



Malldal

GNAMAMI GANGE

Documentation of Ganga from Gomukh to Gangasagar



Report submitted by:

Intangible Cultural Heritage Division

GANGA CULTURAL DOCUMENTATION

MALDA DISTRICT

Intangible Cultural Heritage Documentation

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1. Introduction:

1.1 Background of the Project

Namami Gange Programme, is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved as Flagship Programme' by the Union Government in June 2014 with the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of National River Ganga.

The key achievements under Namami Gange programme are:

- a. **Creating Sewerage Treatment Capacity** : 63 sewerage management projects under implementation in the States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. 12 new sewerage management Projects Launched in these states. Work is under construction for creating Sewerage capacity of 1187.33 (MLD). Hybrid Annuity PPP Model based two projects has been initiated for Jagjeetpur, Haridwar and Ramanna, Varanasi.
- b. **Creating River-Front Development** : 28 River-Front Development projects and 33 Entry level Projects for construction, modernization and renovation of 182 Ghats and 118 crematoria have been initiated.
- c. **River Surface Cleaning** : River Surface cleaning for collection of floating solid waste from the surface of the Ghats and River and its disposal are afoot and pushed into service at 11 locations.
- d. **Bio-Diversity Conservation** : Several Bio-Diversity conservation projects are namely: Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation, Fish and Fishery Conservation in Ganga River, Ganges River Dolphin Conservation Education Programme has been initiated. 5 Bio-Diversity center's at Dehradun, Narora, Allahabad, Varanasi and Barrackpore has been developed for restoration of identified priority species.
- e. **Afforestation** : Forestry interventions for Ganga through Wildlife Institute of India; Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute and Centre for Environment Education has been initiated. Forestry interventions for Ganga have been executed as per the Detailed Project Report prepared by Forest Research Institute, Dehradun for a period of 5 years (2016-2021) at project cost of Rs.2300 Crores. Work has been commenced in 7 districts of Uttarakhand for medicinal plants.

- f. **Public Awareness** : A series of activities such as events, workshops, seminars and conferences and numerous IEC activities were organized to make a strong pitch for public outreach and community participation in the programme. Various awareness activities through rallies, campaigns, exhibitions, *shram daan*, cleanliness drives, competitions, plantation drives and development and distribution of resource materials were organized and for wider publicity the mass mediums such as TV/Radio, print media advertisements, advertorials, featured articles and advertorials were published. Gange Theme song was released widely and played on digital media to enhance the visibility of the programme. NMCG ensured presence at Social Media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.
- g. **Industrial Effluent Monitoring** : The number of Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs) in April, 2019 is 1072. Regulation and enforcement through regular and surprise inspections of GPIs is carried out for compliance verification against stipulated environmental norms. The GPIs are also inspected on annual basis for compliance verification of the pollution norms and process modification, wherever required through third party technical institutes. First round of inspection of GPIs by the third-party technical institutes has been carried out in 2017. Second round of inspection of GPIs has been completed in 2018. Out of 961 GPIs inspected in 2018, 636 are complying, 110 are non-complying and 215 are self-closed. Action has been taken against 110 non-complying GPIs and is issued closure directions under Section 5 of the E (P) Act. Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Stations (OCEMS) connectivity established to CPCB server in 885 out of 1072 GPIs.
- h. **Ganga Gram** : Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) identified 1674 Gram Panchayats situated on the bank of River Ganga in 5 State (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal). Rs. 578 Crores has been released to Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDWS) for construction of toilets in 1674 Gram Panchayats of 5 Ganga Basin States. Out of the targeted 15, 27,105 units, MoDWS has completed construction of 8, 53,397 toilets. Consortium of 7 IITs has been engaged in the preparation of Ganga River basin Plan and 65 villages have been adopted by 13 IITs to develop as model villages. **UNDP** has been engaged as the executing agency for rural sanitation programme and to develop Jharkhand as a model State at an estimated cost of Rs. 127 Crore.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) endeavours to deploy best available knowledge and resources across the world for Ganga rejuvenation. Clean Ganga has been a perennial attraction for many international countries that have expertise in river

rejuvenation. Countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Israel etc. have shown interest in collaborating with India for Ganga rejuvenation. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with various Central Ministries viz.- Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Shipping, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Ayush, Ministry of Petroleum, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation and Ministry of Agriculture for synergizing the Government schemes.

Why we need "Namami Gange" programmes?

- a. River Ganga has significant economic, environmental and cultural value in India.
- b. Rising in the Himalayas and flowing to the Bay of Bengal, the river traverses a course of more than 2,500 km through the plains of north and eastern India.
- c. The Ganga basin - which also extends into parts of Nepal, China and Bangladesh - accounts for 26 per cent of India's landmass.
- d. The Ganga also serves as one of India's holiest rivers whose cultural and spiritual significance transcends the boundaries of the basin.

Aim & Objective of NMCG

The aims and objectives of NMCG are to accomplish the mandate of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) are:

1. To ensure effective abatement of pollution and rejuvenation of the river Ganga by adopting a river basin approach to promote inter-sectoral co-ordination for comprehensive planning and management and
2. To maintain minimum ecological flows in the river Ganga with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development.

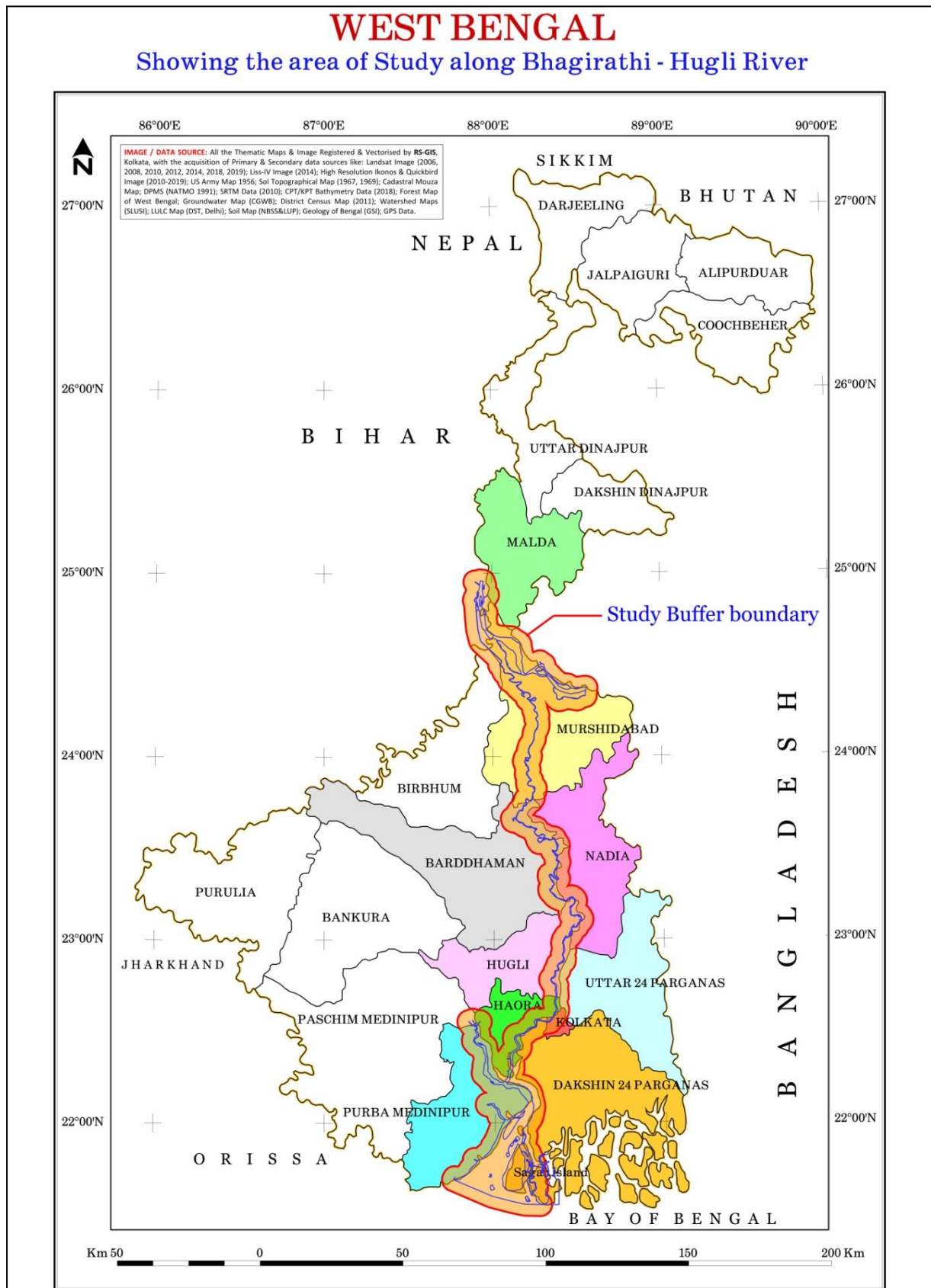
1.2 Ganga Cultural Documentation

India is endowed with rich water resources with approximately 45,000 km long riverine systems criss-cross the length and breadth of the country. The Ganga River basin is the largest of the basins of India with an area of 8,61,452 Sq.km in India, draining into the 11 states of the country, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal. The Ganga River has many tributaries, both in the Himalayan region before it enters the plains at Haridwar and further downstream before its confluence with the Bay of Bengal. The basin has a total drainage length of about 624235.73 Sq.km. The Ganga

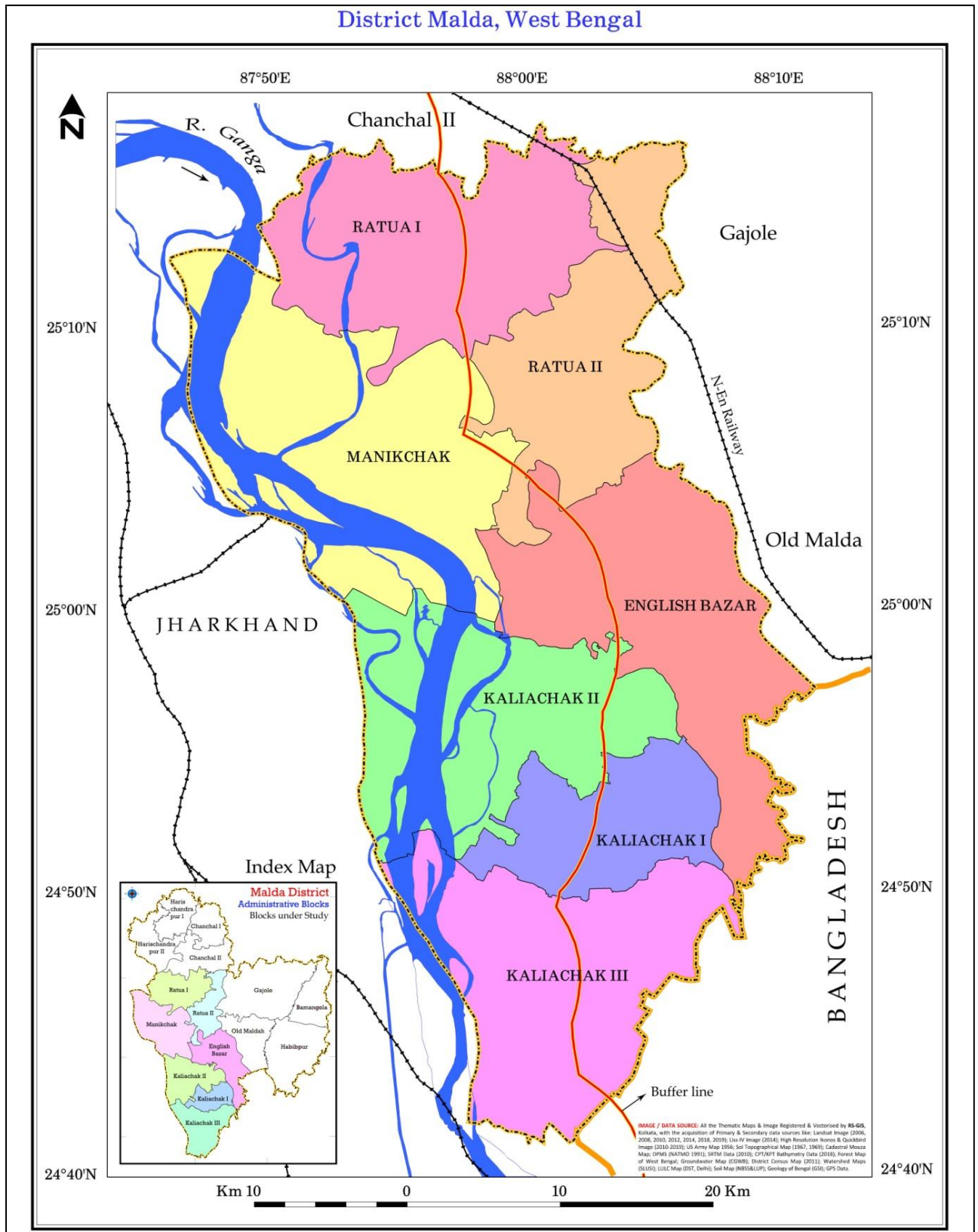
basin lies between east longitudes 73°2' to 89°5' and north latitudes 21°6' to 31°21' having maximum length and width of approx. 1,543 km and 1024 km. The average water resource potential of the basin has been assessed as 5,25,020 million Cubic Meters (MCM).

Sl.	Head Details		Quantitative Information		Remarks	
1.	State Name: West Bengal		-	-		
2.	Geographical Extension of Bhagirathi-Malda		N	E		
			N	E		
3.	Areal coverage in 5km Buffer					
4.	Areal coverage in 10km Buffer					
5.	Total Number of Districts coverage		10			
6.	District wise Police Station & Ward coverage	District		Number of PS/ Wards	Length of Malda River	
		A	Malda	04	88 Km	
		B	Murshidabad	13	520 Km	
		C	Nadia	09	112 Km	
		D	Barddhaman	04	138 Km	
		E	Malda	09	91 Km	
		F	Haora	09	69 Km	
		G	North24 Parganas	09	42 Km	
		H	South 24 Parganas	09	110 Km	
		I	Kolkata	144 Wards	20Km	
		J	Purba Medinipur	06	92 Km	
7.	Total Length of the Bhagirathi-Malda River in the Lower Part		1282 Km.			

