

National Mission for Clean Ganga

(Registered Society, Under Act 1860)

Ministry of Jal Shakti

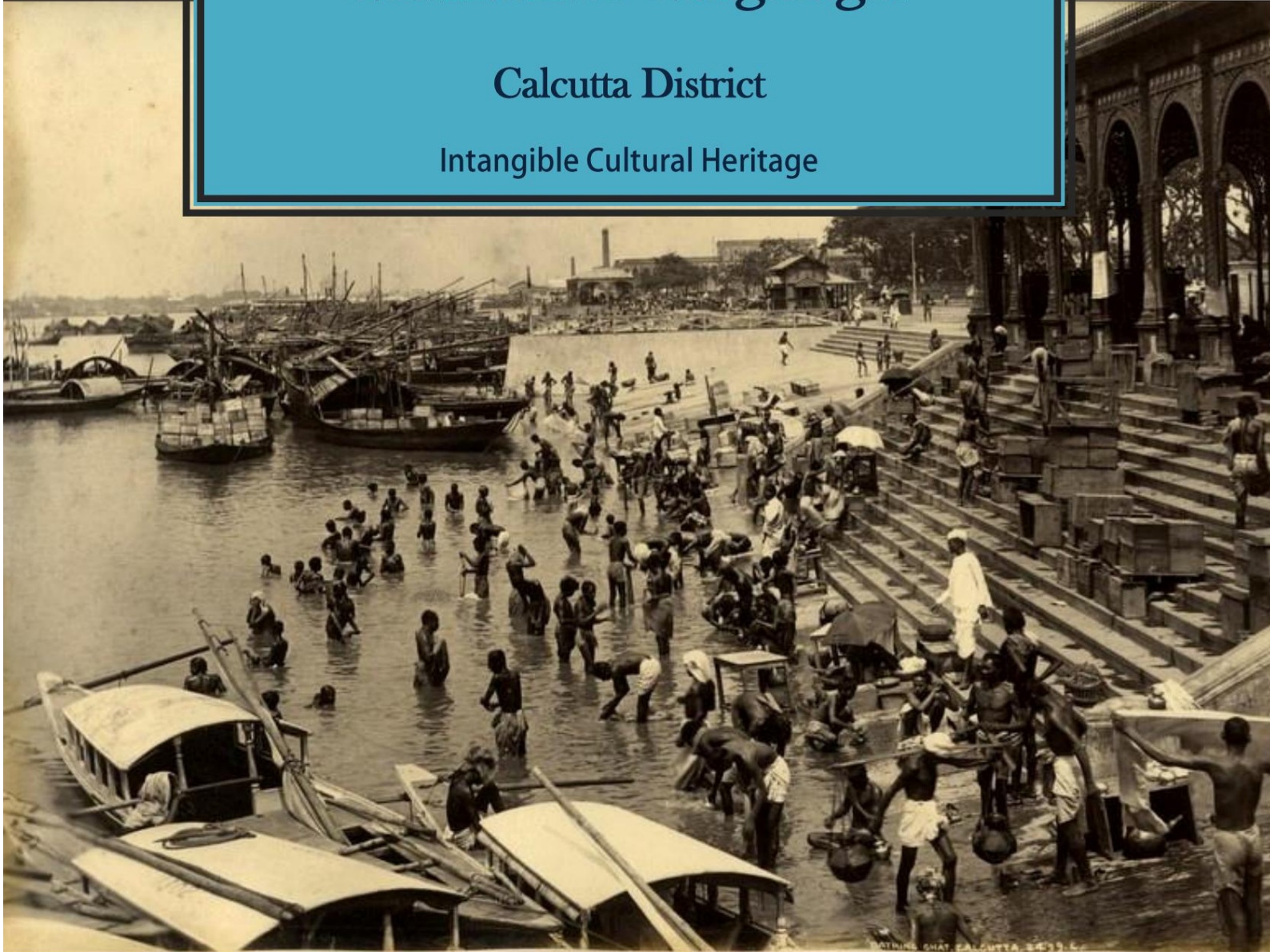
Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation
Government of India



Documentation of Ganga from Gaumukh to Gangasagar

Calcutta District

Intangible Cultural Heritage



INTACH

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June 2021

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage

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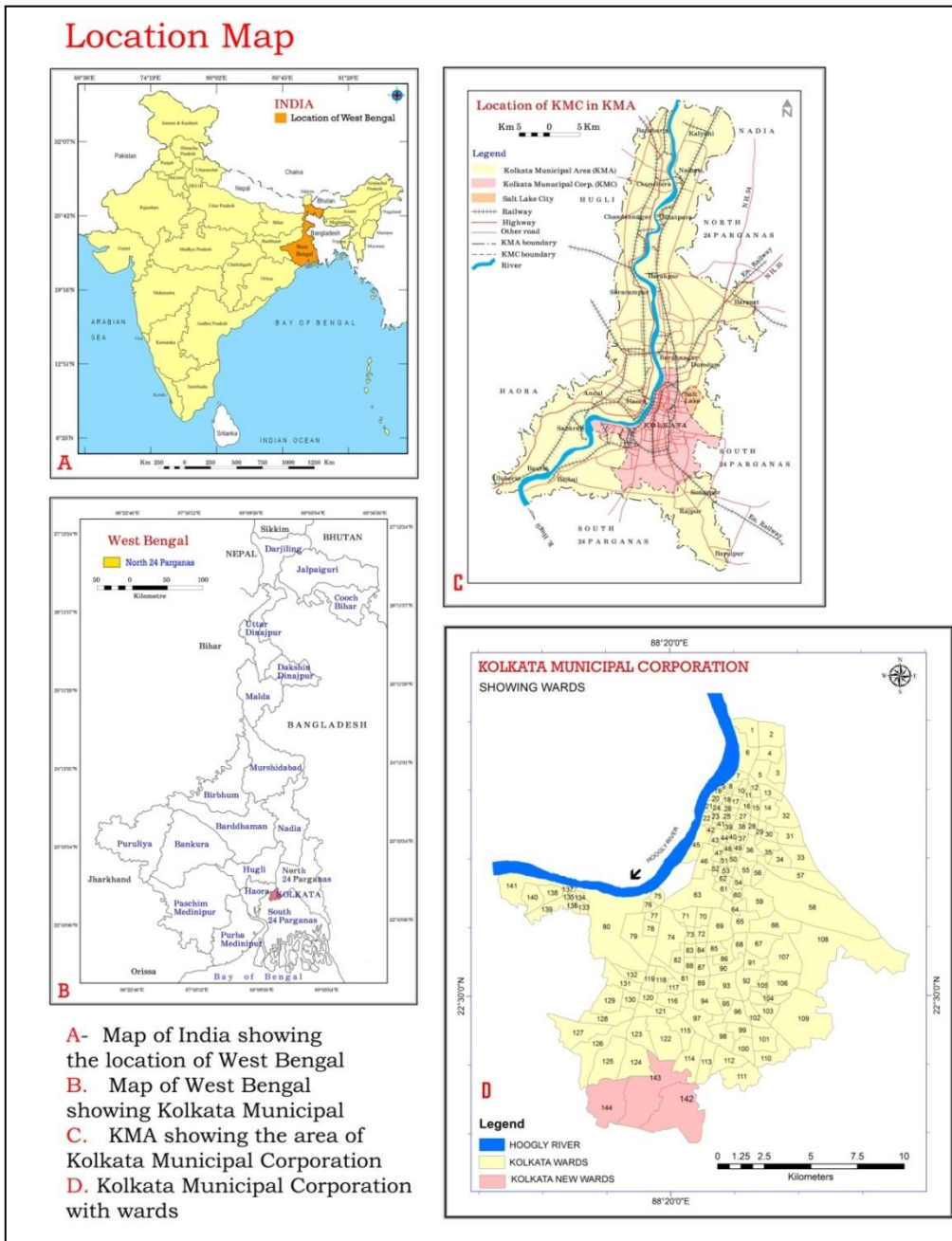
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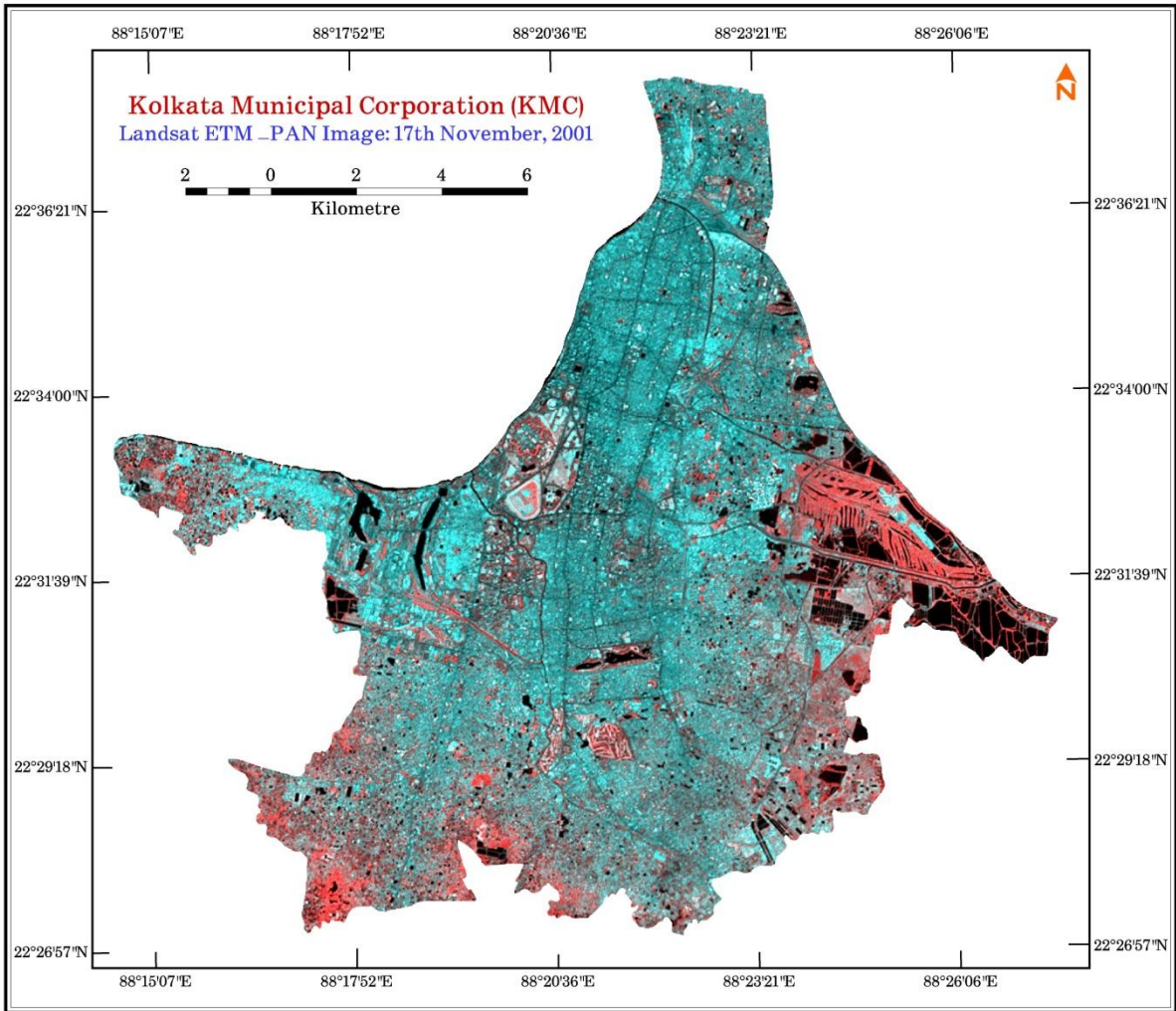
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1. LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA-KOLKATA

Kolkata the "Cultural Capital of India", "The City of Palaces", and the "City of Joy formerly known as Calcutta, is one of India's largest cities. The city is housed on the east bank of the Bhagirathi-Hugli (Hooghly) River, which was once the main channel of the Ganges (Ganga) River, about 96 miles (154 km) upstream from the head of the Bay of Bengal with latitude 22°33'47" N & longitude 88°23'34"E. Like all riparian towns in Lower Gangetic Delta, it stands upon a rich silt, which however, has a history of its own.





2. KOLKATA THROUGH AGES - A GLIMPSE

Barahamihira, the Hindu astronomer indicated the Lower Gangetic plain as Samatata, a term which literally means “level of the sea” and is applied to the tidal swamp on its foreshore. When Houen Tsang came to India through Bengal he found it to be divided 5 kingdoms – Pundra in the north, Kamrupa on the north east, Samatata on the east, Tamralipi on south west and Karna Subarna was on the west. The Hindu legend regarding the formation of land and water in the neighbourhood of Kolkata is described in a 16th century text called Digbijayaprakasha by Kavirama.

“During the churning of the ocean, Kurma (the tortoise) too heavily pressed by the Mandara Mountain on his back and Ananta (the infinite) , gasped out a deep breath in order to stupefy the Daityas; and the country of “Kilkala” was formed ,and extended over the whole tract that was covered by his breadth.” The Province of Kilkala is described as being 21 jojonas (160 square miles) in extent with the Saraswati on the west and Jamuna on the east and containing the towns and villages of Hooghly, Basberia, Khardah, Sialdah, Govindapur etc.

This legend is probably descriptive of a shifting of the centre of gravity of the earth and re adjustment of land and water as a result of an earthquake, during which a hill subsided, gaseous matter escaped from the bowels of the earth, and the sea was violently agitated. The reference to the Daityas (Non Aryans) and their stupefaction has apparent application to the period of Aryan colonisation of the area after the earthquake.

However, legend and tradition always indicate things but for further practical findings a series of bore-operations was conducted under the superintendence of a Committee of naturalists. Of these operations the sinking of the Kolkata bore-hole in Fort William to a depth of 460 feet below the mean sea-level was the most important.

