotives (Rs. 1 crore); phosphate handling equipment (Rs. 0.42 crore); tugs and other vessels (Rs. 3.23 crores); office and workshops (Rs. 2 crores); roads and drainage (Rs. 2 crores); residential quarters (Rs. 1.1 crores); and electricity, schools and markets (Rs. 1 crore). These were added with supervision, contingency and other miscellaneous charges along with devaluation under the total estimation of Rs. 40 crores. The second phase of construction was estimated with a total expenditure of Rs. 15 crores which included — a dry-dock, various kinds of dredging equipments and construction of a floating crane.^{xx}

To resolve the dredging issue, the Calcutta Port Commissioner assigned the dredging work to a Yugoslav firm Ivan Milutinovic – PIM who previously successfully dredged for the Paradip Port project. They started the dredging work in 1966 with a contract of Rs. 2.86 crores. Later a Dutch dredging company was entrusted the job in 1973. This company dredged 50 million cubic meters (hereafter mcm) till 1977 with a total cost of Rs. 26 crores. By 1978, both these companies dredged 82 mcm in Auckland, Jellingham and Middleton.^{xxi} However, despite this huge expenditure on dredging work, the navigability did not improve as it was expected. The Haldia project was planned for a draft of 12.2m, but it did not increase above 9.67m by the end of 1970s.^{xxii} Yet, only to maintain the channel, dredging was continued later on. As a result, big ships were faced difficulties to entre Haldia. Hence, question arose in the air on the viability of the project. It seems that “the planning for Haldia at its present site was wrong right from beginning.”^{xxiii}

However, the much esteemed Haldia port was commissioned in the 1977, though the shipping activity started since 1968 with functioning of oil jetty to feed the Haldia Oil Refinery of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL).^{xxiv} Haldia Dock Complex was developed as an all-inclusive project with heavy cargo handling facility like crude oil, iron ore, coal, petroleum products, fertilizer raw materials, fertilizer phosphoric acid, edible oil etc., and within short period it flourished as an industrial township.

Land Acquisition

In developing countries development is commonly viewed as an inevitable step towards economic progress and modernization that led to loss of livelihood and impoverishment of displaced peoples.^{xxv} For every infrastructural development project, the ‘temple of modern India’ once recalled by Jawaharlal Nehru, local inhabitants suffered the most due to land acquisition and displacement that generally considered as social cost of nation building. In this regard Haldia was not an exception. To develop this Haldia port based industrial urban space for both the public and private capital, land was acquired in a feudal manner. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, in the name of national interest near about 18,000 acres of land was acquired by the Calcutta Port Trust (hereafter CPT) and in this process they forcibly displaced near about 30,000 local inhabitants from their ancestral homeland. These peoples were displaced with assurance of rehabilitation package, but no alternative land and job was offered by the state managers. Gradually, Haldia port was emerged on this *doro* land which once belongs to peaceful fishing and farming community.^{xxvi} Apart from Haldia Dock complex, the port authority later sold part of this acquired land to various public industrial projects and private capitalist including the Indian Oil Corporation and Hindusthan Fertilizer Corporation at a minimal rate. Thus, local landholders lost the opportunity to bargain for market price for their land. Some of these displaced peoples, losing their previous independent profession, later became the *mati kata sharamik* (land tiller), security guards, and labourers of the newly formed port based urban industrial venture. So, this development-induced displacement created various social problems by affecting human livelihood. Nonetheless, to understand this displacement related social transformation of Haldia region we have to undergo a separate and extensive research.

Conclusion

However, starting with the Haldia port complex the area became transformed into a most promising industrial zone of the entire eastern India from a *doro* land of cluster of remote villages of fishermen. In Haldia, initially most of the industries were mainly based on chemical products. With construction of an oil jetty in the late 1960s, plans were taken to develop Haldia as a hub of chemical and petrochemical based industries. Though, various other sectors such as electronic, machinery, alloy steel and other metals, fertilizer, battery, software and tourism industries were also developed in later period. Thus, we can see from the above discussion that within three decades after the development of the Haldia port, the region rapidly transformed to one of the most promising industrial zones of West Bengal. Following the line of the ‘socialistic pattern of development’ Haldia was also developed by the State assistance. Throughout the first phase of development from 1960s to 1970s, transport, communication, township, and other basic amenities were constructed by both Central and State government assistance. Based on this ready infrastructure, the private capital, both local and multinationals, invested here. Like Durgapur, in Haldia also foreign technology and capital played a vital part in making of

every State project like the Haldia port, oil refinery, Haldia fertilizer plant and thus, imperialist plunder was continued. In 1990s after the introduction of the economic policy of privatisation and liberalisation, Haldia industrial zone received new kind of capital investment in the form of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Public-Private project (PPP).

But, how far this industrial development transformed the livelihood of the local inhabitants is a big question. Most of the labour intensive public sector units were gradually became either closed or sick due to lack of modernisation and capital investment from the government. Besides, the private sector investments created only little job which was occupied mostly by the highly educated personnel migrated from outside the region. Thus, we can see a job-less growth at this much hyped Haldia region that only led to the underdevelopment of this zone.

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Pan-Asianism: Rabindranath Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose and Japan's Imperial Quest

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Abstract

Bengali intellectuals, nationalists and independence activists played a prominent role in the Indian independence movement; many shared connections with Japan. This article examines nationalism in the Indian independence movement through the lens of Bengali interaction with Japanese Pan-Asianism, focusing on the contrasting responses of Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra Bose to Japan's Pan-Asianist claims.

Key Words

Japan; Pan-Asianism; Rabindranath Tagore; Subhas Chandra Bose; Imperialism; Nationalism; Bengali Intellectuals.

Introduction

As Japan pursued military expansion in East Asia in the 1930s and early 1940s, it developed a Pan-Asianist narrative to support its essentially nationalist ambitions in a quest to create an "Asia for the Asiatics," and to unite all of Asia under "one roof". Because it was backed by military aggression and brutal colonial policies, this Pan-Asianist narrative failed to win supporters in East Asia, and instead inspired anti-Japanese nationalists throughout China, Korea, Vietnam and other areas subject to Japanese military conquest. The Indian situation, for various reasons which we will explore, offered conditions quite different from those prevailing elsewhere in Asia writ large, and as a result, Japan and Indian enjoy closer and more cordial relationship during WWII and its preceding decades, which included links between Japanese nationalist thought and the Indian independence movement.

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The development and evolution of India's independence movement over the course of the first half of the 20th century saw the significant engagement of Bengali intellectuals and nationalists with Japan. Bengali intellectuals, nationalists and independence activists played a prominent role in the Indian independence movement in the years and decades leading up to Indian independence in 1947 and to a remarkable degree, many of the leading Bengali independence advocates shared an important connection with Japan. This article examines the varieties of nationalist responses in the Indian independence movement through the lens of Bengali interaction with Japanese Pan-Asianism, in particular examining and analysing the differing approaches of Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra Bose, the "poet and the patriot,"¹ to Japan's Pan-Asianist claims.

Tagore was a man of culture while Bose was a political and military leader. As a result of this, the two men inevitably differed profoundly in their fundamental perspectives. Nevertheless, by comparing the two men's views regarding Japan and Japanese Pan-Asianism, we can bring greater nuance to our understanding of the Indian independence movement and the parameters of Indian nationalism in the pre-WWII period. Looking at the Indian independence movement through the lens of Pan-Asianism also enables us to put the movement into a larger transnational and even trans-continental context. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, people throughout Asia faced similar concerns about Asian weakness and Western strength, questioning how to rally and save their nations while yet preserving their own cultures and traditions. Both Tagore and Bose used Pan-Asianist ideas to counter the British Raj, but they did so from diametrically opposed positions. Tagore's message of restoration to India and Asia was cultural while Bose's message called on military and political efforts. Looking at the Indian independence movement via these figures also provides a broad sense of the evolution of Indian nationalist thought and gives insight into the broad trend from a cultural nationalist approach to an explicitly political and military approach to nationalism. The inclusion of Bose also gives a corrective to the widely held Western popular view that the independence movement was wholly dominated by the Gandhian approach of non-violence.

Tagore and Bose were both deeply connected to Japan and engaged in meaningful ways with Japanese Pan-Asianist thought and in particular, the relationship between Japanese Pan-Asianist thought and Indian independence. Yet the two men differed dramatically in their response to Japanese Pan-Asianism. Both Tagore and Bose embraced Pan-Asianist ideas, in part because of its inherent message of Asian solidarity against Western colonialism. While Tagore embraced Pan-Asianist ideas and admired Japan and Japanese civilization, he was also sharply critical of Japanese nationalism and militarism, key elements in the development of Japan's own imperialist quest. Bose too embraced Pan-Asianism as an element of solidarity against the West, but unlike Tagore, Bose viewed Japanese Pan-Asianism and Japan's military mission in Asia as offering an opportunity to India's effort to oust British colonial rule.

Poet, writer, artist and educator, Tagore's universalist, anti-colonialist position has been well-studied as has been his relationship with Japan. Tagore visited Japan five times and was an admirer of Japanese art and culture, particularly what he felt was the Japanese affinity with nature. For Tagore, Pan-Asianist ideas provided a basis for rejecting both British and Japanese colonialism. Tagore's Pan-Asianism was a cultural idea, not a political ideology; it was, in Eri Hotta's formulation, a "Teaist" Pan-Asianism, or we might say a cultural Pan-Asianism, in the same vein as that of cultural critic and tea-master Okakura Tenshin, who famously wrote, "Asia is one." Even from the time of his first contact with Japan in 1916, Tagore sounded an alarm against Japan's colonial expansion. Tagore's view of Pan-Asianism led him to issue the dark warning, in a speech delivered in Japan in 1916, that Japan must, "Never think for a moment, that the hurts you inflict upon other races will not infect you..."²

Subhas Chandra Bose was a founder (after Mohan Singh) of the Indian National Army, organized to fight for India's independence from Britain and to do so through cooperation with the Japanese Imperial Army. Bose's famous cry, "Give me blood and I will give you freedom!" reflects his rejection of Gandhi's tactics of non-violence. Allied with Imperial Japan, Subhas Chandra Bose, in contrast to Tagore, used Pan-Asianist ideas as a way to contest the British Raj while maintaining (like Rash Behari Bose) that

while the British Raj was the oppression of the white man, Japan's colonial rule was being used to "prevent the white race from exploiting" Asia.³

The Pan-Asianist Idea

Pan-Asianism was not a new development that sprang to life only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Pan-Asianist ideas about the essential and inherent unity in Asian culture and identity had a long history in Asia and in Japan. At the most basic level, Pan-Asianist thinking posited Asian unity based on geographic propinquity and the conceptualization of Asia as a distinct geographical unit. Other factors also played an important role in Pan-Asianist ideas about a common Asian identity, perhaps most importantly, recognition of a common Buddhist heritage: Buddhism emerged out of the Hindu context of the Indian sub-continent in the 6th century BC and spread to China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia. The transmission of Buddhist ideas and written texts provided an important intellectual and spiritual link among and between the Asian countries, providing a *lingua franca* (so to speak) that also carried with it the transmission of other cultural and political elements and influences.

By the late 19th century, Pan-Asianism began to develop another important component, something which would in effect, give it new relevance in the modern era, which was the emergence of common cause against Western imperialist encroachment. One element of this was the conceptualization of racial ties across Asia. Despite racialized thinking that denoted the racial differences between Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Indians, against the backdrop of Western imperialist encroachment – the encroachment of "white" civilization – these racial differences receded into the background in Pan-Asianist thinking.

At the same time, from a more political perspective, Pan-Asianist thinking developed an explicitly anti-Western character. Japanese artist and cultural critic Okakura Kakuzo (Tenshin), a central figure in the early 20th century articulation Pan-Asianism in Japan wrote in *The Awakening of Japan*, (1904) "the glory of the West is the humiliation of Asia."⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru later captured this idea in his *Autobiography*, written while serving in a British prison in 1940, writing, "...we feel as Asiatics a common bond uniting us against the aggression of Europe,"⁵

Japanese Pan-Asianism

Okakura Kakuzo (Tenshin) (1862-1913) was a key early figure in the modern development of Japanese Pan-Asianist thought. His most famous work, *The Book of Tea*, (1906) which examines the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of Japan's tea culture with its origins in Chinese tea practice, provides a foundation for the later development of Japanese Pan-Asianist ideas. In 1906, Okakura published a fuller development of Pan-Asianist thinking, *Ideals of the East with Special Reference to the Arts of Japan* which famously opened with the statement, "Asia is one."

Asia is one. The Himalayas divide, only to accentuate, two mighty civilisations, the Chinese with its communism of Confucius, and the Indian with its individualism of the Vedas. But not even the snowy barriers can interrupt for one moment that broad expanse of love for the Ultimate and Universal, which is the common thought-inheritance of every Asiatic race, enabling them to produce all the great religions of the world, and distinguishing them from those maritime peoples of the Mediterranean and the Baltic, who love to dwell on the Particular, and to search out the means, not the end, of life...⁶

Okakura's Pan-Asianism was rooted in the *sangoku* ("three country") concept developed by early Japanese Pan-Asianist thinkers of an inherent relationship between Japan, China and India, which he placed in the historical context of the late 19th and early 20th century Western domination in Asia. As Brij Tankha writes in his introduction to *Okakura Tenshin and Pan-Asianism: Shadows of the Past*, "Okakura's writings were a distilled essence of his view that Western domination had cut at the roots of Asian cultures; it had colonized them politically and culturally. Only Japan had managed to resist and it, therefore, had become the repository of the Asian heritage, and could lead the other nations to realize their original principles." Thus Okakura's ideas represented "a serious, and at times profound, attempt to grapple with the havoc of colonization and a way to universalize the Asian experience."⁷ At the same time however, anticipating Tagore's later view of Japan as having betrayed Asia, in his 1904 book, *The Awakening of*

Japan, Okakura recognized that although Japan had escaped Western colonization, it had done so largely at the cost of compromising its own civilization, writing, "We have become so eager to identify ourselves with European civilization instead of Asiatic that our continental neighbors regard us as renegades—nay, even as an embodiment of the White Disaster itself."⁸

Although Okakura's Pan-Asianist thought was primarily cultural, by the late 19th and early 20th century, however, Japanese Pan-Asianism began to paradoxically take on a distinctly nationalist flavour, adopting a political and polemical aspect in opposition to Western imperialism, what Eri Hotta in *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War, 1931-1945* identifies as *Meishuron*, or "Japan as leader" Pan-Asianism⁹. Starting in 1895 with the assertion of colonial control over Taiwan in the wake of its victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan started down the path of expansion in East Asia adding a second colony in Korea in 1910:

By the turn of the century the pan-Asian mission was defined in two main ways: one was that Japan should serve as a conduit for the modernization/Westernization of East Asia (for example, the 'Okuma doctrine'); the other was that Japan had a duty to protect its East Asian neighbours from Western takeover by extending its benevolent control over them (for example, the annexation of Korea). The basic assumption underlying the notion of a pan-Asian mission was that Japan shared a common culture (*dobun*), a common ethnicity (*doshu*), or common interests with the Chinese, the Koreans, and the other peoples of East Asia. In the Japanese view, these commonalities could, or perhaps should, bind the peoples of East Asia together against the threat of Western military or territorial intrusion.¹⁰

In the early years of the 20th century, Japanese ultranationalist organizations such as the Gen'yosha and the Kokuryukai advocated Japanese expansion into Korea, Manchuria and the Russian Far East. "Increasingly after the Russo-Japanese War," Prasenjit Duara writes, "...the view that Japan was the only Asian nation capable of rescuing Asia and harmonizing East and West civilizations began to take hold."¹¹ By the

1920s and early 1930s, as the ideology of these sorts of groups became more mainstream, Japanese Pan-Asianist ideologues such as Okawa Shumei further developed the theoretical and intellectual underpinnings of a Pan-Asianist rationale for Japan's pursuit of military expansion in East Asia. In the Manchurian Incident of 1931, Japan took over control of Chinese northeastern territory, extending its colonial expansion into Manchuria and establishing the puppet state of Manchukuo. Japan's 1937 invasion of China, followed by Japanese Prime Minister Konoe's announcement of Japan's "Mission in East Asia," and its goal to oust the West from Asia and carve out the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere cemented Japan's pursuit of what Peter Duus called Japan's anti-imperialist colonialism.¹²

Japanese Pan-Asianism: East Asia/India

Japan's emergence onto the world stage in the late 19th century, and particularly its victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, provided a source of fantastic hope for nationalists throughout Asia. As Pankaj Mishra wrote, "For many Asians in the late nineteenth century, the proof of Japan's success lay in the extent to which it could demand equality with the West..."¹³ and what stronger proof of equality could there be than military victory over a Western power? But Japan's military expansion in East Asia in the first half of the 20th century, and its recruitment of Pan-Asianism as a rationale for that quest alienated its would-be followers and thoroughly discredited Pan-Asianism in East Asia. As Mishra writes, [Japanese] Military commanders single-mindedly pursuing war objectives treated local [East Asian] populations with great brutality, making a mockery of the popular slogan, 'Asia for Asians.'¹⁴ As a result of Japan's brutal military aggression and its generally brutal colonial policies in the areas it controlled during the first half of the 20th century, Pan-Asianism's utility as a meaningful discursive concept was called into question.

The Indian relationship with pre-WWII Japanese Pan-Asianism however, provides a contrast to the trajectory of Japanese Pan-Asianism in East Asia. Joseph McQuade notes in his examination of Rash Behari Bose's relationship with Japan that by the early 20th century, Japan was emerging as a leader not only economically and politically in East Asia, but as a "center of Asianist thought."¹⁵ As such, Japan emerged

as a “leader among Asian nations with the potential to challenge the hegemony of the West.”¹⁶ In the early decades of the 20th century, among Indian nationalists, British colonial rule in India inevitably drew comparisons with Japan’s expanding colonialism in East Asia, in India, “the Japanese were not perceived as a threat in a region dominated by the Western powers. Consequently, Japanese-directed Pan-Asianism enjoyed great appeal throughout Southeast Asia.”¹⁷ Although by the 1930s, some Indian nationalists became suspicious of Japanese ambitions and its Pan-Asianist claims, many, like Rash Behari Bose, believed that Japan, as a “fellow” Asian nation, would not exploit other Asians. For many in an India under the tight grip of the British Raj, Japan’s emergence as a potential leader of Asia offered a tantalizing hope of Asian restoration and even the possibility of eventual national independence.

As Prasenjit Duara has argued, over the course of the 19th century, the concept of “civilization” was equated with “the values of Christianity and Enlightenment. ‘Civilization’ (with a capital C) was understood to be both singular and universal.”¹⁸ In the aftermath of the barbarity of World War One, the “war to end all wars,” the validity of this moral premise was called in to question, and as a result, “new national movements sought to turn toward their own civilizational traditions.”¹⁹ In the heady atmosphere after World War One, Japan’s Pan-Asianism appeared as a potentially valid alternative – an anti-Western trope -- to the apparent moral failure of Western civilization highlighted by the so-called War to End All Wars.

In addition to serving India as an aspirational model of an Asian nation free of Western presence and domination, in more pragmatic terms, Japan had at various times emerged as a supporter of Indian independence fighters as a restraint on British strength in Asia. Due to the formal diplomatic ties between the two countries (the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902) this support was not necessarily open and direct but more restrained. In the early decades of the 20th century Japan had provided safe haven for exiled Indian independence movement fighters, including the Bengalis Rashbehari Bose, Taraknath Das and others and by 1941, some 1,000 Indian nationalist fighters were living in exile in Japan, among them Ananda Mohan Sahay and Raja Mahendra Pratdip.²⁰ The British kept an eye on such developments: Tagore’s 1916 visit to Japan, for example, had raised

concerns among British diplomats that the visit “might result in a Japanese-Indian understanding which could eventually take a political and anti-British form.”²¹

Japan, India, Bengal and Pan-Asianism

Bengal, the center of British control over India until 1911, was also the “long-standing heart of anti-British activities.”²² Accordingly, many Bengali intellectuals were drawn first to Pan-Asianist ideas and later more specifically to Japanese Pan-Asianism as they sought to contend with British colonial control and find a path to Indian national independence. Seeing India within the larger context of Asia in turn allowed for the framing of Indian independence on a larger canvas. As Joseph McQuade writes, “If India and Asia were to be understood as the simultaneous sources of world civilization, their subjugation by Europe took on global significance as the oppression of civilization itself.”²³

In the Bengali intellectual culture of the late 19th/early 20th century, three related ideas emerged to form what together served as a foundation for 19th century Bengali thought: “India and the East were synonymous... Eastern civilization was distinguished by spiritual profundity... East and West complemented one another perfectly.”²⁴ These ideas provided an intellectual base which also expanded the discursive context surrounding Indian independence. In addition to Tagore and Bose and their respective responses to Japanese Pan-Asianism, numerous others in Bengal also engaged with Pan-Asianist ideas, including Keshub Chandra Sen and members of the Brahmo Samaj, Chitranda Das, R.C. Mazumdar, Jadunath Sarkar, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Rashbehari Bose.

Although he later broke with the organization and founded his own off-shoot, Keshub Chandra Sen was early member of the influential Brahmo Samaj, founded by Debendranath Tagore in 1843 on the basis of Rammohan Roy’s Brahmo Sabha. In his 1883 speech, “Asia’s Message to Europe,” Sen outlined some of the principles that served as an intellectual foundation for Bengali views of Pan-Asianism. “We have indeed learnt a great deal from the West... but Europe too must learn of Asia. Who can

deny the deep idealism and the lofty spirituality of the East?... It is almost un-Asiatic not to know God.”²⁵ The Brahma Samaj promoted similar ideas that also underlined a fundamental Pan-Asian unity: “The genius of Asia was religious.”²⁶

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this Bengali outlook on Pan-Asianism received further inspiration by Japan’s emergence as a leading force in Asia and as a result, Bengali nationalists increasingly saw in Japan a potential spiritual if not actual ally in the Indian drive for national independence. Bengali lawyer, editor and nationalist, Chitrandan Das (1869-1925) for example, promoted the idea of India “as part of a greater Asiatic federation,” arguing that while Tagore was correct in his view that India was a leader in the realm of the spiritual and religious, “it was ‘the menace which threatens all alike’ – that of Western domination and racism – that was more important and urgent than the ties of ancient culture.”²⁷ Bengali historian R.C. Mazumdar (1888-1980) wrote of “the Indian influence on the whole of Asia, from religion and government to geographical names and measurement systems and even the fusion of races.”²⁸ Another Bengali, historian Jadunath Sarkar, was president of the Greater India Society. These activities all point to an underlying investment in Pan-Asianist thinking.

Perhaps the most prominent of the Indian nationalists who promoted a relationship with Japan was Rashbehari Bose. While many scholars today view Rashbehari Bose as an apologist for Japanese colonialism he himself advanced the view that Japan’s war in Asia was “a righteous war for Asia’s liberation led by Japan against the Anglo-American status quo powers.”²⁹ He argued, for example, that the Japanese, as fellow Asians, “governed and protected Korea in order to prevent the white race from exploiting it.”³⁰

Tagore, Japan and Pan-Asianism

Rabindranath Tagore’s association with Japan was deep and long-lasting. Between 1916 and 1930 he travelled five times to Japan. He admired Japan and Japanese culture, and yet levied a harsh critique against Japan. Tagore grew up in the heart of one of India’s most illustrious and creative families; as he described the influences of his early youth, “... the unconventional code of life for our family has been a confluence of three cultures, the Hindu, Mohammedan and British.”³¹ Despite his many talents and

accomplishments, Tagore's most enduring self-identification was as a poet: "*Ami kobi*," ("I am a poet") was his simple and straightforward statement on the issue.³² In 1902, when Okakura Tenshin travelled to Calcutta to meet Swami Vivekanandhe also met Tagore and the two men formed a friendship that lasted until Okakura's early death in 1913. Although they only met once more, in Boston in 1913, shortly before Okakura's death, Tagore credited Okakura as "one of my intimate friends."³³

Tagore and Okakura held shared views about the spiritual greatness of Asia and of its essential Pan-Asian spiritual and cultural unity. Tagore posited a dichotomy between East and West that tagged Eastern civilization as inherently focused on "social harmony and spiritual liberation" while Western civilization was "dedicated to strengthening national sovereignty and political freedom."³⁴ Western civilization, Tagore wrote in 1901, was "carnivorous and cannibalistic...feed[ing] upon the resources of other peoples..."³⁵ Asia, Tagore believed, was spiritual, and its goal was the "religious liberation of the individual" while the West was political, with the goal of "strengthen[ing] the nation state and its sovereign independence."³⁶

Against this backdrop, Tagore advanced the idea that Asian regeneration had the capacity to "save" humanity from the rapacity of modern civilization.³⁷ But more particularly, amid the crisis of the onslaught of Western imperial domination in Asia, which called into question the very ability of Asia to survive amid the onslaught of Western imperial domination Tagore called on Asia to rally itself: returning from a trip to China in 1924, Tagore announced, "Asia must find her own voice"³⁸

As we saw above, many Indian nationalists in the early 20th century, including Rashbehari Bose and others, believed this voice -- Asia's rallying cry and its renaissance -- could be led by Japan. Tagore on the other hand, despite his Pan-Asianist views, was deeply sceptical of Japan as potential leader of an Asian renaissance. Tagore had long admired what he saw as the artistic and natural character of Japanese culture, and the value it placed on harmony and simplicity. But in his lecture, "Message of India to Japan," delivered at Tokyo Imperial University in June 1916 during his first visit to that country, Tagore expressed the unease he felt over the "divergence that he sensed between those values and the strident patriotism of the new Japan..."³⁹ In his incisive critique of

Japan Tagore argued that Japan, in its all-out effort to modernize, had essentially sold its soul: “The whirlwind of modern civilization has caught Japan like it has the rest of the world... But this is not [the real] Japan.”⁴⁰ In pursuing the “whirlwind of modern civilization,” – Japan by 1916 already had taken colonial control over both Taiwan (1895) and Korea (1910) -- Japan had forfeited its role as potential leader of Asia. Tagore warned Japan that it must

...Never think for a moment that the hurts you inflict upon other races will not infect you, or that the enmities you sow around your homes will be a wall of protection to you for all time to come. To imbue the minds of a whole people with an abnormal vanity of its own superiority, to teach it to take pride in its moral callousness and ill-begotten wealth, to perpetuate humiliation of defeated nations by exhibiting trophies won from war, and using these in schools in order to breed in children's minds contempt for others, is imitating the West where she has a festering sore, whose swelling is a swelling of disease eating into its vitality.⁴¹

His prescription for Japan, and indeed for Asia, then came in the form of a challenge: Japan, he argued, must lead the way in the rejuvenation of Asia and thus a global reformation: Japan, he wrote,

must infuse the sap of a fuller humanity into the heart of modern civilization. She must never allow it to get choked with noxious undergrowth, but lead it up towards light and freedom, towards the pure air and broad space where it can receive, in the dawn of its day and the darkness of its night, heaven's inspiration. Let the greatness of her ideals become visible to all men like her snow-crowned Fuji rising from the heart of the country into the region of the infinite, supremely distinct from its surroundings, beautiful like a maiden in its magnificent sweep of cure, yet firm and strong and supremely majestic.⁴²

With striking prescience, Tagore warned of the danger of Japan's Pan-Asianism: “...nations who sedulously cultivate moral blindness as the cult of patriotism will end their existence in a sudden and violent death.”⁴³

VI. Bose, Japan and Pan-Asianism

Tagore, a cultural nationalist and Pan-Asianist, rejected Japan's version of Pan-Asianism viewing it as Japan's dangerous self-apology for its nationalism and imperialism, and decrying Japan's colonial push and the growth of nationalism in Japan as clear signs of that Japan was merely imitating the West. He warned Japan that it must not "with a light heart accept the modern civilization with all its tendencies, methods and structures, and dream that they are inevitable..."⁴⁴ "Real power," Tagore wrote, "is not in the weapons themselves, but in the man who wields those weapons."⁴⁵ In contrast to Tagore, Subhas Chandra Bose was one who determined that he must in fact wield those weapons, and wield them against Britain, as the only way to gain Indian independence. S.C. Bose, like Tagore, embraced the idea of a Pan-Asian identity: Bose too had read Okakura Tenshin's work, and according to Joyce C. Lebra, "...it was Okakura's writings which had first turned his thoughts toward Japan."⁴⁶ Unlike Tagore however, who rejected Japan's version of Pan-Asianist thinking, Bose accepted it, ultimately allying with WWII Japan in a bid to win India's independence from Britain.

Subhas Chandra Bose, born in 1897 in Cuttack, Bengal, was educated in Calcutta and England. Joyce Lebra writes,

Two things began to make Subhas politically aware. One was the behaviour of Britishers in Calcutta, whose insults to Indians in public places were galling and offensive. This was the psychological basis of the revolutionary movement in Bengal. The outbreak of World War I wrought another change in Bose's thinking. Political emancipation was a desirable goal for India, but without military power India could not hope for independence.⁴⁷

Over the course of the 1920s, worked with Jawaharlal Nehru to organize youth in the Independence League. He was elected president of Congress in 1938 and in 1939, but shortly thereafter, Bose broke with the Gandhian influence in Congress and its adherence to necessity of non-violent struggle. Bose rejected the Gandhian (and Congress) ideal of

non-violence and passive resistance, coming to believe that the non-violent approach might “paralyze” the British administration in India, true independence could only be achieved via armed resistance. Unlike Tagore, whom we can call a “cultural nationalist,” Bose believed in the necessary role of the military in the independence struggle: “In every fight a special responsibility devolves on the vanguard of the army.”⁴⁸ Moreover, by the 1930s, he became convinced that “India would never be able to win freedom without calling on foreign help.”⁴⁹

Arrested by the British in 1940, Bose came to the conclusion while imprisoned that “the only path to independence lay through Axis assistance against Britain.”⁵⁰ Released from prison after a “freedom fast” in late November 1940, he escaped India in January 1941 and fled to Nazi Germany where he was met with a tepid response. Making contact with the Japanese Embassy in Berlin, Bose determined to go to Japan, finally arriving after a daring transfer in May, 1943. By July, 1943, he arrived in Singapore, to take lead of the Indian National Army, the *Azad Hind Fauj* (Free India Army) there. “As long as India lays prostrate at the feet of Britain,” Bose maintained, Indians would not be able to “...shape our own destiny. ...therefore the paramount duty .. of nationalists ...[is] to bring about the political emancipation of India as early as possible.”⁵¹

Where Tagore saw the failed potential of Japan as leader of an Asian renaissance, warning it against taking “pride in its moral callousness and ill-begotten wealth, to perpetuate humiliation of defeated nations by exhibiting trophies won from war,”⁵² Bose saw Japan as a bringer of hope to Asia, remarking in a Japanese press conference in 1943 that Japan’s 1905 victory in the Russo-Japanese War was

the first harbinger of Asian resurgence. That victory was hailed with great joy not only to the Japanese but also by the Indians. Therefore, Indians feel that the existence of a strong Japan is essential for the reconstruction of Asia.⁵³

Bose was satisfied with Japan’s promises of assistance, convinced, of “Japan’s ‘Asian consciousness’” and of Japan’s “desire to help other Asian nations to achieve liberation.”⁵⁴ In this he followed Rash Behari Bose, who “Viewed global empire through

a Manichean racial binary, which prohibited the possibility of one Asian nation oppressing another...⁵⁵ India's freedom, Bose believed, was "not merely ... political elimination of the British. It stood for a revolutionary break from the past, with major structural changes in the economic, social and political lives of the people."⁵⁶

Bose's collaboration with Germany and Japan has clouded his historical reputation outside of India. Sugata Bose writes, "Bose's single-minded absorption in the cause of India's independence led him to ignore the ghastly brutalities perpetrated by the forces of Nazism and fascism in Europe. By going to Germany because it happened to be at war with Britain, he ensured that his reputation would long be tarred by the opprobrium that was due the Nazis. A pact with the devil: such was the terrible price of freedom."⁵⁷ And yet, as historians Christopher Bayly and Tim Harper recognized in a piece written in 2004, "Only now, fifty years on has Subhas Chandra Bose begun to claim his still deeply controversial legacy as the greatest military history of India's modern history."⁵⁸

Although he harboured some suspicions of Japan, stating, "If cunning British politicians could neither cajole nor deceive me, no one else can hope to do so...," he remained convinced of Japan's promise as an ally.⁵⁹ Both pragmatic and charismatic however, "He was focused on India, he did not take into consideration the global situation"⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Bose's alliance with imperial Japan remains problematic. Although he cautioned:

We shall have to be awake and alive, on our guard, not only against the enemy British imperialism, against imperialistically inclined Japanese bureaucrats, but against Indians in our own ranks.⁶¹

He was convinced that his alliance with Japan offered

a golden opportunity to all enslaved nations in Asia to emancipate themselves and set up a new order based on freedom, justice, and morality⁶²

Conclusion

Pan-Asianism and was an idea that captivated many including Rabindranath Tagore and Subhas Chandra Bose in the pre-WWII and WWII era. Given Japan's

position and strength in Asia during that period, its version of Pan-Asianism became the dominant paradigm within Pan-Asianism. But its failure as an idea came as a result of Japan's military aggression in East Asia. Within Indian nationalism and the independence movement came a wide variety of responses to Japanese Pan-Asianism – from Tagore's essentially culturalist and critical approach, to Bose's supportive politico-military approach.