Study Area



Map No 1 : West Bengal Map Showing the Location of Malda



Map No 2 : Administrative Divisions, Malda, Study Blocks

2. Malda Through Ages

- 2.1 The district of **Malda**, also pronounced as **Maldah** was once the Capital of Gour or *Gauda* Empire. It lies to the Southern fringe of North Bengal. The district of Malda came into existence under the British informally in 1813, obtained the *Diwani* of the Subah of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from Emperor Shah Imam in 1765. During the intervening period the district had been parceled out between the districts of Dinajpur, Rajshahi (Bangladesh), Murshidabad and Purnea. The newly formed district included in Bhagalpur Division. A treasury was established in 1832 from which the separate existence of the district is usually dated but it was only in 1859 that a Magistrate and collector were placed in charge of the district. The district Malda lies between 25°32'08" North and 24°40'20" North Latitude and in between 88°28'10" East & 87°45'50" East longitude. To the south is Murshidabad district, to the north are Uttar Dinajpur district and Dakshin Dinajpur district, to the east is the international border of 165.5 km. with Bangladesh and to the west is Santhal Paraganas of Jharkhand and Purnea of Bihar. In 1935, the total area of the district was 5146.30 sq.km as per report on the survey and settlement operations. At the time of partition of India, it covered 5100 sq. km, but now the area is 3733 sq. km. Its ranking in respect of area is 11th (eleventh) in the state.
- 2.2 It takes its name from the town of **Malda**, which is situated on the left bank of the Mahananda river at its junction with the Kalindri River, and is about 6.5 km north of English Bazar (Engrezabad). A story is current of an old woman buying up the entire stock of mercury of a merchant who had come to the place to trade and who had been unable to dispose of his goods. Her wealth (mal) was such that she was able to devote all her purchase to cleaning one tank only, called the Parpukur (mercury tank) to this day, and thus to give the place the name of Malda or the place of wealth. Another fanciful derivation is from *Maladahy* a string of deep pools, a feature of the town being the deep depressions left by old water courses.
- 2.3 The district of Malda contains within its limits the sites of Pandua and Gaur, the capital cities of Bengal throughout mediaeval times. The two towns are almost equidistant north and south from English Bazar and on opposite sides of the Mahananda, Gaur being on the western and Pandua on the eastern. They contain some of the most interesting remains now to be found in Bengal.
- 2.4 The early history of both these cities, as of the kingdoms of which they formed part, is very obscure. It is still uncertain which of them is the older. If, however, the claims of Pandua to identity with Paundranagar be admitted, Pandua is the older town, epitomizing as a ruling city the Bengal of early history when the foreign

influences with which it was in contact were from the east and north. Similarly, Gaur stands for Aryan and Buddhistic rule, followed in later times by the Brahminism of the early Middle Ages. Later both cities were for five centuries the centres of Mahomedan rule in the province. Their history is consequently the history of Bengal from the earliest times till the 17th century.



Image No 1 : Ballal Bati is One of the Latest Excavations in Gauda.

Ballal Bati - This is one of the latest excavations in Gauda. Ballal Bati was unearthed only in 2003 and as of now, literature about it is scarce. The name Ballal Bati is what the locals used to describe a large mound in the area. The legend was that under the mound were the remains of Sena dynasty king Ballal Sena's (or *Ballal Sen's*) palace. Excavations did reveal the foundations of a large building, but it is doubtful being the site of a palace. Another theory is that these are the remains of a Buddhist "Vihara" or monastery, which I feel is much more likely.



Image No 2 : Another Recently Unearthed Site, Known As Jahajghata, Literally Meaning Port

A few metres away from Ballal Bati is another recently unearthed site, known as Jahajghata, literally meaning port (Jahaj = ship, Ghata = wharf/quay). These are alleged to be the remains of an ancient port. The Ganges flowed right through this place at one time, and some indications of the old course of the river are still visible. Unfortunately, Jahajghata has been repeatedly vandalised by locals and tourists alike. The tiles that decorated the walls have vanished. Part of an old chain, probably used to tie ships is visible, and locals say several links of it have been stolen. This may well have been the principal port used by the inhabitants of the citadel of Gauda.

2.5 Gaur or Gauda does not appear at any time to have been the name of any considerable tract of country in Bengal. The origin of the name is obscure; several other places in India of historical importance bear the same name. Cunningham in the Archaeological Reports connects the word with gur (molasses) and thinks that the city of Gaur was originally a great sugar mart. The ancient Sanskrit grammarian Paṇini mentioned a city named Gourpura, which is most likely the city of Gour, the ruins of which are still seen in Malda district. Located on the India-Bangladesh border, it was once also one of the most populous cities in the world. The ruins of Gour now stretch on both sides of the international border, and are divided between Malda district and Chapai-Nawabganj district of Rajshahi Division in Bangladesh. The Kotwali Gate, formerly part of Gour's famed citadel, now marks the border checkpoint between the two countries.

2.6 Sasanka who flourished about 606 A.D. was known as the king of Karna-subarna, the riverain tracts of the Padma, as well as king of Gauda. It is not till the time of the Pala kings of Bengal that the history of Gaur in Bengal as a place in contradistinction to its use as a title for kings becomes clearer.

2.7 The fall of the Gupta Empire and the absence of any other empire in its stead led to the political disintegration of northern India and

the rise of a number of independent powers. In Bengal,



Image No 3 : India / Bangladesh: Buddha In The Attitude Of Victory Over Mara Mudra ('Calling The Earth To Witness') Flanked By Two Bodhisattva. Mahayana Tradition, Pala Dynasty, Bengal, 11th Century

two powerful independent kingdoms of Vanga and Gauda were created in the 6th century CE. The Gauda Kingdom comprised of the northern and most of the western parts of Bengal. Here, the imperial Gupta hold was stronger than in Vanga and so the Later Guptas continued to maintain their pre-eminence until the end of the 6th century CE.

2.8 The Pala kings, whose dynasty begins at the end of 8th century of the Christian era, were originally Budhists, nasty though the later members of the family became Hindus under Brahminical influences. Most of the stone-work bearing traces of Buddhistic art to be found in the ruins of the district belongs to their rule. The little that is known of the history of the period is mainly derived from inscriptions on copper and stone of which a number has been found in recent years in the modern district of Malda and its neighbours.



2.9 The Pala Empire was founded in Gauda during the rise of Gopala as king with the approval of an assembly of chieftains. The Pala Emperors carried the title Lord of Gauda. The empire ruled for four centuries (8th -12th Century) and its territory included large parts of northern India. The empire reached its peak under Emperors Dharmapala and Devapala, Nepal. Its territory stretching across parts of modern-day eastern Pakistan. The Pala period saw the development of the Bengali language, script and other aspects of Bengali culture. Indeed, the term Gaudiya (of Gauda) became synonymous with Bengal and Bengalis.

2.10 *Hemanta Sen*, the founder of the Sena dynasty, was part of the Pala Dynasty until it started to debilitate. Hemanta Sen usurped power and styled himself ruler in 1095 AD. His successor Vijay Sen (ruled from 1096 AD to 1159 AD) helped establish the administration's frameworks, and had a surprisingly long rule of more than 60 years. Ballal Sena vanquished Gaur from the Pala, turned into the ruler of the Bengal Delta, and made Nabadwip the capital also. Ballal Sena wedded Ramadevi a Western's princess Chalukya Empire which shows that the Sena rulers



Image No 4 : Coins of Sen Dynasty

kept up close social contact with South India. Lakshman Sen succeeded Ballal Sena in 1179 AD, ruled Bengal for give or take 20 years, and extended the Sena Empire to Assam, Odisha, Bihar and likely to Varanasi. In 1203–1204 AD, the Turkic

general Bakhtiyar Khilji assaulted Nabadwip. Khilji defeated Lakshman Sen and caught northwest Bengal - Albeit Eastern Bengal stayed under Sena control.

2.11. **For a brief period of time Gaur was under Abyssinian rule also.** During 1487-94, the Bengal Sultanate was ruled by a series of kings of African origin. From the beginning of the Muslim rule in northern India, in addition to Turkish slaves, Habshis (Ethiopians) were imported to serve nobles, military commanders and the sultans, primarily as slave soldiers. Some of them rose through the ranks and achieved high positions, becoming commanders, senior officials, nobles, governors and even rulers. In the case of the Bengal Sultanate, several Africans became the rulers, but only for a very brief period. These rulers were most probably



Image No 5 : Firoz Minar

from complex African origins and mixes with a majority being Habshis. Gaur, then a beautiful and large city, and the capital of the Bengal Sultanate, was described by the 16th Century Italian traveller Ludovico Di Varthema as 'the best place in the world, that is, for living in.'



Image No 6 : Ornamental Bricks Used In Buildings In Gaur, Photograph By John Henry Ravenshaw, 1878)

Abyssinian army chief, Firoz Shah, who reigned for 13 years till 1470 built the Firoz minar in Gaur and several mosques. The minar is supposed to have been erected to commemorate the victories of Firoz Shah. As regards its building the story runs that the king's builder boasted to him that he could have made the minar higher if

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2.12 After the death of Firoz there was a further period of usurpation of the throne by intriguers with the royal guards till Hossain Shah established himself in 1494. At the beginning of his reign the troops sacked Gaur as a reward for their assistance to the king, but shortly after this the king found means to disband these guards. A section of them known as Paiks were settled in Midnapore, and their descendants gave trouble there to the English at the end of the 18th century. Hossain Shah ruled for 27 years and completely restored the fortunes of Gaur, so much so that Gaur became a synonym for Bengal and Gauriya for its inhabitants. The increase of wealth in Gaur is said to have made the use of gold and silver vessels on festive occasions quite common.

2.13 It was in the reign of Hossain Shah in the year 1509 that the famous religious reformer Chaitanya Deb became a sunyasi and founded the bairagi cult. This religious movement, which after Kulinism has most profoundly determined the distinctive Hinduism of Bengal, found two prominent adherents in Gaur in the highly placed officers, the brothers Rup and Santan, who left their homes and positions to follow Chaitanya to Brindaban. Chaitanya himself visited Ramkel near Gaur, where Rup and Sanatan lived. The wellknown "bairagi mela" at Ramkel perpetuates their memory.

2.14 Humayun remained for some three months in Gaur enjoying its amenities. He renamed it Jannatabad (the city of Heaven) as he disliked the word Gaur, which resembled in sound the Hindustani word for a grave. In the meantime, Sher Khan had retreated to the south on Humayun's advance and, taking advantage of the latter's inactivity, worked back to Bihar through Chota Nagpur and barred Humayun's communication with Delhi. Humayun was forced to fight and sustained a severe defeat, which enabled Sher Khan to recapture Gaur and make good his rule over Bihar and Bengal. Later, in 1540, Sher Khan again defeated Humayun and made himself Emperor. He appointed Khizir Khan as his Governor in Gaur and on the attempt of Khizir Khan to make himself independent, Sher Khan defeated him and divided Bengal into several provinces to which he appointed his Lieutenants. In the re-organisation of the provinces, Sher Shah introduced the fiscal division of the pargana into Bengal: that in which Gauf lies bears the name Shershabad.

2.15 By 1500, the city of Gour had a population of nearly 200,000, and many historical accounts, primarily by the Portuguese, attest to its preeminent status. The Sultans built a citadel, mosques, a royal palace, canals and bridges, and the city thrived until the collapse of the Bengal Sultanate in the 16th century, when the Mughal Emperor Humayun invaded the region, and renamed the city as Jannatabad. Subsequently attacked by Sher Shah Suri, Gour also fell victim to the plague, and its glory diminished when a change in the course of the Ganges caused the Mughal provincial capital to shift to Dhaka. Today, most of the surviving structures in Gour date back to the Bengal Sultanate. The relics particularly worth seeing are the Bara Sona Mosque aka Baro Duari Mosque, Dakhil Darwaja aka Salami Darwaja (1425), Qadam Rasul Mosque and the ruins of the extensive fortification. The colourful enamelled tiles on the Gumti Darwaza and Firoz Minar also survive to this day. Indeed, legend has it that real gold was used as part of the decorations on Gumti Darwaza.

2.16 Elsewhere in Malda, among the most popular tourist destinations are Adina Mosque, built in 1369 by Sultan Sikander Shah, and still one of the largest mosques in India. It is a typical example of the most developed mosque architecture of the period, the orthodox design based on the 8th century mosque of Damascus. Adina Mosque is 19 km from Malda town railway station. Yet, another fascinating spot is Jagjibanpur, situated about 30 km from Malda town, which is littered with the ruins of a Buddhist monastery (9th century AD), complete with copper plates and inscriptions. The plate contains inscriptions on both sides in the Siddhamartika script, and has a royal seal attached to the top containing the dharmachakra, flanked by two deer and an inscription in Sanskrit reading 'Shri Mahendra Pal Devah'.



Image No 7 : 9th Century AD, Copper Plates Inscriptions

2.17 A pestilence broke out in which thousands died, including Munaim Khan, in 1573. Gaur became depopulated and practically deserted as a result of this pestilence which is generally believed to have been some form of malaria, probably due to the recession of the main stream of the Ganges from the city front. A Mahomedan

his hizrian writes: Thousands died daily; the living was wearied with burying the dead. Corpses of Hindus and Mahomedan were thrown into the swamps, the tanks and into the Bhagirathi.

2.18 The East India Company early established a trade connection with the district, having its factory at Old Malda, where also was a Dutch factory, of which there are still remains. After the dewani or fiscal administration of Bengal had been granted to the Company, a fortified commercial residency was built in 1771 at English Bazar by Mr. George Henschman. This building is now used as District Collectorate. By the end of the 18th century there were a number of European indigo planters in the district, besides the commercial resident and his assistants. Amongst the planters may be mentioned Mr. Creighton of Goamalti, from whose drawings the ruins of Gaur have in recent years been restored. In 1810 Dr. Buchanan Hamilton visited the district and wrote an account of the ruins of Gaur and Pandua, so far as they were accessible.

2.19 Up till 1813 the district formed part of the Purnea and Dinajpur districts, the Mahananda being the boundary, but in the year, in consequence of the prevalence of serious crime in the Kaliachak and Sibgan Jathanas and on the rivers, a Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector was appointed at English Bazar with jurisdiction over a number of police stations centring on that place and taken from the two districts. In 1832 a separate treasury was opened, the following year being that of the discontinuance of the Company's trade. In 1859 a full Magistrate and Collector was appointed. Amongst holders of that office may be mentioned Mr. Ravenshaw, after whom the College in Cuttack is named. His illustrated description of Gaur and Pandua was published in 1878.

2.20 In 1905 the district was transferred from the Bhagalpur division to the Rajshahi division on the formation of the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam. It was formerly a part of the Rajshahi division, but was Unanswered from that division to Bhagalpur in 1876. The district is from 1912 in the Rajshahi division of Bengal.



Image No 8 : Capital Of A Column In The Golden Mosque (Sona Masjid), Gaur

Indian ink and water-colour drawing of a capital of a column in the Golden Mosque (Sona Masjid) at Gaur (West Bengal) by William Francklin (1763-1839) in 1810. Inscribed on the front in ink is: 'Capital of a column at the Soonah Musjid at Gour - drawn on the spot A.D. 1810. Facsimile. The Original in my possession. W.F. Sung Moosah'; and on the back in pencil: '4'. The Great Golden Mosque or Bara Sona Masjid was built by Nusrat Shah about 1526 and is one of the largest buildings still standing in the ruined sultanate capital of Gaur in West Bengal. It comprises eleven entrances with three aisles and a verandah, four polygonal engaged corner towers and a spacious courtyard which is almost seventy metres in diameter. The building is faced in plain black basalt stone. The doors would originally have been framed by mosaics of glazed coloured tiles in floral patterns. This drawing shows carved details on a basalt capital from one of the piers that supported the roof of the mosque.



Image No 9 : Bara Sona Masjid. Artist: Creighton, Henry (c.1767 - 1807) Date: 1817

3. Celebrated Citizens

3.1 Raja Ganesha

Raja Ganesha (Bengali: রাজা গণেশ) was a Hindu ruler of Bengal, who took advantage of the weakness of the first Ilyas Shahi dynasty and seized power in Bengal. Contemporary historians of the medieval period considered him as a usurper. The Ganesha dynasty founded by him ruled over Bengal from 1415-1435. His name mentioned in the coins of his son, sultan Jalaluddin Muhammad Shah as Kans Jha or Kans Shah. The Indo-Persian historians mentioned his name as Raja Kans or Kansi. A number of modern scholars identified him with Danujamardanadeva, but this



Image No 10 : Raja Ganesha

identification is not universally accepted.