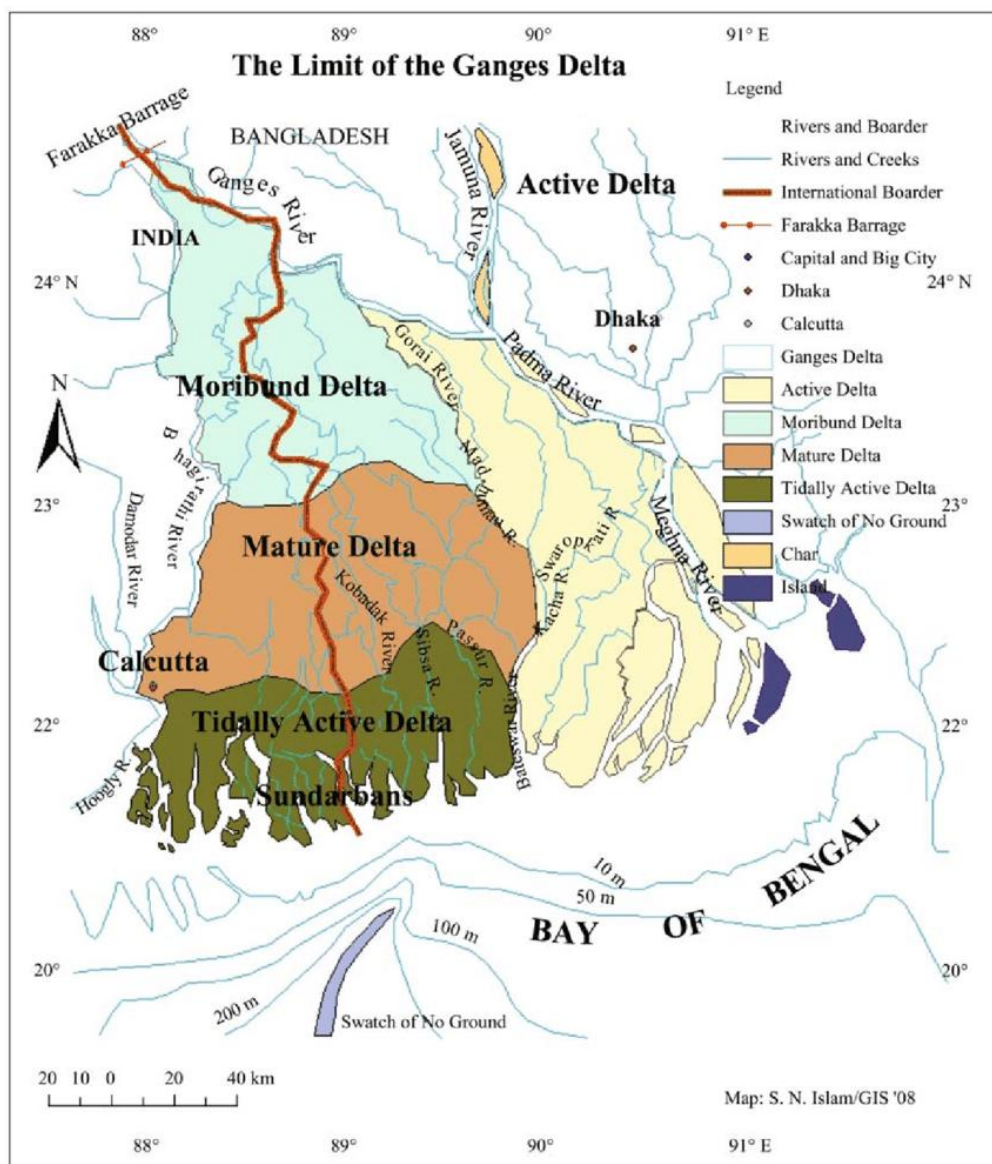
The most interesting facts discovered by these great experiments were-

1. The complete absence of marine deposits throughout the depth of the bore hole.
2. The existence of a peat-bed at 30-35 ft, and again at 382 to 395 feet, below the surface.
3. The existence, in considerable quantities, of fine sand and pebbles like those of the sea shore at 170 to 180 ft and 320-325ft, and again at 400 to 480 ft below the surface. The greater part of these pebbles was derived from gneissic rocks.

It will thus appear that the description of Lower Bengal in Barahamihira’s Brihatsamhita as “Samatata” or tidal swamps and the inference that was gradually raised by alluvial deposits into a habitable kingdom about the 7th century after Christ ,are in perfect accord with the trend of modern physical researches, while there is nothing in the social history of Bengal which commences with king Adisur between the seventh and the ninth century after Christ that appears to militate against the inference.

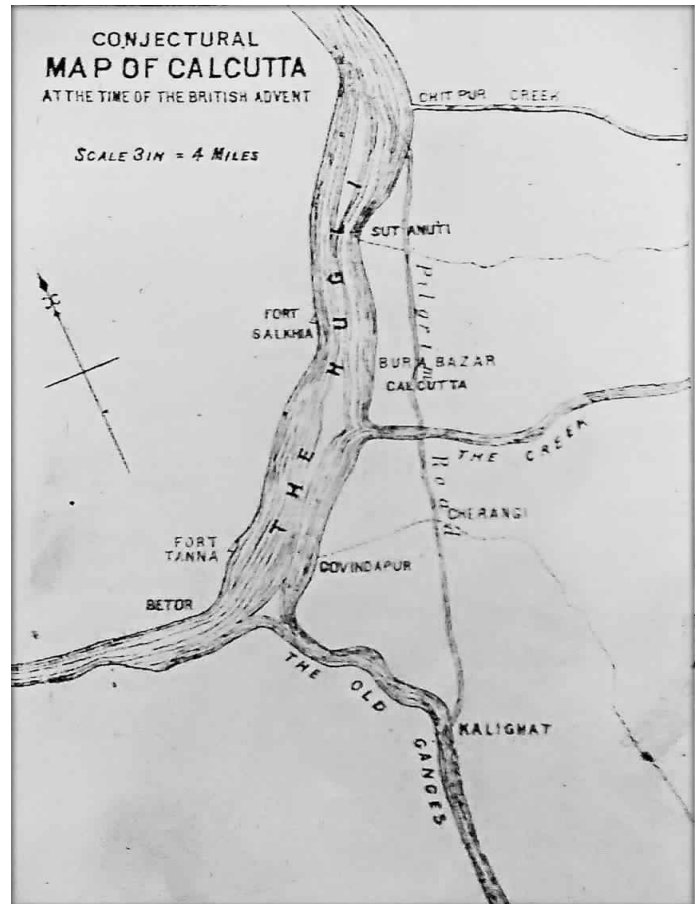
There are therefore good reasons to think-

- a) That in remote antiquity, gneissic hills stood out from the sea where Kolkata now is.
- b) That at a later date – probably during the tertiary period –these hills were depressed and a tidal swamp extended up to the foot of the Rajmahal hills.
- c) That the Lower Gangetic plains below the Rajmahal hills began to be elevated by fluvial deposits about four to five thousand years ago.
- d) That the extension of the delta was from north and west to south and east.
- e) That near Kolkata, an elevation of the area has alternately been followed by a subsidence.
- f) That in historical times the extreme south eastern portion including Khulna, Jessore, the Sundarbans and Kolkata was not fully formed in the 17th century of Christian era, when East Bengal was sufficiently inhabited to form nucleus of a kingdom.



Kolkata or Calcutta (old name) hides mysteries even in its name. It may have been desperation as much as folk humour that invented fanciful derivations like *kal kata* (*cut yesterday*) – a grass cutter’s supposed reply to a misunderstood question from an Englishman. More designedly fanciful is the adaptation of *Golgatha*, the Biblical land of skulls from the high mortality rate amongst the colonists. The name may derive from *Kilkila* – *an ancient province* 21 yojans (160 square miles) in extent, with Saraswati on the West and the Jamuna on the East and containing the towns and villages of Hooghly, Basberia, Bhatpara, Khardah, Sialdaha, Govindapur, etc – (A. K Roy, A Short History of Calcutta).

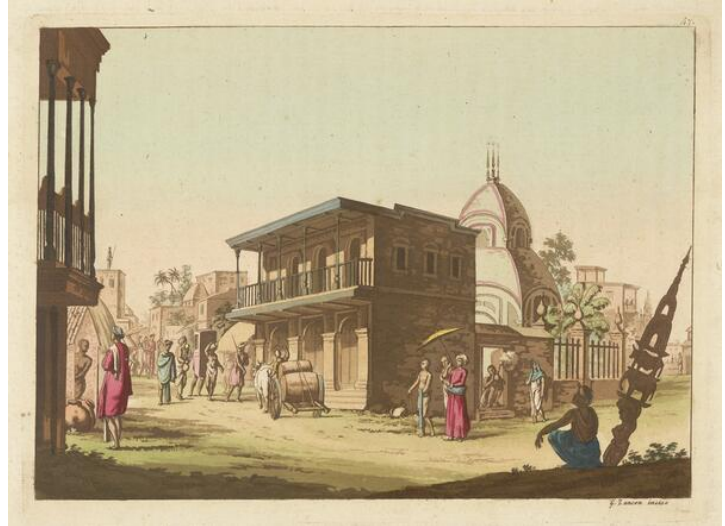
The earliest mention of Kalikata / Kolkata/ Calcutta is found in the poem *Manasa-mangal* of the Bengali poet Bipradas Piplai in the year c.1495 as a village on the bank of the Hooghly and in *Ain-I-Akbari* (c.1590), the form *Kalkata* itself variant of a place name on Raja Todar Mal’s rent – roll: but there are other variants, and in any case name refers to a Mahal (region or district), not a village or town. Going back to a remote antiquity, the name has been derived from *Kol-ka-hata* – the territory or the settlement of the Kols, certain Pre Dravidian tribes. But there is no record of Kols ever having inhabited lower Bengal, and the very name Kol seems to be of late origin. A favoured explanation of one time was that the place had been marked by a *Kata*, warehouse and kiln, for *Kali* (*Chun*) or unslaked lime made by burning



crustacean shells. But others have doubted the extent, antiquity or indeed existence of such a trade here and the explanation is now seldom advanced. It is also suggested that in order to compete with cloth exported by the Portuguese from *Calicut* (hence Calico), the English stamped “*Kalikat*” on their own exports from Bengal, giving rise to the name. *Khal*, in Bengali as in North Indian languages is a canal or ditch, *Kata* means cut or excavated. This etymology has sometimes been advanced with respect to the Maratha Ditch, but what was dug long after city’s foundation. More convincingly, the *Khal* has been taken as the *Beliaghata* canal or creek, which once ran west from the Salt lakes through present day Creek row and Lenin Sarani (Dharamtala). It has been suggested that *Khal Kata* is the source of the English form of Calcutta, while the Bengali *Kalikata* has a different origin.

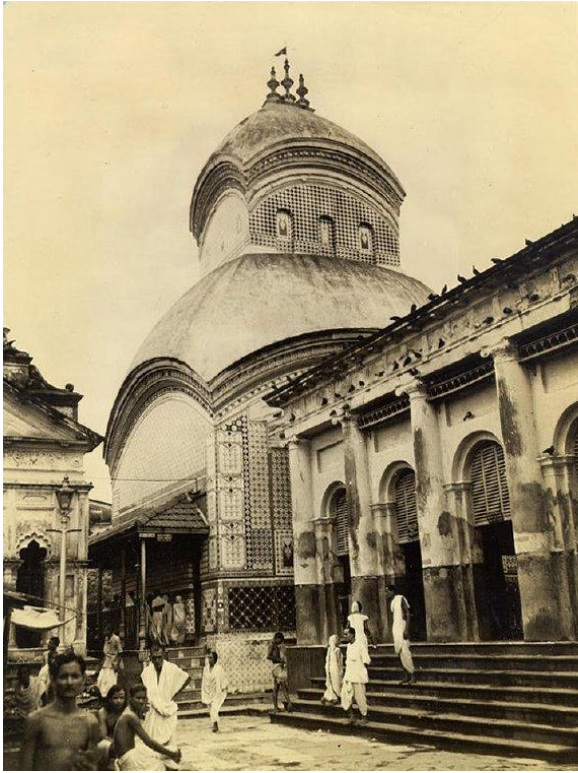
The latter is most commonly derived from the name of the *Goddess Kali* of *Kalighat*. It would be simplistic to derive it directly from Kalighat, as the two names occur side by side in early texts. But again many variants have been suggested, such as *Kali-Kota* (home or abode of Kali) *Kalighatta* (A North Indian distortion of Kalighat), or Kalikshetra (the field or terrain of Kali)

When the dead body of the Goddess Durga or Sati was dismembered by Vishnu's war – discus (Sudarshan Chakra), the toes of her right foot were said to have fallen beside the old course of the Bhagirathi or Hugly River (the old or ADI GANGA). The place became one of the 51 pithas of the Goddess. **Kalighat**, inseparable from the life of Kolkata and some think, directly or indirectly the source of the city's name. The manifestation of the Goddess here is known as Dakshinakali;



her consort Shiva is Nakuleswar; Vishnu in the form of Krishna, dwells under the appellation of Shyam Rai in an adjacent temple. The association of these three deities makes “Kalighat” unique meeting point for both Shakta and Vaishnav pilgrims, for ascetics and well as householders. No one knows from when this deity is worshipped. Brahma himself said to have picked up the Goddess's toes and face beside a small pond to the east of the temple, the hrad or Kalikunda. However the temple was constructed much later by Sabarna family in the year 1809.





It is said that the same Natha saint (**Chowranga Giri**) who founded the ancient Kali Kshetra (**the temple which pre-dates current Kalighat**) in the 15th century, found the swayambhu linga of Nakuleshwar Bhairav. For a long time his shrine was only a thatched hut, some distance to the north-east direction from the Kalighat temple. The Kalighat Temple was developed magnificently by the Sabarna Roy Choudhury family in 1809, but her consort had to wait for some more time for a temple. In 1854 (Bengali Year 1250 or বঙ্গাব্দ ১২৫০), a Punjabi merchant named **Tara Singh**, erected the present stone temple.

Nawabs of Bengal all being located beside River Bhagirathi Hooghly. Kolkata can thus be considered as the sixth capital of the province of Bengal. It also served as a capital of the British India for more than hundred years (1772-1911). Kolkata grew rapidly in the 19th century to become the second city of the British Indian Empire. This was accompanied by the development of a culture that fused European philosophies with Indian tradition. From the very inception, the city has a close relationship with the River. When the Portuguese began to frequent the river about 1530, Sātgaon, not far from Hooghly on the old Saraswati River, was the great emporium of trade. Owing to the shallowness of the upper reaches of the river, however, ships used to anchor at Garden Reach, and their goods were sent up to Sātgaon in small boats; and a market thus sprang up at Betor, near Sibpur, on the west bank of the Hooghly, which the Portuguese made their head-quarters. In the sixteenth century the Saraswati began to silt up, and Satgaon was abandoned. Most of its inhabitants went to the town of Hooghly, but about the middle of the century four families of **Bysakhs** and one of **Seths** founded the village of **Gobindpur** on the site of the modern Fort William. Shortly after this the Portuguese moved to Hooghly, deserting Betor, and the trade of the latter place was gradually transferred to Sutanuti ('cotton mart') in the north of modern Calcutta. To the north lay Chitpore and Baranagar, a Dutch colony famous for handkerchiefs or *rumals*.



Along Sutanuti connecting Kalighat lies the oldest land route of Calcutta i.e Chitpore Road which lies parallel to River Bhagirathi Hooghly from North to South. Its history takes us back to the days when Mughals ruled. This road actually predates the very existence of British Calcutta. It was then known as the *Pilgrim's Road* since its path took to the holy site of the Kali Temple from another oldest temple of Kolkata – Chitteswari or Chitreswari Temple. Adi Chitteswari Mandir, Cossipore: It is said that, the famous robber of that time- 'Chite Dakat', founded this temple. After his death, the idols remain in the midst of the Jungle. Manohar Ghosh constructed this present temple and reinstalled the deity in 1610 A.D., 80 years before Job Charnock landed in Kolkata. The idol of Chitteswari Durga is installed in the sanctum. The deity built with Neem [Margosa] wood remains the same and the idol is one of the oldest exhibits of sculpture of Maa Durga.



Thus when Job Charnock of the English East India Company landed in 24th August, 1691, after his skirmish with the Mughals at Hooghly there were flourishing settlements on the site of the city at a much earlier date. Job Charnock was struck by the commercial and tactical advantages of the site; but there were to be several false starts and inconclusive landings and unconcerted British attempts to settle at Hijli, Uluberia and even Chattagram before he had his way.



The three villages of Sutanuti, Govindapur and Kalikata along River Bhagirathi Hooghly were part of a khas mahal or imperial jagir or an estate belonging to the Mughal Emperor himself and *the Jagirdari* Rights were held by the *Sabarna Roy Choudhury* family. The British East India Company acquired the Zamindari Rights of these three villages from them in 1698 and in 1717, from the then Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar they took over adjoining 38 villages. Till 1756, the legal status of the English in Calcutta was that of Zaminder. But the fortification of Calcutta raised a huge drift between the English and the Nawab of Bengal Siraj – Ud – Daullah. On 16th June 1756, Nawab attacked Calcutta with more than 30,000 combatants and destroyed the Fort William. After the siege, writes A.K Roy in his short history of Calcutta, the name Calcutta disappeared from history for the time. The Nawab renamed it as Alinagar after his Grandfather Alivardhi Khan. The Name Calcutta was restored in January 1758, after British regained control over Bengal and eventually whole of India. From 1772 to 1911, Calcutta was the capital of British India. 18th and 19th century saw the rise of Calcutta as in to become the “**City of Palaces**”. Trade flourished and people from all over the world came to this city to try out their fortunes. Along with Portuguese and Armenians, Jews, Greeks, Scottish, Irish, Parsis and Chinese came through River Hooghly. In 1750, Calcutta had a population of 120,000. The centre of company control over the whole of Bengal from 1757, Calcutta underwent rapid industrial growth from the 1850s, especially in the textile sector, despite the poverty of the surrounding region. Trade with other nations also grew. Despite being almost totally destroyed by a cyclone, in which 60,000 died, on 5 October 1864, Calcutta grew, mostly in an unplanned way, in the next 150 years from 117,000 to 1,098,000 inhabitants (including suburbs), and now has a metropolitan population of approximately 14.6 million.