Many questions remain as we consider whether Pan-Asianism continues to hold relevance. It is hoped that such a study as this will provide a basis for grappling with these larger questions. As Akira Iriye and Rana Mitter write in the foreword to Hotta's *Pan-Asianism*,⁶³ "...the idea that this region [Asia] has values and aims in common has once more gained currency" but in an ever-changing news cycle dominated by disputes among the Asian powers, the question arises: does Pan-Asianism have historical legs and if so, where and why? Did Japan's use of the concept as an ideology of imperialism put an end to the potential utility of such a concept? Currently in Japan some are seeing "a resurgence of nostalgic Pan Asianism among Japanese conservatives and efforts to beautify the past by revisionist historians."⁶⁴ Is Japan currently reviving Pan-Asianist ideas and if so, how will that revival be met in East Asia? Will a Japanese revival of Pan-Asianist thinking find a more ready audience in India than elsewhere in Asia? What does "Asia" mean in the globalized world of the early 21st century and is it a potentially helpful – or harmful – concept? More particularly, can the unique ties that united Japan and India in the early half of the 20th century be relied upon to bring increased stability to the world of the 21st century?

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***Commercial cash crop and the development of capitalist economy:
A study of colonial tea plantations in Darjeeling hills.***

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Abstract:

The present study focuses primarily on the development of Darjeeling hills as a region of tea plantation since the beginning of the mid-nineteenth century. The development of tea plantation ushered in infusion of colonial capital, which completely altered the existing feudal economy. Darjeeling's potential and possibilities as a zone of tea cultivation had attracted the immediate attention of the EIC officials who sought to transform the almost uninhabited forested tract of Darjeeling into a tea region. Large tracts of virgin forest and grasslands were cleared by British Planters and cultivated with tea. In establishing and cultivating their estates it was apparent that the planters were initially able to secure labor from the neighboring Nepal hills. In fact, tea as commercial plantation in Darjeeling since early fifties of the nineteenth century had been a sheer coincidence which was taken place as a part of larger imperial project. Since then tea continued to be the backbone of the economy of Darjeeling hills. The expansion of tea industry in Darjeeling had fundamentally altered the nature of political economy of Darjeeling hills and that too at the cost of forests, ecology and environment in particular. The colonially induced expanding tea plantation lovably called 'imperial cash crop', owned and engineered by the British planters under the patronage of British East India Company gave rise to an insular economy hitherto unknown by the indigenous people lived in so far on tradition based subsistence economy. The substantial quantum of profits accrued from Darjeeling tea used to be siphoned out to Europe and tea labourers had to be kept satisfied with wages only. Such a situation gave rise to a kind of dependent development economy in Darjeeling under the aegis of new technology transformation. In this way, as a part of grand imperial political project, Darjeeling hill was drawn into the world capitalist system.

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KEY-WORDS: Tea plantation, Colonial Capital, Imperial Objective, Zone of Tea Cultivation, Imperial political project, Imperial cash crop, Political Economy, Dependent Development Economy, Technology Transformation, World Capitalist System

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to explore the impacts of commercial tea plantations on the forested lands and on the socio-economic and material conditions of people living in Darjeeling hills. Darjeeling had been the first location in Colonial Bengal to have been penetrated by the tea plantation on commercial basis since the mid of the nineteenth century. In the initial years, the growth was simply phenomenal in the wake of large colonial capital investment. Credit must go to imperial science, European entrepreneurship, knowledge, and governance skill at the one end, as well as innumerable hardship of neighboring human labors on the other. Till then, tea continued to be the backbone of the economy of Darjeeling hills and Terai (Foot-hills) with the resultant consequences on the lands, landscape and demographic configurations.

With the expansion of commercial tea plantations in Darjeeling hills, the natural forest wealth had been subjected to virtual plunder. In fact, the idea of forest conservation and application of scientific forestry reached in Darjeeling at later decade, when a large area of forest land was alienated for tea plantation. Natural dense forest at the initial years was considered to be as an obstruction to development of physical infrastructures and commercial expansion of tea. The realization of optimal revenue had been the priority of the East India Company. Consequentially, by the late fifties of the nineteenth century, sixty percent of the forest cover had been cleared for development purposes including expansion of tea gardens. The rapid and continuous depletion of forested zone, extensive deforestation produced irreconcilable balance in the human-nature relations giving rise to continuous soil erosion, innumerable landslides, devastating floods in the foot-hills and the plains. The depletion of forests resulted in the massive degradation of the ecologically fragile Darjeeling hills.ⁱ

The establishment of first commercial tea garden, Tukvar Tea Estate at the

Lebongspur by the British owned East India Company in 1856 heralded the beginning of a new era in the Darjeeling hills by exercising new mode of natural resource use necessary for much needed economic growth.ⁱⁱ The then prevalent nature of subsistence economy, mostly based on barter economy, with few exceptions of briskly Tibetan trade and a few of East-West Himalayan mountain trade, was radically transformed to monetized economy due to infusion of colonial capital in commercial tea plantations. Tea plantation capitalism in the mid of nineteenth century Darjeeling had substituted the landless labors to wage earning workers.

Tea Plantations in Darjeeling Hills

For Darjeeling, the development of commercial tea plantations coincided with the economic development of the region. The initial idea of making Darjeeling hill station as a sanatoria and military garrison was placed in the back seat, let alone the triumphant tea as a commercial cash crop connecting Darjeeling with European market if not with global market. By 1861 both railways and roadways connecting Darjeeling with the plains and subsequent arteries roads connecting tea gardens were put in place. Tea Plantation opened up a new vista of employment opportunities in a land once clothed with forests where a very low number of people lived a life on natural subsistence economy.ⁱⁱⁱ

The credit for bringing Darjeeling onto India's economic map goes to the British led tea industry. Not only small numbers of indigenous inhabitants were engaged in employment in tea gardens, but also thousands of people from neighboring Eastern Nepal immigrated to Darjeeling hills for accessing new employment opportunities in the tea plantation. For assuring uninterrupted labour supply in the expanding labour intensive tea industry, the system of having indentured labour was never adopted in Darjeeling.

For the plantations in Darjeeling, mostly, immigrant workers came from Nepal. The chronic unemployment prevailing in Nepal due to overthrow of a large chunk of Nepali population belonging to the lowest strata of hierarchically structured caste driven society of Hindu Nepal; the age old tradition of the landless Nepalese leaving home in search for employment in India, the proximity of Darjeeling to Eastern part of Nepal and the similarity in the climatic and physiographic conditions – all combined to facilitate the

movement of labour from Nepal to the plantations of Darjeeling. The Nepalese labourers immigrated on their own initiative being affected by push factors and attracted by the pull factors. The plantation management did not have to engage any recruiting agency. At the initial few years, a good chunk of immigrated labours went back to Nepal, but in course of time, being assured to live with families, majority of them settled down in Darjeeling as permanent residents.^{iv}

Such immigration had remained continuous and rapid in between the decades of 1850's and 1930's. Most of such people started working as unskilled labour force as plantation workers. A good number of skilled labours was engaged in tea plantation as clerks, managers etc. Tea provided ancillary employment opportunities in the making of chest tea, plywood and tea packaging and such other businesses and trades linked with the tea industry.^vIn fact, the Nepali population in Darjeeling had outnumbered all other population settled there since the beginning of 1880's.

Despite the contribution of tea plantation to the economic development in Darjeeling hills, the expanding tea plantations had huge adverse impacts on geo-ecological and socio-economic condition of people. The enhancing expansion or the rapidly growing tea gardens – just from one estate in 1856 to thirty-nine in 1866, one hundred and thirteen in 1874 and one hundred eighty six in 1905, had led to large-scale deforestation, landslides, soil erosion, loss of wildlife, adverse changes in the Darjeeling's biodiversity.^{vi}Darjeeling hill tract was once a land with extensive vegetation and dense forests were deforested with the clearance of forests as the rapid expansion of tea plantations in the region began.^{vii} Around the same time, the construction of hill cart road connecting Siliguri Terai and Darjeeling up to Lebong Cantonment and construction of cobweb of link roads connecting tea gardens by earth cutting, blasting of rocks had weakened the slopes of the hills, soil erosions and landslides causing large scale environmental degradation.^{viii} Moreover, the use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers caused contamination of river/streams and degradation of land.^{ix}

The maximum growth of immigrated population resulted in increased unemployment in tea plantations and affected adversely the sustainable livelihoods of all plantation workers. The population overgrowth led to massive depletion of natural

resources such as forests, vegetation and land. Random cutting of forest wood for fuel and slope lands were indiscriminately used for cultivation, thereby accentuated further damages to the local ecology. Additional pressure on land and water resulted in environmental degradation^x and deteriorated the socio-economic conditions of hill people.^{xi} The increased human settlement added to the vulnerability of Darjeeling hills.^{xii}

By 1840's, Darjeeling, an obscure piece of hill tract did no longer remain a land of anomaly as the British established firm political consolidation on Darjeeling. By 1839, Col. Llyod, the first Agent of the East India Company and the Chief Officer to negotiate with the king of Sikkim, was replaced by Dr. Cambell as the First Superintendant of Darjeeling. Along with other designated officers for tea plantation research elsewhere in India, Dr. Cambell, a Member of Company's Medical Service was eager and interested to experiment tea plantation in Darjeeling hill area. It is important to mention that Brian Houghton Hodgson, the Resident of Nepal, introduced tea cultivation into the Himalayas, establishing a plot in the Residency garden using seeds obtained from China by Kashmiri merchants. Dr. Campbell remained Assistant Resident, Nepal at that time till he joined as Superintendant, Darjeeling in 1839. Dr. Campbell's repeated experiment in Darjeeling leading to the establishment of commercial tea estates by 1852.^{xiii}

Dr. Cambell's successful experiment with tea plants in the backyard of his Bungalow and the achievement in implementing first tea plantation for commercial purposes heralded a new era of colonial political economy in Darjeeling. We find from report dated 28th April 1853 of Dr. Campbell that he was pleading with the government all along for establishment of experimental plantations directly by Government or for extension of trials by the native residents, in the Darjeeling region.

Dr. Campbell's experiment was followed by the plantations of Dr. Withcombe, Major Cromelin in the lower valley, called Lebong. In 1856 tea industry developed on an extensive scale at Takvur by Captain Masson, at Kurseong by Mr. Smith, between Kurseong and Pankabari by Captain Samler. The year 1856 was a landmark in the history of Darjeeling tea industry. The year marked the opening of Alubari tea garden by Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company and another on the Lebong spur by Darjeeling Land Mortgage Bank. In 1859, Dr. Brougham started the Dutaria garden. Between 1860

and 1864 four gardens at Ging, Ambotia, Takdah and Phubsering were established by the Darjeeling Tea Company. By the end of 1866 there were no less than 39 gardens with 10,000 acres under cultivation producing 4,33,000 Lbs of tea and in 1874 the number of gardens had increased to double. The area under cultivation rose to 18888 acres, the outturn to 3,928,000 lbs; and labours increased to 19000 persons. Between 1866 and 1874 the number of gardens under tea was almost exactly tripled, the area under cultivation increased by 82 percent; while the out turn often was multiplied nearly ten times.

The rapid growth of tea plantation in Darjeeling during the colonial period was due to certain convenient factors and congenial circumstances. These are : (a) Availability of cheap labour of the neighboring territories, especially from eastern part of Nepal; (b) Availability of freehold land in abundance; (c) convenient revenue policies; (d) Availability of forest wood and timber for fuel and for such other infrastructural purposes at a very low price or without price; (e) Physical and spatial status of Darjeeling congenial to the growth of tea plantation and quality tea production; (f) Special status of Darjeeling to establish European planters' raj restricting non-European to own tea garden in Darjeeling; (g) Emerging interest among the Europeans to invest capital in the tea industry of Darjeeling.

Since Tea industry was primarily the labour intensive industry, the requirement of labour both skilled and unskilled had largely been felt, however did never remain as a problem due to aspiring unskilled labour force was readily available in the neighboring territories. The Nepali emigrants had kept the supply of labour flowing to the Darjeeling tea plantations. Unlike the Assam Planters, the European planters of Darjeeling did not have to introduce the system of indentured labour. It was not a single labourer but the family of labourer was encouraged to settle in Darjeeling tea plantations to ensure sustainability of labour and to make child labour and women labour available at a cheaper rate. There had always been a steady supply of Nepalese labour force during the whole period of colonial Darjeeling. From the recorded information, it is seen that during the decades between 1850-1870, there was a steady supply from 30,000 per decade till 1871 to 75000 per decade till 1951 (in 78 tea plantation)^{xiv}

The phenomenon of long-distance labour migration, within India and overseas cannot be simplistically described as a voluntary process. There never was and never had been anything like a 'free' market in labour functioning in India. And rarely ever, for that matter, were labourers 'freed' in the simple Marxist sense, of being, at one instance forced off the land and compelled to sell their labour. More often a process of gradual immiseration was at work, with migrant labour being one of a variety of options open to peasants and tribals in which they might attempt to resist the pressures which they were under. As such, they undoubtedly exercised a choice, but that choice was exercised in an environment heavily structured by other features of the culture, society and, above all, economy in which they lived. To speak of this as 'free' choice therefore makes no sense at all. At no stage were they entirely able to escape exploitation, and often that which they subsequently endured was far more systematic than any which had governed their previous existence. If at the end of the day these labourers prospered, it was frequently despite rather than because of the opportunities open to them. Nonetheless many migrants were able to build for themselves a space within the interstices of the colonial labour market, taking the initiative, saving money to support their relatives, resisting or otherwise adapting to their circumstances. Many became jobbers, gang-leaders and recruiters themselves. The role of returnees as recruiters was sometimes deliberately engineered by plantation owners and other employers, although featuring little in official Documents of Indentured Labour.^{xv} Equally often however the process was initiated by the migrants, seeking to build for their relatives a friend a better life, in order to reunite divided families, or in other ways to prosper. As such, it is a tremendous testimony to the individual genius of migrants, to the new world which they built for themselves, and to the enduring links that they were able to maintain, often over vast distances, with their culture, kith and kin at home. In the process new identities were constructed to enable them to bridge this gap between the old and the new and to somehow maintain their links with both.^{xvi}

Initially, while encouraging European businessmen to invest in tea industry, pound-sterling based companies were allowed to register as Joint Stock Company and local administration had made land available at low prices, even arrangement was made

to sell the wasteland through open auction. However, with the passage of initial years, thirty years lease system for cultivation of tea was established. All these opened accesses, governmental patronages and supports resulted in positive expansion of land as well as number of tea estates in colonial Darjeeling as evident from the following table.

Expansion of Tea Acreage in Colonial Darjeeling

Year	No. of Tea Plantations	Tea Cultivation Land
1852	1	433 hectares
1866	39	3000 hectares
1870	56	4400 hectares
1874	113	11000 hectares
1896	186	16230 hectares
1943	142	21075 hectares
1947	138	16569 hectares

Source : Tea Statistics, 2001

The expansion of tea plantation in Darjeeling was rapid during early years of colonial rule due to extraordinary special powers and huge discretionary powers vested in the Superintendent, Darjeeling by the East India Company Board of Directors located in Calcutta. The patronization and encouragement went to the extent whereby the planters could grow tea without paying revenue taxes, normally imposed on agricultural land. It is found that “146 tea estates were revenue free covering an area of 74286 acres as compared to revenue paying tea estates of 82127 acres. These revenue free tea estates consisted mainly of wasteland, the revenue of which were committed under the Wasteland Rules of 7th May 1859. So grant of wastelands put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.10/acre. As a result, between 1859-62 more than 9000 acres of land were sold in the hills by public auctions at a average rate of about Rs.12/acre. Only after the passing of West Bengal Estate Acquisition Act, 1953, all the erstwhile freehold rights have been extinguished and all the tea estates have been made revenue paying”.^{xvii}

Campbell gave special encouragement and inducement to attract settlers in Darjeeling. With a view to encouraging the growth and expansion of the tea industry in

Darjeeling the British government offered land on especially favourable terms, under various sets of rules introduced from time to time. But a time soon came when Government had to devise ways and means to regulate the settlement of prospective tea planters. Land management rules in respect of plantations thus evolved according to the requirement of circumstances. There were at least twenty different tenures mentioned in the papers under which land cultivated with tea was held. But only three of which had practical importance to Darjeeling. They were the Old Assam rule also known as 99 years lease Rules, Fee Simple Rules of 1862 and the Cultivation Leases given under the Orders of the Government of Bengal issued on 22nd July 1864.

After 1854 the Board of Revenue proposed to extend to Darjeeling the rules for leasing wastelands under the Old Assam rules. But Dr. Campbell successfully opposed their introduction, chiefly on the ground that the public were satisfied with the existing rules. What kind of existing rule Campbell was referring to was not very clear. Probably it was a discretionary power which he had been vested with, of granting leases. The leases of 1853 expired in 1858, and many correspondences were granted with the Board of revenue on the subject of their renewal. Some of them were primarily renewed for 1859, and then nothing seems to have been done until 1860.^{xviii} Immediately after the acquisition of the Darjeeling territory in 1835, there was not much demand for land; and the applications which were made were dealt with by the Superintendent at his discretion. In 1838 a large number of applications for land for building sites led to the issue by Government of a set of rules for the grant of lands, dated 4th September 1839.^{xix} Prior to 1850 Dr. Campbell did not find it practicable to report any land revenue from the aboriginal inhabitants of the Darjeeling territory. It is quite clear from a report of Dr. Campbell, to the Board of Revenue in August 1850. In 1850, however, he tried the experiment of settling defined tracts upon the headmen of the communities living within such tracts, for a period of three or five years. Up to 24th December 1850 he had given twelve leases, ten of which were for three and two for five years. In 1853 all these leases were renewed for five years.^{xx} At that time there was not much demand for land in Darjeeling territory. A second lease was granted in 1853 and the demand for land in Darjeeling increased in view of tea cultivation. The leases of 1853 expired in 1858, and

much correspondence granted with the Board of revenue on the subject of their renewal. Some of them were primarily renewed for 1859, and then nothing seems to have been done until 1860.

Meanwhile a new set of rules for the grant of wasteland in the Darjeeling territory was issued by the Board of revenue with the approval of the Government on 7th May 1859.^{xxi} The most important provisions of these rules were:

- 1) Grant of wasteland should be put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.10 per acre.
- 2) That the sale at such auction should convey a freehold title; that existing leasehold grant might be commuted to freehold at the option of the grantee.
- 3) Building locations might be commuted at the rate of 20 years purchase of the annual rent.
- 4) Between the introduction of these Rules in 1859 and their abrogation on the introduction of the Fee-Simple rules in 1862, over 9172 acres of land were sold in the hills by public auction at an average rate of about Rs.12 per acre.

The Fee-Simple Rules: In October 1861 Lord Canning published a resolution, in which he sanctioned the alienation of wastelands in fee-simple and the redemption of the land revenue of wastelands already granted on leasehold tenure. The resolution also contained an outline of the rules which Lord Canning proposed to make.

Lord Canning's minute of the 17th October 1861^{xxii} laid down three main principles on which grants of wastelands were to be made in future. These were, firstly, that such lands should be granted in perpetuity as a heritable and transferable property, subject to no enhancement of land revenue; secondly, that all prospective land revenue would be redeemable at the grantee's option by a payment in full when the grant was made, or a sum might be paid as earnest at the rate of 10 percent, the remainder being paid later; and thirdly, that there should be no condition obliging the grantee to cultivate or clear any specific portion within any specific time. The minimum price for the fee-simple was fixed at Rs.2-8 per acre, so that by anything 10 percent of this or four annas per acre, a title was obtained. Lord Canning's rules were considerably modified at the instance of the Secretary of State, and on the 30th August a fresh set of rules was issued by the

government of Bengal. This modified version of Lord Canning's rule is called the Fee-Simple Rule of 1862.^{xxiii}

They provided that all un-assessed wastelands, in which no right of proprietorship or inclusive occupancy was known to exist, should be available for purchase unless specially reserved by the government. Ordinarily, no lot was to exceed 3,000 acres, but there was no calculation to the number of lots any one person might obtain. Each lot, if available for purchase, was to be put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.2-8 an acre. The price might be sold in installment within ten years of the completion of the purchase. Thus these estates were held in fee-simple or as revenue-free lands, the right of the Government to rent having been hold out. Under these rules, 24 holdings, with an area of 11,152 acres, were sold for about Rs.13 per acre. The most important point of difference between these rules and Lord Canning's is that under the latter the land was given to the applicant at fixed rates, ranging from Rs.2-8 to Rs.5, while the fee Simple rules required that it should be put up to auction. This provision was very much disliked by the speculators, who complained that after they had spent time, trouble, and money in searching for a suitable piece of land, they were liable of lose it altogether, or to have to pay more than its value for it at the auction sale. There was an agitation for the re-introduction of leasehold tenure, which had been discontinued under a clause in the fee-simple rules. Another provision, which was much objected to, was one requiring the demarcation and survey of each lot previous to sale. Gradually the Government had to suspend the survey prior to the sale. The result was disastrous. It happened on many occasions that the grantee had purchased one piece of land and got a title deed describing one quite different.^{xxiv}

Cultivation Leases: The agitation against the auction clause of the fee-simple rules prompted the government to permit lands to be taken up on thirty-year leases for the purposes of cultivating tea. When orders to this effect were passed by the Government of Bengal in 1864, the Board of Revenue drew up a set of rules. In 1864 a new tenure was introduced under Government order, No.1765 T, of the 22nd July of that year; by which lands were granted on cultivating leases for a term of thirty years at 6 annas per acre, with a right of re-settlement at the end of the term at half the rates paid for land cultivated with

the ordinary crops of the District. These holdings were not commutable to fee-simple tenures. There was no efficient provision made for the survey and demarcation of the leaseholds, or in the protection of native interests. In Darjeeling much land had been taken up on this future. In the tea growing areas of the Bengal presidency, under the old rules of 1854 about 30,000 acres held by different tea planters. Similarly 320,000 acres were held under the simple rule and 1,00,000 acres were held under cultivation lease. In a statement on the state of tea culture in the District of Darjeeling, E.W. Whinfield the deputy commissioner on 27th February 1873 gave an account of the land held in different tenure in Darjeeling.^{xxv}

The practical result of those grants was large-scale alienation of forest land (which would otherwise have been state property) by government than was actually required for the extension of tea cultivation. A large quantity of charcoal was required then in the tea factories of Darjeeling for firing and drying the tea. In fact the tea industry initially relied a great deal only on Charcoal as the source of fuel. Another very important requirement of the tea industry was wooden boxes used for packing manufactured tea. All these were taken place at the cost of forest wood.^{xxvi}

Thus, it may be stated that most tea plantations were established by clearing natural forests on lands acquired or purchased from the government of India. Whenever markets for tea were strong enough to enable expansion of plantation acreage, forest cover correspondingly was reduced. There was also attempt by the Forest department to prevent greater alienation of forest land to the tea planters as well as those who indulged in land speculations. However, most of them were of the view that encouragement of a steady increase in the area under tea would serve the interest of the general public. In the interest of the government and the forest administration of Darjeeling, it was felt that the grantees of forested lands should be made to pay for the timber standing on the land thus obtained in such a manner so as to ultimately check the insidious tendency to acquire large areas of forest land, not with the view of planting it with tea, but to keep the land for sale in the future. Thus, the tea industry contributed significantly to deforestation of the natural forest of Darjeeling.

To provide the planters further legal and administrative protection, the district

administration of colonial Darjeeling created a *Touzi* (distinct land revenue) Department primarily to look after the interests of the European planters by setting apart the tea plantations from the agricultural sector and thereby from the jurisdiction of the general land revenue administration too. This explains why the *Touzi* Department is having its existence only in the two tea producing districts namely Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to provide special privileges.^{xxvii} Effectively, there had been none in between the tea planters and the East India Company Authority except the single layered bureaucratic frame headed by the Superintendent/District Collector. This arrangement also explains how the nexus was built between the private European planters and the District administration in Darjeeling. The *Touzi* Section under District Administration dealt with land matters of the tea garden land, renewal of the lease of the tea garden, collection of land cess/salami/penalty/fine etc., it also dealt with giving no objection certificate for the development purpose, permission for uprooting and replanting/felling of shed trees. *Touzi* was also held responsible for the resumption of the retained land of the tea garden. Interestingly, the post-colonial independent state government administration continued this colonial arrangement and *Touzi* section under District Magistrate Darjeeling still continues to operate.

The annexation of Darjeeling from the king of Sikkim (through a Deed of Grant), Darjeeling was given a special status by the East India Company administration under which it was designated as a non-regulated district and the land laws of Bengal did not apply.^{xxviii} Such unique arrangement provided opportunities for bringing a huge portion of land under tea cultivation. Consequently, the rapidly growing tea industry played a major role in the initial development of the entire hills of Darjeeling. As a matter of fact, once conceived as sanatoria or as a military station, Darjeeling had been brought under the fold of tea economy and had been designated as tea land being tea designated as the colonial cash crop. The period between the establishment of first tea estate in 1852 and till 1947, the entire Darjeeling hills (principally restricted to Darjeeling Sadar and Kurseong sub-Division and only five tea gardens in the western part of Tista under lately annexed Kalimpong sub-division), experienced an unprecedented growth in tea plantation. The number of tea estates and the area under tea cultivation increased steadily from just one

estate (1856) with an area of 4.33 hectare under tea cultivation to one hundred and thirteen tea estates covering 11,000 hectares of land under tea cultivation in 1874. In 1895, the total number of tea garden rose to 186 and the area occupied under tea cultivation as recorded in 1943 rose to 21075 hectares.^{xxix} However, the periods from 1896 to 1943, experienced the decrease in the number of tea gardens due to closure, suspension of works, declaration of sick garden, or merger with the big group of tea companies, and increase in the area of land under tea plantation. There had been other factors too for the expansion of tea area and reduction of number of tea gardens.

In 1873, the first General Meeting of the Darjeeling planters was convened in Darjeeling to discuss on the issues and problems confronted by the planters. After the passage of roughly two decades, Darjeeling planters Association was formally formed in 1892 and was associated to Indian Tea Association in 1910.^{xxx} A separate association called the Terai Planters' Association was formed in 1928. This association faced friction between some Indian and European members due to lack of trust between planters. Simultaneously, another important event of technology transformation was taken place in Darjeeling tea plantation. Mr. O'Brian an engineer, first time applied the power driven tea roller and tea sorter in the processing of tea in 1872 by installing turbines. This resulted positive impact both on the quantity and quality of tea processing in Darjeeling and held responsible for rapid growth and expansion of tea plantation.^{xxxi} Rapid expansion of tea plantations in the second half of the nineteenth century created major employment opportunities and served as the impetus for initial economic development of the entire hill tract of Darjeeling.

Thus it may be stated that most tea plantations were established by clearing natural forests on land acquired or purchased from the Government of India. Whenever markets for tea were strong enough to enable expansion of plantation acreage, great cover correspondingly got reduced. For many years, the tea planters held dominant financial and political leverage in Darjeeling and prevented the Forest department from gaining control over the wide forest area of the district. Higher ups in the forest department wanted to prevent greater alienation of forest areas to the tea planters as well as to those who indulged in land speculation. The large scale alienation of forest land for plantations

and speculation as was indulged in at that point of time spoke of the great concern with which the forest department viewed the growth of the planter's interest in the district of Darjeeling. The dichotomy of interests between government foresters and private planters went unabated throughout the colonial period. The Colonial revenue officials had always tilted their balance to private planters in view of their revenue paying capacity.

Taking legitimate control over the forest land was the acknowledged policy of the British Government from the very beginning of the establishment of the Forest Department. British Government gradually realized that if the prevailing state of affairs was allowed to continue unchecked, in the same proportion as cultivation increased and forest was cleared, the government forest property would not only become valueless, but might soon be diminished to such a degree as to be incapable of supplying the just demands of the country, which it was considered as the duty of a civilized government to secure. It was also recognized as practically impossible for a government to undertake the systematic management of a vast state property from which every individual could supply his or her wants free of charge, and frequently yielded no income from local sale. Soon it became evident that in order to effect the required changes, it was necessary to legislate in order to legalize the settlement and the reservation of forests areas as well as the assumption of the complete control of their management

It was consequently necessary to discern, in the first instance, between forests in which the control of the state was still absolute; forests which were the property of the state, but which were burdened with legal rights, prescriptive or granted. It was found that the forest Act of 1865 drew no distinction between the forests which required to be closely reserved, even at the cost of more or less interference with private rights, and those which merely needed general control to prevent improvident exploitation. It also provided no procedure or inquiring into and settling the rights which it so vaguely saved, and gave no powers for regulating the exercise of such rights without appropriating them. The forest Act of 1865, of such reasons, lent itself badly to the constitution of the state reserves. As a matter of fact, the Indian Forest Act of 1878 which was subsequently passed, did not per se accept the forest settlement work done under the earlier enactment.^{xxxii}

The credit for bringing tea to Darjeeling goes to Dr. Cambell who was appointed in 1839 to the post of Superintendent. In 1841, there was successful cultivation of the plant at an attitude of 213.36 metres, from the seeds of a Chinese variety brought from Kumaon. The other early planters were Dr. Whilecombe, a civil surgeon and Major Crommlin, a civil engineer. It was identified that the land around Lebong – a little below Darjeeling north side, was particularly suitable. By the beginning of 1850's, on the way up from the plains, the Pankhabari and Kurseong gardens were developed by pioneers like Martin and Captain Samler. The commercial potential of Darjeeling as a tea cultivation zone with its unique kind tea aroma was proved beyond doubt and several other gardens were established. These tea gardens were promoted either on the basis of proprietorship or as joint stock companies. In 1856, the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company opened the Alubari Garden. The Dhutana garden owned by Dr. Brougham opened in 1859. Dr. Campbell attempted to inspire the local indigenous people by way of distributing tea seeds; however, his attempts were proved to be a failure.^{xxxiii}

With the initiation of tea cultivation on commercial basis, by 1860's several concerns like the Darjeeling Tea Company and the Lebong Tea Company opened a number of tea gardens at the high mountain ridges of Darjeeling hills. But soon there was interest in opening estates at lower levels in the Terai region. In 1862, James White, owner of Singel tea estate of Singel near Kurseong, opened the first garden in the Terai at a place called Champta. In 1872, the property was registered and the partners were W. Lloyd, G.A. White, S. Cochrane, A. Smallwood and R.S. Wright.^{xxxiv} The business was converted into a joint stock company called the Champta Tea Company, in 1883. This huge estate was reorganized and the New Champta Tea Company was created in 1889 under the managing agency of Davenport and Company.

In 1866, 14 years after the first commercial planting, Darjeeling district had 39 gardens producing a total of 21,000 kg. of tea. In 1870, the number of gardens increased to 56 producing about 71000 kg. of tea. By 1874, there developed 113 gardens in the district covering an approximated area of 6000 hectares under tea. Tea was proved to be a highly profitable venture and by 1905, tea was grown over some 20,000 hectares – nearly 80 square miles and the production had risen to about half a million kg. The following

chart shows the expansion of tea in Darjeeling between 1874-1907.

Year	Number of Gardens	Tea cultivated area (ha)	Output (kg)
1874	113	7643	1781700
1885	175	15380	4123359
1895	186	19705	5313720
1907	148	20485	5646172

Source: Tea Statistics, Darjeeling.

The table approves the fact that during years both land under tea cultivation and output of tea had always an upward tendency, however the number of gardens experienced a downward tendency while compared to the figures of 1895 and 1907. This was due to the fact that a number of adjoining gardens were amalgamated for economic management and changes in the ownership deed of registration from personal proprietorship to Joint Stock Company. Over and above, tea flourished both in the hills and terrain plains of the district.

Interesting to note that Indian entrepreneurs were allowed to open a number of gardens in terrai part of Darjeeling after 1907. They were however allotted land with less favourable soil. However, the rest of the Darjeeling gardens located in hills were still kept under European ownership. The expansion of tea cultivation in Darjeeling went unabated till it faced notable crisis during the world wars. Till then, there were 71 gardens across 10,117 ha within the jurisdiction of Darjeeling Thana, 46 gardens across 6,889 hectares under Kurseong Thana, and 32 gardens across 3197 hectares under Siliguri Thana. Thus about one seventh of the district was covered with tea and no less than one third of tea population lived off the industry.^{xxxv} The Census of India showed that 64000 persons were engaged as plantation workers. Darjeeling tea imbued with fine unique aroma became famous by 1870's for this flavour and realized higher prices.

The tea industry in Darjeeling continued to progress satisfactorily between 1901 and 1940. There had been the decline in the numbers of tea gardens, however, area under tea cultivation in Darjeeling district continued to increase from 20485 hectares to 25520 hectares and the output grew from 5,464,292 kg. to 10,760,072 kg. The district grew both

black and green varieties of tea and the 1942 output was 12,010,420 kg. and 563371 kg. respectively. However, in the post World War II period, the tea industry in Darjeeling suffered a decline. The area under cultivation fell and production remained virtually stagnant. The tea industry in Darjeeling started suffering from starvation of capital. The recurring depression in World tea price, falling profitability of investment in tea in India in general and Darjeeling in particular, devaluation of rupee and the problem of repatriation of dividend and remuneration had been the causing anxiety to investors and made the British capital problematic.^{xxxvi}

The penetration of colonial capitalism in India led to the growth of a wage-earning industrial labour force divided into several segments in the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. A major segment was the plantation labour force formed and maintained essentially on the basis of unfree labour. In view of all this and also in view of the multi-tribe, multi caste and multi-lingual composition of the labour force and the subsistence of primordial tribal/caste linguistic ties can such a labor force be viewed and identified, if not in the subjective sense but at least in terms of objective content, as a working class or a segment of Indian working class? This leads to the broader issue of ambiguities in the process of class formation under conditions in which the capitalist sector emerges and grows but the capitalist relations are not sufficiently generalized in the economy as a whole. This suggests once more that the plantation labour force was very much a phenomenon of unfinished capitalist relational process of history. All this had also very important bearing on the process of development of class struggle and labour and for class consciousness among the plantation workers.^{xxxvii}

During the last few years of colonialism, Darjeeling experienced organized trade union movement which penetrated into the tea gardens around 1943. The Provisional Committee of the Communist Party of India (CPI) delegated Sushil Chatterjee to organize a unit in the Darjeeling district. Mr. Chatterjee came into close contact with Ratan Lal Brahmin, a local popular person commonly acceptable among the labours of the gardens. R.L. Brahmin was drawn gradually into organized Leftist politics and won the National Assembly constituency seat in 1946 as a Communist candidate. The rift

between other emerging trade unions of the Gorkha League, Congress and the Communists had widened as a result.