3.2 Sanatan Goswami

(1488–1558) was a principal follower of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sanatana wrote a number of important works in the bhakti tradition of Gaudiya Vaishnavism and was the senior most of the influential Six Goswamis of Vrindavan, among whom was his brother Rupa Goswami. He was born in around 1488 CE as the son of Mukunda, the private secretary of the Sultan of Gauda, Jalaluddin Fateh Shah (ruled 1481–1487). Sanatana was the eldest son of Mukunda, and his younger brothers were Rupa and Vallabha (Anupama). There seems to be some controversy amongst biographers about Sanatana Goswami's birthplace. Some opine that he was born in Navahatta (present-day Naihati, West Bengal, India) while others believe that he was born in Bakla Chandradvipa or in Fateyabad Pargana, Jessore, East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Some biographers believe that he was born in Ramakeli in the district of Malda, West Bengal. Sanatana Goswami wrote four important books in Sanskrit on Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy:



Image No 11 : Sri Sanatana Goswami Deity Installed At His Sacred Samadhi, Vrindaban

- a. Brihat-bhagavtamrita ("The Great Nectar of the Lord's Devotees") This work of 2,500 verses is divided into two parts. The first section explains the ontological hierarchy of the devotees of Krishna. The second section deals with the soul's journey to the eternal realm of Krishna. Narrated as stories, both sections explain many aspects of Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy. Sanatana also wrote for this book his own commentary, called the Dig-darshini.
- b. Hari-bhakti-vilasa ("Performance of Devotion to Hari") This book was a joint work between Sanatana Goswami and Gopala Bhatta Goswami. Compiled on the order of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the book deals with the rituals and conduct of Gaudiya Vaisnavas. Sanatana also wrote an auto-commentary on Hari-bhakti Vilasa.
- c. Krishna-lila-stava ("Glorification of the Pastimes of Krishna") Krishna-lila-stava consists of 432 verses tracing Krishna's pastimes as told in the Bhagavata Purana, from the beginning of the 10th Canto up through the vanquishing of Kamsa. Krishna-lila-stava is also sometimes referred to as the Dasama-charita.
- d. Brihad Vaishnava Toshani ("That which brings Great Joy to the Devotees of Krishna") The Brihad Vaishnava Toshani is Sanatana's extensive commentary on the Tenth Canto of the Sanatana Goswami returned to Vrindavan, where he located various lost holy places. He also established the worship of the deity of Madana-mohana. Soon after Sanatana discovered the deity, a rich officer in the Moghul army named Krishna Dasa Kapura built a temple for Madana-mohan. This later became one of the seven principal temples of Vrindavan. The temple is called Radha Madan Mohan Temple. Sanatana Goswami disappeared in the year 1558 CE. His samadhi (tomb) is located next to the Madana-mohana temple. Bhagavata Purana. This commentary is also known as the Dasama-tipanni.

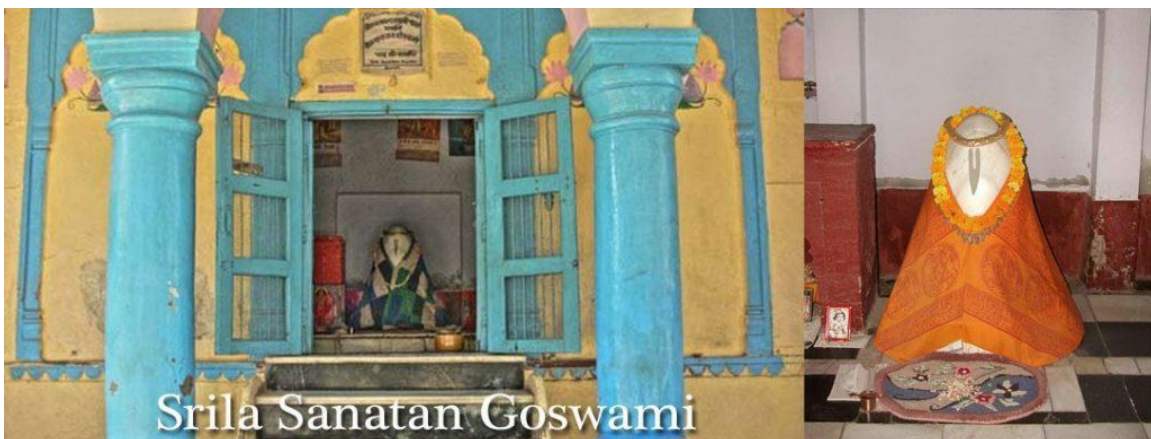


Image No 12 : Samadhi Area

3.3 Rup Goswami

(1489–1564) was a devotional teacher (guru), poet, and philosopher of the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. With his brother Sanatana Goswami, he is considered the most senior of the six Goswamis of Vrindavan associated with Caitanya Mahaprabhu, a hidden avatar (incarnation) of Krishna in Kali Yuga. He was born in around 1489 CE. There seems to be some controversy amongst biographers about Rupa Goswami's birthplace. Some opine that he was born in Naihati, West Bengal while others believe that he was born in Bakla Chandradvipa or in Fateyabad Pargana, Jessore, East Bengal (now



Image No 13 : Rup Goswami Samadhi , Vrindaban

Bangladesh). Some biographers believe that he was born in Ramakeli in the district of Malda, West Bengal. Rupa and his brothers were residents of Ramakeli (in present-day Malda, West Bengal) and it was here, in 1514 CE, that they first met Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The meeting changed their lives. After meeting them, Chaitanya gave them the names Rupa, Sanatana and Anupama. Sanatana advised Mahaprabhu, Dear Lord, you are going to Vrindavana with hundreds and thousands of people following You, and this is not a fitting way to go on a pilgrimage. — Chaitanya Charitamrita 2.1.224.

Rupa and Sanatana remained in Vrindavana for the remainder of their lives. Their mood of renunciation and devotion was exemplary. Rupa uncovered various holy places associated with the pastimes of Krishna and rediscovered the famous deity of Govindadeva, which was originally installed and worshipped by Krishna's great-grandson, Maharaja Vajranabha. Rupa and Sanatana were intimately connected with other Vaishnava saints in Vrindavana such as Lokanatha Goswami, Bhugarbha Goswami, Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami and Raghunatha Dasa Goswami. Shortly after, they were also joined by their nephew Jiva Goswami who was given initiation by Rupa and personally trained by him in the philosophy of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Rupa Goswami departed from this world in 1564 CE and his samadhi (tomb) is located in the courtyard of the Radha-Damodara temple in Vrindavana. In Gaudiya Vaishnava theology, Rupa Goswami is considered to be the incarnation of Rupa Manjuri, the foremost junior cowherd damsel who eternally serves Radha-Krishna under the guidance of Lalita

Rupa Goswami wrote a number of texts in Sanskrit on philosophy, poetics, drama and dramaturgy. The following is a list of some of his most well-known works:

Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu (The Ocean of Nectar of Divine Love): Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu can be considered to be one of the most important books in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. It elaborately describes gradations of bhakti from its lowest stage of sraddha (faith) up to its highest stage of maha-bhava (ultimate ecstasy in love of Godhead).

Ujjvala-nilamani (The Sapphire of Divine Love): This work exclusively explains the conception of madhurya-rasa (divine conjugal love). Ujjvala-nilamani is considered to be a sequel to the Bhakti-rasamṛta-sindhu.

Laghu-bhagavatamṛta (A Summary of Nectar about Godhead): It is a summary of Sanatana Goswami's book Brhat-bhagavatamṛta. It begins by explaining the intrinsic nature of Krishna and his incarnations and subsequently deals with devotees of Krishna.

Vidagdhamadhava (1524) & Lalitamadhava (1529): Rupa originally began to write these two dramas as one in 1516 but he completed them as two separate plays in Vikram Samvat 1581 (1524) and Saka era 1451 (1529) respectively. It is said that Rupa had a vision of Satyabhama, one of Krishna's queens in Dvaraka, who told him to divide the book into two separate dramas. Thus, Lalitamadhava deals with Krishna's pastimes in Dvaraka, and Vidagdhamadhava narrates Krishna's pastimes in Vrindavana.

3.4 Jiva Goswami

Jiva Goswami c. 1513 – c. 1598, was an Indian philosopher and saint from the Gaudiya Vaishnava school of Vedanta tradition, producing a great number of philosophical works on the theology and practice of Bhakti yoga, Vaishnava Vedanta and associated disciplines. He is known as one of the Six Goswamis of Vrindavan and was the nephew of the two leading figures, Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami. After the passing of Rupa and Sanatana, Jiva Goswami became the foremost authority in the Gaudiya Vaishnava line. In 1542 Jiva established one of the prominent and important temples in the Vrindavana area, the Radha Damodara mandir, installing deities of Radha and Krishna that had been personally carved by Rupa Goswami. At that time, he also established the Vishva



Image No 14 : Jiva Goswami Statue , Vrindaban

Vaishnava Raja Sabha (World Vaishnava Association) and the Rupanuga Vidyapitha, an educational facility for Gaudiya Vaishnavas to study the works of Rupa and Sanatana. His erudition and spirituality were so famous that the Moghul emperor Akbar became his ardent admirer and donated paper for his writing.

In 1558, Jiva instructed his students, Narottama Dasa, Srinivasa Acarya and Shyamananda, to go to Bengal and propagate the Gaudiya Vaishnava philosophy and to take with them the original manuscripts that had been written by Rupa and Sanatana.

One of Jiva's main theological contributions was to present Chaitanya's teachings as "the epitome of the Vedas." To do so, Jiva should claim that the Bhagavata Purana, which Chaitanya regarded as the key Hindu scripture, was indeed part of the Vedas, while it was not generally considered as "part of the canonical Veda" at that time. Jiva proceeded to "extend the scope of the Veda to include the epics and the Purānas," and concluded that the Bhagavata Purana was "scripture par excellence". In fact, he shifted "the locus of scriptural authority from the Veda to the Bhāgavata," which had important, if controversial, consequences for the subsequent development of Hindu theology.

3.5 Shibram Chakravorty

Shibram Chakraborty (1903–1980) was a popular Bengali writer and humorist who is best known for his humorous stories. His best known short stories and novels are renowned for their unique use of pun, alliteration, play of words and ironic humour. He was a prolific author who also wrote poems, plays, non-fiction and novels for mature audiences in his long career. Chakrabarty was born into the well-known Chanchal Rajbari (royal house of Chanchal) family, although his ancestral home was in Malda. However, the ancestral seat of the Chakrabarty family was at Choa in Murshidabad District. He was born at his maternal uncle's house at Nayan Chand Dutta Street, Darjipara in Kolkata, the capital of British India. His father was Shibprashad Chakrabarty. A spiritualist by nature, Shibprashad would often speak of the road. Shibram inherited his wanderlust from his father.



Image No 15 : Shibram Chakravorty

In school, he played an active role in the Swadeshi movement (part of the struggle for Indian independence and as a result jailed, which resulted in his inability to sit for the

matriculation exam. Despite not progressing further with his education, Chakrabarty studied on his own and was knowledgeable in a variety of subjects.

He spent most of his life in the second-floor rented accommodation, only consisting of a bedstead & bedsheet at Muktaram Babu Street in Kolkata. He turned its walls into a hand-written calendar, documenting his time there. He never married and was known as a "free spirit" and was generous to his friends. He did not maintain proper records or preserve the manuscripts of some of his works.

His initial foray into literature was as a poet. His first book of poems was called Manush (Man). He worked as a feature writer in daily newspapers and magazines such as Basumati (বসুমতী), Ananda Bazar Patrika (আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা) and Desh [দেশ]. These were tinged with humour and got him noticed in the public eye. Subsequently, he started writing stories and novels.

His writing is noted for use of literary puns as a key story vehicle – speculated to be a first in Bengali literature. He is also noted for his self-deprecating humour. An example of this is the convoluted way in which he would spell his name in Bangla in his stories: শিরাম চকরবরতি (Shee-bram Cho-ko-ro-bo-ro-ty). He would often put himself into his stories amongst fictional characters. The most famous and recurring characters in his stories are the brothers Harshabardhan [হর্ষবর্ধন] and Gobardhan [গোবর্ধন] and his sister Bini. He also created a detective character named Kalke Kashi. Advertisements for his books often bill him as the King of Laughter.

3.6 Chanchal Raj Family

It was the home of **Raja Saratchandra Rai Bahadur**, who built the Chanchal palace. The King was married to Queen Dakshyani. One part of the palace was transformed into a government college in 1969. The other part of the Palace is now Chanchal Subdivisional Court. Victor Banerjee is an Indian actor who appears in English, Hindi, Bengali and Assamese language films, was born in a Zamindari Bengali Hindu family. He is a descendant of the Raja Bahadur of Chanchal (Malda District) and the Raja of Uttarpara.

He has worked for directors such as Roman Polanski, James Ivory, Sir David Lean, Jerry London, Ronald Neame, Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Montazur Rahman



Image No 16 : Victor Banerjee

Akbar and Ram Gopal Varma. He won the National film award for best supporting actor for the film Ghare Baire.

3.7 Benoy Kumar Sarkar

(1887–1949) was an Indian social scientist, professor, and nationalist. He founded several institutes in Calcutta, including the Bengali Institute of Sociology, Bengali Asia Academy, Bengali Dante Society, and Bengali Institute of American Culture. Binoy Kumar Sarkar was born in Malda Town, in Bengal Presidency. He started his early education in Malda Zilla School. Sarkar entered the University of Calcutta at the age of 13 after standing first at the entrance examination from Malda Zilla School, while he graduated in 1905, at 18, with dual degrees in English and history. The following year he received his master's degree. In 1925 Sarkar started as a lecturer at the Department of Economics of University of Calcutta. He praised Nazism as "form of benevolent dictatorship", and advocated the establishment of a fascist dictatorship in India. In 1947 he became a professor and head of the department. He died on a trip to the United States in Washington, DC, in November 1949. Sarkar wrote in five languages, his native Bengali, English, German, French and Italian, publishing a large volume of work on a variety of topics, including 53 books and booklets in English alone, his written production amounting in all to some 30,000 pages. A complete list of his publications is contained in Bandyopadhyay's book *The Political Ideas of Benoy Kumar Sarkar*.



Image No 17 : Benoy Sarkar

3.8 Abu Barkat Ataur Ghani Khan Choudhury

(1 November 1927 – 14 April 2006), known as Barkatda to his supporters, was an Indian politician from West Bengal, India. Choudhury was a senior leader of Indian National Congress party. His home is in Kaliachak, Malda, West Bengal. Ghani Khan Choudhury was first elected as an MLA to the West Bengal state legislative assembly in 1957, winning the seat in 1962, 1967, 1971 and 1972. He served as a State Cabinet Minister in the Government of West Bengal from 1972 to 1977. First elected to the 7th Lok Sabha in 1980 from Malda, Choudhury would go on to represent the constituency for eight straight



Image No 18 : Abu Bakr Ataur Ghani Khan Chowdhury

terms, winning again in 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004. From 1982 to 1984, Choudhury served as the Minister of Railways in Indira Gandhi's and Rajiv Gandhi's governments. He took active part in introducing the Kolkata Metro Railway and Circular Railways in the city of Kolkata, and towards establishing the Malda Town railway station as one of the most important stations of the region. For his contributions, Choudhury is often respected as the **architect of modern Malda**.

3.9 Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury

Abu Hasem Khan Choudhury (born 12 January 1938) is an Indian politician and former Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare.[1] He has represented the Malda Dakshin (Lok Sabha constituency) since 2009. He first elected M.P from his brother A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhury's seat Malda (Lok Sabha constituency) as a member of the Indian National Congress party. A.H Khan was born into a Bengali Muslim family in Malda district, West Bengal. His father, Khan Bahadur Abu Hayat B. Khan Choudhury was a Zamindar in Malda district during British Raj.