Calcutta's intellectual life received a great boost with the advent of Western Education. Calcutta saw the establishment of several different Western-style higher education institutions this period, including Sanskrit College (1824), Calcutta Medical College (1835), University of Calcutta (1857), Surendranath College (1885) and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (1887), India's first research institute. The advent of 19th century in Bengal also witnessed - **The Bengali Renaissance** or simply Bengal Renaissance, Banglar Nobojagoron) which was a cultural, social, intellectual and artistic movement in Bengal region in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent during the period of the British Indian Empire. The Intellectual awakening paved the way for the early stages of the national movement of independence. Exactly a hundred years after the fall of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey, Calcutta saw the beginning of what is often called the First Independence Movement of India. In 1883, Surendranath Banerjee organised a national conference – the first of its kind in 19th century India. This conference heralded the birth of **The Indian National Congress**. Other societies based on nationalist or religious thoughts were started, like the Hindu Mela. Revolutionary organisations like the Jugantar and the Anushilan Samiti were formed with the goal of using force against the British rulers. The early nationalists were inspired by Swami Vivekananda, the foremost disciple of the Hindu mystic Sri Ramakrishna and helped by Sister Nivedita, disciple of the former. The rousing cry that awakened India's soul was penned

by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. Now the national song of the nation, it is an ode to the land of Bharat (India) as the Divine Mother, "**Vande Mataram**". The British got scared and announced for the Partition of Bengal in 1905 which led to the initiation of the Revolutionary activities in Bengal. In 1911, Calcutta was stripped out from her Capital status. 20th century Calcutta became the seat of National Freedom Struggle Movement. From 1912 to India's Independence in 1947, it was the capital of all of Bengal. After Independence, Calcutta remained the capital of the Indian state of West Bengal. The intense violence caused during the partition of India led to a shift in demographics in Bengal, and especially Kolkata; large numbers of Muslims left for East Pakistan, while hundreds of thousands of Hindus arrived to take their place. Kolkata received millions of refugees from what became East Pakistan without receiving substantial assistance from the central government. Over the 1960s and 1970s, severe power shortages, strife in labour relations (including strikes by workers and lockouts by employers) and a militant Marxist-Maoist movement who sometimes used violence and property destruction as tactics of protest — the Naxalites — damaged much of the city's infrastructure, leading to economic stagnation. Calcutta lost her commercial identity and according to Rajiv Gandhi in 1985 it became the "Dying City". But, Kolkata has never lost her soul. It always remained the "Cultural – Intellectual" capital of India. It produced six Noble Laureates and the germination ground of innumerable ideas and institutions. Throughout this report we will try to document the multi dimensional cultural traditions of the city of Calcutta.



Timeline

1495 - The name Kalikata was mentioned in the *Manasa-mangal* of the Bengali poet Bipradas Piplai.

1537 - 4 families of Bysacks and a Setth family settled down near Adi Ganga to trade with Portuguese in Betor. They named the place on the name of their family deity – Govinda Jew as “Govindapur”.

1556 – 1605 - The name “Kalikatta” was mentioned in the rent-roll of the Mughal Emperor Akbar. According to Ain-e-Akbari, Bengal Subah was divided into 15 Sarkars and again the Sarkars are divided into 689 Mahals. Satgaon Sarkar has the name Kalkatta mentioned as the 35th Mahal. Together with 36th and 37th Mahal Kalkatta Mahal used to pay Rs 2,34,015/- as tax.

1600 - The East India Company is founded

At first the company is known as 'The Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies.' It is founded by a Royal Charter, signed by Queen Elizabeth I, on 31 December 1600. Sir Thomas Smythe is the Company's first Governor.

1690 - The Company builds trading centres in Calcutta

There is a great demand for all kinds of gorgeous Indian textiles in Europe. Indian craftsmen produce many beautiful textiles for the Company: cottons, silks, muslins and embroidered quilts. While these workers suffer the effects of famine, war and poverty, the Company grows rich on the profits of the textile trade.

1717 - Mughal emperor Farrukh-Siyar granted the East India Company freedom of trade in return for a yearly payment of 3,000 rupees; this arrangement gave a great impetus to the growth of Calcutta.

1742 - When the Marathas from the southwest began incursions against the Mughals in the western districts of Bengal in 1742, the English obtained permission from 'Ali Vardi Khan, the nawab (ruler) of Bengal, to dig an entrenchment in the northern and eastern part of the town to form a moat on the land side. This came to be known as the Maratha Ditch. Although it was not completed to the southern end of the settlement, it marked the city's eastern boundary.

In **1756 the nawab's successor**, Siraj al-Dawlah, captured the fort and sacked the town.

1757 - Battle of Plassey

The British government is concerned about the way the Company is governing its Indian territories, and decides to curb its power. Warren Hastings is appointed as the first governor-general of India. He is charged with mismanagement in 1785.

1772 - Calcutta became the capital of British India. Calcutta did not become the capital of British India until 1772, when the first governor-general, Warren Hastings, transferred all important offices to the city from Murshidabad, the provincial Mughal capital.

1813 The monopoly of all trade with India ends

The Company's sole trade with India is stopped but it continues to trade with China.

In 1814 the Lottery Committee was constituted to finance public improvement by means of lotteries, and between 1814 and 1836 it took some effective measures to improve conditions.

The municipal corporation was established in 1841. Cyclones in 1864, 1867, and 1870, however, devastated the poorer, low-lying areas.

1833 The end of the East India Company's trading days

During the East India Company's life about 4,600 ships voyages are made from London. The company is finally abolished in 1858 after a rebellion by its Bengali Army.

3. CELEBRATED CITIZENS OF KOLKATA

“What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow”- Gopal Krishna Gokhale

Kolkata has been regarded as the cultural capital of India and a hub for intellectuals and artists. People from Bengal have achieved remarkable success in every field. Noble laureates, scientists, civil service officers, doctors, astronauts, polymaths, journalists, musicians, biologists, physicists, singers, mathematicians, poets, dramatists, economists, philosophers, dancers, barristers, professors, painters, and the list is never ending. The region has been a historical melting pot, blending indigenous traditions with cosmopolitan influences from pan-Indian sub-continental territories, thereby, upholding the status-quo in every achievable way. The germination started in the 19th Century Kolkata where after the annexation by British, Bengal’s culture was extraordinarily influenced by westerns. It leads to a new generation of intellects where we have witnessed the climax personalities like Tagore. This phase is often compared with the European Renaissance which took place in the 16th Century.

Bengal Renaissance and Beyond

During the 19th century, Bengal witnessed an intellectual, cultural, social and artistic movement. It was an idiosyncratic blend of social reformers, scholars, literary giants, journalists, orator, and scientists. All of them coalesced to form the image of a renaissance and earmarked the metamorphosis from the “medieval” to “modern”. The list of Stalwarts are endless but still to name a few associated with the social reforms in Bengal were Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore and the list goes on. Let us go through the work of some of the contributors; a. Male & b. Female.

A. Eminent Contributors (Male)

1. Rammohan Roy - The maker of modern India, Raj Ram Mohan Roy was born on May 22, 1772, at a time when society was cursed with the iniquities clad in the fabrics of religion. Among countless feats, Raja Ram Mohan Roy's greatest achievement was that of setting up of the Brahma Samaj in 1828. It is considered to be one of India's first socio-religious reform movements. Brahma Samaj believed in the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of mankind. It not only discarded meaningless rites and rituals but also forbade idol-worship. Raja Ram Mohan Roy believed in the oneness of God and preached the same. Through Brahma Samaj, Raja

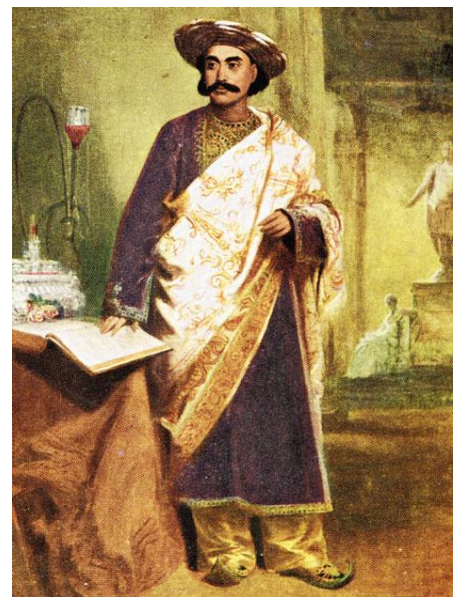


Ram Mohan Roy raised his voice against the caste system, polygamy, child marriage, infanticide, untouchability, seclusion of women and Purdah system. Brahma Samaj attacked the age-old social taboos and tried to make Indian society more secular than before. The Samaj was lesser of

a religion and more of an intellectual approach. Nearly 200 years ago, when evils like -- Sati -- plagued the society, Roy played a critical role to bring about a change. He opposed the regressive practice that forced a widow to immolate herself on husband's pyre. He advocated the right of women to be remarried.

In 1830, he travelled to the UK as the Mughal Empire's envoy to ensure that Lord William Bentinck's law banning the practice of Sati was not overturned. Raja Ram Mohan Roy also brought reforms in the field of education. He established The Hindu College, the City College, Vedanta College, and English Schools were established in Calcutta through his efforts. He contributed a lot for the development of Bengali, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English language and wrote books in these languages. He supported the introduction of English education in India, which he thought was necessary to promote enlightenment and knowledge of science in the country. Through the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Charles Metcalfe removed all the restrictions imposed on Press in 1835 and gave freedom and autonomy to the newspapers in publication and management. Ram Mohan himself edited the Sambaed Kumauni and Miratul Akbar.

2. Dwarkanath Thakur - Dwarkanath Tagore (1794–1846), one of the first Indian industrialists and entrepreneurs, was the founder of the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family, and is notable for making substantial contributions to the Bengal Renaissance. Tagore was a western-educated Bengali Brahmin and an acknowledged civic leader of Kolkata who played a pioneering role in setting up a string of commercial ventures—banking, insurance and shipping companies— in partnership with British traders. In 1828, he became the first Indian bank director. In 1829, he founded Union Bank in Calcutta. He helped found the first Anglo-Indian Managing Agency (industrial organizations that ran jute mills, coal mines, tea plantations, etc., Carr, Tagore and Company. Dwarkanath Tagore was of the firm conviction that at those



times "the happiness of India is best secured by her connection with England". Dwarkanath was no doubt a loyalist, and a sincere one at that, but he was by no means a toady. Servility was as far from his character as was lack of generosity from his nature. He was also firm in defending the interest and sentiments of his people against European prejudices. With this in view, he established on 21 March 1838 an Association for Landholders (later known as the Landholder's Society). The association was overtly a self-serving political association, founded on a large and liberal basis, to admit landholders of all descriptions, Englishmen, Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. What is interesting is that it cut across racial and religious divides being founded along with his old rival Raja Radhakanta Deb with whom he had earlier founded the Gaudiya Sabha. It was the first political association in India to ventilate in a constitutional manner the

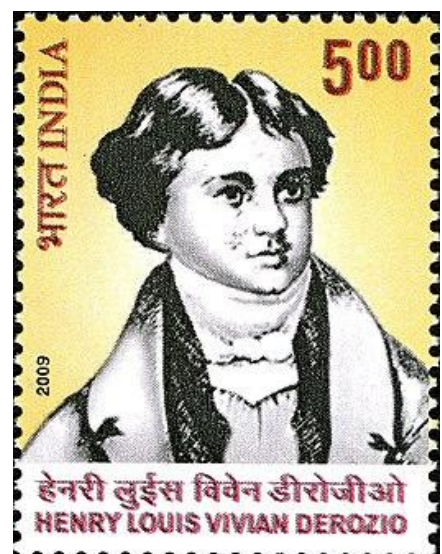
grievances of the people or a section of them that were outspoken. From this grew the British Indian Association, the precursor to the Indian National Congress.

3. David Hare - During the British rule in India there were a vast number of English people, who followed their own path, not tried before, maintained their conviction of character and strong individuality and pursued their goals with passion. Such people sincerely worked for the welfare of the Indian natives with the money they saved in India. They never had any partisan attitude when it came to serving the humanity with equal justice and fairness. David Hare, a Scottish gentleman dedicated his entire life to the cause of education for Indians to lift them from ignorance.



David Hare (1775–1842) was a Scottish watchmaker and philanthropist in Bengal, India (see East India Company and their rule in India). David Hare was born in Scotland in 1775. He came to India in 1800 to make a fortune as a watch maker. However, while he prospered in his business his mind was distracted by the deplorable conditions of the native population and unlike most of the other people who returned to their native land after gathering a fortune to live a life in peace and prosperity, he decided to stay back in the country and devote himself entirely to the cause of its uplift. Hare felt that the need of the country was English education. David Hare along with Raja Rammohan Roy were mostly instrumental in founding Hindu College which later on became the Presidency College. He even gave his own land for the purpose of construction of Hindu School in College Street area. He was also instrumental in establishing the School Book Society on 6 May 1817. It took the initiative to print and publish text books in both English and Bengali. This society contributed substantially to the flowering of the Bengal Renaissance. In 1818, he established Arpooly Pathsala which later on renamed as Coolotullah Branch School and finally now known as Hare School. The school is declared as the oldest western type school in Asia.

4. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and his Young Bengal Movement - The Young Bengal was a group of Bengali free thinkers emerging from Hindu College, Calcutta. They were also known as Derozians, after their firebrand teacher at Hindu College, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (18 April 1809 – 26 December 1831), was an Indian poet of Portuguese origin and assistant headmaster of Hindu College, Kolkata at the age of 17. He was a radical thinker of his time and one of the first Indian educators to disseminate Western learning and science among the young men of Bengal. Derozio was known during his lifetime as the first 'national' poet of modern India.



Derozio's students, collectively called the *Young Bengal*, ridiculed all old social traditions and customs, debated the existence of God, defied social and religious convictions and demanded freedom of thought and expression and education for women. They cherished the ideals of *French Revolution* and the liberal thinking of England. The very strong radical views of this group and their unconventional practices like not showing respect to religious idols alarmed the orthodox Hindus of Calcutta. They thought that the teachings of Derozio were the root cause of the views held by the young boys and exerted pressure on the authorities of the Hindu College to dismiss him. The Young Bengal Movement continued even after Derozio's dismissal and his sudden death in 1831. Though deprived of leadership, the members of this group continued preaching radical views through teaching and journalism.

Some of the stalwart of Young Bengal Movement were - Krishnamohan Bandyopadhyay, Rashik Krishna Mallik, Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay, Ramgopal Ghose, Madhab Chandra Mallik, ramtanu lahiri, Maheshchandra Ghose, Sibchandra Deb, Harachandra Ghose, Radhanath Sikder, Govindachandra Basak, Amritalal Mitra and others.

5. Radhanath Sikdar October 1813 – 17 May 1870 was an Indian Bengali mathematician who is best known for calculating the height of Mount Everest. When, in 1831, the Surveyor General of India George Everest was searching for a brilliant young mathematician with particular proficiency in spherical trigonometry, the Hindu College maths teacher John Tytler recommended his pupil Sikdar, then only 19. Sikdar joined the Great Trigonometric Survey in 1831 December as a "computer" at a salary of thirty rupees per month. Soon he was sent to Sironj near Dehradun where he excelled in geodetic surveying. Apart from mastering the usual geodetic processes, he invented quite a few of his own.



6. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar - Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) was as one of the pillars of Bengal renaissance who managed to continue the social reforms movement that was started by Raja Rammohan Roy in the early 1800s. Vidyasagar was a well-known writer, intellectual and above all a staunch supporter of humanity. He had an imposing personality and was revered even by the British authorities of his time. He brought about a revolution in the Bengali education system and refined the way Bengali language was written and taught. His book, 'Borno Porichoy' (Introduction to the letter), is still used as the introductory text to learn Bengali alphabets. The title 'Vidyasagar' (ocean of knowledge) was given to him due to his vast knowledge in several subjects. Poet Michael Madhusudan Dutta while writing about Ishwar Chandra said: "The genius and wisdom of an ancient sage, the energy of an Englishman and the heart of a Bengali mother". He was an ardent advocate of women education. He rightly viewed education as the primary way for women to achieve emancipation from all the societal oppression they had to face at that time. He exercised his power and lobbied hard for opening of

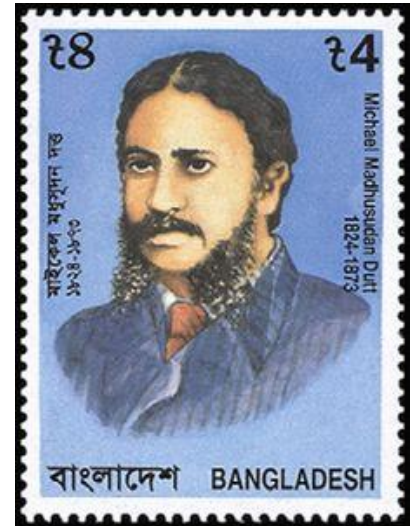
school for girls and even outlined suitable curriculum that not only did educate them, but also enabled them to be self-reliant through vocations like needlework. He went door to door, requesting heads of families to allow their daughters to be enrolled in schools. He opened 35 schools for women throughout Bengal and was successful in enrolling 1300 students. He even initiated Nari Siksha Bhandar, a fund to lend support for the cause. He maintained his support to John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune to establish the first permanent girls' school in India, the Bethune School, on May 7, 1849. He disseminated his ideals through regular articles he wrote for periodicals and newspapers. He was associated with prestigious journalistic publications like 'Tattwabodhini Patrika', 'Somprakash', 'Sarbashubhankari Patrika' and 'Hindu Patriot'. He wrote a number of books that hold primary importance in Bengali culture. His lasting legacy remains with 'Borno Porichoy', an elementary level book for learning Bengali alphabets, where he reconstructed Bengali alphabets and reformed it into typography of 12 vowels and 40 consonants. He established the Sanskrit Press with an aim to produce printed books at affordable prices so that common people could buy them. Vidyasagar was always vocal about the oppression that the society inflicted on women at that time. He was very close to his mother who was a woman of great character, who directed him once to do something to alleviate the pain and helplessness of Hindu widows, who were forced to live a life of abnegation. They were denied basic pleasures of life, marginalised in the society, often exploited unfairly and treated as a burden by their family. Vidyasagar's compassionate heart could not take their plight and he made it his mission to improve the quality of life for these helpless women. He faced raging opposition from orthodox society which termed the concept as something heretic. He challenged the Brahminical authorities and proved that widow remarriage is sanctioned by Vedic scriptures. He took his arguments to the British Authorities and his pleas were heard when the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856 or Act XV, 1856, was decreed on July 26, 1856. He did not just stop there. He initiated several matches for child or adolescent widows within respectable families and even married his son Narayan Chandra to an adolescent widow in 1870 to set an example.



7. **Michael Madhusudan Dutta**- (25 January 1824 – 29 June 1873) was a popular 19th-century Bengali poet and dramatist. He was a pioneer of Bengali drama. His famous work Meghnad Badh Kavya, is a tragic epic. It consists of nine cantos and is exceptional in Bengali literature both in terms of style and content. He also wrote poems about the sorrows and afflictions of love as spoken by women. Dutta is widely considered to be one of the greatest poets in Bengali literature and the father of the Bengali sonnet. He pioneered what came to be called 'Amitrakshar chhanda' (blank verse). Although his first love remained poetry, Dutt showed prodigious skill as a playwright. He was the first to write Bengali plays in the English style, segregating the play into acts and scenes. He was also the pioneer of the first satirical plays in

Bengali – Buro Shaliker Ghare Rnow (Bengali - বুড়ো শালিকের ঘাড়ে রৌঁ) and Ekei Ki Bôle Sâbhyôta? (Bengali - একেই কি বলে সভ্যতা?)".

The poem Satan is a good sonnet by Her Here and Michael Madhusudan Dutt. It is a piece of his epic poetry. Like Milton's Paradise Lost this poem focuses on Satan's fullest glory. Here Satan's beauty is stressed but obviously it is a faded beauty "King Poru" is one of the well known poems based on a legendary episode from Indian history. The King Poru was caught by the military of King Alexander after winning the battle of the Hydaspes River. Alexander asked Porus how he wanted to be treated. To this the King Porus answered that he wanted to be treated like a King. King Porus A Legend Of Old is based upon the true incident from history of India. There are 6 stanzas in this long narrative poem. The first stanza begins with the image of raging storm., The poem ends with the images of volcano and earthquake. These images suggest that it is a wide scale tragedy. It brings forth issues that form a kind of moral to the tale. The Queen of Delhi's Dream is a tragic poem by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. It has been taken from The Captive Ladie (1849). It tells the story of the Rajput King Prithviraj Chauhan. In this poem, the poet presents the story of King's abduction of the daughter of the King of Kanauj and his unsuccessful battle with the Muslim invader Muhammad Ghori. The poem ends with the death of the King and his Queen.



8. Dinabandhu Mitra (1830 – 1 November 1873) was a Bengali dramatist. He is notable for his play Nil Darpan (1860). Mitra's play Nil Darpan was about the plight of indigo farmers. Indigo revolt (1858) in Bengali was the revolt of the indigo farmers against the indigo planters. It was one year after the Sepoy Revolt, Bengal saw one more important revolt in its history. Michael Madhusudan Dutt translated the play into English immediately after it was published. and Reverend James Long published it. The play got wide publicity in Europe where it was translated into other languages. No other Bengali book at that time got so wide publicity at such large scale.



9. Mahendralal Sarkar - 2 November 1833 – 23 February 1904, was a Bengali medical doctor (MD), the second MD graduated from the Calcutta Medical College, social reformer, and propagator of scientific studies in nineteenth-century India. He was the founder of the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science.

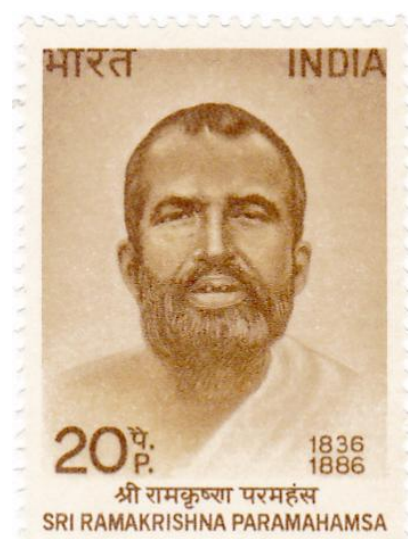


10. Bankimchandra Chatterjee or Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, (27 June 1838–8 April 1894) was an

Indian novelist, poet and journalist. Chattopadhyay is widely regarded as a key figure in literary renaissance of Bengal as well as the broader Indian subcontinent. Some of his writings, including novels, essays, and commentaries, were a breakaway from traditional verse-oriented Indian writings, and provided an inspiration for authors across India. He was the composer of *Vande Mataram*, originally in Sanskrit stotra personifying India as a mother goddess and inspiring activists during the Indian Independence Movement. Chattopadhyay wrote thirteen novels and many serious, serio-comic, satirical, scientific and critical treatises in Bengali. Some of his path breaking work are – Anandamath (Political Novel) , Debi Choudhurani , Krishnakanter Will, Kamalakanter Doptore, Kapalkundala etc. His works were widely translated into other regional languages of India as well as in English. Critics, like Pramathnath Bishi, consider Chattopadhyay as the best novelist in Bangla literature. Their belief is that few writers in world literature have excelled in both philosophy and art as Bankim has done. They have felt that in a colonised nation Bankim could not overlook politics. He was one of the first intellectuals who wrote in a British colony, accepting and rejecting the status at the same time. Bishi also rejects the division of Bankim in 'Bankim the artist' and 'Bankim the moralist' – for Bankim must be read as a whole.



11. Shri Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa - Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa 18 February 1836 – 16 August 1886, born as "Gadadhar" Chattopadhyay was an Indian Hindu mystic, philosopher, saint and considered as an avatar by many in 19th century Bengal. Shri Shri Ramakrishna experienced spiritual ecstasies from a young age, and was influenced by several religious traditions, including devotion toward the Goddess Kali, Tantra (shakta), Vaishnava (bhakti), and Advaita Vedanta. As a priest at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, his mystical temperament and ecstasies gradually gained him widespread acknowledgement, attracting to him various spiritual teachers, social leaders, lay followers and eventually disciples. Reverence and admiration for him among Bengali elites led to his chief disciple Swami Vivekananda founding the Ramakrishna Math, which provides spiritual training for monastics and householder devotees and the Ramakrishna Mission to provide charity, social work and education. With his unquenchable thirst for God, Sri



Ramakrishna broke the frontiers of Hinduism, glided through the paths of Islam and Christianity, and attained the highest realization through each of them in a short span of time. He looked upon Jesus and Buddha as incarnations of God, and venerated the ten Sikh Gurus. He expressed the quintessence of his twelve-year-long spiritual realizations in a simple dictum: Yato mat, tato path "As many faiths, so many paths." He now habitually lived in an exalted state of consciousness in which he saw God in all beings. Sri Ramakrishna did not write any book, nor did he deliver public lectures. Instead, he chose to speak in a simple language using parables and metaphors by way of illustration, drawn from the observation of nature and ordinary things of daily use. His conversations were charming and attracted the cultural elite of Bengal. These conversations were noted down by his disciple Mahendranath Gupta who published them in the form of a book, Sri Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita in Bengali. Its English rendering, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, was released in 1942; it continues to be popular to this day on account of its universal appeal and relevance.

12. Keshub Chandra Sen - 19 November 1838 – 8 January 1884 was a philosopher and social reformer in the Bengal Presidency of British India. Born a Hindu, he became a member of the Brahmo Samaj in 185 but established his own breakaway "Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj" in 1866 while the Brahmo Samaj remained under the leadership of Debendranath Tagore (who headed the Brahmo Samaj till his death in 1905). In 1878 his followers abandoned him after the underage child marriage of his daughter which exposed his campaign against child marriage as hollow. Later in his life he came under the influence of Ramakrishna and founded a syncretic "New Dispensation" inspired by Christianity, and Vaishnav bhakti, and Hindu practices.



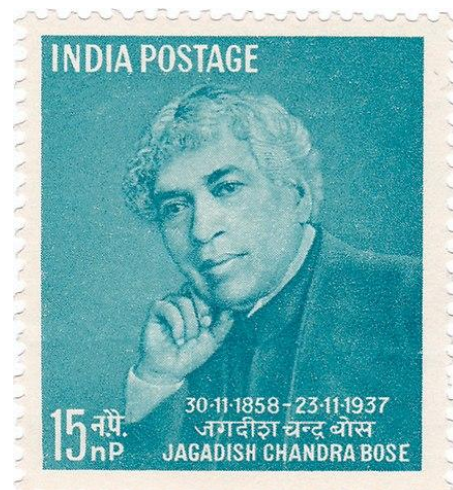
13. Girish Chandra Ghosh (28 Feb 1844 – 8 Feb 1912) was a Bengali musician, poet, hair designer, playwright, novelist, theatre director and actor. He was largely responsible for the golden age of Bengali theatre. He can be referred to as the Father of Bengali Theatre. He was a versatile genius, a scholar without having any formal educational background, an actor of repute and a mentor who brought up many actors and actresses, including Binodini Dasi. He cofounded the Great National Theatre, the first Bengali professional theatre company in 1872, wrote nearly 40 plays and acted and directed many more, and later in life became a noted disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.



14. Sir Surendranath Banerjee (10 November 1848 – 6 August 1925) was one of the earliest Indian political leaders during the British Raj. He founded the Indian National Association, through which he led two sessions of the Indian National Conference in 1883 and 1885, along with Anandamohan Bose. Banerjee later became a senior leader of the Indian National Congress. Surendranath welcomed Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, unlike Congress, and with many liberal leaders he left Congress and founded a new organisation named Indian National Liberation Federation in 1919. He was one of the founding members of the Indian National Congress.



15. Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose - (30 November 1858 – 23 November 1937), was a polymath, physicist, biologist, biophysicist, botanist and archaeologist, and an early writer of science fiction in British India. He pioneered the investigation of radio and microwave optics, made significant contributions to plant science, and laid the foundations of experimental science in the Indian subcontinent. IEEE named him one of the fathers of radio science. Bose is considered the father of Bengali science fiction, and also invented the crescograph, a device for measuring the growth of plants. A crater on the moon has been named in his honour. Born in Mymensingh, Bengal Presidency, during British governance of India, Bose graduated from St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He went to the University of London, England to study medicine, but could not pursue studies in medicine because of health problems. Instead, he conducted his research with the Nobel Laureate Lord Rayleigh at Cambridge and returned to India. He joined the Presidency College of the University of Calcutta as a professor of physics. There, despite racial discrimination and a lack of funding and equipment, Bose carried on his scientific research. He made remarkable progress in his research of remote wireless signalling and was the first to use semiconductor junctions to detect radio signals. However, instead of trying to gain commercial benefit from this invention, Bose made his inventions public in order to allow others to further develop his research.

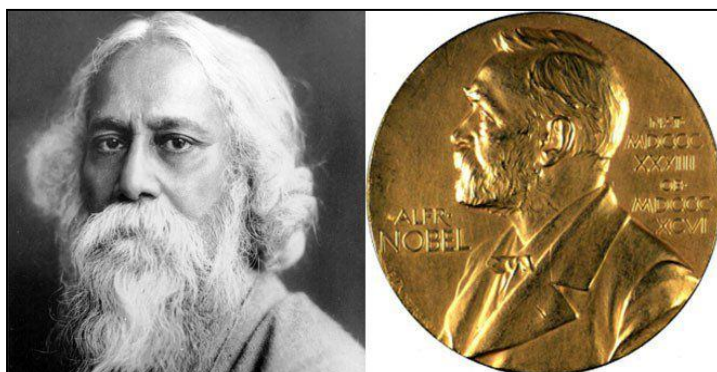
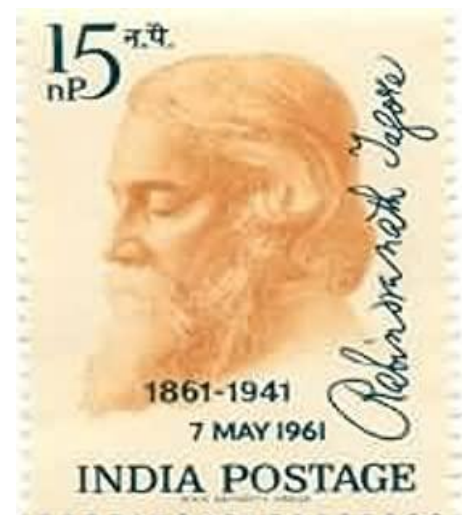


Bose subsequently made a number of pioneering discoveries in plant physiology. He used his own invention, the crescograph, to measure plant response to various stimuli, and thereby scientifically proved parallelism between animal and plant tissues. Although Bose filed for a patent for one of his inventions because of peer pressure, his objection to any form of patenting was well known. To facilitate his research, he constructed automatic recorders capable of registering extremely slight movements; these instruments produced some striking results, such as quivering of injured plants, which Bose interpreted as a power of feeling in plants. His books

include *Response in the Living and Non-Living* (1902) and *The Nervous Mechanism of Plants* (1926). In 2004, Bose was ranked number 7 in BBC's poll of the Greatest Bengali of all time.