Conclusion:

It has been explored that the development of Darjeeling hills as a region of tea plantation had acquired its credential since the beginning of the mid-nineteenth century. It was only with the abolition of the East India Company's trading monopoly of tea with China in 1833 that a quest for tea in British India acquired urgency. The British Scientists and Botanists under the leadership of Nathaniel Wallich had noticed that the tea plant succeeded best on the sides of mountains. During the same period, the coincidence was that including Darjeeling hill tract along with extensive tracts of the Himalayan foot-hills had been brought under Company's direct control as the end results of wars with Burma, Nepal and Sikkim.

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The Origin and Growth of Kalimpong as an Urban Hill Station in Colonial India: A Historical Study

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Abstract:

Urbanization has not been uniform all over the world. Different ages have witnessed localized growth. The degree of urbanization of a nation is generally defined as a proportion of the population resident in urban places. Kalimpong as a hill urban centre was developed later than the most hill stations in India. Kalimpong was nowhere on the map of India before 1865. Actually, the region of Kalimpong was originally a part of Sikkim from which it was taken over by Bhutan. Finally following a defeat in the Anglo-Bhutanese war in 1865 Bhutan handed over the tract to the British government of India in 1865. The trend of urbanization in Kalimpong was not same as the satellite town of Darjeeling rather Kalimpong civil station had a character of its own, totally different from the seasonal retreats by virtue of their social life, their good spirits and style. Above all it was meant for the Indians and Anglo-Indians.

Keywords: *Urbanization, development, Hill station, Settlement, Colonial*

Introduction:

The term 'urban' is derived from Latin word 'urbanus'. Urbanization means the process of the physical and social growth of a city both in terms of its social structure, population and cultural organization.¹ The Indian subcontinent shares, with Mesopotamia and the Nile valley, a long history of urbanization. The first phase of urbanization in the Indus valley was associated with the Harappan civilization dating back from around 2350 B.C. to 600 B.C. India, again came across towns and cities associated with the two major and closely related, cultural streams of India, namely the Aryan civilization of the North and the Dravidian civilization of the south from this period onwards. For about 2500 years,

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India has had a more or less continuous history of urbanization. However, from the historical evidence it is evident that there were both periods of urban growth and periods of urban decline.²

The story of urbanization in India in historical times is a story of spatial and temporal discontinuities. The earliest urban developments were confined to the Indus valley and the adjoining parts of Rajasthan, Punjab and to some extent western Uttar Pradesh. Other parts of the country remained outside the pale of urbanization. The causative factor behind urbanization varied from time to time, leading to not one but several urbanization processes at different points of time.³ In the historical periods, from the ancient to the British period, urbanization was inextricably related to the rise and fall of kingdoms, dynasties and empires, and thus, in effect urbanization during this period was essentially a political process. In recent times, urbanization has been associated with industrialization and economic development. In this sense, urbanization is essentially an economic process.⁴

Urbanization is a concept that refers to a demographic change involving an increase in the urban areas and the concentration of population in large urban settlements. The degree of urbanization of a nation is generally defined as a proportion of the population resident in urban places.⁵ The first hill stations were established as early as 1815, and by 1870 there were over 80 hill stations in four different areas in India, serving the four major metropolitan cities of Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Madras.⁶ The hill stations originally catered to the need of the British population in India, which consisted mainly of civilian and military personnel and their dependents. In course of time, a substantial native population migrated to these towns, seeking employment in providing the various services which the British needed.⁷ The British built schools, hospitals, hotels and clubs for the exclusive use of Europeans. Women and children of European origin outnumbered the men, who were compelled to spend longer times in the plains. In due course, the Indian princely families followed the British to the hill stations, where they established their summer palaces. Urbanization in Kalimpong was vastly different from plains like Calcutta and other metropolitan and non-metropolitan cities. Kalimpong as a

hill urban centre was developed later than most hill stations in India. Kalimpong was nowhere on the map of India before 1865.⁸

A brief history of Kalimpong:

The precise etymology of the name Kalimpong remains unclear. There are many theories on the origin of the name. One widely accepted theory claims that the name “*Kalimpong*” means ‘Assembly (or stockade) of the King’s minister’. The word is derived from Tibetan ‘*kalon*’ (king’s minister) and ‘*pong*’ (stockade).⁹ It is located at an average elevation of 1250 meters (4101 Ft.) from sea level. The village, which has given its name to the tract of country formerly known as Dalimkot, used to be the headquarters of a Bhutanese district. Kalimpong had been invaded by several successive rulers since the second half of the nineteenth centuries. The first Tibetan captured the land in the name of Namgyal dynasty. The Bhutanese usurped the whole area of Kalimpong from Sikkim and carried out an autocratic rule over this land of the Lepchas. After the Anglo-Bhutan war of 1864, the entire area lying over the eastern bank of the Teesta River as well as the Dooars was ceded to British India and this ceded area was attached to the Western Dooars District. In the following year, this area was transferred to the District of Darjeeling.¹⁰

The annexation was a strategic necessity unlike that of Darjeeling which was a gift, actually exacted from Sikkim, for the bracing climate and its perfect physical location of as a sanatorium. Kalimpong was not favoured as one, although there existed all the essential factors which are usually identified as basics to the establishment of a hill station- altitude, scenic beauty ,terrain, accessibility –not only physical accessibility based on distance and availability of transportation, but also social factors such as political control or access.¹¹

Till 1912, that is for about fifty years since the annexation of the Kalimpong region from Bhutan (Treaty of Sinchula of 1865) there were no talks of developing Kalimpong as a hill sanatorium. Kalimpong was considered so insignificant that the Ashley Eden of the Bengal Civil Service, made just a flying reference to the village of Kalimpong, in his report to the Secretary to the Government of India.¹²

The question of developing Kalimpong as a hill station arose out of petition made to the Government in 1913, by Mr. Corb who was the Resident Representative of Cawnpore Wollen Mills. He tried to seek permission to purchase a house and a plot of land from a 'cultivating *ryot*' in the village. Since the annexation it had been the government policy to reserve all land for the Lepchas and the Bhutias and any transfer of land was strictly prohibited. The government then tried to seek suggestion from the Board of Revenue, Bengal, regarding the advisability of making provision of new sites for the European settlers and also to decide whether Kalimpong should be developed as a hill station, and if so, what should be a general plan of development of the place.¹³

With the government's approval regarding the matter, C.J. Stevenson Moore, Hon'ble member of the Board of Revenue, was given the authority to enquire into the feasibility of opening a hill urban centre in Kalimpong. While Mr. Moore was in Kalimpong on 3 and 4th June, 1914 he held discussions with Dr. J.A. Graham of the mission and a few government officials of various ranks. They were all unanimous that the hill station was a good idea. Dr. Graham was of the opinion that if Kalimpong was well planned it would become one of the most attractive hill stations in India. The reports indicated that opening another hill station in Bengal (after Darjeeling and Kurseong) was a viable proposition. Stevenson Moore argued that Darjeeling and Kurseong were already overpopulated having little scope of further expansion and the climatic condition of Kalimpong was better suited than Darjeeling, to the needs of the retired Anglo-Indians. And Kalimpong could easily be connected with Calcutta via Siliguri. An extension of the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway was already under progress from Siliguri to Gailkhola, a point at a distance of about 7 miles from Kalimpong.¹⁴

Development of Kalimpong :

Kalimpong became an important centre for trade with Tibet due to the closeness of the town to the Jelep La pass which allowed access to central Tibet. Trade with Tibet was channelized through Kalimpong. Musk, wool, fur, food grains, etc., that were traded in Kalimpong. Increasing reclamation of land for cultivation encouraged many to settle in Kalimpong. The decision to develop Kalimpong as a hill station too prompted well- to-

do families from the plains and as well as British Officers to frequently visit the place and build summer cottages there.¹⁵

Apart from the agriculture and trade, British interest in Kalimpong was largely in the field of missionary activities. Eight years after the annexation, in 1873, William Macfarlane started to work among the Lepchas. J.R. Minto (1974), in his book “Graham of Kalimpong” writes that Macfarlane found caste system and orthodoxy of the Hindu Nepalese a ‘stumbling block’ to his work in Darjeeling. Over the years the mission grew up and extended. Since 1878 the mission received land on token or nominal rent for its extensive philanthropic works. The Scottish University Mission Institution was the first school that was opened in 1886. The Kalimpong Girls high School was established in 1886 as well. A Church was erected in 1891, a hospital opened in 1893. By the late 1890s the mission started running an Anglo-Hindi middle school for boys, a girl’s school, a vocational training institution for the hill tribes. In the year 1900, Rev. J.A Graham founded the present Dr. Graham Homes which were aimed to be a school cum orphanage for destitute Anglo-Indian children. The Christian settlement thrived in the cozy corner of *khasmahal* without any hindrance or opposition what so ever.¹⁶

The Schools of Kalimpong, besides imparting educations to the locals, attract a significant number of students from the plains, the neighbouring state of Sikkim, Bihar and countries such as Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Thailand. Kalimpong gained little importance from the commercial point of view until the last decade of the nineteenth century. A small township began to take shape around the mission. A number of European missionaries, their Indian converts, people seeking job as coolies, servants and scavengers, all contributed to clearing of jungle and extension of the human habitat. Some adventurous people from distant Haryana and Rajasthan appeared on the scene to take up the job of supplying provisions to the missionaries.¹⁷

Stevenson-Moore pointed out that some steps should be taken as precondition of the development scheme: 1) Setting up a Kalimpong Sub-division, 2) Provision for water supply, and 3) Improvement of the existing mule track leading to the Tibet border. However, Moore made another spot enquiry in 1915 and forwarded a second note on July

1, 1915. That the Government acted upon Stevenson-Moore's note was apparent from the fact that a new Sub-division was created with its headquarters at Kalimpong with effect from March 1, 1916.¹⁸

The outstanding landmark at Kalimpong is a beautiful Gothic church and tower just above the bazaar, which were built as a memorial to the Rev. Macfarlane, the pioneer missionary of the Church of Scotland in the Darjeeling district. Several mission houses near the church, a charitable dispensary from which 1500 patients obtain relief annually, an excellent dakhunglow, and a residence of forest officer through the area near the Church, while near the bazaar there are the Mahamedan mosque, the Hindu temple and Buddhist monastery, and about two miles from the town, there is the residence of the Bhutan agent in which the Dalai Lama lived during his visit at Kalimpong.¹⁹

A few examples of the changing trend may be cited. New shops in the Bazaar appeared, concrete buildings started to be erected, hotels opened, motor vehicles arrived. Number of rural people was being engaged in the bazaar as transport coolies and labourers as trade expanded. Jubilee High School, the first non Missionary high school of Kalimpong was established in 1936.²⁰

There was a need and demand for a municipality. In 1943 the government of Bengal declared their intension to establish a Municipality in Kalimpong. Two years later (1945) it was established extending over the development area, the bazaar and the mission compound and covering 3.35sq mile.²¹

Transportation:

The communication between the plains of Bengal and Kalimpong was a creation by the Britishers. There were traditional trade routes between India and Tibet but most of the routes were through Nepal. Among all the Indo-Tibetan trade routes the Bengal-Kalimpong-Lshsa route became the most important one. During the second half of the nineteenth century, after a British control was established over Sikkim (1861) and Bhutan was defeated in the Anglo-Bhutanese war in 1864, a direct route from Bengal to Tibet via Kalimpong was laid out. In course of time, Kalimpong, a small village in this area became the linking point between the plains of Bengal and Lshsa.²²

Trade from Tibet to the plains of India via Kalimpong subdivision follows two routes both of which pass through Sikkim state.²³ In 1888 a British force of appreciable strength passed through this area to drive out the Tibetans from the Sikkim's territory. After the successful repulsion of the Tibetans and the resultant Anglo-Chinese Convention (1890) and Anglo-Chinese trade convention (1893) empowering the British to open a trade mart at yatung on the Tibetan side of the frontier, Kalimpong started to grow as a trade centre.²⁴

In 1907 and 1908 a new road was built by the government in the Teesta valley at a higher level and the railway company took over what was left of the old road and constructed the Teesta valley extension railroad which was opened for traffic in 1915.²⁵

The Teesta valley road started from Siliguri and reached Kalimpong crossing about 36 Miles away. At that time cane bridge was very common in this area. During the second half of the nineteenth centuries the Cane Bridge was replaced by Iron suspension bridge.²⁶ A macadam surfaced road from the Coronation Bridge to the Teesta Bridge was made. It was fit for heavy motor transport limited to 35 cwt.laden weight.²⁷

The continuation of the Teesta Valley road went towards Kalimpong rising over 3000 feet in eight miles. It was improved in the year of 1929-30 to make it usable by heavy motor traffic.²⁸

The cart road from Siliguri to Kalimpong was frequented by the travelers, traders, missionaries, and the government officials soon after the annexation of Kalimpong. A two feet gauge steam tramway system pulled by a small powerful engine, started off at Siliguri and ran up to Gailkhola. The mode of transport between Gailkhola and Kalimpong was bullock carts, horses and ponies. As early as 1914, Mr.Cresswell, the Manager of Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, expressed the company's intention of constructing a ropeway from Gailkhola to Kalimpong.²⁹

The Kalimpong Ropeway co. Ltd. was formed in 1928 for the purpose of transporting commodities between the town of Kalimpong and the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway in the Teesta valley. The ropeway was designed and constructed by the engineers of the British Ropeway Company Limited; London was opened for traffic in

1930. The ropeway served Kalimpong's trade in a big way. It now took only one and half hours to transport goods between Kalimpong bazaar and Teesta valley, while Bullock carts used to take 12 hours to cover the same distance.³⁰ After the improvement of the Teesta valley road, trucks competed with the ropeway.³¹

On June, 12, 1950, the railway line up to Gailkhola was washed away by disastrous floods. The damaged ropes were soon repaired but there was no initiation taken on the part of the government to open the ropeway for traffic or construct the railway line.³² Sometime later trade was revived with the improvement of Teesta valley roads. Trucks began to be used for carting commodities up to Siliguri. In the sixties Siliguri-Gantok route became very important.³³

Settlements and Territorial Development:

According to Bell's survey and settlement report, "Government is the proprietor of the Estate." Therefore, the absolute ownership of lands changed hands from one alien ruler to another, from the hands of the Namgyal rulers to the British colonial rulers. Since first survey and settlement in 1882, the *raiyat* was given *pattas* for his holdings and on that *patta* his rights were based. In 1878-82 a Survey and Settlement of the more advanced portion of the estate was carried out by Messors Paul, Ritchie, and Shake. The area under settlement consisted of 53494 acres in the valleys of the Teesta, Relli, and Rangeet.³⁴

By 1901 the population of the sub-division had risen to 41,511 from 12,683 in 1881, while the population of the government estate alone was about 36,000. The total area of the estate was found to be 178 square miles or 114,216 acres, of which 53,349 acres were held by raiyats and 60,867, were 'khas' government waste.³⁵

The term of the last settlement expired on 31st March 1913, but it was extended for another five years under government order no-581, dated the 6th February 1912, and thus ultimately expired on the 31st March 1918. In 1918 a partial resettlement of a portion of the estate near Kalimpong was sanctioned and Mr. D.G Pyne, the Deputy Collector and Sub divisional Officer, Kalimpong, was appointed as the Settlement Officer. It was decided, however, to postpone these operations and to take up the re-settlement of the whole estate. The process of settlement, as expected, was slow in the beginning.³⁶ It was

ordered, therefore, that the work of receiving the old maps and record should begin in the field session of 1919-20, and the re-settlement of the Kalimpong estate should be taken up separately from that of the other two estates in which cadastral survey was required and could not be started till the following year.³⁷

The rent rolls were published under Act VIII of 1879 and thus the new rents came into effect from 1st April 1921, in accordance with section 12 of that Act. The news that a new civil station was in the process of opening was already in the air and there are reasons to assume that interested parties were enquiring about the various aspects of the settlement. A building lease for 90 years subject to renewal after every thirty years would be granted. The form of lease was finalized in August 1919. It laid down certain strict conditions. Water connections and water borne sanitations and regular dressing and upkeep of the areas adjoining each holding were insisted upon.³⁸

Demographic changes:

A great deal of research work including government gazette on the history and people of Kalimpong recorded high growth rate of migrant population in every decade. It should turn to Bell's report for probing the question of population explosion and changing demographic pattern in the government estate of Kalimpong. The Marwaris outnumbered the Bengalis as a single community in Kalimpong. Their influx in Kalimpong began long ago-in the late 19th and early 20th century in connection with Tibet trade. The goods were brought down by the Tibetans but in Kalimpong they were handed to the Marwaris who exported them out of Kalimpong. The occupational pattern of the communities changed to some extent in post- independence period. The dominance of the Marwaris over business continued and they continued to dominate commodity trade and business in Kalimpong. Biharis are mainly found in retail shops. In the pre independence period the share of the Europeans and Anglo Indians in gazetted services was high. In place of the Europeans the proportion of the Nepalis increased in Government and semi Government jobs in post-independence period.³⁹

The list of leases indicates that in the beginning it was mainly the Indians who were coming in as predicted back in 1914, by Stevenson-Moore and ,of course, well to do Indians alone could afford the luxury of maintaining a holiday resort in the hills. Thus,

posh locality of affluent community gradually emerged in Kalimpong. And with the passage of time the new settler mingled with the local people and contributed to the growth of a population characterized by mixed cultural identity of the society that existed and still exists in Kalimpong.⁴⁰ Most important fact is that from the very beginning the urban settlement of Kalimpong tended to be much a seasonal retreat of outsiders. Urbanization in Kalimpong remained basically a rural environment for the most part. The traders were perfectly comfortable in the typical rural setting. Trade was all that mattered; in the existing urban condition there was no hindrance to trade.⁴¹

POPULATION OF KALIMPONG (1881-1941)

TABLE -I

Year	Population	Decade variations	Percentage of decade wise variations
1881	4033	-----	-----
1891	3522	-511	-14.50
1901	4469	947	+26.88
1911	7880	3411	+ 76.32
1931	8776	896	+11.37
1941	11491	2715	+30

Source: Census of India of respective years.

From the above tabulated data, it is clear that there was a decline in population in the decade (1881-1891), after which the population gradually started rising. The highest increase was noted during the period of (1901-1911) due to lot of influx of migrants coming to settle in the hills for trade and commerce. Kalimpong was declared a town (Class-V) in 1931 with a population of 8776 people and it changed its rank to the next class in 1941 with a population of 11961 people.⁴²

Conclusion:

The present paper has studied the origin and growth of Kalimpong as an urban colonial hill station. In spite of having several favourable geographical conditions; Kalimpong has failed to draw adequate attention of the colonial rulers as a hill station until the last decade of the nineteenth century. The initial phase of urbanization in Kalimpong was

completed by 1920. However, population of Kalimpong's urban area increased significantly without having any significant changes in physical infrastructure and basic service facilities; this has directed the urbanism of locals to a miserable condition. An unplanned building construction, gradual disappearance of foot paths, lack of transport planning have led the town to be congested and has also exposed it to serious threats of natural hazards and disasters like earthquake and landslides. Beside loss of land, environmental degradation also affected the people of Kalimpong estate. Both British administration and new settlers were responsible for this destruction. Urbanism not only destroyed the hill eco-system but also increased landslides to a great extent. Today Kalimpong relies mostly on the business generated by the educational institutions, tourism, agriculture, horticulture and floriculture. Now it is the time to rethink about the future of the town from a holistic stand to ensure the sustainability of urbanization of Kalimpong.

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Suhrawardy and the ‘Great Calcutta Killing’: Revisiting the Episode and its Consequences

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Abstract:

Soon after the installation of the League Ministry headed by H.S. Suhrawardy in Bengal, the Cabinet Mission announced its draft plan on 16 May 1946 rejecting the Muslim League’s demand for ‘Pakistan’ which prompted the League Council to give a clarion call to all the Muslims to go for ‘Direct Action’ for achieving ‘Pakistan’. Following the Council’s decision, Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier-cum Home Minister, came forward to observe the ‘Direct Action Day’ on 16 August 1946 declaring a public holiday on that day which brought disastrous consequences in Calcutta as the city witnessed communal riot, blood-shed and a ‘reign of terror’ for four days. The entire episode vitiated Bengal politics, embittered Hindu-Muslim relationship and intensified communal tension which altogether made the partition inevitable in 1947.

Key Words: *Suhrawardy, Jinnah, Direct Action Day, Great Calcutta Killing, Muslim League, Congress, Hindu Mahasabha*

In the elections to the Bengal Legislative Assembly (consisting of 250 members), which took place in between 19 March and 22 March 1946, all the leading political parties failed to achieve absolute majority and to reach at the magic figure of 126 (250/2+1) to form the ministry of its own. The overall results of the Assembly elections show that the Bengal Provincial Muslim League (BPML) won in 114 seats, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC) obtained 86 seats, the Independent (Hindu) won in 6 seats, the Krishak Praja Party (KPP) captured 4 seats, the Communist Party of India (CPI) bagged 3 seats, the Independent (Muslim) candidates got elected in 2 seats and rest of the seats were held by the European Group- 25, the Anglo-Indians-4, Indian Christians- 2,

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the Hindu Mahasabha- 1, the Emarat Party- 1, the Kshatriya Samity- 1 and the Scheduled Caste Federation- 1.¹ As the BPML emerged as the single largest party, Sir Frederick Burrows, the then Governor of Bengal, invited H.S. Suhrawardy (who was already elected as the Leader of the League Parliamentary Party), to form the ministry on 2 April 1946. At that point of time, he was 12-short of the magic figure but within a few days he was able to 'manage' the support of some elected Independents, Independent Scheduled Castes and also the European Group (numbering 25) and to have a comfortable majority in the House. Ultimately Suhrawardy formed a 8-member ministry (consisting of 7 Ministers from the Muslim League and the rest from the Scheduled Castes)² on 24 April 1946 in the Throne Room at the Government House at 12:30 P.M.

Few days later, the Cabinet Mission (consisting of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A.V. Alexander) which arrived in India (on 24 March 1946) mainly to resolve the country's constitutional deadlock, to set up a constitution making body and to amicably frame a constitution, announced its draft plan on 16 May 1946. Rejecting Jinnah's demand, the draft plan categorically stated that: "The setting up of a separate sovereign state of Pakistan on the lines claimed by the Muslim League would not solve the Communal Minority problem. Nor can we see any justification for including within a sovereign Pakistan, those districts of Punjab and of Bengal and Assam, in which the population is predominantly non-Muslim. Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan, can equally, in our view, be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas, from Pakistan. The point would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.... We are, therefore, unable to advise the British Government that the power that at present resides in British hands, would be handed over to two entirely separate sovereign states...."³

In the Cabinet Mission Plan, it was stated: "There should be a Union of India embracing both British India and the States which should deal with the following subjects: foreign affairs defence, and communications....All subjects other than the union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces. Provinces should be free to form Groups with executives and legislatures and each Group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common...."⁴ According to this Plan, there would be

three main administrative groups of provinces-Group A: all Hindu – majority provinces (Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa); Group B: all Muslim – majority provinces of the north-west (Sind, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan); Group C: Muslim – majority provinces of the north - east consisting of Bengal and Assam. The Plan also outlined that a Constituent Assembly would be elected by the provincial Assemblies by proportional representation where the members from Groups A, B and C were to sit separately to decide the constitution for the provinces and if possible, for the groups also. Thereafter, the whole Constituent Assembly (all three Sections, A, B and C combined) would sit together to frame the Union constitution. Not only that, according to the Plan, on the demand of the Legislature of a province, the constitutions of the Union and of the Groups would be reconsidered and revisited after an initial period of ten years and at ten- yearly intervals thereafter.⁵ The Cabinet Mission also proposed for the setting up of an Interim Government (consisting of 14 members – 6 from the Congress, 5 from the Muslim League and 1 each from the Indian Christians, Sikhs and Parsees) at the Centre, under the Viceroy.

The reactions of the Congress and the Muslim League to the plans of the Cabinet Mission were mixed. The Congress welcomed the Plan as it rejected the ‘Pakistan’ proposal and recommended a scheme which was based on the concept of a united India. But the Congress leaders were opposed to the system of compulsory groupings of the so-called ‘Pakistan’ provinces as it would deprive the provinces of their autonomy and hamper the interests of the Sikhs. They were not satisfied with the Mission’s clarification (on 25 May) that grouping would be compulsory at first, but the provinces would have the right to secede from a group after the first general election and after the constitution had been finalized. The Congress leaders also demanded that the Constituent Assembly which was proposed to frame the Constitution of India should be “a sovereign body” and they criticized the absence of any provision for elected members from the Princely States in the proposed Constituent Assembly. Gandhiji, however, warmly welcomed the plans of the Cabinet Mission at a meeting in Delhi on 17 May 1946 and declared: “Cabinet Mission’s proposals contained the seed to convert this land of sorrow, into one without sorrow and suffering”.⁶ Although the Muslim League was not at all happy with the

rejection of the 'Pakistan' scheme, welcomed the Grouping Scheme. The AIML accepted the Cabinet Mission's Plan on 6 June 1946 and declared in its resolution that "the basis and the foundation of Pakistan are inherent in the Mission's Plan by virtue of compulsory grouping of the six Muslim provinces in Section B and C", and that the League agreed to "co-operate with the Constitution-making machinery proposed in the scheme outline by the Mission, in the hope that it would ultimately result in the establishment of completely sovereign Pakistan".⁷ In that meeting of the AIML, Jinnah categorically mentioned: "Muslim India will not rest content until we have established full, complete and sovereign Pakistan".⁸ In addition to this, Jinnah thought that the Congress would not accept the Plan which ultimately would prompt the British Government to invite 'the League alone to form the Interim Government at the Centre'.⁹

But Jinnah's assumption did not materialize as the Congress Working Committee after much heated debate, passed a resolution on 25 June 1946 accepting the long-term plan put forward by the Cabinet Mission. Although the AICC accepted the Plan, the next AICC meeting which was convened at Bombay on 7 July 1946, was turned into a stormy one. In that meeting, Aruna Asaf Ali, the left-wing Socialist leader, severely attacked the Cabinet Mission's Plan and raised her voice for a united mass struggle to expel the British from the soil of India. Jawaharlal Nehru, the newly elected Congress President by replacing Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, tried to assure the critics by declaring: "It is not a question of our accepting any plan, long or short....We are not bound by a single thing, except that we have decided for the moment to go to the Constituent Assembly".¹⁰ He reiterated his assertion in a Press conference on 10 July: "...the Constituent Assembly would never accept any dictation or any other directive from the British Government in regard to its work...."¹¹ and he went further: "... the probability is, from any approach to the question, that there will be no grouping"¹² as N.W.F.P. and Assam would have objections to joining Section B and C.

All these developments and statements created a great uproar within the League which led Jinnah to convene a meeting of the League Council at Bombay on 27-29 July 1946. In that meeting, the Council passed two important resolutions: by the first, it ultimately decided to withdraw its acceptance of the long-term plans of the Cabinet

Mission and by the second resolution (passed on 29 July 1946), the Council gave a clarion call on the 'Muslim Nation' to go in the way of 'Direct Action' to achieve Pakistan and renounce all titles conferred upon them by the 'alien government'.¹³ In the second resolution of the Council, it was mentioned: "Whereas the Council of the All India Muslim League has resolved to reject the proposals embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Delegation and the Viceroy dated 16th May, 1946 due to the intransigence of the Congress on one hand, and the breach of faith with the Muslims by the British Government on the other.... and whereas it has become abundantly clear that the Muslims of India would not rest contented with anything less than the immediate establishment of Independent and fully Sovereign State of Pakistan and would resist any attempt to impose any constitution-making machinery or any constitution, long term or short term, or the setting up of any Interim Government at the centre without the approval and consent of the Muslim League; the Council of the All India Muslim League is convinced that now the time has come for the Muslim Nation to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan to assert their just rights, to vindicate their honour and to get rid of present British slavery and the contemplated future caste – Hindu domination".¹⁴

On the next day (i.e. on 30 July 1946), the Working Committee of the AIML adopted a resolution (now famous as the 'Direct Action Resolution') by which all the branches of the League throughout India were directed to hold 16 August as a 'Direct Action Day'.¹⁵ M.A. Jinnah, the League Supremo, declared: "This day we bid good-bye to constitutional methods. Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it".¹⁶

In that meeting of the League Council, Suhrawardy, the Bengal Premier, rejected the Cabinet Mission's Plan by saying: "... We cannot any more rely either on the professions of British friendliness or on the hope that the Congress will one day do justice to us. The Congress was out to destroy Muslim resurgence in this country... Let the Congress beware that it is not going to fight just a handful of people fighting for power, but a nation which is struggling for its life and will secure that life".¹⁷ He came forward to abide by the decision of the AIML and made an appeal to the Muslim youth to 'marshal all your forces under the banner of the Muslim League'.¹⁸

As there was a Muslim League ministry, it was quite expected that the 'Day' would be observed with much fanfare in Bengal. The BPML took certain programmes to organize and observe throughout Bengal such as: i) to organize complete general *hartal* or strike; ii) to give explanation of the 'Direct Action' resolution of the AIML before the public gathering in mosques and in public meetings; iii) to offer *munajat* (special prayer) for the freedom of Muslim India; iv) to arrange peaceful processions and demonstrations; and lastly v) to make appeals to all other political parties to observe *hartal* on that day (i.e. Friday, 16 August 1946).¹⁹ The prominent BPML leaders like Suhrawardy, Abul Hashim and the like, tried to project the 'Direct Action Day' as a struggle against British imperialism and devised it as anti-Congress and anti-Hindu. Nazimuddin, the then President of the BPML and his supporters (known as the 'Khwaja group'), as it was quite expected, also came forward to implement the decision of the Working Committee of the AIML. The 'Muslim National Guard' was formed in Calcutta and its training centres were opened in every district of Bengal. On 1 August 1946, Nazimuddin made an appeal to the Muslim youth to immediately join in the 'Muslim National Guard'. Four days later (i.e. on 5 August), an assembly of the 'Muslim National Guard' was held at the Muslim Institute where Nazimuddin asked the audience to follow the holy Quran and the Islamic order. Meanwhile, the Viceroy gave an offer to the Congress to form an Interim Government at the Centre on 8 August 1946 and the Congress instantaneously accepted the offer on 12 August. Though the Viceroy officially announced the appointment of the Congress-led Interim Government with Jawaharlal Nehru as its Vice-President on 24 August, the offer to the Congress was an open secret to the Muslim League circles and embittered the political environment prior to the observance of the 'Direct Action Day'.