3.10 Jitu Santhal

Jitu Santhal was a great admirer of Gandhiji and “Gandhi Raj”, although his understanding of Gandhi Raj was markedly different of what Gandhi might ever think of. This simple man dreamt that in Gandhi Raj there would be no money lenders, no Jamindars and the original tillers of the soil would retain their land. Hundreds and thousands of Santhals believed him and his words. Jitu got his strength from the local Hindu Mahasabha, a guru from the sabha brain washed him to undertake a reformation inside his community, not to eat forbidden meat, worshipping of Hindu gods, and conversion of Santhals

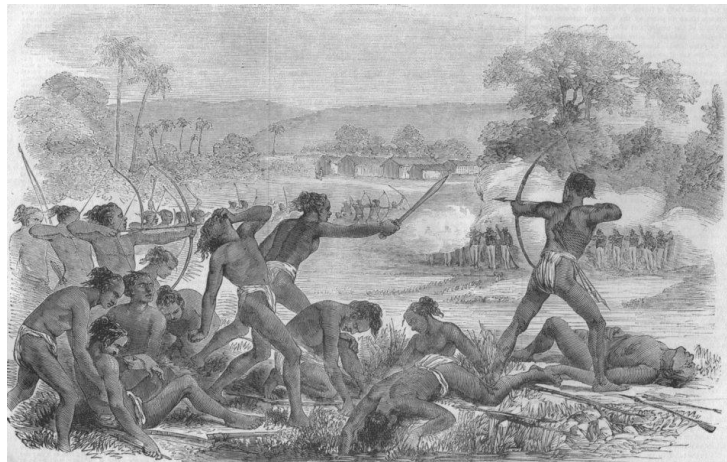


Image No 19 : Santhal Rebellion

to Hinduism. Jitu diligently followed his master and never for once understood that he was being used as a pawn in communal war game. In October 1932 the Jamindar of Kotwali demanded two-third crops from the Santhals. Following Jitu's command the Santhals refused to offer and a clash broke out among the Jamindar's men and the Santhals. Police rushed to the spot to quell the situation, after the clash the Santhals were heartbroken to find that the police actually took the Jamindar's side. The police

protected the Capitalists as the Proletariats suffered. Finally in December 1932, Jitu Santal and six of his comrades died while confronting the police in Adina Mosque.

3.11 Radhesh Chandra Seth & Kusum

The first monthly periodicals published from Malda was Kusum, edited by Radhesh Chandra Seth, a noted personality of the then Malda. Though the exact date of its first publications is not known, it has been assumed by the informed sources that Kusum was first published in the 1890s. In 1896, Radhesh Chandra published two weekly newspapers Gourdoot and Gourbarta. In 1897 Malda Samachar edited by Kaliprasanna Chakrabarty began to be published. Maulavi Abdul Ganikhan published 'Malda Akhbar' in 1914. In the same year, another periodical 'Gambhira' edited by Krishna Charan Sarkar was published. Damru, Adina and Minar—three weekly newspapers were published in 1941. The editors were Nanda Gopal Chowdhury, Akbar Munshi and Abdur Rahaman respectively.

The most important among them was Gourdoot which was first published on 1896 by Radhesh Chandra Seth. But within a short period, the publication of the newspaper came to an end as the editor faced a serious financial loss. The 'Gourdoot' again began to be published from 1912 under the editorship of Lalbihari Majumdar. Majumdar was a great scholar and his literary sense was appreciated by Benoy Kumar Sarkar and Radhesh Chandra Seth. In this endeavor, the editor was greatly supported by them and financed by Sarat Chandra Roy Chowdhury, Maharaja of Chancal. The Gourdoot was used to be published on Thursday of each week. The paper contained 6 pages and the price is one anna in 1944. The political outlook of the newspaper is pro-congress. Moreover, Lalbihari Majumdar, its editor took a pioneering role in organizing the congress movement in Malda. He has for a long time been the vice-president of the district Congress. The periodical had an implied antipathy towards Gandhian ideology.

In modern times there are also some local newspapers published in Malda, the most prominent among them are Malda Samachar, Rupantorere Pothe, Gour Malda Sambad Aamader Malda, etc. 'Rupantorere Pothe' is published in every Sunday in each week. Malda Samachar and Gour Malda Sambad are published every Wednesday and Friday respectively.

4. The art and craft of Malda

4.1 Clay Art

A. Snake Heads:

Snake Heads (hoods) are made to offer to Goddess Manasha are hand crafted, unbaked and painted with earth colours are made of clay are hand pressed, made by a particular potter family carrying title of Pandit. Their ancestors migrated (about seven generation) from Danapur, Bihar. Sri Shankar Pandit who said previously during Manasha Puja these Snakes were in big demand but now demand has been declined, the devotees buy these to offer as votive to the Manasha Than.



Image No 20 : Jubili Road, Uttor Baluchar Are Mostly Important For This Craft, N 250 0' 7.33"

It is believed that by offering snakes to Manasha, she as the Goddess of snakes will protect from snake bites. It is a handcrafted art mostly made by using the method of pinching. Clay and Earth Colours are mostly used for the craft. Shri Sankar Pandit is involved in this craft for generations. He and his family members create these products mostly for local consumption. They sometimes send their products to English Bazaar.

B. Clay Horse / Peerer Ghora :

The small horses are made with clay using pinch technique are made by hand by a particular potter family carrying title of Pandit. Their ancestors migrated (about seven generation) from Danapur, Bihar. Sri Shankar Pandit who said

previously during Moharrum these horses were in big demand but now demand has been declined, the devotees buy these to offer as votive to the Peer Thaan. These horses were offered at Dargas (Thaan) of Peers as goodwill gesture, generally by those whose wishes were fulfilled. These were having huge demands during Muharram. Jubili Road, Uttar Baluchar, English Bazar, Malda are the centres where these horses are mostly prepared.



Image No 21 : Clay Horse Used During Muharram

4.2 Gambhira Mask

One of the most important traditional handicrafts is the Gambhira Masks. The Gambhira dance is performed all over the Malda district of North Bengal during the festival of Chaitra Sankranti. The masks are made out of neem and fig trees by the local Sutradhar community. Sometimes they were also made the mask of clay. The three-dimensional crowns are the specialty of these masks. First, the facial features are carved out from a piece of wood and then coloured according to the character. This mask dance performed with Gombhira song. The songs of Gambhira originated among the Hindu community of Malda in West Bengal, completely in its theme formation. This mask is used in the war dance. It is also called Mukha Khel meaning the game of masks.



**Image No 22 : Gambhira Mask 24°50'50.07"N
88° 7'31.26"E**

Like the Chhau dance, the Mukh Khela dance too is based on themes related to ancient themes, which are largely inspired by the numerous song-filled chapters of the Ramayana. There are also dances with themes of Mahishasura Mardini, along with masks in the characters of Lord Rama, Ravana and even animal masks of tigers, deers, bears, monkeys, etc. The Mukh Khela dance also has other popular Hindu deities like Goddess Kali, Goddess Bhadrakali, etc.



Image No 23 : Performance OF Mukh Khela Dance AS Goddess Bhadrakali

Lore, Legend, Myth associated the ritual: According to Folk belief the Masks are living Deities but they have no limbs; they are kept either at the Gambhira Thaan or Puja room of the house (in personal collection) and being worshipped daily. But it is monotonous sitting (or hung) at one place, the deity feels dull and needs to move. The Bhakta (devotee) lend his body (limbs) to the deity and dances around Gambhira Thaan. It is not easy to lend a mortal body; it needs to be purified. The devotee practices austerity during month of Chaitra and on the day of Mukha Naach, fasts for the day. Before the dance the priest of the shrine starts Puja along with the devotees' wearing masks. At one time the devotee in trance starts dancing at the beat of drums (Dhak) and metal bells, it is believed that the Deity (Narashinghi, Kali) Bhar (entered into) the devotee) on to the devotee and he is not the person but the God itself and being worshipped accordingly.

Time : The Mukh Khela dance is mainly performed during the Ambubachi ceremony in the Bengali month of Chaitra. At the end of the festivities the masks are deposited with the head priest of Mukh Khela, who is known as 'Debangshi' which literally denotes an image of God. A fresh coat of paint is applied on the masks before the commencement of the following year's festival.

Bagdi, Dom, Kaibartya, Dhibar, Teli etc. communities participate in this danceform.

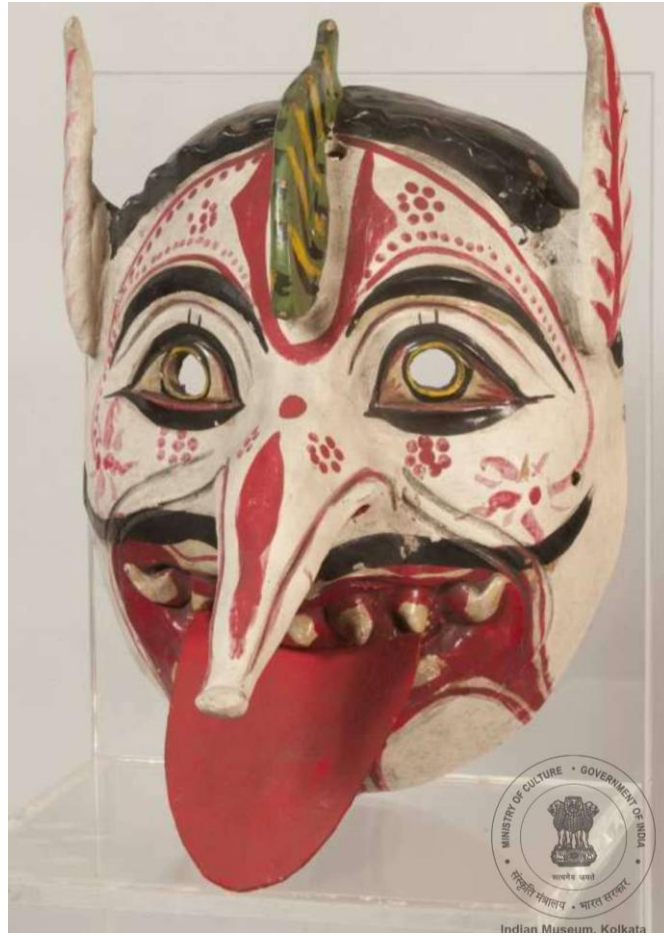


Image No 24 : GambhiMask at Indian Museum



Image No 25 : Gambhira Performance & Masks, English Bazaar



Image No 26 : Gambhira Performance & Masks, English Bazaar



Image No 27 : Performance Of Gambhira Dance With Social Message



Image No 28 : Performance Of Gambhira Dance With Social Message

Influence of Buddhism on Gambhira : There are so many influences of Buddhism on Gambhira. The masks used in Gambhira look like the same as Buddha-Tebetan masks. The Gambhiras which are noticed in Barendra region are based on the remarkable influences of Buddhism. Even today the Gambhira is conducted in the day of Buddha Purnima in so many areas like the Gambhira of Gossain Bari, Malda, the Gambhira of Kutubpur and the 'Chand Gambhira' in the Diara region which are all influences of Buddhism, according to the research scholars.

During the visit to India by Fa-Hien, the festivals of the Buddhist, the image of Buddha, The Sun God and the Lord Shiva were worshipped. 'Dharma' is a Goddess in the Buddhism and later she is the Goddess 'Adya'. In the earlier stage, this Goddess 'Adya' was worshipped as 'Shakti' in the festival of Gambhira, when the marriage between 'Lord Shiva' and 'Adya' was solemnized, the Gambhira became the Gambhira of Lord Shiva from the Gambhira of 'Adya'.



Image No 29 : A Shrine Of Gambhira With Different Type Of Sapling Symbolizing Productivity & Performance of Gambhira at Basra, Habibpur, Malda

4.3 Bamboo Basket Making

Bamboo Basket Making of Gajole, Harischandrapur, Habibpur of Malda -

Though Gajole, Harischandrapur, Habibpur do not falls exactly under our study area (buffer zone) but because of its global importance we have included it in our report. In Malda majority of the crafts persons belong to Mahali community. Bamboo works is the primary source of livelihood for majority of the crafts persons.

In India, basket weaving is an ancient art. Indigenous communities developed special shapes and patterns of baskets based on their local traditions, needs and techniques.

Today it is a well-developed art form with concentrations in Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Bardhaman and Bankura. Leading artisans are making diversified products which can be termed as connoisseurs' items: jewellery, lampshades, etc. The products marked by finesse and have good market. Keeping the traditional basket weaving intact, some of the crafts persons are even making furniture using bamboo. The craft has huge potential as its eco-friendly, presentable, relatively cheap and light weight.



Image No 30 : Bamboo Basket Making, Harischandrapur

Despite the abundant supply of raw material, the huge potential and skilled crafts persons, the demand for products in the national and international market is quite low.

In Malda, the craft is a skill which the crafts persons have inherited from their forefather's statement, wherever it is worn and have a market all over the world. Different types of baskets, hand held fan, sieves, brooms, eco-friendly decorative items like lanterns, flower vases, wall hangings, jewellerys are made and painted with auspicious symbols for using in marriage or any other ceremony. Today, the cane and bamboo industry in Malda as well as in India is vastly growing with many more opportunities and challenges ahead. In order to achieve the goal, tight scheduled planning with evaluations is needed. Collaboration among all the stake holders under Government entities is needed. A vision with strategic process with set up of bench marks and targets is also desire to optimise the value of this sustainable eco-friendly industry.



Image No 31 : Different Bamboo Items From Gajole, Malda



Image No 32 : Different Bamboo Items From Gajole, Malda

Some important bamboo artists of Malda

- a. **Manik Rabi Das** - Manik Rabidas is a resident of Alampur village in Gajole block of Malda district. He has won the District Award 5 times and the State Award thrice. An ace craftsman he has made a name for himself. Manik makes winnows, baskets and decorative items like flower vase, pen stands and he also specializes in jewellery. Rabidas works as a master trainer in the states of West Bengal, Tripura, Assam, UP, Uttarakhand and Haryana. He has



Image No 33 : Manik Rabi Das

participated in fairs in Kolkata, Delhi and Tripura.

- b. **Jatin Tudu** – A craftsman of repute from Majlish bag village of Malda district, Jatin Tudu makes winnows, baskets and decorative items like flower vase, table lamps, pen stand etc. He has participated in fairs in Kolkata, Delhi, Goa, Mumbai, Kerala, Siliguri and Aizawl and has won the District and State award in the year 1983 and 1984 respectively.



Image No 34 : Jatn Tudu

- c. **Manoranjan Mondal** - Manoranjan Mondal is a resident of Sarkarpara in Malda district and has been working as a bamboo craftsman since 2007. He has learnt the craft from his wife Durga Mondal who has been in this craft for long. He makes traditional items like winnows, baskets and decorative items like flower vase, pen stands, lampshades etc. He has participated in fairs in Goa, Kerala, Chandigarh, Delhi, Siliguri and Asansol. Manoranjan has also



Image No 35 : Manoranjan Mondal

participated in the international fair at Lithuania in 2017.

- d. **Srinath Tudu** - Srinath Tudu started working as a bamboo crafts person in the year 2000. He has learnt the craft from his father Jatil Tudu. He makes table lamps, pen stands, hairclips, incense stick holders, candle stands and jewellery boxes. Srinath has participated in fairs in Kolkata, Siliguri, Durgapur, Asansol, Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Kerala. He has won the State Award in 2007, and District Award in



Image No 36 : Srinath Tudu

2006 and 2007.