16. Noble Laureate - Rabindranath Thakur- Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali Rabindranath Thakur, (born May 7, 1861, Calcutta [now Kolkata], India—died August 7, 1941, Calcutta), Bengali poet, short-story writer, song composer, playwright, essayist, and painter who introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of early 20th-century India. In 1913 he became the first non-European to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. The son of the religious reformer Debendranath Tagore, he early began to write verses, and, after incomplete studies in England in the late 1870s, he returned to India. There he published several books of poetry in the 1880s and completed *Manasi* (1890), a collection that marks the maturing of his genius. It contains some of his best-known poems, including many in verse forms new to Bengali, as well as some social and political satire that was critical of his fellow Bengalis.

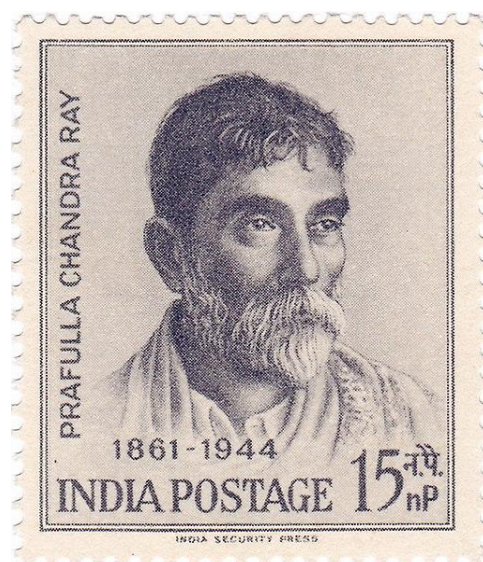
In 1891 Tagore went to East Bengal (now in Bangladesh) to manage his family's estates at Shilaidah and Shazadpur for 10 years. There he often stayed in a houseboat on the Padma River (the main channel of the Ganges River), in close contact with village folk, and his sympathy for them became the keynote of much of his later writing. Most of his finest short stories, which examine "humble lives and their small miseries," date from the 1890s and have a poignancy, laced with gentle irony, that is unique to him (though admirably captured by the director Satyajit Ray in later film adaptations). Tagore came to love the Bengali countryside, most of all the Padma River, an often-repeated image in his verse. During these years he published several poetry collections, notably *Sonar Tari* (1894; *The Golden Boat*), and plays, notably *Chitrangada* (1892; *Chitra*). Tagore's poems are virtually untranslatable, as are his more than 2,000 songs, which achieved considerable popularity among all classes of Bengali society. **Encyclopaedia Britannica.**



Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are *Manasi* (1890) [*The Ideal One*], *Sonar Tari* (1894) [*The Golden Boat*], *Gitanjali* (1910) [Song Offerings], *Gitimalya* (1914) [*Wreath of*

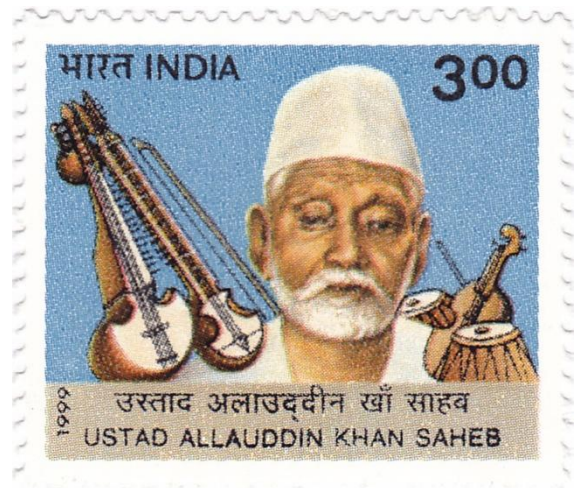
Songs], and Balaka (1916) [The Flight of Cranes]. The English renderings of his poetry, which include The Gardener (1913), Fruit-Gathering (1916), and The Fugitive (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, Gitanjali: Song Offerings (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake. Tagore's major plays are Raja (1910) [The King of the Dark Chamber], Dakghar (1912) [The Post Office], Achalayatan (1912) [The Immovable], Muktheadhara (1922) [The Waterfall], and Raktakaravi (1926) [Red Oleanders]. He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a number of novels, among them Gora (1910), Ghare-Baire (1916) [The Home and the World], and Yogayog (1929) [Crosscurrents]. Besides these, he wrote musical dramas, dance dramas, essays of all types, travel diaries, and two autobiographies, one in his middle years and the other shortly before his death in 1941. Tagore also left numerous drawings and paintings, and songs for which he wrote the music himself.-**Noble Prize Organization.**

17. Acharjya Prafulla Chandra Roy- (2 August 1861 – 16 June 1944) was a Bengali chemist, educationist, historian, industrialist and philanthropist. A leading Bengali nationalist, he established the first Indian research school in chemistry and is regarded as the father of chemical science in India. The Royal Society of Chemistry honoured his life and work with the first ever Chemical Landmark Plaque outside Europe. He was the founder of **Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals**, India's first pharmaceutical company. He is the author of A History of Hindu Chemistry from the earliest times to the middle of 16th century (1902) He remained a bachelor throughout his life who took active participation in politics. He was closely associated with Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and occupied various administrative posts during his lifetime and finally elected as the President and Trustee of Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. His autobiography "**Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist**", published in two volumes in 1932 and 1935 documents his own motivations as a scientist and the sweeping changes India was experiencing during his lifetime. Prafulla Ray wanted to use the marvels of science for lifting up the masses. He was a very passionate and devoted social worker and he participated eagerly and actively in helping famine and flood struck people in Bengal during the early 1920s. He promoted the khadi material and also established many other industries such as the Bengal Enamel Works, National Tannery Works and the Calcutta Pottery Works. He was a true rationalist and he was completely against the caste system and other irrational social systems. He persistently carried on this work of social reformation till he passed away.



Prafulla Ray retired becoming professor emeritus in 1936 aged 75. He died on 16 June 1944, aged 82.

18. Allauddin Khan, also known as Baba Allauddin Khan (8 October 1862 – 6 September 1972) was a Bengali Indian sarod player and multi-instrumentalist, composer and one of the most notable music teachers of the 20th century in Indian classical music. Khan became court musician for the Maharaja of Maihar. Here he laid the foundation of a modern Maihar gharana by developing a number of ragas, combining the bass sitar and bass sarod with more traditional instruments and setting up an orchestra. In 1935, he toured Europe, along with Uday Shankar's ballet troupe, and later also worked



at his institute, Uday Shankar India Culture Centre at Almora for a while. In 1955, Khan established a college of music in Maihar. Some of his recordings are made at the All India Radio in 1959–60. Khan was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1958 and the Padma Vibhushan in 1971, India's third and second highest civilian honours, and prior to that in 1954, the Sangeet Natak Akademi awarded him with its highest honour, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship for lifetime contribution to Indian music.

19. Swami Vivekananda and Ramkrishna Mission - Swami Vivekananda (12 January 1863 – 4 July 1902), born Narendranath Datta, was an Indian Hindu monk, a chief disciple of the 19th-century Indian mystic Ramakrishna. He was a key figure in the introduction of the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to the Western world and is credited with raising interfaith awareness, bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion during the late 19th century. He was a major force in the revival of Hinduism in India, and contributed to the concept of Indian nationalism as a tool of fight against the



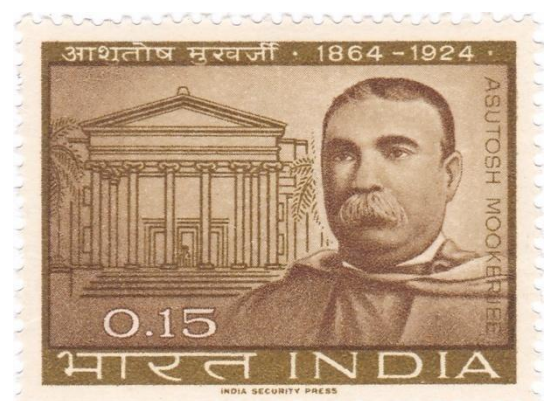
British empire in colonial India. Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. He is perhaps best known for his speech which began with the words - "Sisters and brothers of America ...," in which he introduced Hinduism at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893. Born into an aristocratic Bengali Kayastha family of Calcutta, Vivekananda was inclined towards spirituality. He was influenced by his guru, Ramakrishna, from whom he learnt that all living beings were an embodiment of the divine self; therefore, service to God could be rendered by service to humankind. After Ramakrishna's death, Vivekananda

toured the Indian subcontinent extensively and acquired first-hand knowledge of the conditions prevailing in British India. He later travelled to the United States, representing India at the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions. Vivekananda conducted hundreds of public and private lectures and classes, disseminating tenets of Hindu philosophy in the United States, England and Europe. In India, Vivekananda is regarded as a patriotic saint, and his birthday is celebrated as National Youth Day.

20. Dwijendralal Ray - 19 July 1863 – 17 May 1913, also known as D. L. Ray, was a Bengali poet, playwright, and musician. He was known for his Hindu mythological and Nationalist historical plays and songs known as Dwijendrageeti or the Songs of Dwijendralal, which number over 500, create a separate subgenre of Bengali music. Two of his most famous compositions are Dhana Dhanya Pushpa Bhara and Banga Amar Janani Amar. He is regarded as one of the most important figures in early modern Bengali literature.



21. Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee (29 June 1864 – 25 May 1924) was a prolific Bengali educator, jurist, barrister and mathematician. He was the first student to be awarded a dual degree (MA in Mathematics and Physics) from Calcutta University. Perhaps the most emphatic figure of Indian education, he was a man of great personality, high self-respect, courage and towering administrative ability. The second Indian Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta for four consecutive two-year terms (1906–1914) and a fifth two-year term (1921–23), Mukherjee was responsible for the foundation of the Bengal Technical Institute in 1906 and the College of Science of the Calcutta University in 1914. Mukherjee also played a vital role in the founding of the University College of Law popularly known as Hazra Law College. The Calcutta Mathematical Society was also founded by Mukherjee in 1908 and he served as the president of the Society from 1908 to 1923. He was also the president of the inaugural session of the Indian Science Congress in 1914. The Ashutosh College was also founded under his stewardship in 1916, when he was Vice-chancellor of University of Calcutta. He was often called "Banglar Bagh" ("Tiger of Bengal") for his high self-esteem, courage, academic integrity and a general intransigent attitude towards the British Government.



22. Sir Jadunath Sarkar CIE (10 December 1870 – 19 May 1958) was a prominent Indian historian especially of the Mughal dynasty. In 1898, he was appointed at Presidency College, Calcutta after getting selected in the Provincial Education Services. In between, from 1917 to 1919, he taught Modern Indian History in Benaras Hindu University and from 1919–1923, both English and History, at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. In 1923, he became an honorary member of the Royal

Asiatic Society of London. In August 1926, he was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University. In 1928, he joined as Sir W. Meyer Lecturer in Madras University.

23. Abanindranath Tagore (7 August 1871 – 5 December 1951) was the principal artist and creator of the "Indian Society of Oriental Art". He was also the first major exponent of Swadeshi values in Indian art, thereby founding the influential Bengal school of art, which led to the development of modern Indian painting. He was also a noted writer, particularly for children. Popularly known as 'Aban Thakur', his books Rajkahini, Budo Angla, Nalak, and Khirer Putul are landmarks in Bengali language children's literature.



Tagore sought to modernise Mughal and Rajput styles to counter the influence of Western models of art, as taught in art schools under the British Raj. Along with other artists from the Bengal school of art, Tagore advocated for a nationalistic Indian art derived from Indian art history, drawing inspiration from the Ajanta Caves. Tagore's work was so successful that it was eventually accepted and promoted as a national Indian style within British art institutions.

24. Atul Prasad Sen 20 October 1871 – 26 August 1934, was a Bengali composer, lyricist and singer, and also a lawyer, philanthropist, social worker, educationist and litterateur.

25. Sri Aurobindo (15 August 1872 – 5 December 1950) was an Indian philosopher, yogi, guru, poet, and nationalist. He joined the Indian movement for independence from British rule, for a while was one of its influential leaders and then became a spiritual reformer, introducing his visions on human progress and spiritual evolution. Aurobindo studied for the Indian Civil Service at King's College, Cambridge, England. After returning to India he took up various civil service works under the maharaja of the princely state of Baroda and became increasingly involved in nationalist politics in the Indian National Congress and the nascent revolutionary movement in Bengal with the Anushilan Samiti. He was arrested in the aftermath of a number of bomb outrages linked to his organisation, but in a highly



public trial where he faced charges of treason, Aurobindo could only be convicted and imprisoned for writing articles against British rule in India. He was released when no evidence could be provided, following the murder of a prosecution witness, Narendranath Goswami during the trial. During his stay in the jail, he had mystical and spiritual experiences, after which he moved to Pondicherry, leaving politics for spiritual work. At Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo developed a spiritual practice he called Integral Yoga. The central theme of his vision was the evolution of human life into a life divine. He believed in a spiritual realisation that not only

liberated but transformed human nature, enabling a divine life on earth. In 1926, with the help of his spiritual collaborator, Mirra Alfassa (referred to as "The Mother"), he founded the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. His main literary works are *The Life Divine*, which deals with theoretical aspects of Integral Yoga; *Synthesis of Yoga*, which deals with practical guidance to Integral Yoga; and *Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol*, an epic poem.

26. Rai Bahadur Sir Upendranath Brahmachari (19 December 1873 – 6 February 1946) was an Indian scientist and a leading medical practitioner of his time.[1] He synthesised Urea Stibamine (carbostibamide) in 1922 and determined that it was an effective substitute for the other antimony-containing compounds in the treatment of Kala-azar (Visceral leishmaniasis) which is caused by a protozoon, *Leishmania donovani*. His discovery led to the saving of thousands of lives in India, particularly in the erstwhile province of Assam, where several villages were completely depopulated by the devastating disease. The achievement of Brahmachari was a milestone in successful application of science in medical treatment in the years before arrival of antibiotics, when there were few specific drugs, including quinine for malaria, iron for anaemia, digitalis for heart diseases and arsenic compounds for syphilis. Most other ailments were treated symptomatically by palliative methods. Urea Stibamine was thus a significant addition to the arsenal of specific medicines.

27. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, 15 September 1876 – 16 January 1938, was a Bengali novelist and short story writer. He is arguably the most popular novelist in the Bengali language. His notable works include *Devdas*, *Srikanto*, *Choritrohin*, *Parineeta*, *Grihadaha*, etc. Most of his works deal with the lifestyle, tragedy and struggle of the village people and the contemporary social practices that prevailed in Bengal. He remains the most popular, translated, adapted, and plagiarized Indian author of all time.



28. Harinath De (12 August 1877— 30 August 1911) was an Indian historian, scholar and a polyglot, who later became the first Indian librarian of the National Library of India (then Imperial Library) from 1907 to 1911. In a life span of thirty four years, he learned 34 languages.