Strongly reacting against the creation of an absolutely Congress-led Interim Government at the Centre, Suhrawardy in an interview with the Associated Press of America on 10 August, warned: "[The] probable result of putting the Congress in power, bypassing the Muslim League, would be the declaration of complete independence of Bengal and the setting up of a parallel government. We shall see that no revenue is derived from Bengal and will consider ourselves a separate state having no connection with the centre".²⁰ This statement of Suhrawardy aroused worst possible fears amongst

the Hindus. Not only that, some official declarations and decisions of Suhrawardy also intensified communal tension and created tremendous repercussions. He declared 16 August as a public holiday in Bengal – a decision which was widely criticized and condemned. The Hindu Mahasabha brought censure motion against the League in the Bengal Legislative Council on the official declaration of holiday on 16 August which was ultimately defeated by 31-13 votes.²¹ Defending his decision, Suhrawardy said in the Bengal Legislature on 15 August 1946: “The government have declared a public Holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act for the purpose of minimizing the risks of conflicts and in the interests of peace and order”.²² In addition to this, his announcement of the release of the ‘pre-Reform’ political prisoners on 15 August, also complicated the then political situation of Bengal.²³

The Congress leadership attacked the Premier-cum Home Minister for ‘giving people a direct encouragement to law breaking and violence’.²⁴ The Bengal Provincial Congress Committee (BPCC) convened a public rally at the Deshapriya Park on 14 August 1946 where Surendra Mohan Ghosh, the President of the BPCC, announced the decision to oppose the proposed *hartal* on 16 and warned both the Hindus and Muslims to keep themselves away from any sort of incitement.²⁵ On the other hand, the Leftist Tram Labour Union in its meeting held at the University Institute on 15 August, took a ‘controversial’ decision to support the proposed *hartal* on 16 in order to continue its ‘fight against Imperialism’ and to protect ‘unity’ among the labourers unless it apprehended that there would be a riot amongst the labourers themselves.²⁶

Calcutta, a predominantly Hindu city where the Muslims constituted barely 23.6 per cent of the population, a city which was well-known for communal harmony and peace and many glorious anti-imperialist movements, became the first victim of communal bloodshed because of the instigating activities and speeches of some leading politicians. S.M. Usman, the Secretary of the Calcutta District League and the then Mayor of Calcutta, announced on 9 August the detailed programme of the ‘Direct Action’ and told that a historic rally and gathering would be held at Calcutta Maidan. He declared *jehad* or holy war against the Hindus and published and distributed several inflammatory leaflets and pamphlets (mostly in Urdu) to incite the Muslims to commit

violence against the Hindus in the name of religion. On 10 August, he issued a statement in Urdu in which he said: “I appeal to the Mussalmans of Calcutta.... to rise to the occasion..... We are in the midst of the month of *Ramazan* fasting. But this is a month of real *Jihad* [i.e. holy war] ... Let Muslims brave... Muslims must remember that it was in *Ramazan* that the Quran was revealed..... the permission for *Jihad* was granted by Allah [i.e. God]... The Muslim League is fortunate that it is starting its action in this holy month”.²⁷ Same kind of provocative words were expressed in one of the pamphlets of the Muslim League: “We Muslims have had the crown and have ruled. Do not lose heart, be ready and take swords.... Oh Kafir! Your doom is not far and the general massacre will come. We shall show our glory with swords in hands and will have a special victory”.²⁸ *The Star of India* (which was controlled by the Ispahanis), also made campaign for the observation of the ‘Direct Action Day’ from 9 to 13 August. On 14 August, the members of the ‘Muslim National Guard’ were instructed to assemble in the khaki dress at the Muslim Institute on the day of ‘Direct Action’ at 8-30 A.M. On that day, Nurul Huda, a distinguished leader of the League, declared: “No more slogans. The clarion call has come for action and nothing but action”.²⁹

The Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha (BPHM), the Hindu press and many contemporary Hindu leaders of Bengal did not sit idle and strongly reacted against these reactionary statements and considered these provocative comments ‘as a threat to ‘Pakistanise’ the whole of Bengal forthwith’.³⁰ The majority of the Hindu Bengalis considered the ‘Pakistan’ scheme as ‘the permanent loss of political sovereignty and their subjection to the will of the Muslim majority’ and they were determined to protect their ‘homeland’ for which ‘they were ready to fight to the death’.³¹ In one of its leaflets (written in Bengali), the Hindu Mahasabha urged: “Sixteenth August, Beware! The Muslim League has declared the 16th of August as the “Direct Action (Sangram – War) Day” and on that very day public has been asked to observe “*hartal*”. That day has been proclaimed as such for the Muslim League to attain Pakistan. The Bengali Hindus and every non-Muslim are opposed to Pakistan. Under these circumstances to observe “*hartal*” on the 16th as proclaimed by the League or to help them in any way would mean supporting their demand [i.e. Pakistan]. The Bengal’s Hindus can never do that. The

League Ministry had the audacity to declare that day as a holiday.... By this method that day the Govt. Hindu employees will be forced to observe "*hartal*". The Hindus will have to give a clear reply to this highhandedness of the Muslim League. It is the clear duty of every Hindu that he will do his usual normal duty and no Hindu, non-Muslim or anti-League Muslim shall observe "*hartal*" nor will he allow anyone to observe "*hartal*"...."³² Thus the leaders and their followers belonging to both the communities (i.e. Hindus and Muslims), were heavily charged up before the observation of the 'Direct Action Day' and they were taking all sorts of preparations and devising various plans and techniques to deploy on that day against each other. On the other hand, the role of the Bengal Governor and the British military forces was not at all satisfactory. The military officers decided in a meeting held at Barrackpore on 14 August 1946: "When the riot begins, we will not interfere. If the people want swaraj (self rule), let them fight for it".³³

Finally the 'Day' (i.e.16 August) came in when the leaders of the BPML and their supporters launched 'Direct Action' and gave whole-hearted effort to make it successful which in turn brought disastrous consequences particularly in Calcutta. The League organized a large rally on that day at the Calcutta Maidan which was addressed by Khwaja Nazimuddin, Gaznafar Ali Khan of Lahore, Suhrawardy and the like. Nazimuddin in his exciting speech said: "Our struggle is against the Congress and Hindus".³⁴ Addressing the rally, Suhrawardy gave a hint that the army and police had been "restrained" which in the words of F.J. Burrows, the Bengal Governor, 'was an open invitation to disorder; and in fact many the listeners started attacking Hindus and looting Hindu shops as soon as they left the meeting'.³⁵

The Muslims resorted to looting and arson and forced the Hindu shopkeepers to observe *hartal* on that day. Defending themselves the Muslims alleged that the Hindus at first, wholeheartedly tried to spoil their observance of 'Direct Action' by resorting to rioting and looting³⁶ and also by attacking the processionists from the housetops of the Hindus.³⁷ According to Nirmal Kumar Bose, "The offensive began from the side of the Muslim mobs; but within a few hours the Hindus....also struck back".³⁸ As a result, Calcutta witnessed a 'reign of terror' for fully four days (16-19 August 1946) when the entire law and order machinery of the government suddenly collapsed and the city

completely went under the control of the hooligans. A massive communal riot broke out which took a heavy death toll of both the communities. This episode came to be known in Indian history as ‘the Great Calcutta Killing’ which was identified with ‘widespread loot, incendiaries and murder on a scale unprecedented in the history of Calcutta’.³⁹ F.J. Burrows, the then Governor of Bengal in his report wrote that on 16 August ‘communal trouble started as early as at 7 a.m. in Manicktala in north-east Calcutta and has continued and spread throughout the day. Situation upto 6 p.m. is that there have been numerous and widespread communal clashes in Calcutta’.⁴⁰

On that day, more than 100 (according to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the actual figure would be 161) people lost their lives⁴¹ and 583 people were injured and were admitted to the hospitals (upto 12 noon).⁴² But ‘mass butchery’ according to the *Modern Review*, ‘started with the early dawn of Saturday’⁴³ which took away the lives of about 300 (but *The Statesman* mentioned the figure as 270).⁴⁴ The magnitude of the catastrophe compelled Jinnah to unequivocally condemn the acts of violence on 17 August 1946: “I unreservedly condemn the acts of violence and deeply sympathise with those who have suffered”.⁴⁵ But surprisingly, the Bengal Government and the police did not take any action against the hooligans till the evening of 17 and ultimately at night the military forces were deployed. F.J. Burrows, the then Governor of Bengal, tried to defend his position: “the atmosphere was admittedly explosive and we realized – and I impressed it on my CM and his colleagues – that the League were playing with fire”,⁴⁶ but Suhrawardy did not take any immediately action.

On 18 August, the total number of deaths rose upto 2000 and at the end of the riot, it was reported that over 4,000 people (of both sides) died and 11,000 injured in the streets and bye- lanes of Calcutta.⁴⁷ In addition to this, the Government Report (of 28 August) stated the fact that 10,000 people became homeless as their buildings were set on fire during the course of the riot.⁴⁸ *The Statesman* in its editorial titled ‘Disgrace Abounding’, called it ‘a political demonstration of the Muslim League’ and it came to the conclusion: “this is not a riot. It needs a word from mediaeval history, a fury. Yet ‘fury’ sounds spontaneous and there must have been some deliberation and organisation to set this fury on its way. The horde who ran about battering and killing with 8 ft lathis may

have found them lying about or bought them out of their pockets, but that is hard to believe”.⁴⁹

The main participants of the Calcutta riot, according to Suranjan Das, were non-Bengalis, many of whom belonged to the underworld.⁵⁰ It had its resemblance in the report of F.J. Burrows, the Bengal Governor (dated 22 August 1946) wherein it was clearly stated that it was a pogrom between rival armies of the Calcutta underworld.⁵¹ In the words Suranjan Das “What, however, most clearly distinguishes the 1946 violence from earlier outbreaks was its highly organized nature and direct links with institutional politics. The leadership for both Hindus and Muslims now came from established political parties: Muslim League for the Muslims and Hindu Mahasabha and sections within the Congress for the Hindus”.⁵² He further pointed out that the ‘leading members of the [Hindu] community and Marwari businessmen made available their mansions and their workshops to be used as bases for operations’.⁵³

It was not only a riot or ‘a war between two communities’, it was more than that and it took the character of a ‘civil war’. Tapan Raychaudhuri who witnessed arson and murder in the vicinity of the Scottish Church College (the locality where he lived), narrated his ‘very humbling’ experience of those four days (16 to 19 August 1946) in his *The World in Our Time: A Memoir*. The genocide destroyed forever his ‘pride in the non-communal outlook of educated Bengali Hindus’.⁵⁴ Nikhil Chakravarty, another eyewitness of that holocaust, described: “There was cold-blooded killing on both sides. The riot was well-organised on both sides. Suhrawardy organised the riot ruthlessly to show that... [the Muslims] will retain Calcutta. On the Hindu side, it was part of the campaign for the Partition of Bengal....”⁵⁵ It must be mentioned here that there were some good, sensible and heroic people of both the communities who took all risks to protect the members of the other community during those crucial days.

Immediately after this massacre, the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, a section of the Congress leaders and a section of the Hindu press absolutely put the blame on Suhrawardy and his Ministry and particularly accused Mr. Suhrawardy of giving ‘marching orders’ to the Muslims of Calcutta. Also his presence in the police control room at Lal Bazar when the killings went on the rampage throughout the city was

questioned by them. It was revealed from the report of the Detective Department that the vehicles of the Calcutta Corporation were used to carry the processionists. Even the car of the Bengal Premier was used for carrying food for the assemblage along with knives, weapons, kerosene, petrol etc.⁵⁶ Suhrawardy was also attacked for delaying in the deployment of the police forces when the situation was going out of his control. Even in the secret note of the Home Department of the Bengal Government, it was stated that when they were called for action on the night of 17 August, thereafter the police 'did not interfere when crime was being committed in their presence' and in addition to this, inspite of protecting the lives of the people and their properties, they even joined in the act of looting.⁵⁷ *The Statesman* severely criticized the role of the Bengal Government and its complete failure in the judgment of the situation and its regrettable inefficiency in the running of administration: "The origin of the appalling carnage and loss in the capital of a great Province we believe the worst communal rioting in India's history was a political demonstration by the Muslim League.

Bengal's is a Muslim League Ministry.... the obligation on the Bengal Ministry, is fulfilment of the League's declared policy of keeping 'Direct Action Day' peaceful was unique. But instead of fulfilling this, it undeniably by confused acts of omission and provocation, contributed to the horrible events which have occurred".⁵⁸ Even Bucher, acting Army Commander, when he met the Viceroy in Calcutta on 26 August 1946, commented on the 'completely communal attitude of the Chief Minister Suhrawardy....'⁵⁹ On the same day, Wavell, the Viceroy, wrote in his diary his observation about the position of the Bengal Government: "He [Governor] outlined the position in the Assembly where the Government was really dependent on the European vote and could be turned out. But there was no alternative ministry and a Section 93 administration was not possible. He said that Suhrawardy had forfeited everyone's confidence and suggested the possibility of a coalition ministry....."⁶⁰

On 27 August 1946, Sarat Chandra Bose, the then member of Congress Working Committee and Leader of the party in the Central Assembly, attacked the British Government and the Bengal Governor and demanded for the dissolution of the Muslim League Ministry led by Suhrawardy and called for the formation of an all-party ministry

in Bengal in order to restore communal harmony and peace.⁶¹ Mrinal Kanti Bose, the President of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), also condemned the inactive role of the Bengal Governor and told him that the province had no use for him.⁶² In order to cool down the situation, Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, met with Gandhiji and Nehru in Delhi on 27 August 1946 and put emphasis on the formation of coalition governments, both in Bengal and at the Centre. He tried to convince both of the leaders by citing the example of the 'Calcutta Killings' about the necessity of keeping British troops in India for an indefinite period. The Viceroy also suggested them that they should issue a statement asserting the position of the Congress that the provinces must remain in their Sections till the completion of the first elections under the new constitution. On the next day (i.e. 28 August), far from agreeing, Gandhiji gave him a written reply wherein he categorically said: "If India wants her blood bath she shall have it....If British arms are kept here for internal peace and order, your Interim Government would be reduced to a farce. The Congress cannot afford to impose its will on warring elements in India, through the use of British arms. Nor can the Congress be expected to bend itself and adopt what it considers a wrong cause, because of the brutal exhibition recently witnessed in Bengal. Such submissions would itself lead to an encouragement and repetition of such tragedies...."⁶³ In his reply, Jawaharlal Nehru also expressed the same mood: "Provincial autonomy is a basic provision and each province has the right to decide whether to form or join a group or not".⁶⁴ As a result, Wavell's meeting with the Congress leaders did not bear any result and he became extremely hostile towards the Congress. But the Viceroy could not take any step against it as Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State, requested him 'to do nothing rash with the Congress'.⁶⁵ Despite the Viceroy's resentment, a twelve-member Congress-dominated Interim Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru was sworn in on 2 September 1946 without having any League representative.

Suhrawardy who was severely criticized for his maladministration and mishandling of the situation following the observance of the 'Direct Action Day', after the catastrophe, he appeared to have 'changed his mind and sincerely wanted to restore confidence among Hindus'⁶⁶ which was reflected in his attempt to form a coalition government in Bengal with the Hindus. But Suhrawardy, as rightly pointed out by the

Star of India, was not in a position to take any independent decision in this matter as everything was depended on the green signal of the League Supremo Jinnah. So he met Jinnah at Bombay on 5 and 6 September, discussed with him the Bengal situation and requested him to give necessary permission for the formation of a coalition government in Bengal. But he failed to get the approval from Jinnah. The Nazimuddin group were also opposed to it as they were 'keen for an ouster of Suhrawardy from the provincial League leadership'.⁶⁷ Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, recorded this event in his diary of 8 September 1946 that "the only event to record is an interview with Suhrawardy, the Premier of Bengal, who had gone to Bombay to see Jinnah, and was on his way back to Calcutta. He had obviously drawn a complete blank with Jinnah, who had refused to allow him to establish a coalition ministry in Bengal, unless there was a satisfactory coalition at the Centre. Perhaps he trusts Suhrawardy as little as I do..... Suhrawardy was obviously very worried. I dislike and distrust him intensely. I have always thought him a dishonest, self-seeking careerist with no principles. I think Jinnah is worried too, but he seems as intransigent as ever".⁶⁸

Returning to Calcutta in empty-handed, Suhrawardy had to face tremendous attacks from the Opposition in the Bengal Legislative Assembly when its second session started from 12 September 1946. On that day, the Congress brought the adjournment motion in the House as a protest against the Calcutta massacre which was ultimately defeated in the Legislative Council by 29 votes to 17 (9 members, including the 6 Europeans, refrained from casting their votes).⁶⁹

On 19 September Dhirendra Nath Dutta, Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, moved the no-confidence motions in the House against the League Ministry in general and the Chief Minister in particular. The Congress members like Bimal Coomar Ghose, Ishwar Das Jalan, Bhupati Majumdar, Kiran Sankar Roy, Bina Das and the like came forward to support him. Moving this no-confidence motion, D.N. Dutta accused the Government (which was the custodian of the law) for violating the law and also provoking the people 'to break the law'. In his speech, he severely criticized the police and Executive Officers for their failure in 'maintaining the law and order' and also

condemned the Council of Ministers for their irresponsible conduct at the time of communal riots.⁷⁰

Keeping in mind the aftermath of the Calcutta riots, B.C. Ghose demanded that for the 'future political and economic well being of the province.... the Chief Minister must vacate his high office'.⁷¹ Ishwar Das Jalan of the Opposition, reiterated the failure of the Government and told in the House: "so far as the Government of Bengal is concerned, it had failed to preserve law and order, not only in a lane or a by lane but in the broadest streets of Calcutta, not only for an hour or two but for days together".⁷² He also expressed his strong resentment against the Chief Minister that the catastrophe even took place when Suhrawardy himself was present in the police Control Room. Nisith Nath Kundu, Niharendu Dutta Majumdar, Ganendra Bhattacharjee and Bijoy Krishna Sarkar participated in this debate and highlighted the corruption, inefficiency, sluggishness and partiality of the League Ministry and the police altogether.

Participating in this debate Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the Hindu Mahasabha leader, gave the longest speech in the House on 20 September 1946 wherein he strongly attacked both the Government and the Chief Minister: "... What happened in Calcutta is not the result of a sudden explosion but it is the culmination of an administration, inefficient, corrupt and communal.... We are like poles asunder when you say that you will plunge the country into war if you do not get Pakistan and we say that you shall not get Pakistan. These views are irreconcilable...."⁷³ .As regards the future of Bengal as well as India, he uttered: "What about the future? My friends, the Muslims, say that they constitute 25 per cent of India's population, and that is so big a minority that they will never agree to live under 75 per cent Hindu domination. Now if that is their honest and genuine point of view how can they expect that 45 per cent of the Hindu population of this Province will ever agree to live under a constitution where that particular nation represented by Muslims, constituting only of 55 per cent will along dominate?.... Now, if the Muslims of Bengal under the leadership of the Muslim League feel that they can exterminate the Hindus, that is a fantastic idea which can never be given effect to: three and a half crores can never exterminate three crores nor can three crores exterminate three and a half crores..... It is therefore vitally necessary that this false and foolish idea

of Pakistan or Islamic rule has to be banished for ever from your head. In Bengal we have got to live together. We say as a condition precedent this Ministry must go. Only then can we create a state of affairs which will make it possible to build a future Bengal which will be for the good of all, irrespective of any caste, creed or community".⁷⁴

Jyoti Basu, the CPI leader who was selected from the Railway Labour Constituency in the 1946 Bengal Provincial Assembly Elections and later became the Chief Minister of West Bengal, said before the House that the British Imperialists, who were looking after Indian administration, were the main criminals for the communal riots and pointed out the fact that while 'the Sind Governor disallowed the declaration of holiday on 16 August, the Bengal Governor did the contrary in Calcutta'. He made an appeal to preserve Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony and at the same time, put emphasis on the formation of a coalition ministry in Bengal.⁷⁵ Kiran Sankar Roy, the Opposition Leader in the House, urged the Bengal Government to suppress hooliganism and vandalism at any cost and restore peace and communal harmony.

In reply to the no-confidence motion of the Opposition against him and against his Ministry, H.S. Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister cum the Home Minister, tried to defend his action prior to the Calcutta riot: "The 16th August had been declared by me a holiday. That was done for the purpose of minimizing conflicts but the Hindu newspapers and leaders deliberately interpreted it in a different light and exhorted their young men to oppose it in all possible way".⁷⁶ The members of the ruling party like Abul Hashim, Minister Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Habibulla Chowdhury, M.A.H. Ispahani and the like participated in the debate and put the blame mainly on the 'Hindu Press' (particularly on the *Basumati*) for the unfortunate and regrettable happenings in Calcutta. Fazlul Huq who rejoined the League in September 1946, considered the riot as 'pre-planned' and called it a purely 'fiendish fury' with which both Hindus and Muslims had been murdered. In a highly emotional speech at the floor of the House, Mr. Huq said: "while we are shouting here, the fate of India is going to be decided not by resolutions here and there, but in White Hall and in Delhi. It would have been better if we had watched and seen what would be the upshot and the result of the talks which are now going on between the Viceroy and the Party leaders. I am optimistic in this respect. I feel

Sir, that all will end well. If there is a Coalition Government at the Centre there is no reason why there should not be a Coalition Government in all the provinces.... I want to see peace established in the country".⁷⁷

After a long and much heated debate which continued for two days (19-20 September 1946), the no-confidence motions against the Ministry and the Chief Minister were put on to vote. The motion against the Ministry was defeated by 131 to 87 votes and the other against the Chief Minister was defeated by 130 votes (Suhrawardy, the Chief Minister abstained from voting) to 85. The European Group (20 members), the Communists (3 members) and the Speaker remained neutral whereas 5 members from the European Group, 2 members from the Congress and 1 Nationalist Muslim remained absent at the time of voting.⁷⁸ It is to be mentioned here that under tremendous pressure, the Calcutta Disturbances Commission of Enquiry was set up with Sir Patrick Spens as its President but the Commission did not submit its report.

Although Suhrawardy was able to save his chair of the Premier and his Ministry, the tragic and horrific experiences of the people of Calcutta on the occasion of the observance of the 'Direct Action Day', did not at all washout from the minds of both the Hindus and Muslims who by and large, were in search of a 'chance' to take revenge against each other. The celebration of the 'Day' not only shattered mutual trust and cordiality and accelerated much tension in Bengal but also in India which was 'rapidly transformed by communal riots on an unprecedented scale: starting with Calcutta on 16-19 August, touching Bombay from 1 September, spreading to Noakhali in east Bengal (10 October), Bihar (25 October), Garmukteswar in U.P. (November), and engulfing the Punjab from March 1947 onwards'.⁷⁹ As a 'chain reaction' to the Calcutta massacre, riots broke out in the different districts of Bengal like Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong, Barisal, Pabna etc. But Noakhali and Tippera, the two southeastern districts of Bengal, bore the worst consequences. Noakhali where the Hindus constituted only 18 per cent of the total population, witnessed a massive communal riot led by Mian Ghulam Sarwar from 10 October 1946 and continued for at least seven days in which hundreds of Hindus were massacred by the Muslim hoodlums (backed by the League Ministry). Under the auspices of the local administration, the reports of the riot did not come to the surface

before 15 October, the day *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote: "Riotious mobs with deadly weapons are raiding villages and looting, murder and arson are continuing....on a very large scale".⁸⁰ F.J. Burrows, the then Governor of Bengal, also did mention about the Noakhali riot in his confidential report of 16 October 1946 wherein he pointed out: "Large bands of Moslem hooligans [are].... moving about terrorizing Hindus and committing acts of arson, loot and murder, kidnapping and forcibly converting Hindus".⁸¹ More than 3000 people became homeless in that region and in addition to arson, looting, murder, abduction of women and forced conversion, there were many cases of forced marriages.⁸² The most gruesome side of the Noakhali riot was the inhuman torture committed on the Hindu women which compelled Gandhiji to rush to that place on 6 November 1946 to restore communal harmony and peace. To quote Gandhiji, "It is the cry of outraged womanhood that has promptly called me to Noakhali"⁸³ where he had to put his *ahimsa* (non-violence) to the acid test. From Noakhali, the riot spread to Tippera and thereafter to Bihar where 'a madness' had 'seized the people' and took the lives of at least 7000.⁸⁴ Aggressive Hindu peasants massacred a huge number of Muslims and the Congress government failed to cool down the situation. Same kind of butchery took place in other parts of the country like Bombay (where 162 Hindus and 158 Muslims were killed),⁸⁵ Garmukteswar in U.P. (where the 'Hindu pilgrims slaughtered a thousand Muslims'),⁸⁶ Punjab (where according to Penderel Moon, 1,80,000 people had been killed and millions of people belonging to Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, had become refugees)⁸⁷ etc.

The situation became much more intense because of the inflammatory statements and speeches of Vallabhbhai Patel, Jinnah and others which added much fuel to the fire. With the passage of time, it was observed that the 'secular' ideals of many of the Congress leaders tended to evaporate. In spite, of the Muslim League's joining in the Interim Government (in October 1946), it failed to control the growing communal inferno. The series of communal riots along with the non-workability of the Interim Government led by Nehru at the centre, compelled many political leaders and a large section of the population to accept what had been unthinkable so far- a Partition of India and the demand of Pakistan, a separate homeland for the Muslims, almost became a 'near

reality'. Many Hindus and Sikhs in Bengal (although there was a movement for 'Independent Sovereign Bengal' led by Suhrawardy, Sarat Chandra Bose and Abul Hashim) and Punjab who were alarmed at the prospect of compulsory grouping which might lead them in Pakistan, insistently launched campaign for the partition of their provinces. The Hindu Mahasabha led by Syama Prasad Mookerjee also demanded the partition of Bengal in order to establish a separate Hindu-majority West Bengal Province (including Calcutta). The BPCC in its meeting, took a resolution on 4 April 1947, in favour of partition and urged for the formation of a new state of West Bengal within the Indian union.⁸⁸ Jinnah, the League Supremo, on the other hand, denounced the move for partitioning Punjab and Bengal as it was intended to 'unnerve the Muslims by repeatedly emphasizing that the Muslims will get a truncated or mutilated Pakistan'.⁸⁹ At last after a series of interviews with the Indian political leaders and in consultation with His Majesty's Government, Mountbatten announced his Plan on 3 June 1947 for the transfer of power on the basis of partition and dominion status which was instantaneously accepted by the High Commands of both the Congress and the Muslim League. The Mountbatten Plan ultimately paved the way for 'three partitions'- partition of India, partition of Punjab and partition of Bengal. Thus it can be said without any doubt that the observance of the 'Direct Action Day' and its aftermath – the 'Great Calcutta Killing' created permanent cleavage between the Hindus and Muslims and laid the edifice of the partition of Bengal in 1947.

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Working Class and Politics of Drinking in Bengal (1856-1900)

Dr. Amrita Mondal¹

Abstract:

In colonial Bengal, being the victims of economic exploitation, the working class's idea of drinking pleasure faced the moral question of the Indian reformists, Europeans and Christian missionaries. These three groups presented three perceptions on the drinking pleasure of the working class; however, all these narratives indicated that excessive drinking led this particular class into the paths of immorality and financial distress. The paper, while revisiting all these narratives, especially colonial excise policies, finds out patterns of drinking practice of the working class and the reasons for changing the perception of the society on working-class drinking and redefining drinking pleasure of the working class in the nineteenth century Bengal.

Keywords: *Working Class, Drinking, Colonialism, Nineteenth-century, Bengal, Plantation, Excise policy.*

The emergence of Kolkata as an important business centre and the establishment of jute mills, coal mines, and expansion of tea plantations in different parts of Bengal during the first half of the nineteenth century drove many people to the urban centres and other newly established workplaces for better livelihood and opportunities. These migrated people formed a new group, called the working class, and gradually their identity became prominent with the formation of workers' organizations and their agitations. Meanwhile, the Colonial Government passed the Factory Acts of 1881 and 1891¹ along with other labour related acts² for the betterment of the working class and to safeguard the colonial interest. However, all these labour acts remained silent on many of the social issues related to the working class, especially, on the moral and financial degradation of the workers due to drinking as posed by the social reformers and philanthropic Europeans. The intemperance among the workers, as the social reformers and temperance activists

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identified, was continuously increasing from 1860 due to colonial excise policies. The study, while looking through colonial excise policies, first discusses reasons and patterns of the drinking of the working class, the perceptions of colonial government and Indians on working-class drinking and then highlights the reason of scrutinizing drinking practice of the working class by the different section of the colonial society and if these scrutinization helped the working-class in the search of pleasure. The paper, to trace the drinking pattern and politics of drinking of the working-class, chooses four labour sectors, i.e., the migrated labourers in the Kolkata, the labourers in the tea gardens, the railway workers and the mill workers.

Working-class and pleasure of drinking

Migrated labourers in Kolkata started drinking due to the lack of any other entertainment in the world of ‘sanitise culture’ of the city. While migrating to the new urban centres like Kolkata, the migrants brought their traditional culture and entertainments, like *jatra*³, *panchali*⁴, and *kabigan*⁵ with them. These popular cultures, initially, provided the working class with a source of entertainment and an opportunity to mingle with the same class people. Eventually, after 1840, these traditional art forms got marginalised with the emergence of the ‘sanitised culture’, controlled by the newly educated middle class. This marginalization of popular art form had forced the poor labourers to search for new entertainment.⁶ Availability of cheap liquor and consumption of alcohol among the upper-class had encouraged the labourers to emulate them. Mostly, these working-class people gathered in groups at toddy shops for drinking and entertainment. Kaliprasannay Sinha in *Hutom Pyanchar Naksha*⁷ has described the ambience of a toddy shop, overcrowded with working-class people on a busy market day, situated at Chitpore Road. He describes⁸,

The sweepers, now done with the removing garbage, came to the watering hotel and started drinking rum in large swigs. They began an argument with the undertakers on the relative superiority of their professions. The wine-sellers, who acted as the mediator, now tried to please the undertaker by ruling that his vocation was superior to that of the sweeper and now conceded that the sweeper’s profession was the greatest. Drummers, funeral

makers, hog-keepers and palanquin-bearers took sides in this great-war on the lines of the battle of Kurukshetra. The sudden arrival of a group of dancers, exponents of *jhumur* or *gadai*, had the effect of pouring cold water on the heated debate. The liquor shop bubbled with life.

This description of the toddy shop highlighted how toddy became a source of entertainment for the working class, how sometimes people of lower-class committed crimes under the influence of drunkenness, but at the same time, he admitted that drinking culture and drinking places allowed the working class to maintain the spontaneity of life.

The establishment of mills, expansion of tea gardens, and construction of railway tracks in the different parts of Bengal led to the gathering of workers in these areas. A large number of coolies from Bihar and Bengal migrated to tea gardens of Darjeeling and Assam with the expansion of tea cultivation from 1851. These coolies followed the custom of drinking *pachwai* during the festivals after shifting to the plantation area. The colonial government and the planters turned that custom into a habit by providing liquor to the coolies as a stimulator and reward for overtime.⁹ Besides, these coolies were also provided rum to maintain their health in the cold and wet weather.¹⁰ At the initial phase of the plantation, coolies' pleasure of drinking was dependent on the wish of the tea-garden planters and colonial government. Later, coolies regularly became drunkard on the weekend and absentee on Monday without concerned about the wish of the authority. Expansion of the out-still system and availability of the liquor at the vicinity of the tea gardens turned coolies into drunkards.

After the formation of the separate Assam province in 1880 and the growing impact of capitalism on the plantation and colonial administration, as Nitin Varma argues, changed the perception on the drinking practice of the coolies. The tea planters, under the influence of the new plantation economy and capitalism, posed the question on the drinking practice of the coolies.¹¹ The influence of capitalism and desire of ruling the world tea market by competing China changed the perception of Assam tea planters on working-class leisure. The tea planters identified the drinking pleasure of the coolies as a violation of the 'time-work-discipline' method of the tea gardens.¹² These tea planters

took the help of the medical science and idea of temperance to oppose the drinking pleasure of the coolies and colonial aim of increasing more liquor revenue.¹³ These changes in Assam also impacted the tea garden managers of Darjeeling, and the tea planters of Darjeeling argued that the coolies became addicted to liquor for two reasons. First, the aboriginals of Darjeeling, *Paharis*, consumed country liquor to survive in the cold and wet weather, and the close association of the tea-gardens' coolies with these hill tribes contaminated drinking practice among coolies too. Second, the opening of the government *out-still* liquor-shops near to the tea gardens also attracted the coolies towards drinking.¹⁴ Under the *out-still* distillery system, the production of liquor, the price and strength of alcohol were determined by the Contractor. The Government had hardly control over the production of this kind of distillery. Absence of any government supervision had led these distillery and liquor shop owners to increase the strength of the liquor and turned the coolies into addicted and habitual drunkards. The managers of the tea garden were continuously informing the government about the growing intemperance in the area. One of the manager of a tea-garden in Darjeeling had written to the government that the local government officers had pressured them (tea-garden managers) to open a liquor shop in the estates. Under this circumstance, the coolies of tea gardens in Darjeeling would get more opportunity to drink.

Thomas Evan, a Baptist missionary of the Santhal Parghana, highlighted the drinking practice of railway workers of Jamalpore railway workshop. He said that most of the people of the town were artisans and workmen, who earned high and regular wages. This population regularly spent a proportion of their wage on the liquor. Therefore, the number of convictions for the drunkenness in the area was increased. Further, Evan pointed out that drunkenness also spread among servants for household work and turned them absentee.¹⁵

Establishment of jute mills opened up a large number of job opportunities at Kolkata and its vicinity; thus, a huge number of labourers migrated in these areas. Such a mill was opened in Gurrifa.¹⁶ The inhabitants of Gurrifa and its adjoining villages, while giving the petition to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, mentioned the annoying

behaviour of the mill workers. They argued that these millworkers spent almost their entire salary on liquor and wrote;¹⁷

[T]he drunken mob behave most abominably in the public thoroughfares, singing indecent songs and taking all manner of liberty with the travellers who come across them, and breaches of the peace have frequently been the result.

This perception of the inhabitants of Gurrifa indicates, first, the fear of outsiders and second, identifying the expression of joy and pleasure of the working class as un-cultural while following the ‘sanitised cultural’ norms of city-space.

Parimal Ghosh shows that the establishment of the jute mills led to the formation of slums for the coolies. The poor living conditions of these slums and lack of any other entertainments drove these coolies in the path of drinking and consumption of other narcotics.¹⁸ The *Rangpur Dik Prakash* of the 7th July 1864 published an article on the pattern of growing intemperance among the low-working class and its effect. The article argued that most of the low-class labourers with small payment spent most of their salary on liquor due to its high price. Therefore, the family members of the labourer became the sufferers. However, the article also suggested that the only way to solve this was to decrease the price of liquor and the number of drunkards as well.¹⁹ Along with the moral issue, the economic effects of drunkenness also became the important focal point of this newspaper article.

These descriptions of the labourers’ drinking practice indicate that there were two narratives on the drinking practice and patterns of a different groups of labourers. The first narrative, produced by the colonial government, tea planters, Christian missionaries and common people, argues that the working-class were habitual drinkers. Besides, the working-class found alcohol consumption as the easiest mode of entertainment in the new workplaces and increased wages along with *out-still* liquor shops enabled them to spend money on liquor. However, the second narrative on the drinking of the working-class, produced by incorporating the views of labourers, highlighted an alternative notion of working-class drinking. According to the workers of collieries, alcohol consumption made them energetic, increased their work efficiency

and enabled them to earn more. Further, they believed that liquor would improve their immune system and protect them from diseases like fever, cholera and other diseases which affected the teetotallers.²⁰ The coolies also argued that the workers usually drank on holidays which did not affect their work, but the manager of the collieries wanted to use the working capacity of the coolies without any interruption. Thus, the managers or contractors of the collieries were against any leisure enjoyed by the workers. One of the excise reports of 1906 highlighted this situation. The report says,²¹

The consumption of any particular kind of alcoholic drink does not interfere seriously with the consumer's power to resume work next day. Coolies have the opinion that liquor enables them to work better. As a matter of fact, in the colliery tracts, the coolies are exempted from work on Sunday and Monday. The coolies are generally paid on Sunday, which is spent in heavy drinking; and as a holiday. It is likely that the colliery managers are inclined to minimise the evil in order to prevent any sort of interference which might affect the content of their labours.