4.4 Handlooms, Gamcha (Traditional napkins industry)

Malda has alegacy of handloom industry. After the partition of India, numerous weavers from Bangladesh came to Malda and made a great effort to set themselves up afresh. Since ancient times, Malda is renowned for its silk and handloom industry. Presently handloom industry has fallen under grievous circumstances. Individuals, who live here are generally poor. Employment in the silk industry is becoming confined

to the middle age segment and women workers since the individuals in the 18-44 years bracket find themselves unable to continue living there because of the absence of employment asset and are subsequently constrained to seek employment in other states.

The major centres and their products are as follows :

Sl.No.	Block	Mouza	Main Items	Status
1.	English Bazaar	Sattari	Traditional napkins	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
2		Amriti	Traditional napkins	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
3		Bhabanipur	Traditional napkins	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
4		Pirpur	Traditional napkins	
5		Madia	Traditional napkins	
6		Atgama	Traditional napkins	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
7	Kaliachak	Babla	Traditional napkins	
8	Manikchak	Kamaltipur	Traditional napkins	
9		Enayetpur	Traditional napkins Lungi	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
10		Shyampur	Traditional napkins Lungi	
11		Puranigram	Traditional napkins Lungi	Arrangement for technological up gradation in weaving, dyeing & designing. (By Directorate of Handloom)
12		Shershahi	Traditional napkins Lungi	



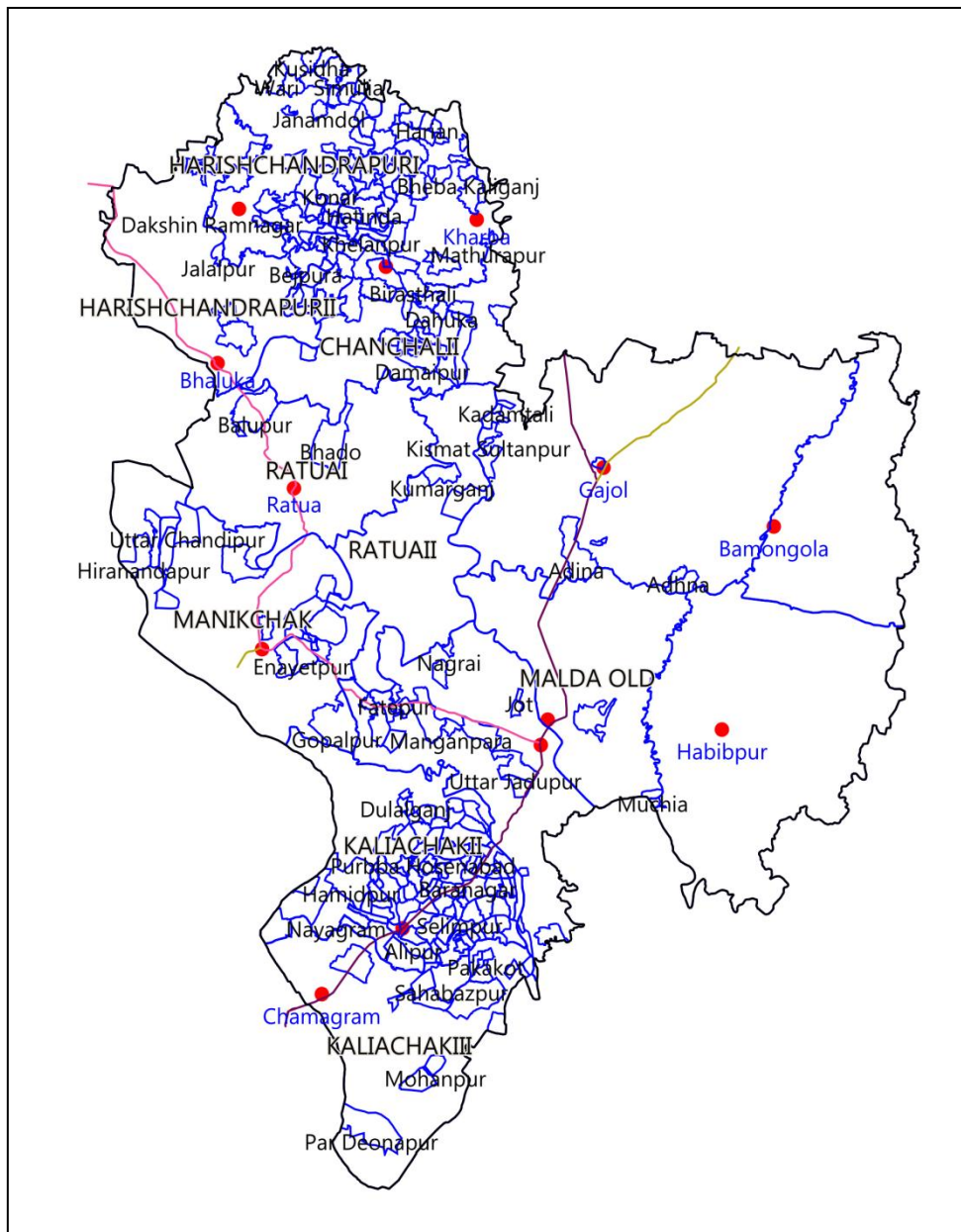
Image No 37 : Gamcha Making Is Done By All The Family Members

4.5 Silk Weaving

Silk of Malda are world famous due their flavor and threads characteristics. Famous sarees always made using silk thread. And in this matter Malda silk in the first preference of the weavers.

Sericulture is an agro based industry and plays a vital role in the economy of Malda district comprising 60% of national share and 75% of state share in raw silk production. 80% of this industry is confined in Kaliachak block I, II and III. Sericulture is now practiced in about 660 villages in Malda district. More than 19,000 acres of land is

under mulberry cultivation and more than 60,000 families are directly and indirectly earning their living from sericulture.



Map No 3 : Map of Malda showing sericulture villages

Sl.No	Block	Major Sericulture Villages
1.	Kaliachak III	Par Deonapur, Mohanpur Sahabazpur, Sashani
2	Kaliachak I	Pakakot, Alipur, Selimpur Suzapur, Bara Hamidpur, Nayagram, Dulalganj
3	Kaliachak II	Gopalpur, Manganpara Fatepur, Uttar Lakshmpipur Debipur

4	Manikchak	Enayetpur, Nazirpur Hiranandapur, Uttar Chandipur
5	Harischandrapur II	Bhaluka, Bhairabarpur Jalalpur, Dakshin Ramnagar Sultannagar
6	Harischandrapur I	Chhatrak, Konar Hatinda, Khelanpur Mathurapur



Image No 38 : In Alamtola Village Of Kaliachak II Block About 66 Households Are Involved In Sericulture



Image No 39 : In Alamtola Village Of Kaliachak II Block About 66 Households Are Involved In Sericulture



Image No 40 : Whole Sale Silk Shop, Kaliachak



Image No 41 : Cocoon Market of Kaliachak

4.6 Kantha of Malda

Kantha embroidery is an indigenous household craft that is also considered a form of art, due to the uniqueness of individual creations, its ability to convey a story and its use as a form of personal and artistic expression. What sets this form of needlework embroidery apart from others is the wide use of the running stitch, also known as kantha. Yarn used for running stitches is often taken from old sarees or dhotis, and covers almost the entire piece of



Image No 42 : Kantha of Malda

fabric onto which motifs and designs are embroidered. The repetitive use of the running stitch contributes to Kantha's signature wrinkled and wavy effect on the fabric. Malda Known for its beautiful Kanthas. The designs are Lahari and geometric, with small series used in the vacant spaces of the designs. The motifs are seen are those of peacock with feathers spread, betel leaves, boat, mat, sun, and flowers.

4.7 Jute Handicrafts in Old Malda

The jute fiber comes from the stem and ribbon (outer skin) of the jute plant. The fibers are first extracted by retting. The retting process consists of bundling jute stems together and immersing them in low, running water. There are two types of retting: stem and ribbon. After the retting process, stripping begins. Women and children usually do this job. In the stripping process,



Image No 43 : Jute Mat, Dhokra

non-fibrous matter is scraped off, then the workers dig in and grab the fibres from within the jute stem.

Products : Jute floor coverings consist of woven and tufted and piled carpets. Jute Mats and mattings with 5 / 6 mts width and of continuous length are easily being woven in Southern parts of India, in solid and fancy shades, and in different weaves like, Boucle, Panama, Herringbone, etc. Jute Mats & Rugs are made both through Power-loom & Handloom, in large volume from Kerala, India. The traditional Satranji mat or is becoming very popular in-home décor. Jute non-woven and composites can be used for underlay, linoleum substrate, and more.

Jute has many advantages as a home textile, either replacing cotton or blending with it. It is a strong, durable, color and light-fast fibre. Its UV protection, sound and heat insulation, low thermal conduction and anti-static properties make it a wise choice in home décor. Also, fabrics made of jute fibres are carbon-dioxide neutral and naturally decomposable. These properties are also why jute can be used in high performance technical textiles. Moreover, jute can be grown in 4–6 months with a huge amount of cellulose being produced from the jute hurd that can meet most of the wood needs of the world. Jute is the major crop among others that is able to protect deforestation by industrialisation.

Thus, jute is the most environment-friendly fibre starting from the seed to expired fibre, as the expired fibres can be recycled more than once.



Image No 44 : Items Made From Jute



Image No 45 : Jute Items Making Process

5. Food and Drinks of Malda

5.1 Sweets of Malda

1. During the reign of Sultan Hussain, Chaitanya Dev also known as Gaurango came to Malda. It was in Gaur that he preached the language of love to Roop and Sanatan. And it was this event that led to the creation of a famous Bengali sweet, **Roshokodombo**. A sweet whose taste is incomparable, with that layer of hardened **kheer** on the top. It resembles to the KADAM flower under which Chaitany Dev preached. The minute once bites that hard outer shell, your tongue gets a chance to savour a rosogolla inside. Malda is not just famous for its Roshokodombos, it is also a land that churns out **halwa patti** and **Tara Khhaja**. Both are sweets of the Sultanate period. **Monacca** is another attraction. With the downfall of the Sultanate in Delhi and its influence in Bengal, these ethnic sweets started disappearing, but Roshokodombo was much in demand. Be it wedding or rice eating ceremonies, Roshokodombo was a must. Its fame spread near and far. Roshokodombo also uses posto or poppy seeds. Poppy seeds are cultivated in Malda, therefore it's cheap. The most popular Roshokodombo shop is Ratan Sweets, on Netaji Subhash Road, Malda. If one needs the best quality, which can be kept outside the refrigerator for 15 days, one has to wait. During the Durga pujas, the demand is very high, and people stand in long queues to savour the taste.



Image No 46 : Rosokodombo, speciality of Malda



Image No 47 : Different sweets from Ratan Sweets, Malda 25° 0'9.30"N 88° 8'52.24"E

2. Kansat, another signature sweet of Malda was in the favourite list of the erstwhile Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. She had tasted it when she came to Malda and Congress supremo Ghani Khan Chowdhury treated Gandhi to

this sweet. She liked the taste of Kansat so much, that every time Ghani Khan visited Delhi, he had to take a packet of these sweets for her.

Since then, many who visited the Khan Chowdhurys or landed in Malda, were always on a search for the Malda grown world famous mangoes and an equally delicious Kansat. Today, Kansat has crossed the seven seas and is not just famous as a sweet in the national level, but also at the international platform. Its taste is just mind blowing. Even when foreign delegates come to India or expatriates return, they are always seen to make a beeline for this fresh sweet.



Image No 48 : The Historic Kansat Sweets

Originally Kansat came to Epar Bangla from Bangladesh. In East Bengal this sweet is very famous and had almost 12 names! Kansat is actually a prosperous village in the upazila of Shibgunj. Mahendra Kumar Saha, the first maker of Kansat lived in this village during the British era. He even started a sweet shop in Shibgunj, that later turned famous under his son Vijaykumar Saha, who made a new Kansat with his own recipe. Even today if you are travelling to Malda, do not forget to drop in at their shop. Only 15 minutes from Malda station and ten minutes from the bus stand, is a neighbourhood known as Maqadampur. To buy the best of kheer for these sweets, the two brothers who manage the famous Kansat, regularly travel to the local haat or market to buy kheer. The quality of the kheer is important, else the taste of the sweets will change. The 'Kansat' shop of Malda remains untouched by modernity. But the quality of the sweets has not been compromised with. It still caters to the taste of thousands of clients from across the globe!



Image No 49 : The Kansat Shop of Malda. 24°59'46.75"N 88° 8'38.25"E



Image No 50 : The Kansat Shop of Malda. 24°59'46.75"N 88° 8'38.25"E

Historical significance : Kansat is the name of a place in the Chapai Nawabganj district of Bangladesh. The sweet here is known as the Shibgonj Adi Chomchom, which is probably its original name. There is a lot of history



Image No 51 : Kansat

connecting the two. Between 12–15 August 1947, the fate of the Malda district as to whether it should go to Pakistan or to India, was undecided because the announcement of the partition award of Sir Radcliffe did not clarify this. During these few days the district was under a Magistrate of East Pakistan. When the details of the Radcliffe Award were published, the district came over to West Bengal on 17 August 1947. However, the sub-division of Nawabganj was severed from Malda and was given to East Pakistan as a sub-division of the

Rajshahi district. The traditional sweetmakers belonged to the Hindu community. Like many other victims of partition, they were forced to leave the land of their forefathers and settle across the border, rebuilding their trade. In renaming the shibgonj chomchom as Kansat, they were trying to keep alive the memory of a lost homeland.

5.2 Hatthi Paiya Luchi (Luchi Like Elephant Foot)



Sadullapur of English Bazar Block is very famous for a specialized Luchi which resembles the foot of an elephant. Refined Wheat Atta (from a special type of wheat from Purnia, Bihar) is used to prepare these Luchis.

Method : Knead the flour mixed with water and few drops of palm oil and kept aside for half an hour for seasoning, then prepare big flat rounds by pressing and flattening out by a big roller on a flat wooden board, after that deep fry in a big pan.

It is eaten along with Potato curry, Chatni and fried chilies.

Mostly associated with social custom :

For “*ShashanBandhu*” (companions to cremation), round the year.



Image No 52 : Local Sweet Shops at Kaliachak Bazaar, Kaliachak

5.3 Dried Mango Pulp

It may sound strange, but mangoes—the succulent fruit we are privileged to eat in summer, appears to be inseparably linked with the town of Malda in Bengal. Its fortuitous location at the meeting of the rivers Mahananda and Kalindi, has helped in making Malda among the best developed areas in Bengal. Malda's most famous produce are mangoes, much of which is exported to many parts of the world. The most popular and craved for mangos that grow in this fertile soil—Him Sagar being a hot favourite! Needless to say, the Mango Festival in season is a great draw.

Dried Pulp of Mango, sweetened or un-sweetened, flattened and made into thin sheets. It's produced in different parts of our country, but the best Amsatto comes from Malda District of West Bengal. This is the Best Amsatto available in India. **In fact, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore was the first one to popularize it where such mango pulp candies are mixed with milk and consumed. In fact, these mango pulp candies are also used to prepare different types of Bengali cuisines. The candies are reportedly quite popular among the residents of Buckingham Palace.** The pulp here is extracted from " Gopal Bhog ' Mango of Malda which is the best Mango. Malda is well known around the Globe for its Mango production. There are different names for Amsatto like Aam Papad, Mango sheet etc. It's a homemade product and sold locally. The prices and quality vary. It can be best used with milk allowing it to dissolve properly. It can also be used in making dessert.



Image No 53 : Food (Mango) Processing Cluster At 'Anandamayee Mahila Sahgha' Atarapur, Kotwali, Malda.

Implementing Agency : District Office of WBKVIB, Malda. 25° 2'7.89"N 88° 8'14.75"E

Making amsotto, or sun-dried mango pulp – a famous cottage industry of Bengal – is now going to get a major boost as the State Government has decided to extend special monetary help to the women-only self-help groups (SHG) of Malda district to enable them to make its manufacturing more viable. Amsotto has traditionally been made by women.