29. Bagha Jatin born Jatindranath Mukherjee, 7 December 1879 – 10 September 1915, was an Indian freedom fighter. Several sources mention Jatin as being among the founders of the Anushilan Samiti in 1900, and as a pioneer in creating its branches in the districts. Jatin, together with Barindra Ghosh, set up a bomb factory near Deoghar, while Barin was to do the same at Maniktala in Calcutta. Whereas Jatin disapproved of all untimely terrorist



action, Barin led an organisation centred around his own personality: his aim was, aside from the general production of terror, the elimination of certain Indian and British officers serving the Crown. Side by side, Jatin developed a decentralised federated body of loose autonomous regional cells. Organising relentless relief missions with a paramedical body of volunteers following almost a military discipline, during natural calamities such as floods, epidemics, or religious congregations like the Ardhodaya and the Kumbha Mela, or the annual celebration of Ramakrishna's birth, Jatin was suspected of utilising these as pretexts for group discussions with regional leaders and recruiting new freedom fighters to fight the supporters of the Britain. He was the principal leader of the Jugantar party that was the central association of revolutionary freedom fighters in Bengal.

30. Nandalal Bose 3 December 1882 – 16 April 1966 was one of the pioneers of modern Indian art and a key figure of Contextual Modernism. A pupil of Abanindranath Tagore, Bose was known for his "Indian style" of painting. He became the principal of Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan in 1922. He was influenced by the Tagore family and the murals of Ajanta; his classic works include paintings of scenes from Indian mythologies, women, and village life. Today, many critics consider his paintings among India's most important modern paintings. In 1976, the Archaeological Survey of India, Department of Culture, Govt. of India declared his works among the "nine artists" whose work, "not being antiquities", were to be henceforth considered "to be art treasures, having regard to their artistic and aesthetic value".



He was given the work of illustrating the constitution of India.

31. Bidhan Chandra Roy MD DSc MRCP, FRCS; (1 July 1882 – 1 July 1962) was an eminent Indian physician, educationist, philanthropist, freedom fighter and politician who served as the Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1948 until his death in 1962. Bidhan Roy is often considered the Maker of Modern West Bengal due to his key role in the founding of several institutions and five eminent cities, Durgapur, Kalyani, Bidhannagar, Ashokenagar and Habra. He is one of the few people in history to have obtained F.R.C.S. and M.R.C.P. degrees simultaneously. In India, the National



Doctors' Day is celebrated in his memory every year on 1 July. He was awarded Bharat Ratna on 4 February 1961, India's highest civilian honour.

32. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar (known as R. C. Majumdar; 4 December 1884 – 11 February 1980) was a historian and professor of Indian history. From 1950, he was Principal of the College of Indology, Benares Hindu University. He was elected the general president of the Indian History Congress and also became the vice president of the International Commission set up by the UNESCO for the history of mankind. In 1955, Majumdar established the College of Indology of Nagpur University and joined as Principal. In 1958-59, he taught Indian history in the University of Chicago and University of Pennsylvania. He was also the president of the Asiatic Society (1966–68) and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (1968–69), and also the Sheriff of Calcutta (1967–68).

33. Rakhaldas Bandyopadhyay (12 April 1885 – 23 May 1930), also known as R D Banerji was an eminent Indian Archaeologist & Museum expert. He was the Manindra Chandra Nandy Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture at the Banaras Hindu University from 1928–30. He is mostly known as the discoverer of Mohenjo-daro, the principal site of the Harappa culture.

34. Sukumar Ray- 30 October 1887 – 10 September 1923) was a Bengali poet, story writer, playwright and editor from Moshua, Kishoreganj, which was part of India/ the Indian Subcontinent and is now in Bangladesh. He is remembered mainly for his writings for the children. He was the son of children's story writer Upendrakishore Ray, the father of Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray and grandfather of Indian filmmaker Sandip Ray. His creations such as the collection of poems Abol Tabol (Gibberish), novella HaJaBaRaLa, short story collection Pagla Dashu (Crazy Dashu) and play Chalachittachanchari are considered equal in stature to Alice in Wonderland. More than 80 years after his death, Ray remains one of the most popular of children's writers in Bengali literature.

35. Radhabinod Pal (27 January 1886 – 10 January 1967) was an Indian jurist, who was a member of the United Nations' International Law Commission from 1952 to 1966. He was one of three Asian judges appointed to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, the "Tokyo Trials" of Japanese war crimes committed during the Second World War. Among all the judges of the tribunal, he was the only one who submitted a judgment which insisted all defendants were not guilty. The Yasukuni Shrine and the Kyoto Ryozen Gokoku Shrine have monuments specially dedicated to Judge Pal.

36. Manabendra Nath Roy (22 March 1887 – 25 January 1954), born Narendra Nath Bhattacharya, was an Indian revolutionary, radical activist and political theorist, as well as a noted philosopher in the 20th century. Roy was a founder of the Mexican Communist Party and the Communist Party of India. He was also a delegate to congresses of the Communist International and Russia's aide to China. Following the rise of Joseph Stalin, Roy left the mainline communist movement to pursue an independent radical politics. In 1940 Vinay Roy was

instrumental in the formation of the Radical Democratic Party, an organisation in which he played a leading role for much of the decade of the 1940s. In the aftermath of World War II Roy moved away from Marxism to espouse the philosophy of radical humanism, attempting to chart a third course between liberalism and communism.



37. Jamini Roy (14 April 1887 – 24 April 1972) was an Indian painter. He was honoured with the State award of Padma Bhushan in 1955. He was one of the most famous pupils of Rabindranath Tagore, whose artistic originality and contribution to the emergence of modern art in India remains unquestionable.



38. Noble Laureate-C.V Raman - Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (November 1888 – 21 November 1970) was an Indian physicist who made ground-breaking works in the field of light scattering. With his student K. S. Krishnan, he discovered that when light traverses a transparent material, some of the deflected light change wavelength and amplitude. This phenomenon was a new type of scattering of light and was subsequently known as the Raman effect (Raman scattering). His works earned him the 1930 Nobel Prize in Physics and was the first Indian or Asian or non-white person to receive Nobel Prize in any branch of science. Born to Tamil Hindu parents, Raman was a precocious child, completing his secondary and higher secondary education from St Aloysius' Anglo-Indian High School at the ages of 11 and 13, respectively. He topped at the University of Madras in physics from Presidency College at age 16. He published his first research paper on diffraction of light in 1906 while still a graduate student. The next year he completed an M.A. degree. He was only 19 years of age when he qualified for the Indian Finance Service. Working in Calcutta (Kolkata), he became acquainted with the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), the first research institute in India. There he started independent research and made his major contributions in acoustics and optics.



39. Suniti Kumar Chatterji (26 November 1890 – 29 May 1977) was an Indian linguist, educationist and litterateur. He was a recipient of the second-highest Indian civilian honour of Padma Vibhushan.

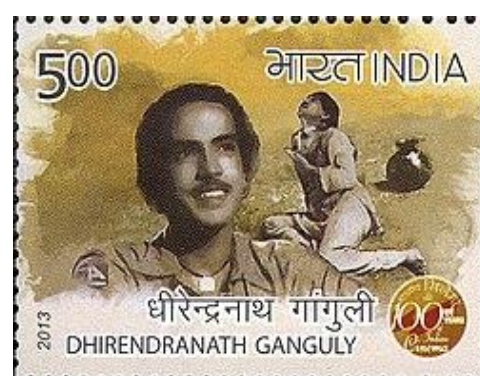
40. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis - 29 June 1893 – 28 June 1972 was an Indian scientist and statistician. He is best remembered for the Mahalanobis distance, a statistical measure, and for being one of the members of the first Planning Commission of free India. He made pioneering studies in anthropometry in India. He founded the Indian Statistical Institute, and contributed to the design of large-scale sample surveys. For his contributions, Mahalanobis has been considered the father of modern statistics in India.



41. Meghnad Saha 6 October 1893 – 16 February 1956 was an Indian astrophysicist who gained global prominence for his development of the Saha Ionization Equation, used to describe chemical and physical conditions in stars. His work allowed astronomers to accurately relate the spectral classes of stars to their actual temperatures. He was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Prize in Physics by Arthur Compton, Debendra Mohan Bose and Sisir Kumar Mitra. Saha was a dedicated humanitarian who became politically active to devote himself for the people of the newly independent India, which was facing a post-partition crisis. He was elected to the Parliament of India in 1952.



42. Dharendra Nath Ganguly (26 March 1893 – 18 November 1978), better known as Dhiren Ganguly or D.G, was a Dadasaheb Phalke Award - winning and Padma Bhushan recipient film entrepreneur / actor / director of Bengali Cinema. He had set up a number of film production companies: Indo British Film company, British Dominion Films, Lotus Film Company. Later, he directed films for New Theatres. He produced many movies in the comedy genre. He was born in Calcutta and died in the same city.



43. Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay (12 September 1894 – 1 November 1950) was an Indian Bengali author. He is considered to be one of the most iconic writers of modern Bengali literature and also one of the most prominent writers in the Post-Tagore era. His

best known work is the autobiographical novel, *Pather Panchali* (The Song of the Road). He was posthumously awarded the Rabindra Puraskar in 1951, the most prestigious literary award in West Bengal, for his novel *Ichhamati*.

44. Satyendra Nath Bose, (1 January 1894 – 4 February 1974) was an Indian physicist specialising in theoretical physics. He is best known for his work on quantum mechanics in the early 1920s, providing the foundation for Bose–Einstein statistics and the theory of the Bose–Einstein condensate. A Fellow of the Royal Society, he was awarded India's second highest civilian award, the Padma Vibhushan in 1954 by the Government of India. The class of particles that obey Bose–Einstein statistics, bosons, was named after Bose by Paul Dirac. A polymath, he had a wide range of interests in varied fields including physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, mineralogy, philosophy, arts, literature, and music. He served on many research and development committees in sovereign India.



45. Swami Pranavananda also known as Yugacharya Srimat Swami Pranavananda Ji Maharaj, (29 January 1896 – 8 February 1941) was a Hindu yogi and saint who founded an organization known as the Bharat Sevashram Sangha. He is remembered for his pioneering efforts to bring the modern Hindu society into the new age without compromising the essential values of ancient traditions of Hindu spirituality. Swamiji was one of the greatest spiritual leaders of modern India. He is still revered very much for his message of universal



love, compassion for all humanity and social reform without giving up the nationalist zeal, the love of mother land. He was born on 29 January 1896, the auspicious day of Maghi Purnima (16th Magha, 1302), in Bajitpur, a village in Faridpur District in undivided India (presently in Bangladesh). His parents Vishnu Charan Bhuia and Saradadevi were very pious and blessed by Lord Shiva to have a son for the mitigation of human suffering and universal emancipation. He was affectionately named Jaynath by his father at birth and later in his boyhood he was called Binode. Binode showed uncommon philosophical inclinations since childhood and often could be seen in deep contemplation at the village school. He was popular with the children of the locality because of his helpful nature.

46. Subhas Chandra Bose - 23 January 1897 – 18 August 1945 was an Indian nationalist whose defiant patriotism made him a hero in India, but whose attempt during World War II to rid India of British rule with the help of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan left a troubled legacy. The honorific Netaji (Hindustani: "Respected Leader"), first applied in early 1942 to Bose in Germany by the Indian soldiers of the Indische Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin, was later used throughout India. Bose had been a leader of the younger, radical, wing of the Indian National Congress in the late 1920s and 1930s, rising to become Congress President in 1938 and 1939. However, he was ousted from Congress leadership positions in 1939 following differences with Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress high command. He was subsequently placed under house arrest by the British before escaping from India in 1940. Bose arrived in Germany in April 1941, where the leadership offered unexpected, if sometimes ambivalent, sympathy for the cause of India's independence, contrasting starkly with its attitudes towards other colonised peoples and ethnic communities. In November 1941, with German funds, a Free India Centre was set up in Berlin, and soon a Free India Radio, on which Bose broadcast nightly. A 3,000-strong Free India Legion, comprising Indians captured by Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps, was also formed to aid in a possible future German land invasion of India. By spring 1942, in light of Japanese victories in southeast Asia and changing German priorities, a German invasion of India became untenable, and Bose became keen to move to southeast Asia. Adolf Hitler, during his only meeting with Bose in late May 1942, suggested the same, and offered to arrange for a submarine. During this time Bose also became a father; his wife, or companion, Emilie Schenkl, whom he had met in 1934, gave birth to a baby girl in November 1942. Identifying strongly with the Axis powers, and no longer apologetically, Bose boarded a German submarine in February 1943. In Madagascar, he was transferred to a Japanese submarine from which he disembarked in Japanese-held Sumatra in May 1943. With Japanese support, Bose revamped the Indian National Army (INA), then composed of Indian soldiers of the British Indian army who had been captured in the Battle of Singapore. To these, after Bose's arrival, were added enlisting Indian civilians in Malaya and Singapore. The Japanese had come to support a number of puppet and provisional



governments in the captured regions, such as those in Burma, the Philippines and Manchukuo. Before long the Provisional Government of Free India, presided by Bose, was formed in the Japanese-occupied Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Bose had great drive and charisma—creating popular Indian slogans, such as "Jai Hind,"—and the INA under Bose was a model of diversity by region, ethnicity, religion, and even gender. However, Bose was regarded by the Japanese as being militarily unskilled, and his military effort was short-lived. In late 1944 and early 1945, the British Indian Army first halted and then devastatingly reversed the Japanese attack on India. Almost half the Japanese forces and fully half the participating INA contingent were killed. [The INA was driven down the Malay Peninsula and surrendered with the recapture of Singapore. Bose had earlier chosen not to surrender with his forces or with the Japanese, but rather to escape to Manchuria with a view to seeking a future in the Soviet Union which he believed to be turning anti-British. He died from third-degree burns received when his plane crashed in Taiwan. Some Indians, however, did not believe that the crash had occurred, with many among them, especially in Bengal, believing that Bose would return to gain India's independence.

The Indian National Congress, the main instrument of Indian nationalism, praised Bose's patriotism but distanced itself from his tactics and ideology, especially his collaboration with fascism. The British Raj, though never seriously threatened by the INA, charged 300 INA officers with treason in the INA trials, but eventually backtracked in the face both of popular sentiment and of its own end.

47. Kazi Nazrul Islam -25 May 1899 – 29 August 1976 was a Bengali poet, writer and musician who was later recognized as the national poet of Bangladesh. Popularly known as Nazrul, he produced a large body of poetry and music with themes that included religious devotion and rebellion against oppression. Nazrul's activism for political and social justice earned him the title of "Rebel Poet" .His compositions form the avant-garde genre of Nazrul Geeti (Music of Nazrul). Born in a Bengali Muslim Kazi family, Nazrul Islam received religious education and as a young man worked as a muezzin at a local mosque. He learned about poetry, drama, and literature while working with the rural theatrical group Letor Dal. He joined the British Indian Army in 1917. After serving in the British Indian Army in the Middle East (Mesopotamian campaign) during World War I, Nazrul established himself as a journalist in Calcutta. He criticised the British Raj and called for revolution through his poetic works, such as "Bidrohi" ('The Rebel') and "Bhangar Gaan" ('The Song of Destruction'), as well

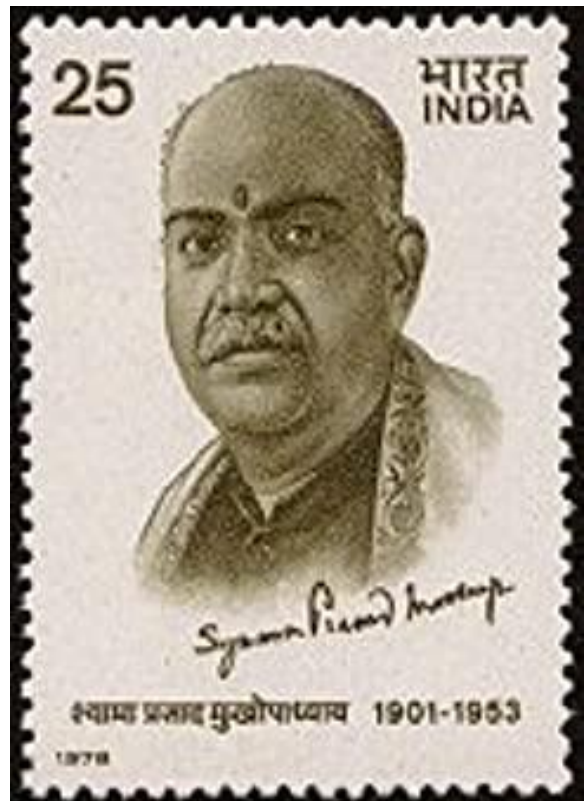


as in his publication *Dhumketu* ('The Comet'). His nationalist activism in Indian independence movement led to his frequent imprisonment by the colonial British authorities. While in prison, Nazrul wrote the "*Rajbandir Jabanbandi*" ('Deposition of a Political Prisoner'). His writings greatly inspired Bengalis of East Pakistan during the Bangladesh Liberation War. Nazrul's writings explored themes such as freedom, humanity, love, and revolution. He opposed all forms of bigotry and fundamentalism, including religious, caste-based and gender-based. Nazrul wrote short stories, novels, and essays but is best known for his songs and poems. He profusely enriched ghazals in the Bengali language. He is also known to have experimented with Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit words in his works to produce rhythmic effects. Nazrul wrote and composed music for nearly 4,000 songs (many recorded on HMV and gramophone records), collectively known as *Nazrul Geeti*. In 1942 at the age of 43, he began to suffer from an unknown disease, losing his voice and memory. A medical team in Vienna diagnosed the disease as Pick's disease, a rare incurable neurodegenerative disease. It caused Nazrul's health to decline steadily and forced him to live in isolation in India. He was also admitted in Ranchi (Jharkhand) psychiatric hospital for many years. At the invitation of the Government of Bangladesh, Nazrul and his family moved to Dhaka in 1972. He died four years later on 29 August 1976 in Bangladesh.