Besides, the drinking practice and liquor-shops provided the culturally marginalised working-class a chance of assimilation in the unfamiliar landscape of city life. Changes can be observed in the first kind of narratives on the working-class and drinking with the socio-economic changes in society. The government, however, identified workers as drunkards and denied the second narrative on working-class drinking with the establishment of the linkage between the *out-still system* and the working-class drinking practice. Except for Kaliprasanya Sinha, every report on the working-class drinking identifies the workers as drinkers. However, this government initiative of identifying workers as drunkards and protecting the government's excise policy was soon challenged by different groups of people.

Changing perception on working-class drinking

The drinking practice of the working class was closely scrutinised by the missionaries, Indian nationalists and Europeans from economic, cultural, moral and nationalist perspectives. These perspectives revealed different dimensions of the drinking practice and two stands could broadly be brought out from this scrutiny, i.e., first, the views of the

Indians, missionaries and Europeans and second, the views of the colonial government on the working-class drinking.

The first criticism on alcohol consumption of the working class came from the tea garden managers. H. Bald, a manager of a Darjeeling tea garden, wrote that the drunkenness led these coolies towards gambling. These coolies carried on these two vices, drinking and gambling, all night long; therefore, they became incapable of work in the daytime. Further, Bald mentioned that coolies went to the market to buy supplies of food for the week on Sundays (the market day), and while returning from the market, these coolies got drunk and spent the bulk of their salary on drinks. The effect of drinking remained on the next day. As a result, the employer found a significant number of absentees in the tea gardens and faced a significant loss.²² Besides, these drunken coolies violated law and order under the influence of alcohol, creating a disturbance within the tea-garden premises. Many of the coolies died due to excess drinking. While reporting all these incidents related to labourers' drinking, the tea-garden managers wrote to the government that intemperance in the tea-garden areas increased due to government excise policy and opening of numerous *Out-stills* at the vicinity of tea-gardens. Thus, the managers demanded the reduction in the number of *Out-stills*²³ and the liquor shops in the vicinity of the tea-gardens.²⁴

The missionaries, working in the Darjeeling districts also became vocal about the drunkenness of the tea gardens coolies, wrote letters to the government and appealed to the tea-garden managers to look into the issue. Some of the tea-garden managers collaborated with the local missionaries and founded the Darjeeling Temperance Associations in 1885.²⁵ Later this society was affiliated to the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association. The president of the Darjeeling Temperance Association, Mr D. Sutherland, and its secretary, Rev. A. Turbull were among the first temperance activist who joined hand with the tea garden planters, organised a successful agitation against the *Out-still System* and working for controlling the drunkenness among the coolies.²⁶ The tea-garden managers also sought the government's intervention in controlling liquor sale while asking changes in the

excise policy, especially in the license system and requesting the government to stop the liquor traffic from Nepal.²⁷

Along with the missionaries, social organizations like the Brahmo Samaj were also preaching the temperance while highlighting the condition of the working class. Among the Brahmo Samaj activists, Keshab Chandra Sen took the first initiative to spread the message of temperance along with the agenda of social and moral reform. He formed the Indian Reform Association on 11th November 1870. This Society organised meetings to discuss the idea of temperance, and the number of labourers attended them. In 1871, such a meeting was organised in Baranagar²⁸. Next year the organization started to publish a temperance magazine.²⁹

The nationalist leaders also addressed the issue of growing intemperance among the working class at the end of the nineteenth century and identified British excise policy along with the exploitative nature of the British colonialism for the moral and economic degradation of the workers. In the presidential address of the fifth National Social Conference, held in Kolkata on 29th December 1901, Raja Binoya Krishna Bahadur argued that the consumption of intoxicating drugs, especially the consumption of liquor, was increasing among the workers. He also mentioned that the workers' families suffered financially due to the changes in the liquor consumption patterns and spending of a large proportion of wage on the liquor. Further, the speaker promoted the idea of temperance and the notion of social purity among the working class. This proposal was supported by nationalists, like Bipin Chandra Pal and Mr Jadunath Mazumdar.³⁰ Common people, along with the reformers and political leaders, also started to write petitions to the government against the growing intemperance, the spread of the *Out-still System*, availability of the substandard liquor at a low price and the opening of new liquor shops. For instance, petitioners of Gurrifa³¹ and its adjoining villages assumed that the new construction work in the area would bring more employment and prosperity to the younger generation, and encourage these young people to become drunkards.³² Thus, they sought government intervention in the matter.

Despite these criticisms, the colonial excise policy remained the same, and the government did not try to control the growing intemperance among the working class for

the economic benefit of the empire. In reply to the nationalist and missionary criticisms, first, the government denied the fact that spreading of the *Out-still System* was the reason for growing intemperance among the workers. Second, the government argued that the improvement in the economic condition also encouraged the workers to spend money on liquor, but there was a decrease in the number of convicts for drunkenness.³³ Additionally, the report of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, published in the year 1884, also supported the fact that the consumption of liquor among the people increased not only for the establishment of the *Out-still System* but also due to the operation of social, moral and religious changes, increase the purchasing power and cheapening of liquor.³⁴ The Collector of Nadia, while reporting to the government about the growing drunkenness among the people, had remarked that the increase in the wage encouraged 'lower order' people to consume more liquor.

The government's contempt for the nationalist, missionary and planters' criticisms of the colonial excise policy reflected through the opening of new *Out-stills* in the Tea-Districts and other parts of Bengal. Besides, the introduction of the auction of liquor licence policy to the highest bidder had increased the number of liquor shops as well as the flow of liquor after 1883 in the tea-districts, especially in the vicinity of the tea gardens. This resulted in the growing intemperance among the coolies.³⁵ Besides, the government policy of opening up new out-stills at new workplaces in Bengal aimed to turn workers into disciplined drinkers while stopping them from having illicit liquor or homemade *pachwai* and ensured the flow of the excise revenue to the government treasury. These policies of the colonial government to promote drunkenness among the workers changed under the pressure of the House of Commons, the report of the Hemp and Drug Commission and the nationalist leaders during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The change in the colonial stand resulted in the identification of the working class as drunkard and drinking of the working class as the source of crime with the help of the 1901 census report. Bengal's Board of Revenue reported that the drinking population increased both in Kolkata and Chota Nagpur during 1903-04 due to the increased number of mills and opening of the collieries respectively.³⁶ While identifying

the workers as drunkards, the colonial government once again denied responsibility for promoting intemperance among the workers and bypassing all the criticism of Indians and missionaries. Soon under the pressure of the Government of India, the Government of Bengal was forced to accept the missionaries' proposition of Local Opinion system in 1908 and changed the liquor policy in 1909. The introduction of the local opinion system forced the government to seek the permission from the residents of the area before the opening of any liquor shop, but this policy also hardly brought any changes in the life of the workers.

Conclusion

The paper is arguing that the pleasure of alcohol consumption of the working class turned into cultural, moral and political conflict grounds for different groups of people, but this conflict failed to bring any change in the life of the working class during the second half of the nineteenth century. Drinking, initially, became popular among the labourers due to the marginalization of the popular folk culture by the 'sanitise culture', working-class' displacement from the aboriginal places and isolation during the migration in the urban centres and other workplaces. The marginalization of the folk and popular culture could not offer any other entertainment to these workers. Besides, some groups of labourers claimed that consumption of liquor made them energetic, increasing their immune system. Besides, violation of colonial instruction on drinking by the working class of Indian could also be considered as subaltern resistance against the colonial interference in the everyday life of Indians. However, this violation of the order or discipline regarding drinking, i.e., what to drink, when to drink and how much to drink by the workers led the colonial authority, planters to intervene.

The colonial government used labourers' drinking pleasure to generate revenue. In this process, first, the colonial government identified drinking as a regular activity of the workers; and second, opened new liquor shops at the vicinity of the working places while claiming to make the working class as 'disciplined drinkers'. Ultimately the colonial excise policy had turned the working class into 'habitual drunkards'. This change in the drinking practice of the workers encouraged the missionaries, Indian social reformers, temperance activists and nationalist leaders to identify the economic

exploitation of the colonialism and moral degradation of the workers. They argued that due to the colonial excise policy, the workers became drunkards, faced moral degradation and financial problems. However, these criticisms failed to change colonial excise policy or to turn the workers into teetotallers.

In the process of scrutinizing drinking practice of the working-class from the economic and moral ground, the society failed to trace the reason for choosing drinking as at most pleasure by the working-class. The absence of an alternative mode of entertainment, an increase in wage and easy availability of cheap liquor due to the colonial excise policy made the workers addicted to liquor consumption. The colonial government identified the workers as habitual drunkards in the census report of 1901 to bypass all allegations imposed on the colonial excise policy by the missionaries and Indians. This colonial step to identify the working class as a drunkard had hardly left any scope to improve their living condition during the colonial era and failed to address the actual reason of working-class drunkenness, i.e., marginalization of popular culture. Neither the colonial government paid attention to it, nor the temperance activists, or the missionaries or the Indian politicians addressed this cultural lacuna during the late nineteenth century.

Notes and References

- ¹ Both of these Factory Acts addressed the working hours of the children and women in the factories and looked into the living condition of the workers.
- ² Several plantation acts, like the Plantation Labour and the Inland Emigration Act of 1882, the Assam Labour and Emigration Act of 1901, the Madras Planters' Labour Act of 1903 were passed to protect the interest of the planters and secure the profit of Indian colonial government.
- ³ An art form acted before a large group of people.
- ⁴ Story of the divine bodies has been written in the poetic form.
- ⁵ A performing art, where two poets verbally contest before their patrons and large gathering of audiences.
- ⁶ Banerjee, Sumanta, *The Parlour and The Streets*, Calcutta, Seagull, 1998, p.64.
- ⁷ This is one of the old and authentic books on the culture of nineteenth-century Kolkata.
- ⁸ Sinha, Kaliprasannay, *Sketches by Hootum the Owl* (Hutom Payachar Naksha) translated by Chitralekha Basu, Kolkata, Samya, 2012, p. 253.
- ⁹ Varma, Nitin, "For the Drink of the Nation", Macrcel van der Linden & Prabhu p. Mahapatra (eds.), *Labour Matters* India, Tulika Books, 2009, pp. 296-299

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- 10 *Ibid.*, p.307
- 11 *Ibid.*, p.300
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 311.
- 14 Collection of papers, Relating to the Excise Administration of India, Reprinted, March 1890, Letter no. 15, pp. 287-290, NAI
- 15 Sinha, *Ibid.*
- 16 This place is near Naihati, a suburb town near Kolkata.
- 17 December 1883, *A Proceeding*, Financial Department/Head: Excise (F/Ex), Coll no. 12, File no. 39, West Bengal State Archives, (WBSA).
- 18 Ghosh, Parimal, *Colonialism, class and a History of the Calcutta Jute Milllhands 1880-1930*, Orient Longman Limited, Hyderabad, 2000, p.136-39.
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- 21 March 1906, *A Proceeding*, Financial Department/Head: Separate Revenue (F/SR), nos. 24, File no. E1-c2. 2, Letter No. 365E, Dated, Darjeeling, 5th January 1906, WBSA.
- 22 Collection of papers, Relating to the Excise administration of India, Reprinted, March 1890, Letter no. 15, pp. 287-290, National Archives of India (NAI).
- 23 Under this distillery system, the production of liquor, the price and strength of liquor were determined by the contractor. The government had hardly control over the production of this kind of distillery.
- 24 Collection of papers, Relating to the Excise administration of India, Reprinted, March 1890, Letter no. 11, p. 274, NAI.
- 25 This was one of the earliest affiliated societies of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association.
- 26 *Abkari*, No. 11, October 1892, London.
- 27 Collection of papers, Relating to the Excise administration of India, Reprinted, March 1890., Letter no. 11, p. 274, NAI.
- 28 A Sub-urban city, situated near to Kolkata.
- 29 Mukhopadhy, Arun Kumar, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, Delhi, Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1992, p. 21.
- 30 *Abkari*, No 48. April 1902, p. 51.
- 31 This place is near Naihati, a suburb town near Kolkata.
- 32 Collection of papers, Relating to the Excise Administration of India, Reprinted, March 1890, Letter no. 15, pp. 287-290, NAI.
- 33 December 1883, *A Proceeding*, F/ Ex, Collection no. 12, File no. 41, WBSA.
- 34 December 1884, *A Proceeding*, F/ Ex, File no.2, collection no. 1, WBSA.
- 35 February, 1889, *A Proceeding*, F/ Ex, File no. E 102, Serial No. 1-4, Appendix B, WBSA.
- 36 Board of Revenue, Lower province of Bengal. Report on the Administration of the Excise Department in the Lower Province of Bengal for the year 1903-04, Printed by the Superintendent, Government Press, 1905.

Shattered minds: Controlling the body in the lunatic asylums in colonial India (1858-1920)

Dr. Dahlia Bhattacharya¹

Abstract

Taming with discipline and confinement the 'mentally ill' was largely a colonial concept. The colonial government particularly after 1857 revolt became more concerned about the insane and in controlling insanity they passed Lunatic Acts and constructed asylums throughout the country. In identifying the lunatics the colonial institution used Victorian morality rather than clinical observation. The vagrants and beggars were the mostly classified as insane by the British which was in contrary to the Indian concept of saints and sages. The ganja smokers, hemp and alcohol addicted men were also identified as lunatics. The Victorian morality recognized 'work' as a therapy and the 'mentally ill' were made to work in the garden, carpentry, grinding wheat and other works leading to monetary gain. The funds were applied to maintain the asylums, sometimes the local jails and led to profit for the British. The paper seeks to look into the colonial policy towards the asylums and the hard work imposed upon the lunatics leading to asylum 'industries' and how it received a new direction of economic gains.

Keywords

Unmad, Bimarstan, Revolt of 1857, Lunatic Act XXXIV of 1858, Native –Only Asylums, overcrowding, asylum industries

Introduction

Lunatic asylums and hospitals directed and controlled by the state authority were introduced in the colonial regime. Mental asylums or confinement to a small cell due to mental illness is largely a colonial concept. The concept of “controlling” the lunatics through confinement and discipline existed in Europe in the early seventeenth century i.e., before the British annexation of India. In England laws were passed to identify and

treat a lunatic. The mentally ill was not considered fit to remain within the society and were to remain to private houses within the care of relatives and friends. The houses of correction and later workhouses were used for this purpose. The Society's tolerance of madness had changed, with far reaching effects and management of madness came to be bound increasingly to confinement. As early as 1750, Bethlem Hospital was constituted as a public institutional provision in England for mentally disordered people. There were more hospitals namely Bethel hospital, St. Luke's Hospital, Manchester Lunatic Hospital, York Asylum¹ and England passed laws namely the Lunatic Acts 1845 and the County Asylum Act 1845 in the nineteenth century. But prior to that the County Asylum Act of 1808 was passed which established institutions to poor and for criminally insane as well as mentally ill people. The paupers and wanderers were thus put in mad houses by the Poor Laws Act(1834)². In India the situation was different, as vagabonds and homeless wanderers were not specifically identified as a threat to the civil society.

After the East India Company expanded their dominance over a large part of India, attention was paid for taming the mentally ill and insane by the Victorian concept of morality and care. While referring to Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* it is considered that the concept of mental illness is largely a western construct. The Victorian concept of a civilized world did not exist in India. Foucauldian model of power, knowledge and discipline is used in the article as to assess the Indian context of colonial policy towards the lunatics. Patients were an object of the asylum care³. The main purpose of the article is to give attention to colonial policy towards the Indian lunatics and particularly the change in the policy of confinement towards the wanderers and vagrants after 1857. It looks into the Victorian morality system which imposes the lunatic patients to hard work in order to cure them. Due to the hard work the production in the asylums led to 'industries' and the colonial government received a new direction of economic gains.

Pre-colonial treatment of lunatics and mentally ill

In the ancient India the mentally ill were identified and they were treated with care. In the Hindu tradition, insanity was treated through Vedic prayers and Ayurvedic practices. The

Atharvaveda Samhita 6.111 is a charm against insanity. *Sayana* considers it to be among the *matrnamagana* (list of charms having the name mother) and prescribes its use in a rite “for the quieting of pain from the Gandharvas, from the *Raksas*-demons, from the *Apsarases* or from *bhutagraha* (demonic seizure)⁴. The *Atharvaveda* deals with precision and the Hymn CXI (A Charm for Insanity) refers to an offering by the performer in treating mentally ill. It reads:

“Unbind and loose for me this man, O *Agni* , who bound and well restrained is chattering folly. Afterward he will offer thee thy portion when he hath been delivered from his madness. Let *Agni* gently soothe they mind when fierce excitement troubles it. Well-skilled I make a medicine thout thou no larger mayst be mad. Insane through sin against the Gods, or maddened by a demon’s power –well skilled I make a medicine to free thee from insanity. May the *Apsarases* release, *Indra* and *Bhaga* let thee go. May all the Gods deliver thee that thou no longer mayst be mad.”⁵

However, it seems that “this fits well with the notion that madness was considered to be characterized by the mind leaving the body; and in order to become sane, it must be returned⁶. Besides the hymns and charms, in Ayurveda the unreasonable and irrational state of mind is referred to as *unmad* like hysteria, *Apasmara* (epilepsy) and others. Ayurvedic science concentrated more on the aspect of mind, body and soul and thus molded the system of Ayurveda a treating process combining both body and mind. *Charaka Samhita*, gives a systematic line of mental diseases and the elimination of the disease through therapy. The *Satvavajaya* or Psychotherapy is based on three principles ie, replacement of emotions, assurances and psycho shock therapy⁷. Furthermore, Patanjali observed too that there is a constant rhythmic interaction between body and mind and to create a harmony of mind one should recognize the psychological self and to cure the mental illness yoga was the only remedy⁸.

In the medieval times the Mughals had established a system of care by creating *bimaristan*, a hospital for the insanes deriving from *bimar* (the Persian word for ‘patient’) and *bimaree* (meaning ‘disease’)⁹. Dominik Wujastyk has revealed that the Mughal

physicians could identify institutions that would cure insanity in the sixteenth century rather than just isolate and confine the mad¹⁰. Nevertheless, in the pre colonial period there were no institutions governed by the state authority to control the lunatics. One of the reasons behind the non – existence of the lunatic asylums controlled by state was due to the social differences among men in matters of caste which did not permit the treatment of the patients together in the same institution¹¹. Therefore, the lunatic asylums in the form of ‘control’ and ‘confinement’ started to develop as a separate institution in the colonial period.

Definition of a Lunatic in British Laws

The British before coming to India passed lunatic laws in England and defined a ‘lunatic’ with the help of western medical science. The Laws of England says that, “A lunatic or non-compos mentis, is one who hath his understanding but by disease, grief or other accident, hath lost the use of his reason”¹². It further states,

“a lunatic is indeed properly one that hath lucid intervals; sometimes enjoying his senses and sometimes not and that frequently depending on the moon. But under the general name non compos mentis, are composed not only lunatics, but persons under frenzies, or who lose their intellects by disease; those that grow deaf, dumb and blind, not being born so, or such, in short as are judged by the court of chancery incapable of conducting their own affairs”¹³.

The terminology for lunacy was loosely phrased so that it can include all those who were considered to be socially and politically troublesome to the British authority. These laws and sense of Victorian morality were used in the colonies to identify and interpret lunacy and lunatics according to their own requirement.

An overview of the history of establishment of lunatic asylums

Some evidences suggest that Portuguese were the first to introduce modern medicine and hospitals to India during the 17th century in Goa¹⁴. The history of modern psychiatry in the Indian subcontinent starts with the establishment of mental hospital by the British

East India Company in 1600. They were constructed exclusively for the European patients in India. The first asylum was established in Bombay in 1745 and the second at Calcutta in 1784, which were exclusively for Europeans¹⁵.

A surgeon named Dr. George M. Kenderline established the hospital in Calcutta, which was initially not recognized by the Medical Board as he was earlier dismissed due to negligence in service in 1777. In 1787, Dr. William Dick, a surgeon, established a private hospital, which was recognized and rented to East India Company. After his retirement in 1818, the hospital gradually deteriorated and was closed in 1821¹⁶. At that juncture, in 1817, surgeon Beardsmore, the head keeper of the hospital, had opened a private hospital at Bhowanipore, Calcutta. This hospital housed around 50–60 European patients with clean surroundings and a garden. During this period, patients were treated with opium and morphia, were given hot bath, and sometimes leeches were applied to suck blood. It was believed that blisters were useful for controlling excited patients. In 1794, Surgeon Valentine Connolly, who was the first superintendent and proprietor of the hospital, established the first hospital in South India at Kilpauk, Madras, for twenty patients¹⁷. Later in 1799, the government took it on lease and Surgeon Morris Fitzgerald was appointed as medical superintendent. In 1807, surgeon James Dalton took in charge and expanded the hospital for 54 inpatients. In 1795, another lunatic asylum in Monghyr, Bihar, about 400–500 miles north of Calcutta, was established by the British rulers. During the same period in 1855 in Dacca another lunatic asylum was opened in Murli Bazar. In the state of Bihar which was under the influence of the Englishmen, two hospitals were opened, one at Monghyr started in 1795 for insane soldiers and later in 1821 another lunatic asylum was opened at Patna.¹⁸

After Lord Cornwallis rule (1786-1793) and until 1857, there was no further growth of any lunatic asylum in other parts of India except in the major cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. After 1858 numerous asylums were built at Patna, Dacca, Calcutta, Berhampur, Cuttack, Waltair, Trichinapally, Colaba, Poona, Dharwar, Ahmedabad, Ratnagiri, Hyderabad (Sind), Jabalpur, Banaras, Agra, Bareilly, and Lahore. Colaba was mainly meant for Europeans with over 285 beds and Ahmedabad had 180 beds by 1872.

The year 1874 is also important in Indian history as Assam was separated from Bengal and by 1876 a new asylum was opened at Tezpur. The similar expansion was also visible in Central Provinces where asylums were established in 1866 at Jabalpur and in 1866 at Elichpur in Brar. The hospitals at Jabalpur and Brar were constructed in 1912 and 1924, respectively. A hospital in Benaras was started in 1854, and at Agra in 1858 and later at Bareilly in 1862¹⁹.

In the twentieth century all asylums that were hitherto under the charge of the inspector general of Police were put under the charge of civil surgeons. The second change was in the recognition of specialists in psychiatry to be appointed full-time officers in these hospitals and the third significant addition was the intent of Government to have a central supervision of all lunatic asylums which was contemplated in 1906 and was brought out in the form of India Lunacy Act 1912. Furthermore, specialists in psychiatry were appointed to these hospitals²⁰.

Under a new legislation (Indian Lunacy Act, 1912) a central lunatic asylum was established in Berhampur for European patients, which was later closed after the establishment of Central European Hospital at Ranchi in 1918. The year 1918 saw the establishment of a Central European Hospital (now called the Central Institute of Psychiatry) at Ranchi by Col. Berkeley Hill for European mentally ill patients. It was the effort of Berkeley Hill that not only raised the standard of treatment and care in the mental hospital at Ranchi but it was his persuasion with the Government that the names of all mental asylums in India were changed to mental hospitals in 1920²¹.

Changing policies in the Lunatic asylums since 1858

It is true that lunatic asylums were established prior to the Revolt of 1857, though more in numbers for the Europeans than for the native Indians. After 1857 there were more native asylums in India than for Europeans. In India the year of 1858 is very significant as it marked the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown and it also marks the end of the Revolt of 1857. Within the year 1858 three lunacy acts were passed to deal with insanity across India: Act XXXIV of 1858 (Lunacy Act Supreme Court), Act XXXV of 1858 (The Lunacy Act District Court) and Act XXXVI of 1858 (Lunatic

Asylum Act).²² These Acts established Lunatic Asylums for natives, made “provision for better care” of lunatics and codified the procedure for admitting insane to these institutions. In India the “lunatic was meant to every person found by due course of law to be of unsound mind and incapable of managing his affairs”²³. It is interesting to note that these lunacy acts were part of the acts for the general reorganization of Indian administration after 1858. It is equally notable that the Indian Lunacy Acts were passed in 1858, merely six weeks after the new Government under the Crown had taken its seat. They represented the thirty-fourth, thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth acts of governance under the Crown's Rule²⁴.

The 1857 revolt made the British Government aware of their position in India and to strengthen it, they passed the Lunacy acts. Prior to the 1857 Revolt the attitude of the British towards the Indians were different but the uprising of 1857 changed the perspective of the British towards Indians and as Mills stated that, “they were now viewed as a dangerous population that needed to be further subjugated”²⁵. This sense of insecurity was felt with the existence of ‘wanderers’ and ‘vagrants’. Mills argued that the British were willing to take preliminary measures in order to protect themselves from any uprisings and revolt by removing the weapons away from Indians and to do away with the unpredictable individuals from the society²⁶. The Lunacy Acts in the Clause 4 & 5 stated the collection of insane wanderers and vagrants, with the requirement specifying that a magistrate must deem them legally insane, which would be followed by incarceration in a Native- Only Asylum²⁷. This clarifies the fact that these people collected may not be clinically proved to be insane but legally they are to be identified as insane.

After the 1857 revolt and the passing of the Lunacy Acts of 1858, a Committee was appointed in 1888 to bring reforms in the asylums. Within the period between 1858-1913 asylums were built at Patna, Dacca, Calcutta, Berhampore, Trichinopoly, Colaba, Agra, Bareilly, Tezpur, Lahore, Poona, Dharwar, Ahmedabad, Ratnagiri, Hyderabad (Sindh), Jabalpur and Benaras²⁸. The British since 1858 were much interested in reforming the Indian and imposed it as a sense of morality on behalf of the colonial masters.

Nevertheless, it is important to study that the statistical data collected by the British in 1856 which shows insanity in India was much lower than compared to England. Yet the British Government gave special attention in identifying the lunatics, collecting and establishing the lunatic asylums since 1858. Dr. MacPherson writes that,

“while speaking high of the white skin superiority of race or racial superiority that we ourselves doubt much whether insanity be actually moiré prevalent among civilized than among uncivilized nations-it doubtless assumes very different forms—highly educated man would probably not be affected in the same way as the ignorant, uneducated and superstitious man—but is it not possible that among the civilized populations, greater notice is taken of those afflicted with lunacy, and thus an apparently higher proportion of insane to the population is made to appear”.²⁹

Twelve state funded asylums were established under the new legislation. Six already existed, in various parts of Northern India and under different circumstances: Patna, Dacca, Murshidabad, Benaras, Delhi and Bareilly. The other six –Nagpur, Jubbulpore, Lucknow, Dullunda, Moydapore, and Cuttack- were converted from existing structures, such as large homes and even a dilapidated farm³⁰. Within a few months after assuming its control the Crown gave birth to the native asylums in India which was definitely a response by a beleaguered government to control and constrain the leaders of the 1857 uprising. Similar argument has been placed by David Arnold that, the new Government wanted to besmirch the leaders of the Rebellion, punishing them with commitment to a psychiatric institution, rather than a prison, where pathology and stigma would prevent their becoming martyrs for a new wave of uprisings³¹. The Revolt of 1857 thus made it clear to the British that their subjects could organize and react in stark opposition of the British colonial paradigms. The new Government of India under the Crown underwent certain practical transformations in order to rule it's most prized colony more effectively but also it moved to embody a different governing mentality.

The statistical data given in the report by Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, 1893-1894 of the year 1892 regarding asylums of Bengal Province and the occupation of the patients

admitted in the states that there were 98 total patients out of which 5 *fakirs*, 16 beggars, 13 cultivators, 7 shopkeepers, 12 traders, 15 labourers, 6 servant, 4 *sepoys*, 1 panda, 1 student, 1 prostitute, 1 priest, 1 constable, 1 *tehsil jemadar*, 1 *sowar*, and un known 12. Thus the *fakirs* and beggars who are the vagrants and wanderers are 21 in number and are the maximum part of the patients who were admitted in the asylum³².

Moral responsibility was an important issue in the Victorian era. Protecting the lunatics who could not protect themselves was the major moral concern of the medical community of British India, especially if the lunatics were categorized as wanderers or vagrants. Laws were passed in England regarding the vagrants and wanderers and they were taken to lunatic asylums. But the cultural philosophy of India was not similar to the British. Nomads and wanderers were a part of Indian religious and spiritual life especially the asceticism. But after the 1857 revolt the wanderers and vagrants were no longer be able to choose their living arrangements because of the British concern for security.

Constructing racism in treatment of the lunatics

In the nineteenth century in British India there was a complex relationship between colonial knowledge of phrenology and race. Scientific examination of the Indian skull was a method of transition from the Indian body to the Indian mind and in doing so they firmly believed in colonial science of race, especially phrenology and the autopsy, that sought to explore, measure and classify the colonized body and that it constructed it as fundamentally different from the body of the colonizer³³. As Mills demonstrates that the symptoms of “madness” as recorded in the colonial asylum were overwhelmingly physical rather than mental; the asylum doctors chose to focus on the details such as the patients weight, bowel functions and the colour and consistency of the brain upon the inmate’s death and no reference is given about the patients mental condition.³⁴

The asylums for Indians and Europeans were separate. The environment and treatment of the European asylums were much better than their Indian counterpart. The medical professionals treating the Europeans had received better training than those serving in Native-Only asylums. Sometimes hospital regulations were altered to favour the mentally ill Europeans in India. Throughout the medical facilities of India, changes were enforced

to give the British the utmost care. Unlike the Indian lunatics, the Europeans were treated with 'great care' and 'attention', whilst institutions for the poor aimed at providing undesirable conditions for its inmates. It is, however, also that the velvet glove of measures was meant for the control and relief of Europeans in India.³⁵ The concept of Victorian morality, conversely, did not work in identifying racial superiority and subduing the Indian race by the colonial masters.

Identifying the native lunatics

It is true that the term lunatics had been defined in the Lunatic Acts of 1858 but in recognizing 'lunatics' or 'insane' in India, the British confined a wide range of diseased men and with different social behavior. Arthur Payne, the Superintendent of the asylums in the Bengal Presidency gives a report on the Bengal Asylum in 1862 that there were more alcoholics and drug addicts (ganja smokers) than patients with actual mental illness. The Dullunda Asylum in the same year shows that, out of 111 patients, 89 were confined for drug and alcohol intoxication, 8 for epilepsy, 3 for depression, 5 for congenital disease, 2 for old age and 2 for opium use³⁶. Considering the statistics 91 patients were kept in confinement due to addiction more precisely for public intoxication. It was argued that once the addiction was out of the patient's system, the patient would be sensible and logical human. But records reveals that even after their addiction to intoxication was removed, they were still made to remain confined. The records also reveal that the epileptics were not provided with anticonvulsive medication during this period³⁷.

The patients were mostly brought to the asylum on the charge of public nuisance. When the admission of the patient took place, the case notes shows that there were more cases of vagrants or wanderers than actually mentally sick and nothing was mentioned about the mental state of the patient. Little was known from the case histories except that the patient list gave one word summaries of the disease and its cause for each patient were described as 'unknown'. Out of the patients that had a cause listed, the common 'diseases' included chronic mania and dementia with the most common causes being ganja smoking, use of hemp and addiction to alcohol consumption. The patients who were under intoxication and addiction were kept in confinement for a longer period of

time. An example is available of Randkrist Dennoth who was confined in Dallunda Asylum on October 9, 1861 as a *ganja* smoker and remained in confinement till May 19, 1862.³⁸

The asylum was important as it was a site of what will be called the categorization and enumeration of cannabis use as a social problem. The British medical officers and superintendents of the asylums came to believe that cannabis was linked to insanity and violence. Dr. Crombie informed the commission that,

“nearly thirty per cent of the inmates of lunatic asylums in Bengal are persons who have been *ganja* smokers and in a very large proportion of these I believe *ganja* is to be the actual and immediate cause of their insanity”³⁹.

Hemp was too taken as another reason for insanity and men using this was admitted in the asylums as seen in a statistics provided by a Report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, 1893-1894 of the year 1892 regarding Bengal Province:

TABLE-1

PATIENTS ADMITTED IN BENGAL ASYLUM IN 1892

Asylums	Total admission in 1892	Cases attributed to hemp drugs in 1892	Number of cases accepted			Number of cases rejected
			Due to hemp drugs	As mixed cases	Total	
Dullunda	64	18	5	3	8	10
Patna	38	8	2	1	3	5
Dacca	43	15	4	1	5	10
Berhampur	38	11	3	1	4	7
Cuttack	3	1	---	-	-	1
Total	186	53	14	6	20	33

Marijuana: Report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, 1893-1894, Volume -1, p-238

The management of the native asylums was not properly done and most of the native asylums were overcrowded. MacPherson relates that the asylums could house 750 patients but most of them were overcrowded with as many as 1,041 patients⁴⁰. The overcrowding in the asylums was an issue for the superintendents particularly of Bengal. The annual asylum reports for both 1862 and 1870 points on the problem of overcrowding. Some of the Bombay's asylums were so crowded that staff could not maintain segregation between male and female patients due to spatial constraints⁴¹.