Malda has been selected by Govt to develop mango pulp industry because it is famous for its varieties of amsotto, many of which are not available elsewhere. With help from the State Government, more amsotto would be produced and be available across the State. Now amsotto is being used as nutritious food for children as well. Help is already being provided by the State Government. The amsotto-makers of Kotuali gram panchayat (a cluster of 15 villages) near Malda town, a traditional hub, have seen their stock rise once again after many had left the business due to lack of help in marketing their products. Amsotto is initially made from Gopalbhog mangoes, and as the season progresses, with himsagar and lakshmanbhog, and finally with fazli.



Image No 54 : Aam Shotto Of Malda.



Image No 55 : Some Other Mango Products Produced At Malda Mango Co-op Society Ltd

5.4 Jaggery or Gur from Gaur Banga

The human race is born with a natural tastebud for sweetness. We are born with it. In ancient times- before some fifteen thousand years, we get the mention of sugarcane and honey as sweetening agents. Probably, the Mesopotamians were the inventors of jaggery. And during the ancient trade, the skillset was transferred to us, Indians. It might be interesting to know that once, the entire Birbhum, Burdwan, Malda, and Murshidabad area was the hub of ancient jaggery making and probably, it was the reason that the name “**Gourbanga**” was given to that particular territory.

The source of Gur can be primarily classified in two varieties- sugarcane and date tree- thus owing to the name, akh-er (sugarcane) gur, and khejur-gur. The sugarcane juice is heated in flat-bottom vessels, till it gets condensed and the perfect color is obtained. The first cut is called as Poyra- maybe from the term “Poyla” or first-cut, after some more heating, it gets to the second stage which is named as “Patali” and the third and final/ worst version is Veli gur. Needless to say, this cut is not really considered as a great quality jaggery.



Image No 56 : Collection Of Date Palm Juice In The Early Morning

Even, jaggery from the dates tree or Khejur gur, can be classified into two varieties- Nolen and Jiren. Everyday evening, the containers or handis are tied to the tree with the insertion and the juice gets accumulated inside that, for the whole night. In the early morning, they are taken down and gur is processed. Gur made from the first fetch of juice is named as Nolen Gur. The tree is left for some rest for some time and jaggery made from the second fetch is named as the Jiren Gur. Here also, Nolen gur is considered to be the superior variety.

Here, it's better to mention that sugarcane jaggery or akher gur is used mostly for Batasa/ murki/ Nokuldana etc- mostly cheap varieties of sweets. And the royal varieties, like Sandesh or Rasogolla are made with the Khejur Gur and mostly, with the Nolen Gur.

Well, the challenge for making jaggery is checking the consistency. The way, chefs check the consistency of sugar syrup, it's almost the same here. If the heating is slightly less, it'll not be a gur- rather a condensed juice. and, if it's heated extra, the jaggery will have a burnt flavor and is unusable. If somebody has got the resources, tasting the fresh date juice, or Khejur Ras is pure heaven in a misty winter morning. But as soon as it gets the kiss of harsh sunlight, fermentation starts- converting it into the cheap spirit. But nothing can beat a sip at the liquid gold of Bengal- the liquid first cut khejur gur.



Image No 57 : Date Palm Sap Is One Of The Most Delicately Flavour Drink Found Only In The Winter Mornings



Image No 58 : The Juice Of Date palm Is Simmered To Prepare Jaggery



Image No 59 : The Juice Of Date palm Is Simmered To Prepare Jaggery

5.5 Delicacies of winters (Rice pan cakes/pitha)

Bengali cuisine holds a special place in every food aficionado's heart. It is rich, versatile and never fails to surprise you with the flavours and aroma. Food in Bengal is unique to each season. While summers bring along soul soothing aam tok and aam dal, monsoon calls for khichudi (khichdi) and begun bhaja. Likewise, come winters and our palate craves for the super delicious pithe and payesh. What is pithe? It is basically a palm-sized winter-special sweet treat, made with fresh palm and date jaggery (nolen gur and khejur gur), scented rice flour, milk and coconut. Although it is available in different sweet shops today, pithe is generally whipped at home in a quintessential Bengali household. In fact, preparing pithe during winters is a tradition for every Bengali. Visit any house in Bengal (and Bangladesh) during this time of the year and you will be welcomed with hot and fresh pithe and gur-er payesh (gur ki kheer). Alongside Bengal, pithe is also enjoyed in different other states in Eastern India including Bihar, Assam and Odisha.



Image No 60 : Steamed Rice Cake Is Getting Prepared

If you explore, you will find a wide range of pithe across West Bengal and Bangladesh. With some basic ingredients in common (like gur and rice flour), different types of pithe includes different recipes and cooking styles. While some are steamed (bhapa pithe), others are cooked in syrup (rosh bora) and kheer (kheer puli). You will also find pithe that are deep-fried (bhaja puli) and baked (chittoi pithe). Moreover, different variety of pithe has different names, shapes and sizes. The list of pithe goes really long. Malda district has also a range of Pithe done by every household during Poush / winter months.



Image No 61 : Steam Rice Cake - Ashke Pithe Or Sora Pitha

Type of steam rice cake - *Ashke Pithe or Sora Pitha* is one of the most popular rice cakes in Malda, West Bengal and Bangladesh. It is also known as Dhaka Pithe, Chikui Pithe and Sora Pithe. Perhaps, the current spelling for 'Axse', has come in the form of ashke or aske because of local use. It is a somewhat looked like the south Indian Idli. At the time of Paush Sankranti, the Ashke pithe is prepared. The Ashke pithe is usually eaten with Molasses, but it is eaten with lentils, peas, fish curry of Koi fish and even meat curry. Historian Tapan Roychoudhury compared the Ashke pithe to the Beefsteak.



Image No 62 : Bhapa/Steamed Rice Cake Pitha

Bhapa/steamed rice cake pitha is a popular sweet snack amongst Bengali and Assamese people. It is delicate, soft, and contains various forms of texture with a fusion of rich flavour as you bite into the pitha.

6. Fairs and Festivals in Malda

Our study area includes the areas under Uttarpara, Serampur, Rishra, Baidyabati, Sheorafuli, Chandannagar, Chuchura, Malda, Konnagar, Lalgola, Balagarh, Mogra which all have their individual lists of local festivals and fairs.

We have created a monthly cycle of festivals and rituals which are very predominant in this district specially in the banks of Bhagirathi-Malda. They are:

- a. Baisakh – Shitala
- b. Jaisthya- Jamai Sasthi, Aranya Sasthi,
- c. Ashar – Rathajatra,Ambubachi
- d. Shravana-Manasha, Janmasthan, Srabani Mela
- e. Bhadra – Arandhan,Biswakarma,Dhaner Lakshmi, Chapra Shasti
- f. Ashwin- Durga Puja,Kojagori Lakshmi
- g. Kartick – Kali, Dipanwita Lakshmi, Itu, Raas, Jagadhatri
- h. Agrahayan-Nabanno, Itu
- i. Poush – Poush Parban, Auni Bauni, Notun Dhaner Lakshmi, Borodin
- j. Magh-Saraswati Puja, Sheetal Shasti
- k. Falgun-Dol
- l. Chaitra – Gajan,Ashok Sasthi, Neel Sasthi, Shitala , Olaichandi

Some of the major festivals of Malda District in our study area :

6.1 Ramkeli Mela

The 500-year-old famous Baishnab-fair 'Ramkeli Mela' commenced near Gour in Malda from 15th June, 2013. The Six (06) day fair has drawn scores of pilgrims and monks from across the country with several forms of rituals and devotional songs being performed. The fair has been organized to commemorate the arrival of Sri Chaitanya in this holy place on 'Jaishtya Sankranti' some 500 year ago. Temporary medical centers and arranged additional transports for smooth conduction of fair, attended by innumerable devotees. The officials have also tightened security. We hope that more tourists will join the Mela by popularizing the famous Baishnab fair. There were the



Image No 63 : Ramkeli Festival

representatives of ISCKON Mayapur with other cultural program all around the large area. Thousands of pilgrims joined the event.

The week-long fair (mela) took place around the last days of the Bengali lunar month of Jyaistha (usually the height of summer) in a small village right outside the still impressive ruined gates and walls of the ancient Bengal capital of Gaur. It is said that



Image No 64 : The Statue of Chaitnya, Ramkeli

the great saint of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534), met and converted two of his principle disciples, the brothers Rup and Sanatan Goswami, who were important courtiers of the Muslim Sultan of Gaur, in Ramkeli. The Fair marks that occasion. It was a great gathering place for singers of the Bengali Kirtan style of Vaishnavite devotional music.



Image No 65 : Ramkeli Festival

Still exist are the footprints of Sri Chaitanya Deva. Under the tree, where Sri Chaitanya Deva met with the brothers, two scholars of Sanskrit literature Roop and Sanatan Goswami, still exist. Ramkeli commemorate the visit of Sri Chaitanya Deva during the Ramkeli fair every year. During the fair, lakh of pilgrims came and gathered in tents, makeshift stays and hotels nearby, ignoring the hot Sun to memorize again the dignified presence of Sri Chaitanya Deva. Through Chaitanya Deva lifetime works to extricate the bitter feeling among different religions, he brought sweet memories of

brotherhood. The temple complex where the great preacher once strolled made one feel his pious presence in the air and in the enchanting bells of the temple.

A small village on the way to Gour, Ramkeli is famous for being the temporary home of Sri Chaitanya, the great religious reformer of Bengal, where he had stayed for a few days on his way to Brindaban. A conglomeration of two tamal and two kadamba trees can still be seen, under which the saint is said to have meditated. A small temple constructed under this tree contains Sri Chaitanya's footprints on stone. There are eight kundas or tanks flanking the temple. Every year, on the Jaishthya Sankranti, a weeklong celebration is held here to commemorate the arrival of Sri Chaitanya. The whole area was flooded with pilgrims at Gour nearly 12 kilometers south of Malda; right on the Indo-Bangladesh



Image No 66 : Footsteps of Chaitnya

border is a historical relic of 14th and 15th Century Bengal. Places of sightseeing are the Bara Sona Mosque, Dakhil Darwajah (built in 1425), Qadam Rasul Mosque, Lattan Mosque and the ruins of the extensive fortification. There are colourful enameled tiles on the Gomti Gate and Firoz Minar. Chinese traveller Hiu-en Tsang visited to have Buddhist lessons from here. The place houses the footprint of Prophet Muhammad, William Carey the prominent missionary Christian worked towards mankind. It was like rediscovering the united picture of India in diversity. It was greatly enticing experience to remember. Our journey began, for the concluding part of the Malda site seeing.

6.2 Chhat Puja of Malda

Chhath is an ancient Hindu festival historically native to the Indian subcontinent, more specifically, the Indian states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and the southern parts of Nepal. Prayers during Chhath puja are dedicated to the solar deity, Surya, to show gratitude and thankfulness for bestowing the bounties of life on earth and to request the granting of certain wishes. Chhathi Maiya, the mother goddess and Sun's sister, is worshipped as the Goddess of the festival. It is celebrated six days after Diwali, on the sixth day of the lunar month of Karthika (October–November) in the Hindu calendar Vikram Samvat.

In Malda, Chhat Puja is celebrated all along Mahananda and Ganga River. All the blocks of our study area – Manikchak, Kaliachak I, II, III, English Bazar, Old Malda

celebrates Chhath with great vigour. Thousands of people take holy bath and offer puja to Sun God and Chhath Maiya. Here are some renowned ghats where Chhath Puja takes place. Mostly people from Jharkhand, Bihar celebrates Chhath Puja.



Image No 67 : Chhat Puja, Jubilee Ghat, Old Malda Along Mahananda River



Image No 68 : Chhat Puja, Mission Ghat, Old Malda Along Mahananda River



Image No 69 : Chhat Puja Near Malda Station



Image No 70 : Chhat Puja, Manikchak Ghat, Opposite Rajmahal



Image No 71 : Chhat Puja, Old Malda

6.3 Banke Bihari Kartick Puja of Malda

The Kartick Puja of Roy bari is also known as *Banke Bihari Babar Pujo*, it's a tradition that was initiated by their forefathers. And there is no impediment to the rejoicement of the participants of this occasion. According to a family member of the revered family, their forefathers settled in Phoolbari from Uttar Pradesh during the 18th century.

Legend says it that the puja was launched to avert any threat from miscreants and since then, generations after generations have been abiding by the rituals at the Dalanbari.



Image No 72 : Banke Bihari Kartick Puja of Malda

A 20-foot Kartik idol in Bansbari in Malda town. The puja is held annually by descendants of Monomohan Saha, who is said to have begun the event 395 years ago. It is the largest and most famous Kartik Bari in Malda. Big fairs are held here every year. And many devotees also come to see this deity from far and wide. So come and see Kartik here and here See for yourself everything. The Kartik Puja here has been

going on for a long time. Manmohan Saha was the first to perform this Kartik Puja, and as long as there is Kartik Puja here, Kritan is held here.



Image No 73 : Monomohan Saha Family Plaque Where Details Of Kartick Puja Is Described



Image No 74 : Kartick Puja, Monmohan Saha Bhawan

6.4 Durga Puja

Like every part of Bengal, Durga Puja is also celebrated at Malda with much aplomb. However, here the traditional face of Durga is much more different from other areas. Then along the bank of Ganges, the location of the puja changes because of tremendous bank erosion.

- i. **Manikchak** : Manikchak Diara Sarbojonin Durgotsav at Domhaat in Malda district is one of the oldest community pujas in the district and had started at Gangapara in 1905. The organisers of the Manikchak Diara Sarbojonin Durgotsav at Domhaat in Malda district have had to shift the goddess's *mandap* or pavilion at least five times in the past 25 years because of severe bank erosion. The frequent change in the autumn address of the goddess is another indication of how an aggressive Ganga is devouring its banks and changing the land map of this north Bengal district. "There used to be no fear of erosion those days, but things have changed drastically in the past 25 years or so, forcing us to change the address of the *devi mandap* five times," said Bholanath Mandal, a septuagenarian and a farmer by occupation. It was in 1995 that the erosion left its spell and the *mandap* was swallowed by the Ganga and the 90-year-old address had to be changed.

"The puja did not stop even then. The goddess was shifted to an alternative *mandap* at Bechutola village and the puja continued there till 2006," Mandal said.



Image No 75 : Mandap at Bechutola Village

But then again, the erosion caused havoc and the second *mandap* was swallowed by the river. In 2007, the puja had to shift to the Palpara area but the *mandap* lasted only for four years. Then (in 2011), a local resident offered his mango orchard at Haddatola village, where the goddess was worshipped for six years.

“The owner of the orchard sold his property and eventually, a portion of that land was also eroded away by the river. Thus, the goddess had to move to her present abode at Jotepatta in 2016,” said an organiser. A new *mandap* was constructed to venerate the goddess and her family. Since then, the puja has been organised at Jotepatta.

ii. **Adi Kangshabanik Durga Puja, Malda** : An age old Hindu religious place for worshipping of Goddess Durga. It is located at the centre of Netaji Subhas

Road, popularly known as Durgabari More, towards Fulbari, English Bazaar. It is more than 150 years old temple of goddess Durga. Throughout the year many religions Hindu festivals and puja occasions are performed here. During the Durga Puja festival many devotees perform puja and locally people are gathered here to view goddess Durga. It is community level temple maintain by local community people. It is a must



place to visit Malda for everyone.