48. Sharadindu Bandyopadhyay (30 March 1899 – 22 September 1970) was an Indian Bengali-language writer. He was a well-known literary figure of Bengal. He was also actively involved with Bengali cinema as well as Bollywood. His most famous creation is the fictional detective Byomkesh Bakshi. He wrote different forms of prose: novels, short stories, plays and screenplays. However, his forte was short stories and novels. He wrote historical fiction like *Kaler Mandira*, *GourMollar* (initially named as *Mouri Nodir Teere*), *Tumi Sandhyar Megh*, *Tungabhadrar Teere* (all novels), *Chuya-Chandan*, *Maru O Sangha* (later made into a Hindi film named *Trishangni*) and stories of the supernatural with the recurring character *Baroda*, the Ghost Investigator. In addition, he wrote many songs and poems.

49. Uday Shankar (8 December 1900 – 26 September 1977) was an Indian dancer and choreographer, best known for creating a fusion style of dance, adapting European theatrical techniques to Indian classical dance, imbued with elements of Indian classical, folk, and tribal dance, which he later popularised in India, Europe, and the United States in 1920s and 1930s. He was a pioneer of modern dance in India. In 1962, he was awarded by Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's The National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama, with its highest award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship for lifetime achievement, and in 1971, the Govt. of India, awarded him with its second highest civilian award the Padma Vibhushan.

50. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee - He (6 July 1901 – 23 June 1953) was an Indian politician, barrister and academician, who served as the Minister for Industry and Supply in Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet. After falling out with Nehru, Mukherjee quit the Union Government because of differences of opinion with the Nehru-led government on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir. With the help of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, he founded the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the predecessor to the Bharatiya Janata Party, in 1951. He was also the president of Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Mahasabha from 1943 to 1946. Mukherjee was strongly opposed to Article 370[a] seeing it as a threat to the unity of the country and fought against it inside and outside the parliament with one of the goals of Bharatiya Jana Sangh being the abrogation of the article. His dream to repeal Article 370 saw the light of day on 5 August 2019 with the bill being tabled in Rajya Sabha. He died in the custody of Jammu and Kashmir Police in 1953. He was provisionally diagnosed of a heart attack and shifted to a hospital but died a day later. In 2004, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had claimed that he was murdered in a "Nehru conspiracy". Since the Bharatiya Janata Party is the successor to the Bhartiya Jana Sangh, Mukherjee is also regarded as the founder of the Bharatiya Janata Party. He was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award the highest award in Indian cinema, given by Government of India, in 1978, and also in the same year, the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, given by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama.



51. Birendranath Sircar 5 July 1901 – 28 November 1980 was an Indian film producer and the founder of New Theatres Calcutta. He made Bengali-language films that were noted for introducing many film directors who later became famous. He was awarded the Dada Saheb Phalke Award in 1970 and the third highest civilian award in India, the Padma Bhushan, in 1972.



52. Rai Chand Boral (19 October 1903 – 25 November 1981) was an Indian composer, considered by music connoisseurs to be the Bishma Pitamah, the father of Bollywood film music.



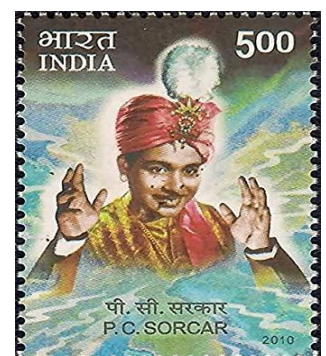
53. Bishnu Charan Ghosh (24 June 1903 – 9 July 1970), known as B. C. Ghosh, was a Bengali bodybuilder and Hathayogi. He was a younger brother of the yogi Paramahansa Yogananda, who became world-famous through his 1946 book *Autobiography of a Yogi*. In 1923 he founded the College of Physical Education, Calcutta. His writings influenced the development of modern yoga as exercise in India when they were taken up by Bikram Choudhury, founder of Bikram Yoga. The annual yoga championships in Los Angeles are contested for the Bishnu Charan Ghosh Cup, named in his honour. Ghosh's Yoga College in North Kolkata continues to offer training in therapeutic yoga in the 21st century. Bikram Choudhury, creator of Bikram Yoga, claimed to have been taught by Ghosh from the age of four (in 1948). However, he actually began studying yoga in 1969, and he was not instructed by Ghosh directly. His system of yoga was based on Ghosh's writings. Choudhury named the Bishnu Charan Ghosh Cup, awarded annually at the International Yoga Asana Championships in Los Angeles, in Ghosh's honour.



54. Pankaj Mullick, 10 May 1905 – 19 February 1978), was a popular Bengali Indian music composer and playback singer, who was a pioneer of film music in Bengali cinema and Hindi cinema at the advent of playback singing, as well as an early exponent of Rabindra Sangeet. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1970, followed by the Dadasaheb Phalke Award (India's highest award in cinema, given by the Government of India) in 1972 for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema.



55. Protul Chandra Sorcar (23 February 1913 – 6 January 1971) was an Indian magician. He was an internationally active magician throughout the 1950s and 1960s, performing his *Indrajal* show before live audiences and on television. Sorcar died of a heart attack at the age of 57 in Asahikawa, Hokkaidō, Japan, on 6 January 1971, where he was performing. Sorcar became famous in the mid-1930s, when he performed shows in Kolkata and also in Japan and several other countries. Among other routines, he performed a *Floating Lady* routine



featuring aerial suspension in 1964. Ganapati Chakraborty was his mentor. The Government of India has named a major street in Calcutta after him - Jadusamrat P.C. Sorcar Sarani Padma Shri (the Lotus), awarded by the President of India on 26 January 1964, The Sphinx (Oscar of Magic), US, 1946 and 1954, The Royal Medallion German Magic Circle.

56. Jyotirindra Basu (8 July 1914 – 17 January 2010); known as Jyoti Basu was an Indian politician belonging to the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from West Bengal, India. He served as the Chief Minister of West Bengal state from 1977 to 2000. He was 11th prime minister candidate of India but his desires refused from the post of not participating the elections. This man had a legendary lifestyle and influential to everybody. He was regarded to be a world politician. A great devotee of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and a leader of national congress from the 1940's era had connection with leaders, such as, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhiji, Pt. Jawarhal Nehru and many others, though, he was a great revolutionary of Indian Independence. Basu was a member of the CPI(M) Politburo since the party's inception in 1964 and remained there till 2008. From 2008 until his death in 2010, he remained a permanent invitee to the central committee of the party.



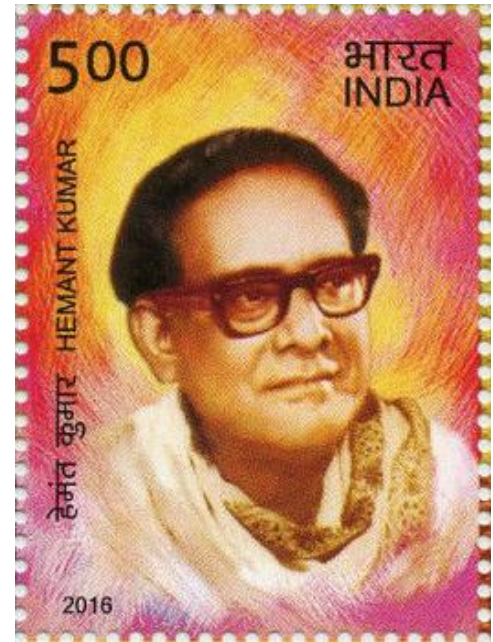
57. Sombhu Mitra (22 August 1915 – 19 May 1997) was an Indian film and stage actor, director, playwright, reciter and an Indian theatre personality, known especially for his involvement in Bengali theatre, where he is considered a pioneer. He remained associated with the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) for a few years before founding the Bohurupee theatre group in Kolkata in 1948. He is most noted for films like Dharti Ke Lal (1946), Jagte Raho (1956), and his production of Rakta Karabi based on Rabindranath Tagore's play in 1954 and Chand Baniker Pala, his most noted play as a playwright. In 1966, the Sangeet Natak Akademi awarded him with its highest award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship for lifetime contribution, then in 1970, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honour, and in 1976 the Ramon Magsaysay Award.

58. Prabodh Chandra Dey (1 May 1919 – 24 October 2013), known by his stage name Manna Dey, was an internationally acclaimed Indian playback singer, music director, musician and Indian classical vocalist. He is considered one of the most versatile and celebrated vocalists of the Hindi film industry. He was one of the playback singers credited with the success of Indian classical music in Hindi commercial movies. He debuted in the film Tamanna in 1942. After the song "Upar Gagan Bishal" composed by S D Burman he saw success and went on to record more than 4,000 songs till 2013. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri in



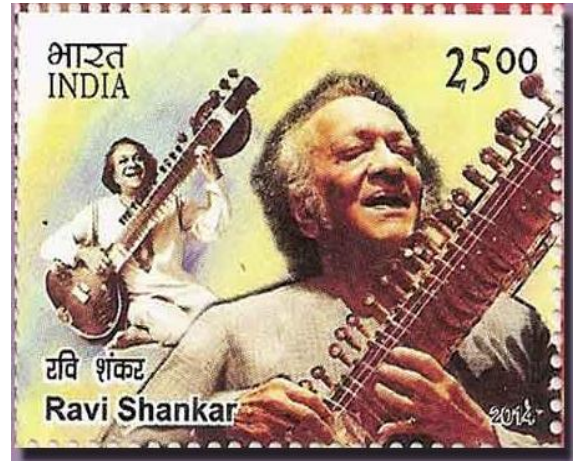
1971, the Padma Bhushan in 2005 and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2007. Dey sang in all the major regional Indian languages, though primarily in Hindi and Bengali. Dey also sang in Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, Punjabi, Assamese, Odia, Konkani, Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, and Nepali. His peak period in Hindi playback singing was from 1953 to 1976.

59. Hemanta Mukherjee also known as Hemant Kumar (16 June 1920 – 26 September 1989); was an Indian music director and singer who sang in Bengali, Hindi and other Indian languages. He was an artist of Rabindra Sangeet. He won two National awards for the category best male playback singer. By the mid-1950s, Hemanta had consolidated his position as a prominent singer and composer. In Bengal, he was one of the foremost exponents of Rabindra Sangeet and perhaps the most sought-after male singer. In a ceremony organised by Hemanta Mukherjee to honour Debabrata Biswas (1911–1980), the legendary Rabindra Sangeet exponent, in Calcutta in March 1980, Debabrata Biswas unhesitatingly mentioned Hemanta as "the second hero" to popularise Rabindra Sangeet, the first being the legendary Pankaj Kumar Mallick. In Mumbai, along with playback singing, Hemanta carved a niche as a composer. He composed music for a Hindi film called Nagin (1954) which became a major success owing largely to its music. Songs of Nagin remained chart-toppers continuously for two years and culminated in Hemant receiving the prestigious Filmfare Best Music Director Award in 1955. The very same year, he scored music for a Bengali movie called Shapmochan in which he played back four songs for the Bengali actor Uttam Kumar. This started a long partnership between Hemant and Uttam as a playback singer-actor pair. They were the most popular singer-actor duo in Bengali cinema over the next decade. In the latter part of the 1950s, Hemanta composed music and sang for several Bengali and Hindi films, recorded several Rabindra Sangeet and Bengali non-film songs. Almost all of these, especially his Bengali songs, became very popular. This period can be seen as the zenith of his career and lasted for almost a decade. He sang songs composed by the major music directors in Bengal such as Nachiketa Ghosh, Robin Chatterjee and Salil Chowdhury. Some of the notable films Hemanta himself composed music for during this period include Harano Sur, Marutirtha Hinglaj, Neel Akasher Neechey, Lukochuri, Swaralipi, Deep Jwele Jaai, Shesh Parjanta, Kuhak, Dui Bhai, and Saptapadi in Bengali, and, Jagriti and Ek Hi Raasta in Hindi.



60. Ravi Shankar 7 April 1920 – 11 December 2012, whose name is often preceded by the title Pandit (Master) and "Sitar maestro", was an Indian musician and a composer of Hindustani classical music. He was the best-known proponent of the sitar in the second half of the 20th century and influenced many other musicians throughout the world. Shankar was awarded

India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, in 1999. Shankar was born to a Bengali Brahmin family in India, and spent his youth as a dancer touring India and Europe with the dance group of his brother Uday Shankar. He gave up dancing in 1938 to study sitar playing under court musician Allauddin Khan. After finishing his studies in 1944, Shankar worked as a composer, creating the music for the Apu Trilogy by Satyajit Ray, and was music director of All India Radio, New Delhi, from 1949 to 1956. In 1956, Shankar began to tour Europe and the Americas



playing Indian classical music and increased its popularity there in the 1960s through teaching, performance, and his association with violinist Yehudi Menuhin and Beatles guitarist George Harrison. His influence on the latter helped popularize the use of Indian instruments in pop music in the latter half of the 1960s. Shankar engaged Western music by writing compositions for sitar and orchestra, and toured the world in the 1970s and 1980s. From 1986 to 1992, he served as a nominated member of Rajya Sabha, the upper chamber of the Parliament of India. He continued to perform until the end of his life.

61. Satyajit Ray- 2 May 1921 – 23 April 1992 was an Indian filmmaker, screenwriter, music composer, graphic artist, lyricist and author, widely regarded as one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. Ray was born in Calcutta into a Bengali family which was prominent in the field of arts and literature. Starting his career as a commercial artist, Ray was drawn into independent filmmaking after meeting French filmmaker Jean Renoir and viewing Vittorio De Sica's Italian neorealist film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) during a visit to London. Ray directed 36 films, including feature films, documentaries and shorts. He was also a fiction writer,



publisher, illustrator, calligrapher, music composer, graphic designer and film critic. He authored several short stories and novels, meant primarily for young children and teenagers. Feluda, the sleuth, and Professor Shonku, the scientist in his science fiction stories, are popular fictional characters created by him. He was awarded an honorary degree by Oxford University. Ray's first film, *Pather Panchali* (1955), won eleven international prizes, including the inaugural Best Human Document award at the 1956 Cannes Film Festival. This film, along with *Aparajito* (1956) and *Apur Sansar* (*The World of Apu*) (1959), form *The Apu Trilogy*. Ray did the scripting, casting, scoring, and editing, and designed his own credit titles and publicity material. Ray received many major awards in his career, including 32 Indian National Film Awards, a Golden Lion, a Golden Bear, 2 Silver Bears, a number of additional awards at international film festivals and award

ceremonies, and an Academy Honorary Award in 1992. The Government of India honoured him with the Bharat Ratna, its highest civilian award, in 1992. Ray had received many noticeable awards and gained a prestigious position over his life time.