'Work' as a remedy in the asylums

Similar to the prisons the colonial regime with the Victorian morality of reform and care sought to introduce labour in the asylums as in the prisons. David Arnold mentions the colonial prison as the material adjunct of the colonial system.⁴² Employment of the prisoners on outdoor labour helped to reduce overcrowding and allowed the mobilization of scarce labour for tasks such as digging canals, construction of roads and ironically, also building prisons. Regarding asylum labour, there were no clear rules but those who were capable of work were certainly employed in all asylums. Though work was considered as a therapy for the lunatics in asylums but it was applied only for Native – Only asylums while it was considered 'uncongenial' for the European insane of any social class in British India, owing to the warm tropical climate.⁴³

The British believed that steady work would result in long lasting cure for the patients in the asylums. The asylums gives a record of rope making, loom working, tin work, gardening, cooking, fetching water, masonry and other ground works. The British categorized the different jobs as "asylum industries". The goals of the medical staff are exhibited in report on Dacca asylum: 'As occupation is so essentially necessary in the treatment of the insane I have to give them occupation without taxing their physical strength, and without using coercion, the great object being to make occupation subservient to health'.⁴⁴ The work was not been forced as the British believed that coercion would not lead to habit forming skills which is necessary to get cured. By 1870 the asylum industries started to expand and it gave new occupation for those physically unable or had "lost all muscle for work and all stomach for digestion".⁴⁵ The

Superintendent J. Bedford Allen in Lunatic Asylum of Patna states that, "The food is unexpectable in quality and sufficient in quantity. The *atta* is ground in the asylum by the female insanes, who also prepare *soojee* for sale".⁴⁶

The annual reports of 1862 and 1870 shows that the work of the lunatics led to profits in the asylums. Some industries such as asylums garden did benefit the patients. The Annual Report of 1862 shows that the production of the second year were feeding the Native – Only asylums, European asylums as well as some local jails.⁴⁷ The British used the garden industries for not only therapy but also to gain profit. In an annual report stated by A. Fleming, Surgeon Major, Superintendent of Moydapore Lunatic asylum for 1867 that "the diet of the asylum were provided by all the vegetables furnished from the Asylum garden worked by the lunatics." While giving the statement of the Cost of Diet Surgeon Major, A. Fleming affirms:

"Exclusive of cost of establishment, the expense of feeding each insane throughout the year has been Rs 15-9-8. After paying all expenses of raw materials purchased for the manufacturers, the clear profits amount to Rs 156-13-10, which gives as the amount earned by each lunatic Rs.9-3-7." But the profit amount was not handed over to the patients but it was for the British Government⁴⁸.

By 1870, the gardens throughout Bengal's asylums were flourishing. The Dallunda asylum had converted a swamp into "an ornamental and productive garden, which furnishes vegetables in abundance, and has commenced to produce the best kinds of fruit, both for use and for sale"⁴⁹. Almost every page of the asylum reports spoke of the profits that were earned from the gardening. The patients completed the excavation and draining of the swamps. There is never an explanation as to why or how laboring in the gardens helped the patients; this seemed of very little concern in the reports. The superintendents did say that garden work was used as a treatment in passing remarks, but the level of detail about the patient history and diagnosis is nowhere comparable to that of profit margins.

Besides gardening there were carpentry as another source of income and it was taken as a method of treatment. A Simpson, the Superintendent of the Dacca asylum, wrote a lengthy description of the goals of using carpentry as a treatment. He mentions that carpentry was a profitable labour work and he also says that,

“necessary tools have now been supplied from the profits of the labour, and I am endeavouring gradually to increase the number of men; at present there are seven lunatics at this work, and as many of the tractable as can be spared from the other duties I will instruct carpentry. A good carpenter here can earn Rs15-20 per mensem on monthly wages of Rupees 10. A carpenter will only work five hours and takes other work for the remainder of the day”.⁵⁰

It should be noted that there is no mention of the care and treatment of the patients in the passage. Unfortunately, the report seemed to be a profit plan for the British government. The asylum industries also manufactured products in looms and spinning devices. The main manufacturing consisted of spinning cotton yarn and flax twine, weaving cloth and *tant* and the making of bamboo *morahs* and chairs⁵¹.

The question thus arises that how it would be possible for the mentally incapacitated patients to be able to work in a loom, or to make cloth and ropes or to work with knives and scissors. It is to be noticed again that the large portion of the patients in the asylum were vagrants and wanderers. In the mid –nineteenth and twentieth century when medical science of psychiatry flourished and treatments were being developed, the focus of the Native Only asylums concentrated on employment and profits. Throughout the annual reports a mention of the work profit is continuously referred.

Conclusion

The British lunatic asylums in India posed a sense of Victorian morals but actually manipulated in diagnoses of patients. The concept of ‘lunatics’ was more a political and legal construct rather arising from the sense of insecurity due to the revolt of 1857. As a result of which the British filled the lunatic asylums with patients who were mostly beggars, vagrants and wanderers. The confinement in the cell would discipline them. They would be ‘civilised’ and ‘cured’ by the high morality of Europe. Racial segregation

was observed in the asylums and the superiority of the European race was preserved. The European patients were given the best treatments, better medical assistants and with rest in their well maintained asylums. Work as a medicine was used in the Native –Only asylums and industries grew up with gardening, carpentry and even loom manufactures. Such method of cure was not applied for the European patients and the rationale illustrated was the tropical climate of the country with which the European was not habituated. Industries and manufactures brought profit to the British Government and the cost of food, building and cloth of a lunatic patient was made by the profit. As Foucault analyses that, “In the asylum work, stripped of any production value; it was imposed as a moral value. It was a limitation of liberty, submission to order, an engagement to responsibility, of which the only goal was the tethering of a spirit that roamed too freely in the excess of a liberty which physical constraints only limited in appearance”⁵². The colonial masters applied the same motive towards the lunatics in restricting their freedom by imposing discipline, order and work and justified it through morality. The work, however, brought profit for the British Government. But the funds raised by the patients were not reinvested for the benefit of the asylums in repair, maintenance and medical facility of the native patients.

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Urbanization of the Siliguri town: Understanding the transformation from Union Board to Municipal Corporation (1915-1994)

Dr. Sudip Khasnobish¹¹

Abstract :

Siliguri situated in the foothills of the Himalayas and about eight hundred and forty two feet above the sea level is now a part of the district of Darjeeling in the state of West Bengal .During the colonial period there were three police stations under Siliguri sub-division i.e Siliguri, Phansidewa and Khoribari. Siliguri is termed as the uncrowned capital of Northern part of Bengal popularly known as North Bengal. Some notable scholars and academicians have contributed in the studies of urbanization of Darjeeling hill town and very few academic works have been done. The focus was largely on the growing commercial activities of Siliguri after post- partition era. Certain areas of study have not been touched. The proposed article intends to understand the various issues or factors which transformed Siliguri from a sleepy hamlet to a Municipal Corporation within a very short period during 20th century and to find out the importance of its strategic geographical location in the context of ongoing Indo-Chinese conflict after Doklam.

Key Words: *Sikkim, Battrish Hazari, Raikat, zamindar, Siliguri, railway, Bangladesh, Municipality , S.J.D.A., jotes, wards, Committee, tea.*

Introduction:

Siliguri was a village in the south of Kurseong sub-division near the left bank of the river Mahananda constituting 748 souls in 1901. The village was situated on fairly high ground and its name meant the “the stony site”, presumably because the bed of the Mahananda which is close by is a mass of broken stone brought down from the hills.¹

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Dozey adds that, “Siliguri or the stony plain, according to tradition derived its name from the stores which once lay in myriads on the bed of the Mahanady river which flows to the north of the town.....It is roughly in the centre of the Bengal Terai, which was acquired from Sikkim in 1850.”² Though, later the name of this place was different and the earlier writers, travellers, historians called it as Sannyasikata or Baikunthapur or Batrish Hazari.

A dense jungle touching modern Siliguri is still known as Baikunthapur Forest Range. In Hunter’s *Statistical Account of Bengal* Siliguri’s alternative name was Sannyasikata. Hunter did not mention about the name of Siliguri in his writings. J.D. Hooker in his travelogue described that “Siligoree stands on the verge of the Terai, that low malarious belt which skirts the base of the Himalaya.”³ Hunter also noted that this place was less inhospitable than the northern part of the river Mahananda and chiefly inhabited by the Koch people.⁴ In the words of L.S.S. O’ Malley it is “a tract of reeking moisture and rank vegetation, it has always been dreaded by Europeans, who used, in the days before the railway, to hurry through it as fast they could travel, and if possible in the early morning, in order to get beyond the fatal fever zone.”⁵ Actually in pre-colonial period this place was considered to be a no man’s land situated near the border of Sikkim, Nepal, Bhutan and Koch Kingdom. The refugees of justice or the Sannyasis were used to take shelter in this dense forest of Baikunthapur till the end of the 19th century.

BAIKUNTHAPUR TO SILIGURI

The Raikats of Baikunthapur⁶ were the collateral branch of the royal family Cooch Behar. During the time of its first two rulers Viswa Singha and Naranarayan Raikat Siswasinha, a step brother of Maharaja Viswasinha had constructed a house near Siliguri, that part of the country being given to him as “*pet bhata*” (appanage) during the middle of the sixteenth century.⁷ Charu Chandra Sanyal also ascribed this theory in his book entitled *The Rajbansis of North Bengal* and stated “His (Siswasinha) capital was first built at Siliacguri (Siliguri) in the village of Debgram.....The capital was called Niz-Baikunthapur.”⁸

In course of time, the Baikunthapur Estate temporarily came under the Dewani of English, East India Company and subsequently introduced Permanent Settlement of land

revenue in this region. Nevertheless, in 1621 under the reign of Mahi Dev, the 5th *Raikat* of Baikunthapur signified his dependence by refusing to hold the umbrella over the Cooch Behar *Raja* at the coronation of Bir Narayan and also refused to pay the annual tribute. In 1773, under the reign of Derpa Dev, the 13th *Raikat* of Baikunthapur with the help of some bandits basically called Sannyasis and in collaboration with the Bhutias continued attack on the territory of Cooch Behar and nearby possessions of the East India Company. Captain Stuart was sent to subdue the rising and he defeated both Derpa Rev and the Sannyasis and took possession of some parts of Baikuthapur Estate. In the year 1774, after a treaty of Bhutan with East India Company the *Raikat* Derpa Dev was placed as an ordinary *zamindar* and was assessed of rupees thirty two thousand per year. The *Zamindari* was thereafter named *Batrishazari*.⁹ In this connection it is to be mentioned that during the political struggle between Raikat Derpa Dev and Rudranarayan, the Raja of Cooch Behar, Derpa Dev had brought five thousands soilders -Sannyasis in his capital Baikunthapur. Derpa Dev had captured the fort of Rahimganj with the help of these Sannyasis and in this confrontations many Sannyasis were killed and this changed the name of the place from Baikunthapur to Sannyasikhata.¹⁰ And after the formation of Jalpaiguri district on 1st January 1869 with the incorporation of Baikanthapur region and later due to some administrative arrangement made by the Colonial Government in 1880, mainly a tract of the southern part of the river Mahananda became a part of the district of Darjeeling popularly known as the modern Siliguri and the town of Siliguri came into being when the administrative headquarters of Terai sub-division was transferred from Hansqua near Phansidewa to Siliguri at the same period. As a result of this gradually Siliguri started to have a sub-jail, the *kachary*, post office, the S.D.O bungalow, a dispensary¹¹ and many new administrative offices and in this regard, in the early part of the 20th Century, the colonial government drew a structural map for the future planning of a growing “Siliguri” as a transit point.¹²

The development of Siliguri as a town is clearly linked with the development of Sanatorium town of Darjeeling and the flourishing tea industry in this region in the colonial period. Prior to that, Siliguri was a small market centre on the trade route of wool from Tibet. The hill resort of Darjeeling was chosen as a Sanatorium by the British

and the importance of Siliguri lay in its being the transit station for onward journey from the plains to the hills.¹³ In an Eastern Bengal State Railway handbook published in the first quarter of the 20th century describe this place as “The village (Siliguri) is the terminus also of the cart road from Kalimpong and Sikkim, and is thus the focus of the local trade- but is known to the traveler only as a stepping stone on the way to the hills.”¹⁴ Siliguri then a rural settlement gradually acquired a few shops to cater the needs of the transit passengers. The roads and railway connecting Siliguri with Darjeeling were developed next. Actually the geographical location of Siliguri served as a gateway to Darjeeling hills on the one hand and also as a door to Dooars and north eastern part of India gave to its importance.

The first measure step taken to improve communication was the deputation of Lieutenant Napier to construct a road from Siliguri to Darjeeling. This was carried out from 1839 to 1842 and the road now known as the Old Military Road, which is still be seen from Pankhabari to Kurseong and thence on to Dow Hill and Ghum. The section of this road is also now known as the Matigara-Kurseong road. This road was not practicable for wheeled traffic and the development of Darjeeling and the cost of transporting military stores led to search for an alternative road. The result of this search is known as the Hill Cart Road which starts from Siliguri and ends in Darjeeling town. The construction was started in 1860 and the road was completed in 1869. Meanwhile decision was taken to construct a road from the Ghat of Ganges to Siliguri at a cost of Rs.14,68,000. This road is 126 miles long and connects Sahebganj to Siliguri. Therefore, Siliguri became the terminal points of the Ganges Darjeeling Road and Hill Cart Road. Importance of Siliguri as it became a junction on the two roads one leading to the north and the other to south.

In 1860 the East Indian Railway had been extended up to Sahebganj and thereafter it was only necessary to travel by road north of this point in order to get to Darjeeling. In 1878 the Northern Bengal State Railway was opened for traffic up to Jalpaiguri and by the end of that year it had been extended to Siliguri. In 1881 the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company had opened its steam tramway for traffic up to Darjeeling.¹⁵ Apart from this the *Darjeeling Himalayan Railway a steam tramway*

opened in 1881 by Mess Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co of Calcutta¹⁶ and was also extended to Kishanganj. However, Siliguri was not connected with the Dooars areas but within some period the work was taken up by the *Bengal Duars Railway* and in 1902 Siliguri was connected with Bagrakot and Assam.¹⁷ The Siliguri- Kishanganj line as stated earlier, further extended towards South-west almost upto Nepal border.¹⁸ An Assistant Settlement Officer of Darjeeling Terai states that this railway system has increased the facility of exporting jute from the Terai and importing rice and other articles from Calcutta and the neighbouring districts.¹⁹ However the Colonial Government took several initiatives to construct bridges over the important rivers to connect plains with the hill. In 1892-1893 a bridge was constructed over the Panchanai river on the 4th mile of Darjeeling Hill Cart Road and was opened for both car and railway traffic.²⁰ Moreover, bridges over the river Mahananda and the river Balasan rendered great facility for well communication system of plains with hills.²¹

EMERGENCE OF SILIGURI: UNION BOARD TO MUNICIPALITY

In the beginning of the 20th century Siliguri was just a village but an important village due to its geographical location. Even L.S.S. O' Malley never termed Siliguri as town, in 1907 he stated that in the district of Darjeeling there are only two towns namely Darjeeling and Kurseong but by the end of the said century it emerged as the most important town of the North Bengal as well as the eastern part of India.

In 1907 the Sub-Divisional headquarter was established in Siliguri. The people from different parts of the Sub-Continent had centered around Siliguri particularly due to tea, tourism, timber and transport. The attraction of the business prospect removed the fear of malaria from the hearts of business loving people. Besides tea and timber companies like Mark Mayer, North Bengal Jute Mill, Rsim & Co, Landen Cleark, Raily Brothers and others related with jute business were established in Siliguri.²² These business activities in the southern bank of the river Mahananda had played very important role for the rise of Siliguri as a commercial centre of North Bengal. These commercial activities also changed the demographic structure of Siliguri. So to fulfill the need of growing population in 1915 a "Sanitary Committee" was formed in Siliguri. The first President of this Committee was a renowned lawyer Surendranath Bhattacharjee and

Secretary Kartik Chandra De.²³ To clear the garbage from non-sanitary latrines and clean the roads were the main responsibilities or activities of this Committee. Actually its initial activities involved overseeing the sweeper in the disposal of night soil near the banks of Mahannanda and Phuleswari rivers and later on Tikiapara. The method of disposal was simple; digging the ground, depositing and covering it. In 1925 an Anglo-Nepali Christian named George Mahbert Subba was elected as the President of this Committee and under his Presidentship provision was made for night lamps on wooden poles on the major roads. Lalit Mohan Dhoni popularly known as Khapachand was the main architect of this job.

In Siliguri transport by modern vehicle started after the World War I in 1919. It was first time used by Mr. Stephen, who had four motor vehicles took passenger to Darjeeling. The fare of each passenger to Darjeeling was Rs. 19. However, the bus service of the Terai areas of Darjeeling started in 1925 in the route of Siliguri-Naxalbari.²⁴ The name of the first passenger bus was “Siliguri Motor Service”. The owner of the bus was Ganeshram Prasad and the first driver of the said bus was Md. Faridh.²⁵ Moreover, before the formation of Municipality in Siliguri there was only one rikshaw which was pulled by a Bihari person named Janakiram. But after the formation of Municipality there was existence of 450 licensed by-cycles in Siliguri town.²⁶

Siliguri was quite an isolated place with a fewer number of people in 1920s. Sree Satyendranarayan Majumder, a great revolutionary who came in Siliguri in 1920 from Mathabhanga of Cooch Behar wrote some passages in his auto-biography about the isolation of Siliguri during those days. According to him, at that time the population of Siliguri was about 3000 to 4000 soul and most of them were Bengalis along with some Bihari community.²⁷ Some of them opened shops nearby to cater the needs of the growing population. On the other hand, some of the Bengalis came with the Maharaja of Burdawan and some came from Rangpur and other adjoining district to serve as clerks, in the Railway stations, tea gardens, jute godowns, saw mills and other various activities in Siliguri and adjoining areas. The Marwaris worked as money lenders apart from doing some commercial transactions.²⁸ The exorbitant rate of interest rapidly snow balled the original amount of debt making repayment of the total amount next to impossible. As

debts remained mostly unpaid, the Marwaris started acquiring land near Siliguri railway station in lieu of the sum lent. The land holdings near the Town Station, almost totally belong to the Marwaris who have adopted a policy to sell the land to the Marwaris only after 1947. The land value has increased tremendously. In Khalpara, the Marwari dominated area the land value per *khata* (720 Sq.Feet) was less than Rs.10 in 1920 and after the partition of India in 1947 the land value has raised enormously.²⁹

It may be noted that during this period the Burdwan Road, Station Feeder Road, Hill Cart Road and Hospital-Court Road had stone and brick surface roads. The other parts of the present Corporation area had a sporadic habitation, uninhabited land and jungles. Khalpara with many other areas of Siliguri was covered with water and water-hyacinth for most of the year.³⁰ With this growing population the barter economy of the rural areas of Terai transformed into market economy. Siliguri gradually emerged as the best centre for buying and selling agricultural commodities. A weekly market was opened in Siliguri.³¹ An Assistant Settlement Officer during the first quarter of the 20th century observed that “There is no town properly so called in the Terai.” He further stated that in comparison of the thinness of the population there were extraordinarily flourishing centres of trade in Terai. *Hats* (local weekly market) were gradually developed in Matigara, Naxalbari, Panighata, Siliguri and Phansidewa. Apart from jute Siliguri was the largest markets for the consumers of essential commodities.³² Though the population of Siliguri till the thirties of the past century had increased gradually but its overall development was not noteworthy, yet till the first decades of the 20th century there was only one single private owned two-storied *pucca* building named “Harihar Kutir” owned by a lawyer and *jotedar* Harasundar Majumdar³³ on the station Feeder Road. Apart from some Government buildings like railway quarter, hospital etc almost all the houses were made out of wood which was easily available and in this earthquake-prone region the practice of making brick houses was restricted by the Colonial Government which proves that Siliguri though had by then a larger population; there had been little improvement in its performance.

Siliguri for the first time in 1931 was declared as IV class town by the Census of India.³⁴ According to the Census Report of 1931, the total number of population in

Siliguri town was 6067 persons among them 4182 males and 1885 were females. Siliguri town covered an area of 3.6 sq. miles and the density of population was 1685 persons per sq. mile and the total number of occupied houses was 1604 in numbers.³⁵ In 1941 it had a population of 10,487 which shows a 73 percent increase over the previous Census of 1931, among 7121 males and 3366 persons were females. With an area of 3.6 square miles, it has a population density of 2913 persons per square mile.³⁶ Among them the total number of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe population was 839 (excluding Nepali tribes) in Siliguri town. Out of these 140 were belong to the Rajbanshis and the three major tribal population of Terai were 14 souls belong to the Santal, 05 were the Mundas and 02 were belong to the Oraon community. Nepali speaking population consisted 856 souls (with 256 persons remain unstated) and out of them 05 were Manger, 39 were Newar, 34 were Tamang, 49 were Gurung and 54 were Sunawar was the prominent.³⁷ The following table (no 1) will exhibit the real picture:

TABLE NO:1
POPULATION OF SILIGURI TOWN IN 1941

Details of the race, caste and tribes of the population of Siliguri Town.

Muslims		1961
Scheduled Castes		839
Menials	523	
Rajbanshis	140	
Others	150	
Sandals (Tribes)	14	
Meches (Tribes)	0	
Oraons (Tribes)	2	
Mundas (Tribes)	35	
Christians (Tribes)	0	
Others (Tribes)	5	
Plains Hindus (Other than Scheduled Castes)		6758
Bengalis	3302	
Marwaris	303	
Punjabis	114	
Hindi-speaking	2968	
Others	71	
Nepalis		856
Rai	31	
Sherpa	3	
Chettri	200	

Sanyasi	0	
Brahman	46	
Bhujel	1	
Yogi	3	
Christians	1	
Others	9	
Caste unstated	256	
Manger (Tribes)	65	
Newar (Tribes)	39	
Tamang (Tribes)	34	
Damai (Tribes)	6	
Gurung (Tribes)	49	
Limbu (Tribes)	18	
Kami (Tribes)	20	
Sunawar (Tribes)	54	
Yakha (Tribes)	0	
Sarki (Tribes)	8	
Gharti (Tribes)	0	
Others (Tribes)	13	
Other Hillmen		12
Bhutia and Tibetan	10	
Lepcha Buddhist	2	
Bhutia Christian	0	
Lepcha Christian	0	
Others	0	
Indian Christians		42
British		4
Total		10487

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, A. J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.86.]

This urban expansion has taken place in spite of unhealthy and insanitary conditions and has no doubt been due to Siliguri's increasing importance as a focus of communications. The town's population is just under 12 per cent of the population of the Sub-division.³⁸ In March 1938 Union Board was formed for replace the Sanitary Committee. The first President of this board was lawyer Laksminarayan Majumdar. He was followed by George Mahbert. Till 1949 George Mahbert was the President of this board.³⁹ It was the only Union Board in the Darjeeling district and has the usual nine members of whom six were Hindus and three were belong to the Muslims. The Board spends about Rs. 1,400 on Chaukidars and establishment and for other purposes raised

Rs. 5,400 in taxation and received grants of about Rs. 1,600 in 1940-41. The following table (no : 2) will exhibit the main items of expenditure for the year 1940-41:

TABLE NO :2
EXPENDITURE OF THE UNION BOARD OF SILIGURI IN 1940-41

Item	Rs.
Roads	350
Drainage	325
Conservancy	4500
Sanitation	540
Schools	400
Dispensaries	200
Miscellaneous	1300

[Source: *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*, A. J. Dash, Government Press, Alipore, Calcutta, 1947, p.245.]

A.J Dash observed that though Siliguri from the late thirties of the 20th century witnessed rapid urbanization but the drainage and water supply were quite inadequate.⁴⁰ Most probably it's haphazard and without having proper direction are the main reasons for these defects.⁴¹ In 1938 the conservancy of the Siliguri *bazar* area was handed over to the Union Board for which a contribution of Rs. 2,000 was made by the D.I.F.⁴²

SILIGURI: MUNICIPALITY TO CORPORATION

The Siliguri Municipality was established on 24th May, 1949 as per the Gazette Notification of the Government of West Bengal dated 29th April 1949 under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932. Initially, it was located in an abandoned small tin roofed single storied house of Mohammad Khudabox on the Hill Cart Road, opposite of the present Meghdoot Cinema Hall. The first Chairman of the Municipality was appointed by the Government. In those days the S.D.O by virtue of the post used to be the Chairman of the Municipality. Accordingly the first Chairman was the then S.D.O of Siliguri Sachindra Mohan Guha and the Vice-Chairman was Briendra Nath Roy Sarkar. Besides the above

the other State Government nominated Commissioners were Abanindranath Bhattacharjee, Pradut Kumar Basu, Bimal Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Digendranath Roy Sarkar, Manturam Agarwala, Bindheawari Misra, Rampada Chattopadhaya, Dr. Khirodh Nath Chattopadhay, Dr. Gopal Chandra Ghosh and George Mahbert. According to the rules of that day three-fourth of the Commissioners were elected and the rest one-fourth were appointed by the Deputy Commissioner. The Chairman used to be a Government servant, but this procedure was abolished in 1956.⁴³ On 26th October 1952, the then Governor of West Bengal, Harendra Kumar Mukhopadhaya laid the foundation stone of the “Poura Bhawan” at its present location near Siliguri court which was inaugurated by Bireswas Majumdar on 26th January 1960.

The first elected Chairman under the new amendment Act was Jagadish Chandra Bhattacharya. Thereafter, leaving aside administrator Chairman on few occasion, the successive Chairman of the Siliguri Municipality were Jiban Krishna Dutta, Krishnendra Narayan Choudhury, Swapan Kumar Sarkar, Asok Narayan Bhattacharya and Bikash Ghosh. In 1994 with the conversion of Siliguri Municipality to Siliguri Municipal Corporation (S.M.C), the nomenclature of Chairmen changed to Mayor. The Siliguri Municipality started with 8 wards and gradually increased to 19 in 1964, 30 in late 80s of the past century and finally 47 in 1994 when it was elevated to the status of a Corporation.⁴⁴ It had no Standing Committee function in the decades of 1950s and 1960s. The administrative set up of the Municipality comprised of five departments namely General Administration, Collection, License, Public Works and Sanitation and Public Health.⁴⁵

Till the early 70s of the past century the main responsibility of the Municipality was to clean the road, providing electric light, sanitation and others various reforms. In December 1974 Krishnendu Narayan Chaudhuri was elected as the Chairman of the Municipality. In this period due to enormous growth of population in Siliguri Municipality various steps were taken by the Municipality. Rehabilitating the Harijans at Ashrampara, constructing roads, supplying water, providing sanitation, lightening the main roads, watering the roads in summer was done during this period. The major development plans which were taken during this period are as follows:

- i) Proper town planning and water sewage system, to include Shaktigarh, Dabgram, New Jalpaiguri, Hyderpara, Ghogomali and some other adjoining areas of Darjeeling district but administratively belong to Jalpaiguri district came under Siliguri Municipality.
- ii) To set up a Central Bus terminus in the vacant land of Burma Shell, Caltex and Standard Vaccam Oil Company on the southern side of the Town Station.
- iii) To set up markets at Pradhan Nagar, Rabindra Nagar, Babupara and also at Road Station
- iv) To build up a stadium at Tilak Maidan which was at that time was owned by the Defence Department and a proposal was adapted to made a fly-over near *kachari* road.

Under the Chairmanship of Swapan Kumar Sarkar the foundation stone of the Kanchanjunga Krirangan was laid in place of Tilak Maidan and consequently some development plans was taken like to reform the roads adjoining the Maidan, to construct a second rail gate beside Town Station and prepare the connecting roads and broadened Kachari road, Station Feeder Road, Burdwan Road, Bidhan Road and Sevok Road. The plan to bifurcate the only broad road of the city i.e Hill Cart Road, from Road Station to Howrah Petrol Pump near hotel Air view was undertaken during this period. The road was decorated by sodium vapour lamps and tube lights and foot path was constructed. Vapour Lamp was also used in adjoining roads of the Municipality and on Bidhan Road, Haren Mukherjee Road, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Road, Station Feeder Road and Sevok Road. Some parks, libraries, markets, community halls were established by the Municipality.

In 1982 a plan was approved to construct an Electric Crematorium and to beatify the Kiran Chandra Shamshan Ghat. Under the tenure of Ashok Narayan Bhattacharjee beautification works of the main roads were done, community toilets were constructed and few bridges were built. Adult education centres were set up in various colonies and various literacy educational plans were undertaken. In the Assembly Election on 20th May 1991 Ashok Bhattacharjee was elected an MLA and became the Municipal Affairs

and Urban Development Minister of West Bengal. In his place Bikash Ghosh became the Chairman of the Municipality. Though, in this mean time the West Bengal Assembly on 12th May 1990 officially announced to give Municipal Corporation status to Siliguri in place of Municipality. In the first election of S.M.C on 15th May 1994, the “Left Front” won the election and Bikash Ghosh was elected as the first Mayor of the S.M.C.⁴⁶

One of the major factors of this transformation of Siliguri is the Sino-Indian War of 1962. As a result of this to provide security of North-East India, a different outlook towards Siliguri had developed by the than Central Government of India. For the national security a number of Military Offices and Divisions were setup. Along with this a number of Military a number of Military stations and Camps for soldiers of the Indian Army, Air Force, B.S.F and S.S.B were established in this region. In connection with this a number of development programmes and economic assistance were provided which helped in the development of this area. Further, the partition of India in 1947 disconnected North-East India from Northern India similarly the central part of Bengal (West Bengal) was separated from northern part of Bengal. In order to solve this problem the than Government of India had set up the Assam Railway Link Project in November, 1947 as a result of which North Station was established in Siliguri which popularly known as Siliguri Junction. In later period with the formation of New Jalpaiguri railway station in 1964 the importance of Siliguri further increased. Moreover, due to partition of India the geographical importance of Siliguri increased because it became a central place of North Bengal with Balurghat and Malda in western side and Cooch Behar and Alipurduar in eastern side. But before the partition Siliguri as a commercial town was not that important as was Hili (in West Dinajpur) and Haldibari (in Cooch Behar). Due to partition the importance of Hili and Haldibari declined because the trade and commerce of these areas was connected with the districts which now formed a part of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), while the commercial vacuum was filled by Siliguri which emerged as a centre of trade and transport activities.⁴⁷ Thus it can be said that during this period “Siliguri is passing through a process of rapid industrial and urban growth because of the vantage point it enjoys as nerve centre of trade and other communication between the north-eastern states and the rest of West Bengal and Bihar.”⁴⁸ On the other hand the than

Divisional Headquarter of North Bengal Jalpaiguri according to Dr. Chandidas Lahiri, after partition of India, due to reorganization of the boundaries between India and Pakistan, the commercial importance of Jalpaiguri declined and within four decades the commercial importance of Siliguri had largely increased.⁴⁹ But before partition, for fancy goods and large amount of purchase the residence of Siliguri had to go to Jalpaiguri.⁵⁰ Even to by school text books Jalpaiguri was the only nearest options in those days.⁵¹ The devastating flood of Jalpaiguri in October, 1968 further declined the importance of Jalpaiguri for a couple of years while on the other hand trade and commerce was flourishing in Siliguri. In fact, traders migrated from Jalpaiguri to Siliguri to conduct trade because Jalpaiguri became basically a sleepy town as Siliguri was in the pre-Colonial period. According to Dr.C.C Sanyal the flood of 1968 completely washout the hundred years old town Jalpaiguri.⁵² Apart from these after the independence of Burma in 1948 and beginning of the military regime in Burma in 1962 under General Ne Win, a large number of Bengalis migrated to Siliguri with many others part of India⁵³ the Indo-Pak War of 1965, the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, the Anti-Foreigner Movement or “*Bengal Khedao Andholan*” during the late 70s and early 80s of the past century in Assam and North-East India, the communal violence of Bangladesh during the early 90s in 20th century etc helped for the enormous change in the demographic structure of Siliguri town and persuaded rapid urbanization in Siliguri. Actually in the post-partition period of India in 1947 the rapid growth of commercialization in Siliguri is the development of the town as an important traffic and transportation function of North Bengal as well as North-East India. Not only does all road traffic to and from Assam and from frontier areas pass through the town but it is also a major rail road terminus in North Eastern India⁵⁴. Further after the building up of Farakka Barage in 1971, train communication became an uninterrupted feature between Siliguri and Calcutta. It may note that New Jalpaiguri became the first railway station in India to have all the three gauges i.e broad, middle and narrow gauge rail lines.⁵⁵

Due to above circumstances in the post-1947 period Siliguri’s population started increasing at a very fast pace beginning with the settlement of thousands of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan following the partition of the country. As a result during 1951-

1961, Siliguri town witnessed a 101.5 per cent population growth. This unprecedented influx to Siliguri town was mainly due to the urbanization process which started taking place prior to Independence and expansion of the territory sector. According to 1961 Census Report Siliguri Municipality covered an area of 4.97 sq. miles and were inhabited by 65,471 persons. Further according to the said Census Report the town had a total number of 464 factories and the establishment of employing about 4814 workers. The principal industries of the town were the rice and flour mills, bakeries, fruit, plywood industry, furniture industry, automobile servicing industry, soap manufacture, sodium silicate manufacture, aluminium utensils manufacture and tea industry. The whole area is rapidly developing into an industrial complex. The growth of the town had started centring round the railway station area with the setting up of godowns and dwelling-cum-commercial establishments. This core of the town has poor accessibility by road and also suffers from bad drainage. The open space in the west and south has rapidly been filled up by large-scale industries like rice-mills, saw mills and setting up of houses for industrial workers. The others areas were mainly residential with a few office buildings interwoven in between the residential houses.⁵⁶

After the construction of the pipelines by the Burma Oil Company in Siliguri town wake came a demand for better housing and the company paid local landlords to built brick and cement houses with modern sanitary fittings. Till then Siliguri did not know of septic tank.⁵⁷ Further for rehabilitation of these refuges the then State Government had sanctioned Rs. 1,50,000 to the Siliguri Municipality to construct new roads, make sanitary arrangements and arrange water supply in the refugee concentrations within the municipal limits. In addition the Refuge Rehabilitation Department opened a market on a three acres plot of land at an expense of more than Rs.10,000,00 for the benefit of about 800 refugee traders and named after the then Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy as Bidhan Market. Half of the eight refugee colonies were within Siliguri Municipality and the persons staying there were mostly employed in urban occupations pertaining to the tertiary sector of the economy.⁵⁸

But apart from this it was late realization on the part of the Siliguri Municipality to envision a development plan in the context of the fast pace of urbanization of Siliguri

town. The obvious result was the unplanned, haphazard growth with its bearing on the public and utility services. Though, it was after fifteen years of the establishment of the Siliguri Municipality that on 13th June 1964 Siliguri Planning Organization was established under the Development and Planning Department of the Government of West Bengal. For the purpose of future land use pattern of Siliguri, the S.P.O prepared an Interim Development Plan for Siliguri in 1965. This plan also sought to provide a futuristic mapping of the Environmental Impact assessment of the town.