Image No 76 : Adi Kangshabanik Durga Puja



Image No 77 : Durgabari, Fulbari, Malda



Image No 78 : Durgabari, Malda

6.5 Durgabari, Malda

Like other part of Bengal, Kaali Puja is celebrated throughout the district. Most of the idols are very big and the puja is performed in traditional way. Here are few very important Kali Pujas of Malda.

- i. **Shri Shri Hanta Kali, Malda city** : The temple is formed at 1947 , but the idol is very old.



Image No 79 : Shri Shri Hanta Kali, Malda City

- ii. **Malda's goddess – Johura Kali** : The myth can be traced back to 1083 Bangabdo (Bengali calendar) when Salwa Tewari, a sadhak who lived in Gobindapur village under Bhatiya Pargana in Malda, had consecrated this temple after envisioning Chandi in mediation. At the time, Gour was the citadel of power in Bengal, first by the Bengali kings after which the Pala and Sena dynasties ruled the state. The ruins that are now archaeological exhibits spread around Malda district are remnants of the once strong, gigantic walled city that was the seat of power in Bengal. A river ran around this walled city that protected it from enemy attack. However, Gour's fortunes began to dwindle. Enemy attacks, natural calamities like earthquakes, famine and other conditions

and series of epidemics turned Gour to ruins. Salwa Tewari, a wealthy sadhak in Malda was deeply perturbed by the despair and distress of the people of Gour. Thus, he



Image No 80 : Johura Kaali

decided to pray to Devi Chandi to

give him the power to emancipate the people from their troubles and bring peace in their lives. In a trance, Salwa Tewari envisioned the goddess who ordered him to consecrate a temple in Her name at that spot. The sadhak immediately established a simple shrine where he built a mound or bedi dedicated to the goddess. The formless deity soon became revered among people from all castes and religions.

It is believed that Salwa Tewari had established the temple in the month of Baisakh. He established the tradition of offering prayers to the goddess only on Tuesday and Saturday. Even today, the descendants of Tewari maintain the traditions. "We continue the traditions that our forefathers had started at this temple. Over the years Johura Kali has become a revered deity. Although the deity is referred to as Kali, she is actually a manifestation of Chandi. During the annual festival in Baishakh, the temple premises are choc-a-block with devotees coming from across the state and other places as well. Many devotees bring goats for sacrifice at the temple," said Mukul Tewari, a fifth-generation descendant of Salwa, and the present sevait at the Johura Kali temple. Since Shakti and Shiva must reside together, a Shivalinga was installed inside the same sanctum sanctorum. The origin of the name 'Johura' remains a mystery. There are several beliefs attached to it. One belief is that dacoits, at one time, would hide stolen jewels under the bedi.



Image No 81 : Every Year The Mask Is Brought Ceremoniously From The Artisan's Studio On The First Tuesday Or Saturday Of Baishakh

Another one goes that an Arab attacker had seen a vision at the temple and exclaimed that there was 'Zeher' inside it. 'Zeher' later became Johura. Around 1213 Bangabdo, (Bengali year), Salwa Tewari's grandson, Hiraram had a vision of the goddess whose appearance he later described as having a long tongue, a third eye on the forehead and having teeth like a boar. Hiraram immediately translated his onto a clay mask. As tradition has it, every year during the annual celebrations in Baishakh, the masks placed over the mound are changed. Only one artisan in Malda has been making these masks through generations. Mask worship is a tradition of North Bengal and that is also followed at the Johura Kali temple as well.

- iii. **Bolla Kali** : Bolla Kali , The Bollakali Temple is located in the Bolla village that lies on the Balurghat-Malda Highway, which is 20 km from Balurghat. The temple is dedicated to Goddess Kali and Kali Puja is conducted in this shrine every Friday after 'Rash Purnima.' A fair also takes place on this occasion, for three days. During this time, the temple is visited by thousands of devotees from different parts of the district.



Image No 82 : Bolla Kali

- iv. **Maa Buri Kali : Kuttipara , Old Malda** . The speciality about this puja is that the puja rituals take place at the midst of the night. The bisarjan takes place at night only.



Image No 83 : Maa Ulka Kali

d. Kali Puja of Manikchak : Social harmony pervades two popular Kali Pujas celebrated in two villages of Malda. Every year, unlike the pujas held in most places, Hindus and Muslims join In Habibpur block, a Kali Puja initiated by a Muslim woman is joined by thousands of Hindus. In Manikchak, members of the Muslim community



Image No 85 : Kali Puja at Manikchak

outnumber Hindus in a Kali Puja committee, the venue being a temple near a mosque. The Kali Puja at Madhyam Kendua in Habibpur block, some 20km from Malda town, is extremely popular, with “going to see

Shephali Kali (Puja)” being a byword among residents. Shephali Bibi, who started this Kali Puja 34 years ago, did not care for resentments articulated by various dogmatic members of both the Hindu and Muslim communities. Eventually, the determination of Shephali Bibi won over orthodoxy, and over three decades on, Hindus and Muslims join hands to organise the puja and maintain a gigantic crowd. Many residents recount a tale that they have heard for decades now on Shephali Bibi started the Kali Puja. She was only 21 when she suddenly fell very ill, recounted a resident. No medicine worked. Then, apparently, she shared a dream with villagers, claiming she was directed by goddess Kali to worship her to get cured hands to celebrate these two Kali Pujas.



Image No 84 : Shephali Bibi, Priest of Habibpur

Initially, her claim was denounced by both communities. Brahmins refused to worship the idol. But an undaunted Shephali, then a young girl, went ahead with the

preparations. Eventually, a priest appeared claiming he received orders from the goddess in his dream to worship the idol. This is how the Kali Puja had started. “Call it a miracle or whatever, Shephali got cured then,” Siddhartha Sarkar, a resident of Habibpur, said. Shephali Bibi, in her late fifties now, still heads the Kali Puja with people's support. The idol is huge, so are the crowds. This year, the pandemic pared down celebrations, but otherwise this continues to be one of most popular Kali Puja celebrations in the region.

Another Kali Puja held in the vicinity of Manikchak police station, some 30km from town, is also special. Around 120 years back, this Kali Puja was started by Fudina Singh, then head constable, in a temple facing a mosque. “Mutual respect is the key factor here,” said Sagar Singh, Manikchak resident. “At the time of the Namaz, the temple's microphone is turned off. Mosque authorities ask people of the Muslim community to refrain from noise during Puja,” he said.

Not just that, most members in this puja committee are Muslims. The committee has 11 Hindus and 13 Muslims working together every year to host the Kali Puja. So, if Gour Mandal, the sabhadhipati of Malda Zilla Parishad happens to be the president of the puja committee, Jamal Khan is the secretary. “We have perceived the basics of every religion. All religions preach tolerance, peace and respect for other religions. Those who try to divide us in the name of religion, do so for their vested interest,” said Khan.

6.6 Guru Nanak Birthday, Old Malda

MALDA situated on the banks of the River Mahananda, is sacred to both Guru Nanak and Guru Tegh Bahadur, who visited it in the course of their travels through the eastern region. A Sikh shrine once existed here in Sarbari area of Old Malda, but with the development of new Malda town across the river, Old Malda declined in importance and population, and all that was left of the Sikh shrine was a site with an old well and two platforms, one dedicated to the First Guru and the second to the Ninth Guru. Native Sikhs from the neighbouring Purnea (now Katihar) district of Bihar used to assemble here once in a year to celebrate the birthday of Guru Nanak. In the mid 1970's efforts were initiated to reconstruct the gurudwara. The shrine is now called Sri Prayag Sahib, Sarbari, Old Malda, though an old marble slab, acquired from Bihari Sikhs and kept in Gurdwara Singh Sabha, describes it as Gurdwara Nima Sarai, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, Old Malda.

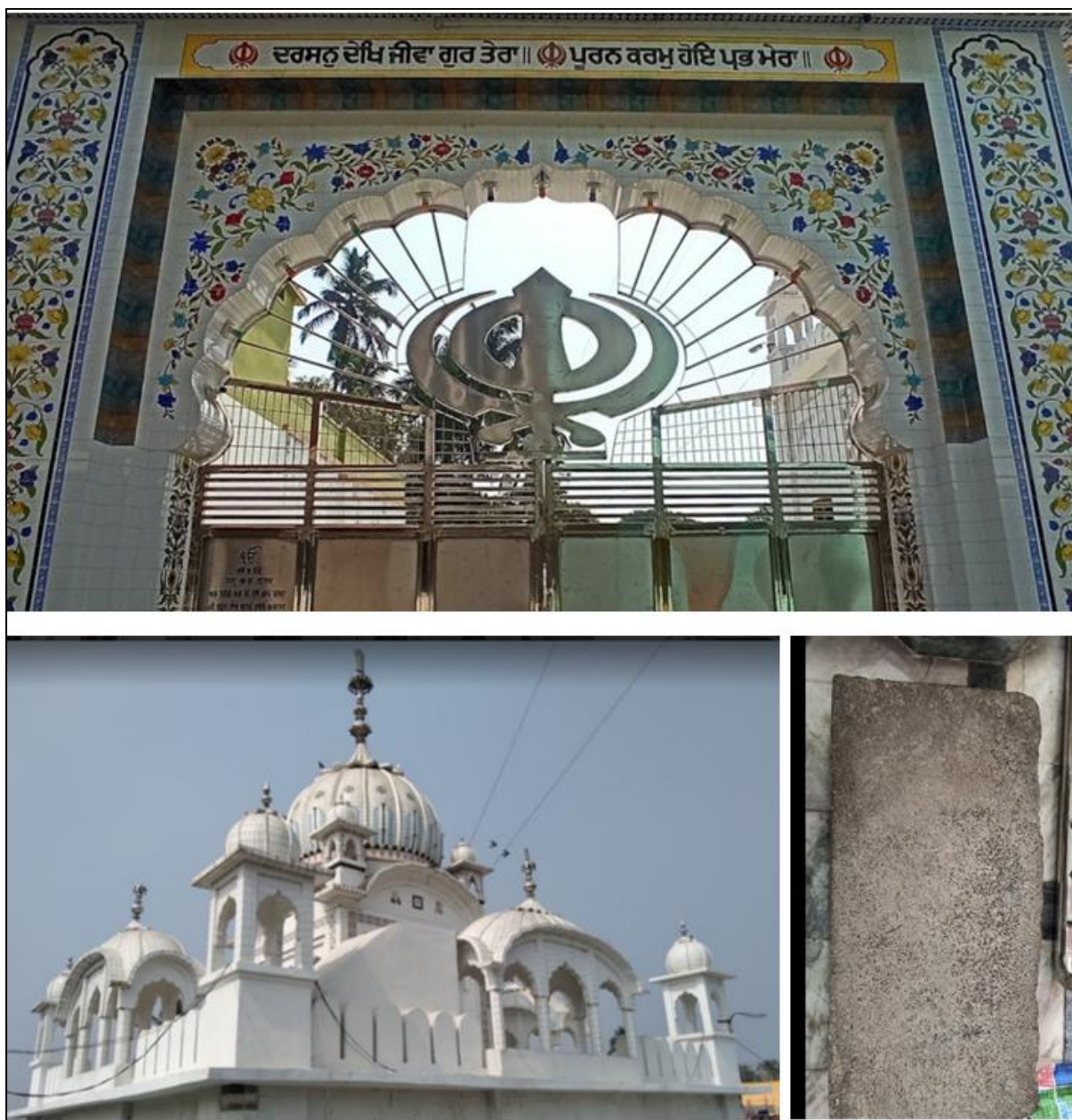


Image No 86 : Sri Prayag Sahib, Sarbari, Old Malda

6.7 Malda Mango Festival

From 2014 onwards food processing industries and horticulture department of the West Bengal government is organising Mango Festival at Delhi mostly showcasing premium quality Malda Mangoes like Himsagar, Lyngra, Fazil etc. Around 24 tonnes of Bengal mango varieties like Himsagar, Laxmanbhog, Langra and Fazli are being sent to Delhi, Malda District Magistrate S K Dwivedi said. "The main objective of organising this festival is to establish the brands of Malda mangoes and to facilitate its marketing," Varieties of raw mango and their allied products like mango leather (Aam Satta), pickle, aam kasaundi, mango panna, etc, were also showcased and sold. Litchis from Malda and Murshidabad would also be on the platter for fruit lovers.



Image No 87 : Mango Festival

6.8 Gambhira Loko Utsab

“Loko Utsav” (Local Festival) become the heart beat among the people of country side. The word “Folk” came from the popular word “Lok”. The word “Lok” reflects the acute life-style of village people and “Loko Utsav” is a kind of festival by which they express their happiness by gathering together. “Bera, “Karticker Lorai”, “Tusu Mela”, “Karam Utsav”, “Hazra Puja”, “charak”, “Neel Puja” all these folk festivals are related Bengal like all. Among all these utsavs “Gambhira” is a very famous “Loko Utsav” in Malda and this utsav remained within Malda. People think that “Gambhira” is just a type of a song but Pushpajit Roy has expressed in this book of “Gambhira” that – Gambhira is not a form of song, gambhira reflects on the total ritualistic drama.

Naturally a question may arise in our mind, what is the literal meaning of “Gambhira”. Mr. Haridas Palit has commented in book, named, “Addyer Gambhira”-ancient days the house which was look like *chandimandap* was used to call gambhiri or gambhira. During the period of second Dharmapal Deb and Gabinda Chandra, gambhira used to be that kind of house in some province like Gour, Rangpur and Dinajpur. So, it means the word gambhira is a “house of God” where religious activities used to perform. The “Gajan Utsav” of Rarh area become “Addyer Gambhira” in Malda district. But these days it is renowned as “Gambhira”, means utsav of “Lord Shiva”. The festival gambhira is basically famous within Rajbanshi, Chnai, Koch, Mahali community. In gambhira festival there is no traditional play. Though there is no particular myth in gambhira but the character of Lord Shiva is always there and he is known as “nana”

Ritual activities, songs, dances are celebrated in gambhira festival. It has been already mentioned that the festival of gambhira is celebrated in different type of places in Malda district in different type of days. Mainly in the end of the month of chaitra (in the middle between March and April) and continue five days. But in some of the places it continues two days to seven days duration. Though festival of gambhira is celebrated with the intention of celebrating chaitra sankranti (last day of chaitra), it is celebrated mainly from the month of chaitra to bhadra (middle between August and September). But the gambhira which was celebrated in asarh to bhadra (June to September), is now obsolete. Exceptionally in Chanchal some of the places it is still now celebrated. The festival celebrated in between jaishtha and asharh is mainly noticed in Barendra Bhumi - Habibpur, Bamangola, Nalagola etc. But the celebration of festival is noticed in The Barendra Bhumi mainly in chaitra. In urban areas in Malda (mainly in English bazar block), this festival is celebrated on 15th and 16th in the month of baishakh. But in Old Malda Block of Malda district this festival is celebrated in the last week of baishakh. And some of the places in Diara, this festival is celebrated in the Buddha purnima is called Buddha-gambhira or chand-gambhira (Moon gambhira) or phuldolpurnima-gambhira.

Structure of a Gambhira programme: At the end of Bengali year (April – 2nd week) means starting of the month Chaitra which is called Chaitra Sankranti gambhira get start. Though Chaitra Sankranti is on 30th Chaitra but gambhira starts four days before Chaitra Sankranti and continues till the end of Chaitra. But in different region gambhira seems to celebrate on Chaitra (Hobibpur Thana, Dohil-Gazole etc.), Baisakh (Alipur-Kaliachak, Sekendarpur-English bazar etc.), Jaistha (aiho-Hobibpur Thana), even in the month of Sravana (Boyaliya-chanchal Thana).

1st day – 26th Chaitra – Pouring of pitcher (Ghat vara) - At the starting of the Gambhira Utsav there is a ritual called- “Pouring of pitcher” (Ghat vara). But this ritual does not celebrate by another region. The time length is different, somewhere this ritual takes it part before three days, seven days, even nine days before. This decision depends on the senior associates of the group. When Sun sets at the evening , one Bramhin take a pitcher by drowning it into the river and after that the water-full pitcher finally establishe to its pre-fixed place , according to Shastra . Thus, the first day of gambhira festival ends with this ritual, there would be no other ritual that day.

2nd day – 27th Chaitra – Small Drama (Chhoto Tamasa) Gambhira Festival starts with some small shows. The show starts with by worshipping of Shiva or Hara-Gouri. The junior disciples take the look of Sannyasi. These sannyasi are called “Bala Vakta”. That day and next day all the Bala Vaktas stand before the Lord Shiva and recite the Shiva-Vandana. After the recitation of Shiv-Vandana all the Bala-Vaktas stand by one leg and take the name of Shiva in mind. Various kind of dances like solo dance, group dance

and facial – act (Mukha Nritya) happens that night. Dr.Pushpahjit Roy has commented about the use of mask that the facial-act is a very important act in gambhira festival . in his own word – even today gambhira is a “Ritualistic Theatre” (“MUKHOSHER PROYAG - PROSANGA”- Essay by Dr. Pushpajit Roy).

3rd day – 28th Chaitra – Big Drama (Baro Tamasa) Big Show bangs at the 3rd day of gambhira festival. At afternoon all the disciples move for jatra called “Shova-jatra”. in that shova-jatra all the disciples of different age group took part and they move from one mandap to another mandap by disguising them as ghosts, witches, fireman, snake-man etc. and they loudly beat Dhak. After finishing the shova- jatra, the Act “Lanka Dahan” happens that evening. Some people thinks that this festival (specialy Chhoto Tamasa and Baro Tamasa) was in ancient days “mahajani Lokayat Bouddha Utsav”, slowly the Mahajani got away from this festival of and Lord Shiva been added to this festival. It means that Hindu religion infleneed the gambhira festival.



Image No 88 : Gambhira Festival of Malda & Durga Puja Pandel with the Theme of Gambhira Masks

4th day – 29th chaitra – Ahara/Bolai/Bolbai Gambhira festival ends at the fourth day with “Bolbai Songs”. Bolbai songs are reputed as gambhira songs. Because all these songs are used to sing on the gambhira stage which at present is known as Gambhira songs. Gambhira is basically vocal folk song. It has no written practice. Every song is based on contemporary event. Basic characteristic is humour and it is presented on the stage always with comic, ironical tone. The basic purpose is to present the plight of common man due to high price rise , corruption , misuse of political power under the pretext of expressing them to lord Shiva. At the beginning gambhira was only a song form. But now a days it consists dialogue between characters along with songs – sometimes solo, sometimes in chorus and sometimes in refrain. therefore, it has taken the form of folk drama. In the ‘Duet’ & ‘Char lyari’ (four friends) part of gambhira we find the abundance of acting than song. It is needless to say both are forms of folk drama.



Image No 89 : Basrani Devi

Almost thousand years before in the district of Malda the Buddhist Goddess Bajra Tara Devi was converted to Basrani Devi. Still now the mask of Gambhira is worshipped at Habibpur, Basra, Katlapur in Buddhist style as Basrani Devi. A huge fare occurs at Basra Village surrounding this puja. Gopinath Burman hereditarily performs this puja and dance.



Image No 90 : Gambhira Masks Used In Durga Idol

In recent times the scope of gambhira has narrowed and it has become limited to Duet and Char iyari drama-song. Now gambhira does not stand for any cultural festival, it has become a performance. It is no more attractive to modern generation. The folk-element has decreased and the tunes of popular Hindi songs have entered in gambhira. Besides the artists are also struggling to survive. So, in order to keep up this art form every year a gambhira festival is arranged by Old Malda-Municipality with all the leading gambhira bands of this district during the end of December at the school ground of Kalachand High School, Old-Mald

So, we find that there is a conflict in the story-between Modern song & folk song. At the end folk song wins through the logical arguments of the husband. Conflict is the soul of a drama. So, it is a folk-drama. In between there are some songs to strengthen the action of the drama. As the people of Malda are proud of Gambhira, so there are many who have no respect for Gambhira. The Duet song is a presentation of this conflict. Many popular songs of today are influenced by folk songs-this truth is not understood by many learned fools of today. This Duet performance of 'Lubdhak' of Old-Malda initiates a new genre to the age old tradition of gambhira. Therefore, we cannot help but praising and welcoming "Lubdhak" for its "Cultural Endeavour" to protect and save our rich folk tradition-gambhira from extinction in today's adverse situation through their rich musical and dramatic performance. Presently, "Lubdhak", "Anwesa", "Nana Hey", "Puratuli Gambhira Dal" all these groups are helping to spread the art at its best.

During the time of freedom fight of India gambhira songs has left their mark. The period from 1971-1972 to 1976-1977 the artists of first half of gambhira were at very poor condition. now a days, the gambhira artists are trying to save this culture but unfortunately this art will remain within uneducated-village-people. An authentic art is getting evaporate for the discouragement of urban people and by the bad influence of television culture.

Dhenki (seesaw) song of Gambhira: There is a kind of corn grinding song in the Bengali folk songs which can be called 'Dhenkimangaler Gan' (song of Seesaw worship) relating to work songs. It is not a solo song but a chorus in which tone and rhythm are the essential features. The song to Dhenki(seesaw) worship or Narad worship (according to mythology seesaw is vehicle of God Narod) is one kind of work song in 'Gambhira'. Actually, the song of 'Dhenki worship' has been created in 'Gambhira' from farmer society. A song to Dhenki worship is given below :

"ঢেঁকি ধান ভাঙরে / সোনার কামেনী ঢেঁকি ধান ভাঙরে

ঢেঁকি গেল গড়গড়াইতে / কুলা গেল রসে

কাটঠা গেল মায়ের বাড়ী / লাইপা খাব কিসে? "

("Oh beautiful lovely golden Dhenki (Seesaw)! Make grind the corns / The Dhenki went on rolling/ And winnower (kula) became spoiled / Weighting basket went to mother house / How shall we weight corns ?)

Md. Sufi (1894-1983) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Md. Sufi (a Gambhira singer) was a muslim by religion and believed in Sufism. He did not believe in division of religion. That is why he prays to God Shiva with penance by saying in an invocation to God Shiva:

"বলি এক ব্রহ্ম দ্বিতীয় নাস্তি (তবে) দুই ভাবাও দেব কেন ?

আজ হিন্দু মুসলমান এক করে দাও ভেদ থাকে না যেন ।

একই রক্ত অস্থি চর্ম , এক সৃষ্টি, কেন ভিন্ন ধর্ম,

দেখে তোমার এসব কর্ম, হয়েছি তব্বহীন, (হর)।"

(" If God is one and all and second to none,
why do thou make us think the division of man?

We don't want division between the Hindus and Muslims and make them in one and all

The Hindu and the Muslims are in the same boat and in same blood and flesh.

Oh God Shiva! What you have done?")

Even he sings :

"ঠিক থাকিলে একে গোড়া হরিদাস খেত না কোড়া

(আর) মহম্মদের তীক্ষ্ণ ছোড়ায় হারাতো না কেউ প্রাণ, (হর)

সুফি বলে যত ভাব সবই ভুল , জ্ঞান চক্ষুই দেখ ঠিক একের মূল

রাম-রহিম ভিন্ন নয় এক চুল, নামভেদে মাত্র জেনো । (হর)।"

("Oh God Shiva ! If thy creation was right,

No religion conversions remained there.

No lives were murdered by Mahammad's violent sword

Sufi says, All doctrines are wrong, but right is the inner knowledge.

Oh God Shiva! You know all, no different between Hindus and Muslims,

The different is only the name.")

In this regard the opinion about third sword by Francis Bacon is mentionable. Regarding Mahammad's third sword, Bacon, a renaissance English essayist says in his essay 'Unity in Religion', concerning the Means of procuring unity, men must beware, that in the procuring or uniting of religious unity, they do not dissolve and deface the laws of charity and of human society. There be two swords, amongst christians, the spiritual and the temporal, and both have their due office and place in the maintenance of religion. But we may not take up the third sword, which is Mohomet's sword, or like unto it –that is, to propagate religion by wars, or by sanguinary persecutions to force consciences (except it be in cases of overt scandal blasphemy, or intermixture of practice against the state), much less to nourish seditions, to authorise conspiracies and rebellions, to put the sword into the people's hands, and the like, tending to the subversion of all government, which is the ordinance of God. For this is but to dash the first table against the second; and so, to consider men as Christians, as we forget that they are men.

6.9 The Folk Element in Hindu Culture (1917)

In 1917, Orient Longman Publisher, located at London published 'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture' written Benoy kr. Sarkar, based on the information from 'Adyer Gambhira' by Haridas Palit. By this publication, the 'Gambhira' crossed the border of Bengal and reached the door of the world and gained its international popularity.

'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture' took place in the first-class libraries in the cities like New-york, Barlin, London, Paris etc. This book has also impressed Gurusaday Dutta to create the Bratachari movement.

Mr. Sarkar has also discussed the communal harmony of the Hindu Muslims in 'Gambhira'. The subject of communal harmony in 'Gambhira' first came into the light in his book. In reference to this, Mr. Benoy kr Sarkar in his 'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture' said, " At the conclusion of the festivities, they dine together, forgetting all caste distinctions, on the shiva-yajana (the yajana of Ramai) day. - - - - - Even the distinction of Hindus and Mohammedans is sunk in this institution."

i. Gurusaday Dutta and Gambhira :

Gurusaday Dutta (1882-1941) was the founder of Bratachari movement. The 'Bratacheri dance' was founded with a purpose of making a group dance performance with a mixture of 'Raibenshe dance', 'Gajan dance' and 'Gambhira dance'. This dance serves as a physical exercise and recreation of the mind. All the intellectual people like lawyers, doctors, barristers, magistrates and professors – all began to learn the 'Bratachari dance'. Gurusaday Dutta, the founder of Bratacheri dance, made the folk dance famous and



Image No 91 : Gurusaday Dutta

also popular to the so called intellectual or high educated people of the society. The revolution came to the field of folk dance. The source of the movement of Bratachari, founded by Gurusaday Dutta, is the folk dance of 'Gambhira'. Mr Dutta got interested in the Bratacheri dance from 'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture'(1917), written by Benoy Kumar Sarkar. So, he was indebted to Benoy kr. Sarkar. He confessed this and once he said- "one day at college street, Calcutta, the book 'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture' written by Benoy kr Sarkar was being sold in an old book stall in cheap. When I saw, I at once bought this book

by giving Rs/1.50 as its value. Though the value of the book was fifteen rupees when I read this book, I came to understand that the book actually is the history and information of 'Gambhira' and the traditional folk dance, folk instrument and also the folk songs of other districts of Bengal. At that very moment I started my research work on 'Rainbensch dance', a traditional folk dance of Birbhum district, from which the introduction of Bratachari dance began. The book 'The Folk Element in Hindu Culture' by Mr. Sarkar had influenced me and also helped in my research work".

ii. **First Recorded Gambhira Solo Song :**

The first artist of solo song in Gambhira was Tarapada Lahiri (1915-1997), a veterinary surgeon. In beginning 20th century some of gramophone record companies started marketing for folk songs. In 1925 H.M.V. company first recorded the song of Kazi Najrul Islam. Later in 1928, Najrul himself joined as a trainer in H.M.V. company.

In 1937, encouraged by Kazi Najrul Islam the first twine record of Gambhira song voiced by Gambhira artist Tarapada Lahiri was recorded from that HMV company. This records of Gambhira song reached to drawing room and from drawing room to interior villages.

The first records of Gambhira song is given below voiced by Mr. Tarapada as a village house wife whose husband is deaf :

"শ্বশুরবাড়ি আইস্যা/ হামার কান হল ঝালাপালা।
কি করব ভালা/ বিশুদবারের গঞ্জের হাটে,
কহনু ক্যাঁথার সুতা আনতে টে,
সুতার বদলে আনল পাতা,/আনল কুলার বদলে মালা/ কি করব ভালা/ দুখের কথা কহব কত
সইবে কেটা হামার মতো,/ দুই কানেতে বৈইরা এতো/ শুনতে পাই কাষা কলা/ ও কি কহব ভালা।"

("Coming to father-in-law's house/ My ears have become deaf / What should I do now?/ I asked my husband to purchase a thread of blanket from village market. / Commence on Thursday/ My husband brought 'pata' means leaves instead of 'suta' means thread/ And 'mala' means wreath instead of 'kula' means winnowing basket./ What should I say?

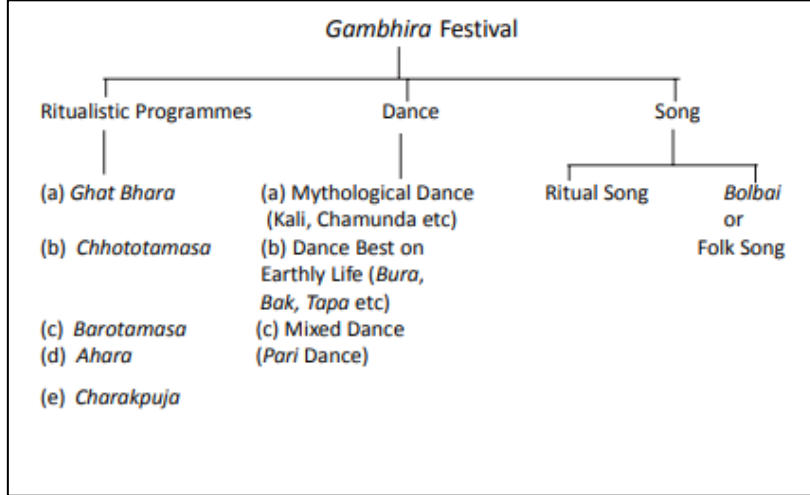
Oh! what a suffering/ Who shall endure like me? / My husband is deaf/He listens nothing/ What shall I do now?)

The second song is given below:

"রে দাদা/ এমনি বিহা ক্যানে হামার দিলি

তোর বো রাঁধতে জানে/মাজে আবার বাসন
হামার বো গড়ের মাঠে/ টেনিস খেলে তখন
রে দাদা/ এমনি বিহা ক্যানে হামার দিলি।"

(Oh Dada! How did you make a match with a peculiar wife? / Your wife does domestic duties/ My wife does not / She plays tennis/ Oh Dada! Why did you make a match with a modern lady?).



iii. Some of the most reputed cultural fairs of the district are :

1. Ramkeli Fair, Gour
2. Aiho and Bulbulchandi ' Kali Puja Fair
3. Debipur Haribasara 32 Prahar Mela.
4. Gobarjanna Kalipujjo Mela
5. Charu Babu Mela
6. Charak Fair
7. Chobbish (24) Prahar at Shingabad and Rishipur
8. Dariapur Urush at Dariapur, Kaliachak
9. Gazole Utsab
10. Kahala Urush at Mothabari
11. Kahala Durga Puja Fair.
12. Kartik puja Fair
13. Moyna Bishohari Mela.
14. Eid Fair, Pirana Pir Dargah
15. Muharram Fair, at Sattari
16. Maha Shivratri Fair or Bhole Bam at Amrity
17. Christmas Carnival, Englishbazar, Malda
18. 32 prahar harinam sankirtan at Debipur (Ratua 1, Malda)

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**GNAMAMI
GANGE**