Later on 1967, the S.P.O prepared a Comprehensive Development Plan of the town. However, in due course, it was rightly felt that SPO was unable to deal effectively the manifold urban problems facing Siliguri primarily due to two reasons, in the first place, the SPO was recommending authority and not an implementing authority and secondly, the area of the town was not confined to administrative jurisdiction of Siliguri Sub-division as urbanization process resulted in its expansion to the neighbouring Jalpaiguri district. Thus on 1st April 1980 Siliguri –Jalpaiguri Development Authority was established under the West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act of 1979. The earlier S.P.O got subsumed into this newly formed S.J.D.A. The S.J.D.A prepared an Outline Development Plan in 1986 for 260 sq.km of the S.J.D.A area which included the whole of 15.5 sq.km of Siliguri Municipality. This plan got the approval of the State Government in 1992. Further in 1994 Siliguri Municipal Corporation and S.J.D.A jointly planed out an “Approach Paper” on urban development of Siliguri.⁵⁹

But the most interesting aspect regarding this spectacular urban population growth of Siliguri is that there has been no support of any type of large scale industries. There is practically no big industry in and around in Siliguri which could be ascribed as the main reason for the high growth as in the case of Durgapur or Kalyani or Haldia. At least on the surface it appears that this growth does not have any production base. This is primarily an out an out commercial centre which cater the growing need of the neighbouring states or countries like Bhutan, Nepal and the North East India. Actually, Siliguri acted as a pull in population movement. This induced migration from rural areas of Siliguri and some adjoining areas of Jalpaiguri. A large percentage of workers are

engaged in non-agricultural activities. Moreover, in comparison between Kalyani and Siliguri it is interesting to note that both the towns are quite different in character. Kalyani is a service town and created in 1950 with a deliberate policy for attracting immigration from the congested Metropolitan Calcutta. In contrary, Siliguri had developed marketing and distribution centre for North Bengal region, lower Assam, North Bihar, Sikkim and Bhutan. Variations in productivity and economic structure in these two towns had resulted in different urban growth rates in these two areas and nature and extent of their impact on the social and economic structures have been quite different.⁶⁰ Durgapur and Kalyani was mainly industrial town and Siliguri a commercial town rather called it a commercial centre and for this reasons on the basis of 1961 Census data Siliguri has been functionally classified as trade and transport town with accentuation of trading in 1971.⁶¹ During the period 1955-1956 to 1964-1965 the number of Limited Companies increased from 37 to 63 in Siliguri. The number of wholesale establishment increased at the same period from 448 to 881. This also helped for the growth of commercial taxes from Siliguri.⁶² During the period between 1961 and 1971, Siliguri Municipality recorded more than double persons per sq.km as regards to the previous decade. Another interesting thing regarding Municipality is that while the urban areas of the three hill sub-division the women compose 44.82 per cent of the population it was only 42.41 per cent in the Municipality areas. It was for the reason that most of the immigrants into the urban areas of the hills, except traders from Bihar and Rajasthan, were permanent settlers, where as a great number of immigrants in Siliguri town were traders, skilled or unskilled workers and day laborers who were non-permanent residents.⁶³ Siliguri Municipality with an area of 15.54 km² has 1, 54,378 souls in 1981 i.e an incensement of 56,894 new persons over the decade (1971-1981). This area and population of the town share about 26 per cent of the total urban area and 55 per cent of the total urban population of the district of Darjeeling respectively. The remaining 45 per cent of urban population are shared by other towns of the district.⁶⁴ The following table (No:3) will exhibit the Siliguri Municipality in 1986 at a glance:

TABLE NO:3

WARDWISE POPULATION OF SILIGURI MUNICIPALITY IN 1986

Ward No.	Name of the Councillor	Occupation of Councillor	Area of the Ward	As per 1981 census
1	Dilip Roy	RSP (Party Whole timer)	Diesel Colony, Mahananda Colony, Gurung Basti, Mallaguri etc.	22600
2	Jagadish Bhupal	Businessman	Khalpara, Tumol Para, Jyotinagar, Goalpatty, Karbala Basti etc.	9231
3	Binimoy Moulick	Businessman	Mahanandapara, Sevoke Road (Part)	4966
4	Samarendra Sarkar	Businessman	Mahanandapara (Part), Dangipara, Fakirtola etc.	3885
5	Rajendra Kumar Baidya	Businessman	Sevoke Road, Khudirampally, Seth Sreelal Market, Bidhan Market etc.	3450
6	Jatindra Nath Dutta (Kalubabu)	Service	Asrampara, Panjabipara, Harijan Colony	9484
7	Ujjwal Chowchury	Party Whole Timer (CPI)	Bibekanandapally, Purba Bivekanandapally, Nitampally	9022
8	Bikash Ghosh	Professor	Hakimpara, Palpara, Ghoshpara	5607
9	Dibish Ch. Roy	Advocate	Collegepara, Hakimpara (Part), Lichubagan	5423
10	Birendra Chanda	Librarian	Subhashpally, Rathkhola, Rabindranagar, Netajeepally, Daspara etc.	7132
11	Santi Chakraborty	Service	Subhashpally, Durgadas colony, Subhasnagar Colony, Jyotinagar, kshudiram Colony etc.	7302
12	Nikhil Guha	Teacher	1 no. Dabgram, Aurabinda Pally, Rathkhola (Part)	5812
13	Rabin Pal	Businessman	Bharatnagar, 1 no. Dabgram colony	5096
14	Vijoy De	Service	Bharatnagar (S), Deshbandhupara (Part), Sramik nagar, Prankrishna colony etc.	12700
15	Ramkumar Agarwala	Businessman	Khalpara, Sarbahara Colony etc.	5606
16	Kanailal Joshi	Teacher	2 no. Jyotinagar, Tumul Para, Goyalpally etc.	15128
17	Plaban Basu	Advocate	Milanpally	9382
18	Swapan Kumar Sarkar	Professor & Advocate	Babupara, Panitanki Colony, Laketown	3448
19	Kamakhya Som	Teacher	Deshbandhupara, Himachal	8492

			Sangha, Laketown (Part), Desbandhu Colony	
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[Source: *Siliguri Purabarta*, Biren Chandra (ed), Siliguri Poursabha, Siliguri, 1986, pp.76-78.]

The classification of the wards on the basis of population reveals that population in majority of the wards i.e twelve out of nineteen were below the average population of the wards and it was high in just two wards. It also reveals that the wards laying mainly at the centre were smaller in size as well as in population than those were situated on the periphery of the Municipality. It may note in this connection that the Ward I had covers largest area (about 3.48 km²) because a large portion of it was occupied by railway territory whereas Ward IV had covered only 0.26 km². So there was a wide difference in sizes between the largest and smallest wards. Moreover, it was cleared from the Municipal data that most of the wards i.e Wards XII to Ward XIX were smallest and were located around the centre of the town. The area of the wards was largest towards the north, west and south-east.

According to Census of 1981 the density of population in Siliguri Municipality was 9934 persons per km² which was more than double of the district urban average. In comparison with other Class I towns of West Bengal like Kharagpur (7359 persons per km²) and Burdawan (4582 persons per km²) Siliguri had recorded higher population density. Actually in case of Siliguri's urban areas about 5 times change was recorded in 1951 as compared to 1941. This is due to influx of immigrants from East Pakistan after the partition of India in 1947. Further noticeable took place during 1971-1981 due to immigration from Bangladesh.⁶⁵ This rapid urbanization brought *bustee* culture in Siliguri and the year of 90s of the past century saw 48 recognised official *bustee* in Siliguri. Though the Siliguri Municipality had no *bustee* at least till 1967 as reported by the then Chairman of the Municipality.⁶⁶ The growth of urban population in Siliguri Municipality in the decade 1981-1991 was 46.83 per cent which was noticeable increase but compared to that of the previous decade i.e 1971-1981 it was less than 58.36 per cent. Moreover one important factor was that Debgram in Jalpaiguri district comprising an area of 21.80 sq. km was annexed to the urban area of Siliguri, showing both Debgram and Siliguri as

one unit and later this additional area along with the Municipal area of Siliguri formed into a one single unit named Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994. Though in the time of 1991 Census Debgram had treated as a separate town, showed a striking increase of population of 92.29 per cent which reflects that the people who immigrated from Assam mainly settled down in Debgram area as a result of which Debgram increased so fast in population.⁶⁷ Though, it is also true that 1981 Census proposed “Siliguri however has great growth potential with an almost phenomenal growth of Dabgram on one side, and the growth of Uttar Bagdogra on the other. In between fall North Bengal University and Bagdogra Airport which may vary well serve as link with core city of Siliguri in near future. The Railway colony of New Jalpaiguri is also too near to Siliguri to be left out.”⁶⁸

In considering the community – wise composition of the population of each ward the major community was found in the Municipality can be derived under nine major categories namely Bengalis, Bihari, Marwari, Punjabi, Nepali, Oriya, Tribal, Muslims and others. As per census of 1991 the Bengalis comprises 64.25 per cent of the total inhabitants of the Municipality and the two other important communities were the Biharis (16.25 per cent) and the Marwaris (6.55 per cent). Regarding the specific localities it needs to be mentioned in this connection as a point of further classification that particular forms of *patti*, *colony*, *para*, *bastee* and *nagar* appear in many cases. The meaning between them is not only different other than the fact that at any instances some of them like *colony* and *nagar* generally indicate a newly settled area of the refugees while *bastee* means usually, but not necessarily a slums. In Siliguri the word *para* for a locality mostly stands for a locality developed earlier, quite often indicating the type of people living in. Such as Babupara means locality inhabited by gentlemen, Hakimpara means locality inhabited by the administrator, which actually even now true as the office and residential quarters of S.D.O and other administrators is situated in that locality. All of them together make the old part of the city or the original nucleus around which later development took place giving rise to outward expansion of the Municipality through decades.⁶⁹ Actually after the partition of India in 1947 as a result of migration from East Pakistan by the Bengalis as well as Biharis, Marwaris and many other communities houses were began to built up in the many unsettled parts of the town and the earlier *jotes* were changed into

para, bustee, colony, nagar etc. But the most interesting facts during post- partition urbanization in Siliguri was that it was not supported by any type of large or medium industries as like Durgapur, Kalyani and many other cities of West Bengal. Rather it better to called it as the main centre of trade and commerce and Siliguri emerged as a commercial town and not as an industrial town.

Thus the tremendous growth of Siliguri from a Sanitary Committee (1915) to mere class IV town in 1941 with a population of 10,487 heads and registering an increase of 209.72 per cent in one decade alone between 1941 and 1951 when urban population for West Bengal as a whole increased by only 32.58 per cent in 1961. Between 1941 and 1991, the population of Siliguri rose from a mere 10487 to 216950 which meant an increase of 1015.19 per cent over a period of five decades against 197.68 per cent in the urban population of West Bengal as a whole. In other words it may say that during this period the urban population of West Bengal increased by hardly 3 times while in case of Siliguri it was increased over 20 times which cannot be accounted for without in-migration and also more in the form of massive then slow infiltration.

Conclusion

The growth and expansion of Siliguri police station of Darjeeling Terai is meteorically rise from a sleepy hamlet of few settlers to a second Metropolitan City of West Bengal. Soon it began to be compared with Calcutta and came to be known as the second capital of West Bengal. During the early part of the colonial rule it was basically a halt station for the travellers, traders and British officials to Darjeeling and other parts of the hills and very soon due to rapid urbanization it was transformed into fourth Municipal Corporation of West Bengal. In the third quarter of the 19th century with the expansion of tea, transport and timber in Terai the urbanization began and in the early part of the 20th century it had expanded trade. But in the post-partition period due to reorganization of the political boundary Siliguri was converted into a transit point for the transport and communication in North-East India as well as hill and other district of North Bengal.

After the Chinese aggression of India in 1962, the then Government of India became aware of the strategic importance of Darjeeling along with Siliguri. In later period with the development of education i.e. teaching and medical facilities, Siliguri was

converted into a second important town of West Bengal after its capital, Calcutta. However, this transformation of Siliguri from a sleepy hamlet to a Municipal Corporation occupied a significant place but the strategic and geographical location of the area is more important in this rapid urbanization than any other factors. In 1862 the Colonial Government with the introduction of green imperialism had begun the process of transformation of society, economy in Siliguri and after a century in 1962, the Chinese aggression further transformed the Siliguri politically.

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Contributions of the Muslims for Creative Writings: A Study on North Bengal with Special Reference to Malda (1835- 1947)

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Abstract

The major part of population in few districts of West Bengal especially Malda are the Muslims. In the early phase of colonial period, the Muslims were not able to take the advantage of western education and even they refused to learn English language and as a result of which they lagged behind the Hindus in various types of writing. But the fact is that, they did not lack skills in writing. The number of their writings was relatively small but their contribution to different types of writing was important. They also tried to enhance the writing culture of this region. The present article will focus the historical and literary works of the Muslim writers of North Bengal with special reference to Malda from academic point of view.

Key Words: *Literary, Malda, Muslims, North Bengal, Writing*

Introduction

Among the districts of North Bengal, Malda is such a place where a major part of population is constituted of the Muslims who had given their best to develop the socio-cultural phenomenon among the Muslims along with the Hindus. Yet, the number of written literature about their contribution is inadequate. Although there are few written books available on Bengal Muslims, which is not covered all aspects of their life. The aim of the present paper is to highlight the contribution of the Muslims of the region of Malda district where they wrote different kinds of interesting writings. It will be discussed from the introduction of western education in India to independence because an allegation was imposed on them that they were not competent enough as they refused the western education. But there was considerable consciousness regarding education among

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the Muslims and consequently they came forward for the development of writings. It is necessary to mention here that we would analyse the writings of the Muslims of present North Bengal instead of previous North Bengal and will also try to give description of those areas which was previously the part of present North Bengal as far as possible.

The Rulers of the Sultanate period of Gauda of the then Malda encouraged the writers to write valuable writings¹ on which we all know as a student of history and those who are conscious about history. It was their glorious past. Similarly in the period of our study we find a contribution of an eminent Muslim person who helped a man by providing valuable documents for creation of history writing.² Therefore, we may say that, from the beginning the interest of writing was present among the Muslims. These were the indirect involvement of the Muslims in promotion of writing and at the same time their direct involvement also found to some extent.

Categorically, the writings of the Muslims may be divided into three parts such as history writing, writing of literature and writings related to religious matter.

Historical Works

The awareness and deep interest of the Muslims regarding history writing was present in the twentieth century. According to the desire of the King Bhup Bahadur of Cooch Behar, the responsibility of writing the history of Cooch Behar was taken by the then secretary of the *Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha*, Khan Chowdhury Amanatulla Ahmed.³ *Cooch Beharer Itihas* was his famous writing which was published in 1936.⁴ The book was written on the basis of scientific method of history writing and no such type of books of any other person can claim such achievement like him. It is evident that he had deep interest in writing history. In the first session of the *Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha*, he presented an essay about the ancestors of Cooch Behar royal family⁵ and in the second session, he offered another essay on the ancient language of Cooch Behar.⁶ Apart from this, he concentrated on publishing the history of the past by deciphered different kinds of coinage with the help of other Muslims.⁷

In case of Malda, few important writers have been found whose contribution in writing history is still afresh in the memory of the people. *Riyazu-s-Salatin* of Ghulam

Hussain⁸ of Malda was the first period of the Muslim composition, although it is not within the period of the article yet it is important to mention his name and the composition to express the tendency and pride of history writing by the Muslims in this region.

However, the name of Sayed Ilahi Bakhsh Alhussaini Aungrezabadi is well known who had started to write the famous history book *Khursid-i-Jahannama* (world displaying sun) from 1853 and spent his entire life to complete the work. The book gives the description of ancient Malda and intends to fill the gap which Golam Hussain didn't describe properly.⁹ He had done a lot of research work and used his local experience in writing and that is why his writing became commendable in the history of Gauda.¹⁰

Another important historian of the regional history of Malda is Khan Sahib Abid Ali Khan who became famous for his remarkable historical work on the Medieval Monuments of Malda, *Memoirs of Gauda and Pandua* (originally *Ruins of Gauda and Pandua*)¹¹ published in 1931. Both the books i.e. *Riayazu-s-Salatin* and *Khursid-i-Jahannama* were written in Persian language but Abid Ali wrote his book in English. Though before completion of his book, he wrote a short descriptive book in 1913 titled *Short Notes on the Ancient Monuments of Gauda and Panduah* to provide an idea about these monuments before the forthcoming visit of Excellencies Lord and Lady Carmichael to the district.¹² Mazharul Islam Taru in his book '*Chanpai Nawabganjer Itihas O Oithya*' has mentioned that Mjibur Rahaman of Nawabganj wrote *Andhakup Hatya Rahasya* and for that he became popular.

Literary Works

In the field of literary practice, the Muslims composed various contemporary literature. The Muslim compositions were affronted as '*puthi of battala*'¹³ or low graded books but its significance must not be ignored because it had its own style of composition by which the image of their society, religion and culture is been reflected. To counter this kind of conception about the Muslims and their literary attributions, Abdul Gafur Siddiki wrote an essay titled '*Musalman O Bangasahitya*' (Muslims and Bengali literature) where he had given a series of names of Muslim writers and their writing compositions¹⁴ which was most important in the field of literature particularly in North Bengal. In his

description a details of the sole literary work of Dinajpur *Khaibarar Jangnama* (1284 B.S) by Moulavi Dost Muhammad Chwdhury is been given.¹⁵ There was another important *puthi* literature named, *Jawheral Momenin* written by Munshi Jawhar Ali of Dinajpur.¹⁶ It should be mentioned that ‘*puthi* literature’ of nineteenth century was so popular in Malda especially among the rural educated classes.¹⁷ Akimuddin and Munsir Nasiruddin of Chanpai Nawabganj of the then undivided Malda were two famous writers of ‘*puthi* literature’.¹⁸

Apart from this *puthi literature* there was lots of modern literature too. In connection with this a question may arise, if the Muslims were lagged behind the Hindus in respect of education, then how a number of Muslim writers emerged? The fact is that, some eminent educated Muslims wrote different essays in different contemporary news papers and delivered speeches in many literary associations through which they have been encouraged the Muslims to bring advanced their community as a whole. Similarly, they didn’t want to remain behind in the field of literary practice through Bengali medium. As a result of this a huge number of literary practices could be seen in the district.

Moulavi Nafaruddin Ahmed was the first Muslim young novelist of Dinajpur, who wrote a historical novel named ‘*Bhagya Lipi*’ based on the events during the reign of Sultan Nasiruddin and Gyasuddin Balban.¹⁹ Ekin Uddin Ahmed was a distinguished lawyer of Dinajpur by profession but he was also a novelist who wrote a novel ‘*Shantiniketan*’ published serially in a contemporary Bengali journal.²⁰ Begum Safura Khatun of Jalpaiguri was also a novelist, who wrote a novel in 1934 named, *Narir Mulya* (value of women).²¹ Besides this, Begum Azijunnesa, first English educated Muslim woman of Tetulia of undivided Jalpaiguri translated the book ‘*The Harmit*’ of Tomas Persele into Bengali in 1884.²² ‘*Pally Gazal*’ (about the sadness of the villagers) and ‘*Chashir Gazal*’ (sad story of farmers) were the two valuable poem books of Dinajpur, wrote by Moulavi Sayed Kochgrami and Moulavi Muhammad Usuf Ali Bhagbi respectively.²³

There are some important name of writers and poets in the Malda district who contributed towards the literary field. The good writings of any Muslim writers and poets

may not be ignored and always be acceptable.²⁴ The authenticity of this statement is seen especially in the case of two persons such as Jahanara Chowdhury of Shibganj Thana of undivided Malda and A.K.S. Nur Muhammad of Gayeshbari area of same district. Both the writer and poet were praised by the great poet Rabindranath Tagore for their works.²⁵ Nur Muhammad loved to write poems and some of his books containing poems were *Banshari*, *Aleya*, *Moslem Veena*. Along with poetry he also wrote a novel named *Dulali*, stories like *Utsab*²⁶ and *Ostad O Shishya*. The last one had got the place in the then popular children magazine among the other most popular writers of Bengal like Kazi Najrul Islam.²⁷ There was another poet of Nawabganj, Sardar Abdul Hamid who also known for his book *Kusum* and *Swapnasudha*. Faijuddin and Abdul Gafur of Nawanganj who became popular for writing novels like *Silsilatub* and *Milanbasor* respectively. Similarly Abdul Karim Mandal of Shibganj became popular for his book *Ashabriksha* and especially for his drama *Jagat Mohini* because he was the second person who wrote the drama after Mir Mosharrif Hossain.²⁸ Khan Sahib Moulabi Abdul Gani of town area, was one of the pioneers of Malda Muslim renaissance who wrote a play named *Najibudoulla*.²⁹ (regarding the conspiracy and desire of power of the British) Mention is to be made of Sardar Abdul Hamid, resident of town area of Maldah, who became popular for his writings.³⁰ Alongside these, many Muslim poets and writers have been found who have kept their names by their short essays and poems in different contemporary periodicals.

Religious Works

There were a lot of religious text books which written by the Muslims of North Bengal. But why they wrote this type of books? The fact is that, the Muhammedans of Bengal believed that their students are gradually becoming fond of Hinduism because the education especially of Bengali literature they received from the school is related to Hindu religion and there were no trace of Islamic ideology and as a result, indifference towards their religion will be expressed.³¹ Probably they deemed it as an aggression of Hindu religion towards Islam. And they thought that to save Muslim culture of Bengal they have to emphasis on Islamic culture along with Arabic language- literature.³² Though, it may not be considered to be the only reason, but it was effective and

significant one. Ekinuddin Ahamed of Dinajpur and Moulavi Abdul Gani of Malda both were emphasised on good learning of their own religion through Urdu and Arabic. Abdul Gani especially wanted to emphasis on Arabic learning through Bengali medium.³³ However, its impact was very clear, if we look at their increased religious literature which were much acceptable to their own society such as-

Wakafnama of Abdul Rahim Bax Peskar of Jalpaiguri,³⁴ *Eslam Tari* by Moulavi Muhammad Usuf Bhagbi,³⁵ *Nabi Amader Uttam Adarsha, Satyer Pracher, Namaz, Kabar Puja* etc. of Moulana Moniruddin Anowari, *Holy Quran on Sectarianism, Musalmaner Tetrish Koti Devota, Koran Probeshikkha* etc. of Muhammad Taimur,³⁶ and *Islam Dharmaniti* of Ekinuddin Ahamed of Dinajpur were important books.³⁷ Similarly, Moulavi Abdul Gani of Malda wrote *Islam Bilap* where he has mentioned that his objective was to improve the Muslim society. The book first published in 1908 and has written in the form of varse.³⁸ Not only that, Abid Ali Khan who was famous for his historical book *Memoirs of Gauda and Pandua*, wrote four religious books namely *Maulud Sariph O Hajrat Charit* (The Holy Birth and the Life of Prophet Muhammad), *Shahadat Nama Va Maharam Parva* (Martyrdom or the Maharam Festival), *Gulsane Hind* (The Garden of India)³⁹ and the last one is *Prayer Book for the Muslims with the Risala-i-Namaz*.⁴⁰ The book was printed along with in both Aabic and English languages. According to the author's description, "there is a large demand for the 'Prayer book for Muslims,' in foreign countries viz., Trinidad, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Hongkong, and Ceylon."⁴¹ A person named Najir Ahmed Chowdhury wrote an essay on 'Bengali Musalmaner Sahitya Sadhana' (Literary pursuit of Bengali Muslims) in a contemporary Bengali periodical *Masik Muhammadi* of 1337 B.S. where he wrote that "we have to awaken self-respect by reading the glorious story of Islam, but we have to be careful that our vision and judgment power should not be covered" and this was so significant to this section.

Other Educational Works

Out of above mentioned categories there was another category where the Muslim writers wrote books for the educational institutions specifically for *Madrashas* to improve their students. As per the Govt. notification of 1925, the books written by the Muslim writers

on the subject Bengali and History will get preference for *Maktab* students.⁴² Here we find the glorious contributions of few Muslims of North Bengal as well as Malda like Usuf Ali Bhagbi of Dinajpur, Khan Sahib Moulavi Abdul Gani, Khan Sahib Abid Ali Khan and Moulavi Muhammad Taimur of Malda district in this regard.

Usuf Ali Bhagbi was very popular name for his novel *Bhagyalipi*. He also wrote few essays for *maktab* students like *Maktab Shishu Sikkha* for class students of primary level for better knowledge in Bengali alphabet. His essays were published in different Bengali periodicals of the time.⁴³ Another important name was Moulavi Muhammad Taimur who was associated with *Malda Moslem Shikkha Samiti* which had the objective to increase the educational atmosphere among the Muslim community. To fulfil this target he wrote a school level book *Gyan Vikash* for the students of fourth and fifth standard⁴⁴ of any community. Moulavi Abdul Gani was the main person who introduced *Malda Moslem Sikkha Smiti*, who wrote *Banga- Arbi Byakaran* in two parts for easy understanding of Arabic through Bengali language.⁴⁵ In the similar way Abid Ali Khan wrote four books out of which two belongs to Mathematics (*Mansanko O Shubhankari Sambalita Dharapat* and *Moukhik Anko*)⁴⁶, the other one Bengali (*Sachitra Bangla Sikkha*)⁴⁷ and the last one on Urdu (*Urdu Primer*)⁴⁸ languages. Though he was an engineer of P.W.D. under British Govt. but he thought deeply for the upliftment of the Muslims and wanted to consolidate the educational foundation of the Muslim students and other students of the society.

Conclusion

After foregoing study and survey it may be summed up that the Muslims were not lagged behind the Hindus in the field of writing history and other literary works. They came forward for the development of writings since the medieval period. But, the proper investigation of their works on micro level has yet not been done from the academic point of view. Perhaps, it is a high time to investigate their works to plug the research gap. It is evident that few eminent Muslim writers wrote their book complying scientific historical method. The tendency to remove the allegation that they were wadding behind the Hindus was seen in different fields, writing is one of them. It is not completely ignored that the Muslims made much of their society dynamic through writing. They tried to

preserve their society, religion and culture by increasing their religious literature, they created the history conscious mentality by writing history and similarly through the different fields of literary practice along with the Hindus they also made the society prosperous. They expanded the path to forward among the Muslim masses by weapons of writing. In this way it is found in deep analysis that their writings played an important role in bringing Muslim renaissance in North Bengal as well as Malda. Alongside it may also be mentioned here that their writings not only encouraged their own community to strengthen their self confidence but also encouraged all to make good interest in writing forever.

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Public Associations in North Bengal from the early years of the 19th Century to Independence

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Abstract

Societies and associations were the harbingers of the new awakening in Bengal among urban middle class. Bengal or India had not known any such societies organised for collective thinking and discussion until the 19th century. The journey of public Associations in Undivided Bengal began with the foundation of Atmiya Sabha, Brahma Samaj led by Raja Rammohan Roy the 'Father of Modern India'. The northern part of colonial Bengal also did not lag behind much in this field. A large number of socio – cultural, religious, political Associations grew up under the patronage of urban middle class, Jotedars, merchants, tea planters and the members of royal family Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri. Professional historians appear to be reluctant to come forward to undertake this task in a concerted and coordinated manner. This is the vacuum that this article seeks to fill in.

Keywords

Associations, Jotedars, Tea Planters, Europeans, Royal family of Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri, Educational Institutions, partition of India.

Introduction

The middle - class nationalist consciousness was strengthened in the sixties and seventies, and its associational base was broadened from the Atmiya Sabha of 1815, through the Bengal British India Society of 1843 and the British Indian Association of 1851 to the Indian Association of 1876. It was flowing through other channels also like the Patriot's Association (1865), the Hindu Mela (1867) and the Students' Association (1875). The Brahma Samaj movement became a potent and living force in this period,

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under the dynamic leadership of Keshab Chandra Sen¹. Professor Binay Sarkar rightly remarks that “these societies and associations were the harbingers of the new awakening in Bengal among urban middle class, because Bengal or India had not known any such societies organised for collective thinking and discussion until the 19th century”. Alexander Duff has remarked that “new societies started up with the utmost rapidity in every part of the native city. There was not an evening in the week or which one, two or more of these were not held and each individual was generally enrolled a member of several”².

In regard to the history of associations in colonial Bengal, Rajat Sanyal’s ‘Voluntary Associations and The Urban Public Life in Bengal’, Professor Nishith Ranjan Ray (ed.) ‘Public Associations in India From The Early Years of The 19th Century To Independence’, Dr. Arun Kumar Chattarjee’s ‘*Unabinsha Shatabdir Sabha Samiti o Bangla Sahitya*’, Manindra Nath Bandhapadhyay and Santosh Kumar Dey’s ‘*Unabinsha Shatabdir Sabha Samiti*’ are need to be cited. The discussion of these books is mainly related with those associations which came up in Calcutta and its adjacent areas. Unfortunately, no serious study as yet has been made regarding the associations of North Bengal during the period of our study. Professional historians appear to be reluctant to come forward to undertake this task in a concerted and coordinated manner. This is the vacuum that this article seeks to fill in. We shall discuss the growth and development of Sabha – Samitis of undivided North Bengal in different dimensions like socio – cultural, economic, religious and communal or politico.

Socio – cultural Associations

The first Association of colonial North Bengal was the *Desha Hitaishani Sabha* Cooch Behar established in 1859 under the tutelage of Cooch Behar royal family. Eventually in 1864 it took the shape as Cooch Behar Hitaishani Sabha. A few British High Officials such as Colonel J.C. Haughton, H. Beveridge contributed a large behind its establishment. Its members were asked to repay their social debt by participating in welfare activities on behalf of the Cooch Behar royal state³.

The Rajshahi Association was established on 21st July 1872. The fundamental objective was (a) to provide education, (b) to promote the cultivation of arts and science,

(c) to assist in the development of healthy public opinion, (d) to promote sanitation and public health and some other objects of an altruistic nature. The president was Raja Pratiba Nath Ray of Dighapatia and the Secretary was Babu Saral Kumar Ghosh, M.A.⁴.

The *Samaj Sanskarini Sabha* was established in 1875 under the encouragement of both Nepali and Bengali intellectuals of contemporary Darjeeling hill⁵. The *Nabya Ekta Sabha* and the *Himadri Harisabha* both came up in Darjeeling hill in 1876 to unite the Bengali people and uplift the cause of social welfare⁶.

The *Dinajpur Bhatpara Unnati Sadhani Sabha* established in 1878 contributed much on education and scholarships were offered to needy students. '*Suhriday*', a yearly magazine written in Bengali was the mouthpiece of the organisation⁷. In the same year, Maharaja Girijanath Ray laid down a literary Association *Pancha Ratna*. The real spirit behind it was Pandit Mahesh Chandra Tarka Churamani. The *Nitya Dharma Badhani Sabha* came up in Dinajpur district in 1860 under the leadership of Babu Girish Chandra Chakrabarty M.A. and Pandit Amarnath Bhattacharya⁸. This was undertaken by a number of individuals like Zaminder Radha Govinda Ray and Maharaja Girijanath Ray. The *Bidhayani Sabha* of Calcutta opened its branch in Dinajpur district in 1904 with the aim of promoting science and technical education. Maharaja Girijanath Ray was its first President. The former established in 1913 the *Dinajpur Natya Samiti*. All the leading personalities of this cultural Association were Brahmins like Nishikanta Ray Chaudhuri, Girija Mahan Niyogi, Kshitish Chandra Ray Chaudhuri. The Bengali Poet Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay and Tarashankar Bandopadhyay made regular visit there. Later it took the shape of Raiganj Institute in 1934⁹.

The Debating Club of Darjeeling established in the year 1884 was a popular cultural association of Darjeeling hill. At initial stage its members were stands only in fifty. The members of the royal families of Cooch Behar and Burdwan were its chief patroniser. Through the munificence of tea industrialist Bipra Das Pal Chaudhury and the then Maharajadhiraja of Burdwan it got its own building. It had primarily two fundamental objectives – (a) To improve the social, national and moral condition of the people; (b) To cultivate the power of speech and reason among its members. To promote a bond of cohesion among the local Bengalis, the association organizes festivals like

Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja, *Paela Baisakh* (Bengali Hindu New Year's Day) and dramatic, musical performances at its own auditorium¹⁰.

The Cooch Behar Students Improvement Association came up in 1886 with the initiative of the students of Jenkins School. Its main aim was to resurrect the cultural consciousness and nationalism among the youth society of Cooch Behar State. Dewan Kalika Das Dutta Ray Bahadur, Head Pandit Mukunda Dayal Basu had a massive contribution behind its prosperity.

The *Suniti Sancharini Sabha* established on 8th January 1895 was a landmark in the women history of Cooch Behar State. This day was observed as the death anniversary of Keshab Chandra Sen by the Cooch Behar Nababidhan Brahma Samaj. However, all the members of the '*Suniti Sancharini Sabha*' were Brahmas and their main aim was to improve the living condition of women¹¹.

The *Gurkha Samiti* established in 1906 was a welfare organisation of contemporary Darjeeling hill. It worked as a cultural and literary forum to promote the socio – economic and cultural interests of local Nepali people¹².

The birth of *Rangpur Sahitya Parishad* in 1906 ushered an era of golden age in the cultural history of undivided North Bengal. Under its corroboration the *Uttarbanga Sahitya Sammelan* (North Bengal Literary Conference) was organised in Rangpur in 1908. Most of its members were prominent literary personages of contemporary North Bengal such as Raja Jagadindra Deb Raikat, pleader Umagati Ray, Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma. It did not last long and continued for twenty years only. It is worthwhile mentioning here that the foundation of *Kamrup Anusandhan Samiti* was the immediate effect of literary pursuits of *Uttarbanga Sahitya Sammelan*. Its chief objective was to explore the unexcavated facts of regional history of contemporary North Bengal¹³.

The *Rajbansi Kshatriya Samiti*, founded in 1910, looked only to government patronage for the upliftment of social status of their castes. It also sought to mobilize the masses. The Kshatriyas were only eligible for membership of the Association. In its fourth annual conference in 1913, it was decided that *Mandali Samitis* would be set up in every village to reach the common people. By 1918 a highly developed network of

village organizations was operating under the *Kshatriya Samiti*. These Samitis were supposed to function as village governments and courts of arbitration, they would spread education and preach ritual reforms and also function as co – operative societies for the economic improvement of the Rajbansi villagers¹⁴. The *Rajbansi Kshatriya Samiti* offered scholarships for the education of the poor Rajbansi students. With these students, a Kshatriya Chhatra Samiti was formed and its members were asked to repay their social debt by participating in welfare activities to help the poor members of the community¹⁵.

The National Education Council of Malda was founded in 1907. The prime object was to spread National Education like other districts of Undivided Bengal. The most notable reformers attached with the Association were Prankrishna Bhaduri, Bipin Behari Ghosh, Radesh Chandra Seth, Md. Nur Baksh, Rajendra Narayan Chaudhuri and Professor Binay Sarkar of Calcutta University. It worked as a cultural and literary forum by organizing popular lectures, symposia, seminars and tried their best to foster the spirit of female education. It also published periodicals for the new – literates¹⁶.

The Bengali Association of Darjeeling hill was established in 1908 on land leased out by the Maharaja of Burdwan at Dowhill Road. The Bengali tea planters extended their hands to other Bengali intellectuals in setting up this cultural institution probably to pursue their cultural interests and social interactions. Through the munificence of S.B. Dey the Association got its building in 1930. The latter was named Raj Rajeswari Hall after the name of the wife of S.B. Dey. With the same object the Bengali Association of Darjeeling came up in Darjeeling hill in 1930¹⁷.

The *Cooch Behar Sahitya Sabha* came up in 1915 (B.S. 1322) indubitably ushered an era of golden age in the history of literary pursuits of Cooch Behar district. Maharaja Jitendra Narayan, Princess Indira Devi, Prince Victor Nityendra Narayan and Amanatullah Ahmed played an important role behind its consolidation. It was the brainchild of *Varendra* Research Association which fundamental goal was to promote the research activity pertaining to the unexcavated history, anthropology of the North East region with special reference to Cooch Behar. The mouth piece of the Association ‘Paricharika’ was published under the literary patronage of Nirupama Devi, wife of

Victor Nityendra Narayan. The writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Akshay Kumar Moitra, Mrinalini Devi, Promoth Chaudhury, Suniti Devi were its main attraction¹⁸.

The 'Jalpaiguri District Association' came up under the initiative of tea industrialist Tarini Prasad Ray. A lion share of its members was pleaders. The fundamental aim of this association was to safeguard the interests of its members and assist the financially to fight with their European counterparts¹⁹.

The Debating Club was established at Jalpaiguri town by the tea industrialists Jogesh Chandra Ghosh and Jogodindra Deb Raikot in the year 1917. Its chief aim was to arrange literary discussion and cultural debate on heterogeneous subjects. Primarily it was held at the residence of Jogodindra Raikot where Jogesh Chandra Ghosh discussed on numerous themes in regard to the literary World of the then Calcutta²⁰.

The Hillmen's Association was established in Darjeeling hill in the year 1917. Its main objective was the educational and economical improvement of the hill people, creation of the spirit of co – operation and brotherhood and the protection of their civil rights. R.N. Sinha was the President and Rai Bahadur C. Tendupla, J.S. Lama were the Vice – Presidents. Mr. J.B. Thapa was the Secretary. Swami Bisuddhananada had a close relation with this association²¹.

In 1920 another association with similar objective came up namely Hill people's Social Union. Bahadur Rai, a renowned social reformer of contemporary Darjeeling hill was its founder. The Sherpa Buddhist Association came up in Darjeeling hill in the year 1924. Its prime motto was to foster the religious fraternity among the hill men²². In 1924, the educated Nepali people of Darjeeling hill took the initiative for setting up an association in order to growth and development of Nepali culture. This ceaseless effort was finally culminated in the formation of a cultural association namely the *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan* in 1924²³.

In 1924, the All Bengal student's Union established its first branch at Jalpaiguri town. A good number of brilliant students of contemporary Jalpaiguri town played an important role behind its birth. It is important to be cited here that this union was the revised version of the Student's Union of Jalpaiguri town namely College and Ex –

Students Association which was actually came up in 1915. In contrast, the Muslim students of Jalpaiguri town established an imitate association namely the ‘Muhamadden Student’s Association’. Its radical aim was to provide financial support to the needy brilliant Muslim students and simultaneously foster the spirit of religious fraternity among the Muslim community. ‘Nawjawan’ was the mouthpiece of this association²⁴.

The birth of the *Jalpaiguri Sahitya Samiti* in 1928 was a consecutive attempt of the contemporary intellectual personages of Jalpaiguri town like Umapada Banarjee, Mohini Mohan Ghosh, Jitendra Nath Majumder, Priti Nidhan Ray, Promoth Nath Basu. All members were Bengali Hindus. Its main aim was to propagate Bengali culture among the dwellers of the town. In contrast with this, the elite Muslims of contemporary Jalpaiguri town established their own association namely *Muslim Sahitya Samiti* in 1931. Tajmal Hossain, the renowned educationist of Jalpaiguri town was its president and Maulavi Md. Shukrulla was its Secretary²⁵.

The Young Men’s Association of Jalpaiguri town was established in 1940 to promote sports and culture. In 1954 it became the District Sports Association. Late it came to be known as ‘Jogesh Chandra Memorial Sports Association’ under the patronage of the tea industrialist Birendra Chandra Ghosh.

The *Gorkha Dukha Nivarak Sammelan* was established in Darjeeling hill in 1932 with the limited initial object of disposing of unclaimed dead bodies of indigent people. With the passage of time and increase in the popularity of the organisation, its activities have extended considerably. It has now several branches throughout the district and runs an orphanage, a first aid centre, a gymnasium, a public library and so on. The organisation also undertakes relief activities during natural calamities. An analogous association came up in Darjeeling hill namely NEBULA (Nepali Bhutia Lepcha Association) in 1934. The *Dukha Nivarak Sammelan* was founded at Kalimpong in 1933²⁶.

During the same decade of the twentieth century, the Marwari Sangha was founded at Jalpaiguri town in 1931 to safeguard the interests of the Marwari people of the district both economically and educationally²⁷.

The Alipurduar Sahitya Parishad established in 1941 was the first literary organisation of the Alipurduar sub - division. Tea industrialist Ray Bahadur Bidhu Bhushan Samaddar was the chief patroniser of this association²⁸.

The Pallimangal Sammelan came up at Jalpaiguri town in the year 1943. Its chief founder and patroniser was Prasanna Deb Raikat. The fundamental aim of this association was to uplift the standard of living of rural people²⁹.

The Mahila Samiti of Jalpaiguri town established in 1928 was the first female organisation all over North Bengal. Their goal was not limited to female emancipation only; they also attempted to enrich the literary atmosphere as well. The setting up of *Mahila Pathagar* (female library) in 1945 was indeed a landmark in this direction³⁰. Later the members of *Jalpaiguri Mahila Samiti* formed the *Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti* (Women Self – defence Association) which played an important role during the *Tebhaga* Movement in 1946. The *Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti* of Darjeeling district was established under the leadership of comrade Mira Chattarje. Later it had to set up its branch at Siliguri town in 1950s³¹.

The Darjeeling branch of the All Bengal Women Conference was established in Darjeeling town in 1930 commonly known as Saraj Nalini Dutta Memorial Association. The Sandhani Mahila Samiti of Kurseong was established in Kurseong for the benefit of local women of all communities. It had a prolonged relation with Brahma Samaj of Kurseong³². The Darjeeling branch of the All India Women Conference was established in Darjeeling town in 1947 for the welfare of women, children and destitute. It distributes medicines and nourishing diet to the poor and needy patients, participates in community cooking, feeding the Harijans and entertaining children on occasions of national importance. During the Chinese aggression, the organisation donated woollen garments, magazines, food and first aid to the Jawans. The Bangiya Mahila Samiti was established in Darjeeling town on 23 June 1956. Its membership was restricted to Bengali women only. The Pulungdung Basti Mahila Samiti of Sukhiapokhri was established in 1965. It holds a literary class daily and imparts training in clay – modelling, sewing and knitting besides organizing games for the members and staging cultural functions every year³³.

The Gorkha Ex – Servicemen’s Association was established Darjeeling hill in 1953 to promote and safeguard the socio – cultural, economic and educational interests of retired Gorkha personnel of the Indian Armed Forces. It had two branches at Kalimpong and Siliguri town. They had a strong feeling towards the demand for Gorkhaland³⁴.

The Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Pariganit Jati Sangha (All India Nepali Schedule Castes Association) of Kalimpong started functioning in 1959 to improve the condition of Nepali Schedule caste people in general with special emphasis on their education, employment and economic amelioration.

The Nepali Sahitya Adhayayana Samiti, Kalimpong was established in 1964 with the aim of promoting the cultivation of Nepalese language and literature. The *Nepali Sahitya Parishad*, Darjeeling was also established with the same objective³⁵.

Economic Associations

The year 1877 was a landmark in the tea industry of Darjeeling district. The Indian Tea Association first established its branch in Darjeeling hill namely Darjeeling Planters’ Association to protect the interests of the European tea planters and to raise funds to carry on the business. All superintendents, managers, divisional managers and assistant employed on gardens were its members. Its first President was K. Devenport, Singtom Tea Estate and Vice - President was M.M. Betten, Tukver Tea Estate. All questions relating to the production of tea in Darjeeling hill, employment of labourer were discussed there. Similarly, the Terai Planters’ Association (P.O. Bengdubi) was established to protect the rights and watch the interests of the European tea planters in Terai. Managers and tea planters were only eligible to be a member of the Association. Mr. A. Robertson, Gayaganga Tea Estate was the Chairman cum Secretary and Mr. W.M. Sangster, Simulbari Tea Estate was the Vice – Chairman.

The European Association (Darjeeling Branch) was established on 25th July 1913 to protect the interests and promote the welfare of the Europeans of Darjeeling hill. All Europeans of whatever nationality were eligible for membership. The Association was governed by a Council had its office in Calcutta and of members numbering in all not less than 18 and more than 25. The chairman and Secretary was Mr. C.W. Hodgson and the

Vice – Chairman was Col. G.A. Webb, Takdah Tea Estate. The Association discussed all matters affecting European interests³⁶.

The Duars Planters' Association (DPA) was set up to safeguard the interests of the European tea planters and to take up all matters connected with the tea industry of the region. Mr. A. Johnson, Baradighi Tea Estate was the President and Mr. E.W. Hughes New Glenco Tea Estate was the Vice – President of the Association³⁷. Since 1954 Indianisation in a regular way has proceeded. Ratan Lal Dasgupta in 1969 became the first Indian chairman and though there were one or two European Chairmen after him for several past years the Chairman have been all Indians. The Duars Planter's Association thereupon dissolved itself and became the Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association in 1950. In short the greatest change was the replacement of British planters by Indians³⁸.

As we know that the Divide and Rule Policy of the British Raj always endeavoured to frustrate the Indian planters. Thus the Indian planters suffered a long way and at least, their undaunted will force surpassed the articulated hindrance and got them united with national consolidation. It resulted in the formation of various Associations owned by the Indian planters only during the British – Raj. The Indian Tea Planters' Association (ITPA) took birth at Jalpaiguri town in 1915 under the earnest patronage of several renowned Indian tea planters like Tarini Prasad Ray, Jyotish Chandra Sanyal, Aminur Rahaman, Jogesh Chandra Ghosh, Rai Jay Govinda Guha Bahadur, Rai Bahadur Joy Chandra Saha and several others. In this context, however, it is important to mention here that Sir Rajendra Nath Mukharjee, Kt., Senior Partner of Messrs. Martin, Burn Ltd. Calcutta was the brainchild behind the formation of this Association. Indian Tea Planters' Association (ITPA) was an organisation of Indian section for the growers of tea in North – East India. With the establishment of ITPA as a trade umbrella the Indian planters received a formidable momentum both in terms of bargaining power, group cohesion on the one hand and growth of the Indianised tea industry with rapidity on the other³⁹.

The Terai Indian Planters' Association (TIPA) was established in 1928. It was the result of friction between the Indian members and the old Terai Planters' Association. Therefore, Bijoy Basanta Bose, Tarapada Banarjee (T.P. Banarjee), Saradindu Bose, Jitendra Mohan Dutta, Abdul Bari Khandakar, Ila Pal Choudhury and Kusum Dutta

started an association at first with only eight gardens (Thanjhora T.E., Bijohnagar T.E., Fulbari T.E., Naxalbari T.E., Atal T.E., Ashapur T.E., Domohoni T.E., Chandmoni T.E.) as its members in the year 1928. Its first chairman was Bijoy Basanta Bose, manager of Thanjhora Tea Estate and Vice – Chairman was Mr. K.A. Bari, Nuxalbari Tea Estate. Mr. A.T. Bose of Thanjhora Tea Estate was the Secretary. It was essentially an Association of Tea Garden Managers. They were determined, however, to overcome all the difficulties and to march ahead side by side with British tea planters⁴⁰.

The Dinajpur Landholders' Association was established in the year 1905. The main objective of this association (a) was to establish good feeling among landholders and between the landholders and tenants (b) to lay before Government suggestions regarding relations of landholders and tenants (c) improvement of agriculture. Any person, who has attained the age of 21 years and pays land revenue of at least Rs. 1,000 a year direct to the Government, may be a member of the Association. Its first president was Maharaja Jagadish Nath Ray of Dinajpur, vice – Presidents were Saradindu Narayan Ray, M.A. and Kshitish Chandra Ray Chaudhury. The Secretaries were Babu Krishna Nath Sen and Babu Gopal Chandra Banarjee.

The North Bengal Zamindars' Association (formerly known as Rangpur Zamindars' Association') came up in 1907 at Rangpur. This Association was comprised with the native Zamindars of Malda, Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri districts of undivided North Bengal. It got its recognition from the British Government in the year 1917. The first President was the Nafar Chandra Pal Chaudhury, the renowned indigo planter and tea industrialist during the British Raj. The Association aims at protecting the legitimate interests of Zamindars and ameliorating the condition of the tenant, compiling annual registers of the produce and exports of food grains, publishing book and periodicals about the management of Zamindari proprietors, placing before the Government the wants of the Zamindars and the tenants and so on. Any Zamindar who pays revenue of at least Rs. 250 annually to the Collectorate, may become a member of the Association. Its first president was Raja Gopal Lal Ray Bahadur of Tajhat and vice – Presidents were Rai Radha Raman Majumdar Bahadur of Dewanbari, Babu Shiba Das

Ray Choudhury and Babu Bhawani Prasanna Lahiri of Naldanga. The Secretary was Babu Surendra Chandra Ray Chaudhury⁴¹.

The Jotedar's Association of Jalpaiguri District established its bedrock under the initiative of Jagadindradev Raikat in the year 1923. All the native Jotedar's both Hindu and Muslim came under one umbrella and the primary object of this association was to fulfil the interests of its members. The off spring of this association also came up at Cooch Behar town with similar goal namely Cooch Behar District Jotedar's Association in the year 1931⁴².

The Dinajpur Merchants' Association was established in 1910 to promote trade in Dinajpur and establish unity among the merchants. Everyone of mercantile profession was eligible for membership. The first President was Seth Giridhari Lal Mundra, vice – President was Babu Tilak Chand Chopra and the Secretary was R.K. Agarwal⁴³.

Religious Associations

The Brahma Samaj founded in Calcutta had to set up its off springs all over North Bengal. The Darjeeling Brahma Samaj was founded on 3 January 1879 on land procured from British Government by Radhanath Ray. In 1878 a prayer hall was constructed⁴⁴. The Brahma Samaj of Cooch Behar was established in 1864 under the encouragement of Ray Bahadur Kalikadas Dutta, Babu Nandalal Madak, Babu Rajani Kanta Ray, Babu Banamali Mitra and so on. When Keshab Chandra Sen arranged the marriage of his minor daughter Suniti Devi with Nripendra Narayan the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, his followers parted the company and formed the Sadharan Brahma Samaj. Both the Naba Bidhan (New Dispension) and the Sadharan Brahma Samaj laid their foundation in Cooch Behar and received patronage from Maharaja Nripendra Narayan. However, the Brahma Samaj emerged as a major religious movement of the middle – class educated Bengalis in Cooch Behar based on the principal of monotheism. The Brahma Samaj of Jalpaiguri was established in 1869 under the tutelage of Chandi Charan Sen who had a close relation with Bipin Chandra Pal. He visited the Jalpaiguri town in 1879. The Brahma temple of Jalpaiguri town was constructed in the year 1901. The Brahma Samaj had a major contribution to foster the socio – cultural spirit of Jalpaiguri town. The Brahma Samaj was founded in Dinajpur under the encouragement of Pandit Bhuban

Mahan Kar in 1867. He brought in some account of radicalism into the movement by attacking caste system, by focusing on widow remarriage and women's rights. The Brahma Samaj established its branch in Maldah town in 1861⁴⁵.

The Young Men's Theistic Association established at Cooch Behar State in 1906 under the initiative of Prince Gajendra Narayan who was the chief propagator of Naba Bidhan Brahma Samaj in Cooch Behar. Its main aim was to improve the condition of the down trodden people of the society. Prince Gajendra Narayan is also famous in the history of Cooch Behar for the establishment of 'Sura Nibarani Sabha' in 1911⁴⁶.

The Darjeeling Branch of the All India Arya Samaj was established in 1883. Its radical aim was to popularise the philosophy of *Vedantic* Hinduism and to promote Nepalese language and culture. It also published a monthly magazine namely '*Janadoot*'⁴⁷. The Arya Samaj opened its branch at Siliguri in 1965 under the leadership of a group of traders like Jawarlal Arya, Ratiram Sharma, Niranjan Lal Arya and Talaram Gid⁴⁸.

The *Cooch Behar Parthana Samaj* was established in 1895 (B.S. 1302) and its main initiator was Umanath Gupta. It worked for the social reformation and women emancipation of the state. The *Arya Nari Samaj* came up in Cooch Behar town in the year 1894 for the welfare of female society of the State. It was established in the household of Brahma Harinarayan Chattapadhyaya⁴⁹. The All India Association of Young Men Naba Bidhan came up on 11th December 1914 in Calcutta under the initiative of Princess Suniti Devi. Its fundamental aim was to bring about a new all – round revival and to recognise the various lines of work (social, educational, philanthropic and devotional)⁵⁰.

The Sherpa Buddhist Association was established in Darjeeling hill in 1924 with the object of prospering the socio – economic condition of the Sherpa Buddhists. In the meantime the Indian Christian Association was formed. Their prime end was to provide social security to the Nepali Christians of the town. Theosophical Society had to set up its first off spring in Kalimpong town under the initiative of Hirendranath Dutta, the then notable pleader and social reformer of Darjeeling hill. A number of educated Nepali people were its member. Among them Matichand Pradhan is deserve to be mentioned. He became the first Sub – Divisional Officer (SDO) throughout the whole Nepali community

of Bengal. The Theosophical Society had no prolonged impact at Siliguri town but it had an immense impact in the civilised society of Jalpaiguri town. This society had its own building there and it was commonly known as *Tatva Bidya Bhawan*. In the year 1928, the conference of All Bengal Theosophical Society was held at Jalpaiguri town⁵¹. The Indian Christian Association, Bengal Buddhist Association, Young Men' s Buddhist Association - all worked with the aim to promote the condition of their each religion respectively⁵².

In 1930s the branches of Ramkrishna Mission (Belurmath) began to set up in various part of North Bengal such as Jalpaiguri, Malda, Kalimpong and Dinajpur. In the year 1923 the Ramkrishna Vedanta Ashram established in Darjeeling hill under the guidance of Swami Abhedananda. In the year 1935 the Gauriya Math also came up in Darjeeling hill. In the meantime the impact of Buddhism grew up rapidly in Darjeeling hill and the birth of Himalayan Buddhist Society was the result of this impact. In the year 1946, the Tsechu Offering Association was established in Kalimpong town with Buddhists from all races as its members. It was an en rapport with the Red sect of Buddhists who follow the Mahayanist philosophy of Tantrism preached by Mahaguru Padma – Sambhava. With this objective, they established a monastery with an attached language school in June 1968 which came to be known as Zang Dog Palri Institute of Tibetology at Kalimpong. However, it was the main meditation centre of all the Buddhist people of Darjeeling hill⁵³.

Political Associations

The Muhamadden Association Rajshahi was established in 1884 under the patronage of Zaminder Ershad Ali Khan Chaudhuri with the aim of (a) promoting education and co – operation among the Muhamadden of the district, (b) to bring the wants and grievances of the Muhamadden community to the notice of the British Government and the overall advancement of the community. Any adult Muhamadden gentleman was eligible to become a member of the Association. Most of its members were Zaminders, Talukdars, pleaders, Mukhters, Jotedars, Pirs (religious heads), merchants and traders. The President was Maulavi Muhammad Haidar Ali, M.A. and the Secretary was Maulavi Muhammad Yakut. The building of the Association was first constructed in 1891 by Mirza Yusuf Ali which was later emerged as the Rajshahi Girls' School. The Anjuman Hemayat Islam of

Rajshahi (1891) by Maulavi Hasan Ali and 'Nur - Ul - Iman' of Rajshahi were established with the object to promote education among the Muhamadden community⁵⁴.

The *Rajshahi Boyalia Dharma Sabha* was an orthodox Association of the Brahmin Hindus. It staunchly condemned the Widow Remarriage Movement of Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and published a book 'Bidhaba Bedan Nishedhak' in 1867 against this social reformation. The 'Hindu Ranjika' was the mouthpiece of the Association. The Rajshahi Dharma Sabha was set up in the year 1888. The advancement of Hindu religion and the creation of brotherhood among the Hindus of the district were its objectives⁵⁵. The 'Rampur Boyalia Dharma Sabha' of Malda town was founded as a branch of the Rampur Boyalia Dharma Sabha of Rajshahi district. The main spirit behind its foundation was Radesh Chandra Seth.

The Bogra National Muhamadden Association was established in 1884 with the aim to safeguard the interests and spread of education among the Muhamadden population of the district. The founder president of the Association was Sayyed Shobhan Chaudhury and the Secretary was Md. Abdul karim.

The Muhamadden Association Rangpur was established in 1887 under the aegis of Central National Muhamadden Association Calcutta. It advocated special measure to spread education, expressed loyalty to the British Raj. The founder President of the Association was Abdul Majid Chaudhuri Zaminder of Mahipur. He also laid the foundation of Islam Mission in the district. The Association financially assisted the Rangpur Madrashah to establish the Students' Hostel⁵⁶.

The Muhamadden Association Malda was founded by a group of elite Muslims of Malda town in 1890. It was the branch of Central National Muhamadden Association, Calcutta. The fundamental object was to improve the social, political and educational condition of the Muhamadden community. Membership was open to all educated Muhamadden. Most of the members were leading pleaders, Mukhtears, landowners, tradesmen and physicians. Business was transacted by an elected committee of 30, mostly resident of English Bazar. Maulavi Muhammad Ismail Chaudhuri was the president and Abdul Aziz Khan was the secretary of the Association. Both were a staunch propagator of pan - Islamic ideology. In the year 1895, Mr. Price the then District Magistrate and

Zamindar Chaudhury Mohayedur Rahaman became its honourable President and working president respectively. Their appeal to the British Government was to appoint only Muslim members in the District Education Department to a large degree. This Association raised the demands for introducing Islamised Bengali language rather than Musalmani Bengali language. The major response of their demand was the formation of 'All Bengal Muslim Literary Association' at Malda town in 1899⁵⁷.

The Malda Association was established in 1887 with the aim to improve the condition of the people of the district in every direction. Membership was open to all adult educated residents of the district. All the office – bearers were Hindus and the association did not represent Muhamadden. Most of the members belonged to the legal profession; others were Zaminders, merchants, physicians and pleaders. Babu Jadu Nandan Chaudhuri, Babu Radhika Lal Satiar was the leading personages of the Association⁵⁸.

The Muhamadden Association Dinajpur was founded in 1904 with the aim to promote the socio – cultural and political condition of Muslim community. Its founder president was Zaminder Eknuddin Ahmed. Most of its members were pleaders and land - holders. During the visit of the British Official Ramfiled Fuller the Association welcomed him with great joy. At initial stage, they supported the Congress and actively participated in Swadeshi Movement. In 1940s the Association was inclined with Muslim League and raised their voices for separate Muslim country⁵⁹.

The Dinajpur Sabha was established in 1886 as a protest against the high revenue demands of the British Government. All the founders in the new Association were the supporters of Indian National Congress. Rakhil Das Sen, Madhab Chandra Chattapadhyay, Parameswar Da, Gopal Chakrabarty, Tarini Sen, Ambika Charan Basu, Jadunath Ray and so on are need to be cited here . They followed the approaches of the 'Bharat Sabha' established by 'Rashtra Guru' Surendra Nath Banarjee. The Dinajpur Sabha later took the shape of Dinajpur Zilla Congress Party in 1890⁶⁰.

The *Anjuman – i – Islamia* of Darjeeling was established on 5th December 1860 and was composed with 225 Muslim residents who had come from the plains. It was the first branch of *Anjuman – i – Islamia* in undivided North Bengal. Advancement of

education, socio - religious regenerations among the Muhamadden of the district and insist loyal sentiments in the youths of the community were some of its radical aims. Its first President was S. Sujauddin and Vice – Presidents were H. Karim Baksh and M. Alam. The first Secretary was Aziz Ahmed⁶¹.

The Muhamadan Association Jalpaiguri came up in 1894 under the leadership of Jotedar Eknuddin Ahmad and tea industrialist Khan Bahadur Rahim Baksh. It strived to develop the notion of pan – Islamic ideology and spirit of education among the Muslim community of the town⁶². This association had a profound relation with the National Muhamadden Association founded by Sayyed Amir Ali in Aligarh. They had a profound relation with the local Rajbanshi Muslims which grew up under the initiative of Sonaula Saheb⁶³.

The *Anjuman – i – Islamia* of Rajshahi was founded in the year 1891. Its fundamental aim was the promotion of loyalty towards the British government and the promotion and protection of the social, political, educational and other rights and interests of the Muhamadden community. The Association was composed of selected members of the Muhamadden community residing in the town and the interior of the district, with an Executive Committee consisting of President, a Secretary, a Joint Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Treasurer and Members⁶⁴. The *Anjuman – i – Islamia* of Jalpaiguri was founded in the year 1892. Respectability was the qualification required for a membership of the Anjuman; the majority of members belonged to the landholding class. Maulavi Mehrajuddin Ahmad was its founder. Tea industrialist Khan Bahadur Musharruf Hossain was the first President and Maulavi Kazi Abdul Khaleque was the Secretary. The *Ahmadiya Association* came up at Jalpaiguri town in 1927. Its main aim was to sow the seed of Islamism among the Hindus as possible⁶⁵.

The Anjuman – i – Islamia of Dinajpur was established in the year 1894 and was composed with 103 Muslim residents of the district. Its main objective was to promote the well – being of the Muhamadden of the Dinajpur district and to ameliorate their educational, social and religious status. Its first President was Maulavi Muhammad Kader Baksh, vice – Presidents were Muhammad Isa, Khorasad Ali Chaudhuri, Maulavi Ainuddin Ahmed. The first Secretary was Maulavi Hasan Ali Ahmed⁶⁶.

The Anjuman – i – Islamia of Malda was founded in 1909 by Abdul Aziz Khan. He was chairman of English Bazar Municipality (1900 – 1912). Its chief ends were to promote the well – being of the Muhamadden of the district. The Anjuman Makhaerul Islam of Malda town was set up in 1900. Hasimuddin Mian, the native Zamindar of Bargharia village was its chief founder. Its main aim was to propagate the morality of Islam and disdain the Hinduism as possible⁶⁷.

The Malda District Association was established in 1906 to resurrect the political consciousness of common people against the British Raj. At initial stage, it was comprised with 55 members and interestingly all were Hindus. The founder President was Radesh Chandra Seth, a pleader cum Congress Party worker. The former had a good relation with the historian Akshay Kumar Maitra.

The Malda District Muslim Youth Association was established in 1925. The chief patroniser was Mubarak Ali Khan, the Constable of Araidanga Police Station. The founder president was Munshi Yaqub Ali, Head Teacher of Araidanga High School and the Secretary was Ahmed Ali Khan. This Association alienated the Muslim youths from mainstream nationalism⁶⁸. In contrast, The ‘Malda District Hindu Youth Association’ was established in 1927. The chief patroniser was Sarju Prasad Behani, the District President of Malda Congress⁶⁹.

The Hitasadhani Sabha established on 19th May 1946 mainly worked to safeguard the interests of the Rajbanshi Hindu – Muslim Jotedars. The important members of the Association were Amanat Ulla Khan Chaudhuri (Dewan of Cooch Behar State), Gajendra Narayan Basuniya, Hefaj Uddin Mian, Hari Barman. Most of the members were Muslims and therefore supported the Muslim league. They protested against the unification of Cooch Behar with independent West Bengal and appealed to merge with East Pakistan. They observed the ‘Direct Action Day’ through *hartal*, protest meetings and demonstrations to explain the meaning of Pakistan⁷⁰.

The Praja Mandal Party was consisted with the Rajbanshi and non – Rajbanshi elite Hindus and generally worked for the welfare of peasant society. The Cooch Behar People’s Association was set up in Calcutta under the leadership of Sudhangshu Bakshi. The leading members of the Association were Ashok Dasgupta, Ramesh Banarjee,

Tarapada Chakrabarty and Pulakesh Dey Sarkar. It raised voices to merge Cooch Behar State with independent West Bengal⁷¹.

By the first half of the twentieth century, a large number of militant organisations came up in various districts of contemporary North Bengal. These associations were known as *Uttarbanga Dal* and worked as an off spring of *Anushilan Samiti*, Calcutta. This militant group *Uttarbanga Dal* was really a sore in the eye of the British Raj. Hence it came to be known as 'Indian Liberating League' in official papers of the British Government.

Other Associations

A large number of people from various part of India went to Calcutta for the sake of employment, better education and better life. Many of them permanently settled there. Despite their stay in Calcutta they could not forgot their birth land. This emotion actually drew them to set up their own association and these were commonly known with the name of their birth land. The *Tripura Hitasadhani Sabha*, *Sri Hatta Sammelani* is few examples in this field. The people of North Bengal lived in Calcutta too established similar Associations. The *Malda Samiti* established by Professor Binoy Sarkar of Calcutta University in 1933, the *Jalpaiguri Samiti* by the then Minister Khagendra Nath Dasgupta and the Dinajpur Samiti are indeed deserved to be mentioned. It is worth while important to mention here that the style of giving name the association with the name of their mother land did not confine in Calcutta only. This style was practised in other districts of undivided Bengal also. The *Rangpur Samiti*, *Manikganj Sammelani*, *Barishal Sammelani* of Jalpaiguri district are need to be cited here⁷².

Conclusion

What need to be focused here through the above discussion is that the Associations of nineteenth and twentieth century's North Bengal gives us a complete picture regarding the socio – cultural, economic, religious and political condition of contemporary period under review. Most of the Associations established by respective communities had the aim to promote their own culture and identity. These associations were remained confined to a small elite group (the so called *bhadralok*) who were the economic and

cultural beneficiaries of colonial rule. Socially, they were Hindus and consolidated their position as landholders, pleaders, physicians. Around the first half of twentieth century, almost all major towns in North Bengal had local *Anjumans* and Central National Muhamadden Association (CNMA) had branches in the districts. A close collaboration between the educated Muslims and the Mullahs was a distinctive feature of these *mofussil Anjumans*. Even a few associations played a key role behind the emergence of communal conflict and finally led to India's partition.

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