62. Mrinal Sen -14 May 1923 – 30 December 2018 was an Indian filmmaker and a nominated Member of the Indian parliament. Sen directed films primarily in Bengali and Hindi. Along with his contemporaries Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak, he pioneered the New Wave cinema in India. Sen was an ardent Marxist. His earlier films are characterized by their left-leaning, often Marxist approaches to Indian society. Sen won the National Film Awards 18 times, next only to Ray. He was made the Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Letters in 1985. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2008 and the Order of Friendship in 2005. The same year, he was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award his contribution to Indian cinema. He is considered to be one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. He is the only Indian filmmaker along with Satyajit Ray whose films have been awarded at the big three film festivals namely the Cannes film festival, Venice Film Festival and the Berlin Film Festival.

63. Tapan Sinha (2 October 1924 – 15 January 2009) was one of the most prominent Indian film directors of his time forming a legendary quartet with Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak and Mrinal Sen. He was primarily a Bengali filmmaker who worked both in Hindi cinema and Bengali cinema, directing films like *Kabuliwala* (1957), *Louha-Kapat*, *Sagina Mahato* (1970), *Apanjan* (1968), *Kshudhita Pashan* and children's film *Safed Haathi* (1978) and *Aaj Ka Robinhood*. Sinha started his career in 1946, as a sound engineer with New Theatres film production house in Kolkata, then in 1950 left for England where he worked at Pinewood Studios for next two years, before returning home to start his six decade long career in Indian cinema, making films in Bengali, Hindi and Oriya languages, straddling genres from social realism, family drama, labor rights, to children's fantasy films. He was one of the acclaimed filmmakers of Parallel Cinema movement of India.

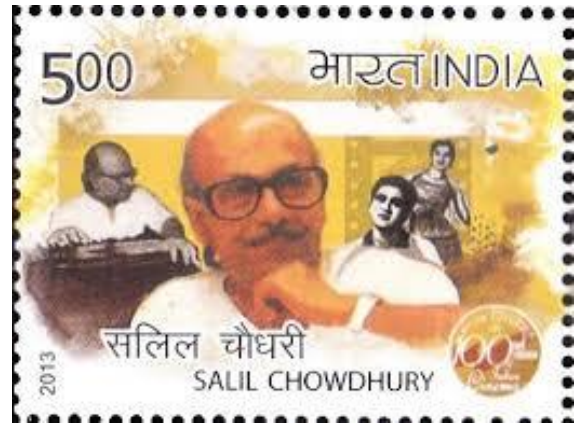


64. Ritwik Ghatak (4 November 1925 – 6 February 1976) was a noted Indian filmmaker and script writer. Along with prominent contemporary Bengali filmmakers Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen, his cinema is primarily remembered for its meticulous depiction of social reality, partition and feminism. Although their roles were often adversarial, they were ardent admirers of each other's work and, in doing so, the three directors charted the independent trajectory of parallel cinema, as a counterpoint to the mainstream fare of Hindi cinema in India. Ghatak received



many awards in his career, including National Film Award's Rajat Kamal Award for Best Story in 1974 for his *Jukti Takko Aar Gappo* and Best Director's Award from Bangladesh Cine Journalist's Association for *Titash Ekti Nadir Naam*. The Government of India honoured him with the Padma Shri for Arts in 1970.

65. Salil Chowdhury- 19 November 1925 - 5 September 1995 was an Indian songwriter, music director, lyricist, writer and poet, who predominantly composed for Bengali, Hindi, Malayalam films. He went on to compose music for films in 13 languages. This includes over 75 Hindi films, 41 Bengali films, around 27 Malayalam films, and a few Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Gujarati, Oriya and Assamese films. His musical ability was widely recognised and acknowledged in



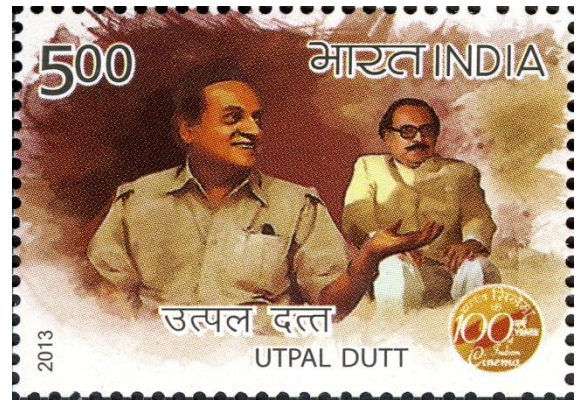
the Indian film industry. He was an accomplished composer and arranger who was proficient in several musical instruments, including flute, the piano, and the esraj. He was also widely acclaimed and admired for his inspirational and original poetry in Bengali. The first Bengali film for which Chowdhury composed music was *Paribortan*, released in 1949. *Mahabharati*, released in 1994, was the last of the 41 Bengali films where he rendered his music. He is affectionately called *Salilda* by his admirers.

66. Uttam Kumar (born Arun Kumar Chatterjee; 3 September 1926 – 24 July 1980) was an Indian film actor, director, producer and singer who predominantly worked in Bengali cinema. Kumar is widely regarded as one of the most popular and beloved actors ever in India. Through his career he earned commercial as well as critical success, and he remains as an Indian cultural icon. Considered as the most popular film star of Bengali cinema, popularly known as "*Mahanayak*", Kumar managed to have a huge fan following, that mainly concentrated in the regions of West Bengal, India and Bangladesh. He was a recipient of many awards over his lifetime, including National Film Award for Best Actor. A Metro Station in Kolkata was renamed in his honour.



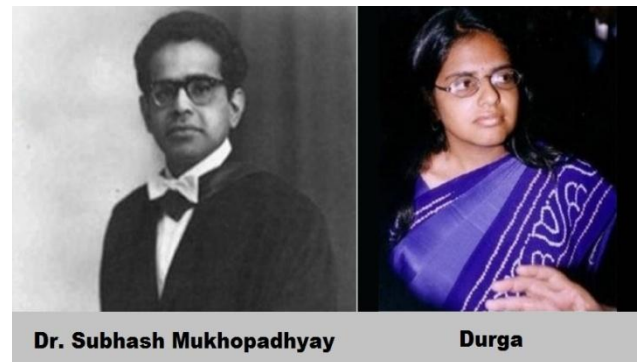
67. Utpal Dutt (29 March 1929 – 19 August 1993) was an Indian actor, director, and writer-playwright. He was primarily an actor in Bengali theatre, where he became a pioneering figure in Modern Indian theatre, when he founded the "*Little Theatre Group*" in 1949. This group enacted many English, Shakespearean and Brecht plays, in a period now known as the "*Epic theatre*" period, before it immersed itself completely in highly political and radical theatre. His plays became an apt vehicle for the expression of his Marxist ideologies, visible in socio-political plays such as *Kallol* (1965), *Manusher Adhikar*, *Louha Manob* (1964), *Tiner Toloar* and *Maha-Bidroha*. He also acted in over 100 Bengali and Hindi films in a career spanning 40 years, and remains

most known for his roles in films such as Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome* (1969), Satyajit Ray's *Agantuk* (1991), Gautam Ghose's *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1993) and Hrishikesh Mukherjee's breezy Hindi comedies such as *Gol Maal* (1979) and *Rang Birangi* (1983). He also did the role of a sculptor, Sir Digindra Narayan, in the episode *Seemant Heera* of *Byomkesh Bakshi* (TV series) on Doordarshan in 1993, shortly before his death.



He received National Film Award for Best Actor in 1970 and three Filmfare Best Comedian Awards. In 1990, the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Theatre, awarded him its highest award, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship for lifetime contribution to theatre.

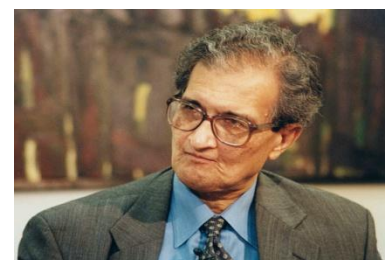
68. Subhash Mukhopadhyay (16 January 1931 – 19 June 1981) was an Indian Bengali scientist, physician from Hazaribagh, Bihar (now in Jharkhand), India, who created the world's second and India's first child using in-vitro fertilisation. Kanupriya Agarwal (Durga), who was born in 1978, just 67 days after the first IVF baby in United Kingdom. Afterwards, Dr. Subhash Mukhopadhyay was harassed by the then West Bengal state government and Indian Government and not allowed to share his achievements with the international scientific community. Dejected, he committed suicide on 19 June 1981.



His life and death has been the subject of countless newspaper reviews and inspired the Hindi movie *Ek Doctor Ki Maut* (Death of a physician), directed by Tapan Sinha.

69. Samaresh Basu (11 December 1924 – 12 March 1988) was an Indian writer who wrote in the Bengali language. He was awarded the 1980 Sahitya Akademi Award in Bengali, by Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, for his novel, *Shamba*. He won the 1983 Filmfare Awards for Best Story for *Namkeen*.

70. Noble Laureate - Amartya Sen-3 November 1933 is an Indian economist and philosopher, who since 1972 has taught and worked in the United Kingdom and the United States. Sen has made contributions to welfare economics, social choice theory, economic and social justice, economic theories of famines, decision theory, development economics, public health and



measures of well-being of countries. He is currently Thomas W. Lamont University Professor, and Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University. He was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998 and India's Bharat Ratna in 1999 for his work in welfare economics.

71. Sunil Gangopadhyay or Sunil Ganguly (7 September 1934 – 23 October 2012) was an Indian poet and novelist in the Bengali language based in the city of Kolkata. Gangopadhyay obtained his master's degree in Bengali from the University of Calcutta. In 1953 he and a few of his friends started a Bengali poetry magazine, *Krittibas*. Later he wrote for many different publications. Ganguly created the Bengali fictional character Kakababu and wrote a series of novels on this character which became significant in Indian children's literature. He received Sahitya Akademi award in 1985 for his novel *Those Days (Sei Samaya)*. Gangopadhyay used the nom de plume Nil Lohit, Sanatan Pathak, and Nil Upadhyay. He was one of the most popular and celebrated Bengali Writers of the present era.

73. Buddhadeb Guha 29 June 1936 in Calcutta is a Bengali fiction writer. He studied at the St Xavier's College of the University of Calcutta. He spent his early years in various districts of East Bengal (now Bangladesh). Those days in Rangpur, Jaypurhat and Barisal are depicted in his *Rivu* series. Some of the *Rivu* books are dedicated to his early-age friends in Bangladesh. His novels and short stories are characterized by their dreamy abstractness and romantic appeal. His essays reveal the soul of a true wanderer providing some of the most beautiful renditions of travel in Bengal. His love for forests and nature provide the background for many of his novels. A highly successful chartered accountant by profession, and an accomplished musician, Guha is very urbane in his lifestyle. He was one of the first to create characters representing easy-going, upper middle-class modern Bengali families, whom readers could identify with, and that gave him instant popularity. He is the recipient of many awards including Ananda Puraskar, 1976; Shiromani Puraskar; and Sharat Puraskar. The Library of Congress has over fifty titles by him. His most famous novel, according to many, is *Madhukori*. It is considered a milestone in Bengali literature. He is also the creator of *Rijuda*, an imaginary character who moves about in jungles with his sidekick Rudra. The jungles that he wrote about were mainly in Eastern India.

74. Soumitra Chatterjee or Soumitra Chattopadhyay

- 19 January 1935 is an Indian film and stage actor, reciter, poet and artist. He is best known for his collaborations with Oscar-winning film director Satyajit Ray, with whom he worked in fourteen films. Soumitra Chattopadhyay is also the first Indian film personality conferred with the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France's highest award



for artists. He is also the winner of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award which is India's highest award for cinema. In 2018 exactly thirty years after auteur Satyajit Ray was honoured with France's highest civilian award, the coveted Legion of Honor, thespian Soumitra Chatterjee, arguably, the most prominent face of Ray's films, also received the prestigious award as the first ever Indian actor. Starting with his debut film, Apur Sansar (The World of Apu, 1959), the third part of Apu Trilogy, he went on to work in several notable films with Ray, including Abhijan (The Expedition, 1962), Charulata (The Lonely Wife, 1964), Aranyer Din Ratri (Days and Nights in the Forest, 1969); Ashani Sanket (Distant Thunder, 1973); Sonar Kella (The Fortress, 1974) as Feluda and Joi Baba Felunath (The Elephant God, 1978) as Feluda, Ghare Baire (The Home and The World, 1984) and Ganashatru (Enemy of the People, 1989). Meanwhile, he also worked with other noted directors of Bengali cinema, with Mrinal Sen in Akash Kusum (Up in the Clouds, 1965), Tapan Sinha in Kshudhita Pashan (Hungry Stones, 1960), Jhinder Bandi (1961), Asit Sen in Swaralipi (1961), Ajoy Kar in Saat Pake Bandha (1963), Parineeta (1969), and Tarun Mazumdar in Sansar Simante (1975) and Ganadevata (1978). He acted more than 210 films in his career till 2016. He also received critical favour for his directorial venture Streer Patra which is based on the story of the same name by Tagore. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Government of India in 2004. In 2012, he received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, India's highest award in cinema given by the government of India for lifetime achievement. He has won two National Film Awards as an actor, and as an actor in Bengali theatre, he received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1998, given by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama. In 2013, IBN LIVE named him as one of "The men who changed the face of the Indian Cinema". In 2014, he received the introductory Filmfare Awards East for Best Male Actor (Critics) for his role in Rupkatha Noy. He won 7 Filmfare Awards. In 2006 he won the National Film Award for Best Actor for the film Podokkhep.

75. Pradip Kumar Banerjee (23 June 1936 – 20 March 2020) was a former Indian professional footballer who played as a striker for the India national football team. He also captained the national team and later on became the coach of the national team. He represented India in 45 official matches and scored 15 official goals for the country. He was one of the first recipients of Arjuna Award, when the awards were

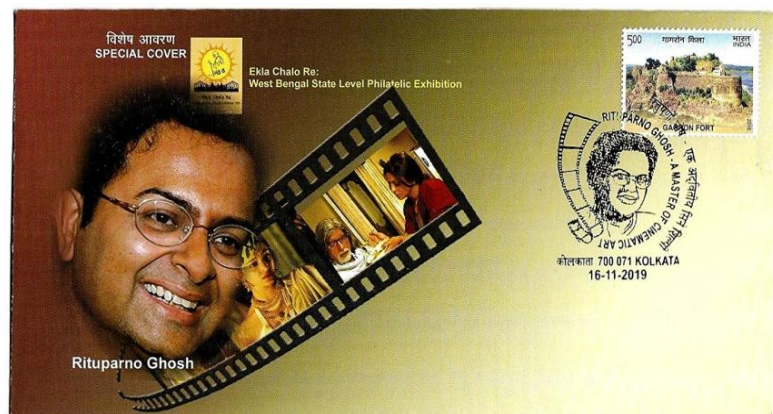


instituted in 1961. He was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri in 1990 and was named Indian Footballer of the 20th century by IFFHS. In 2004, he was awarded the FIFA Order of Merit, the highest honour awarded by FIFA. Banerjee died on 20 March 2020 at 12:40 p.m. after suffering from age-related issues, having been on life support at a Kolkata hospital since March 2. He also had an underlying history of Parkinson's disease, dementia and heart problems.

76. Subimal Goswami (born 15 January 1938), commonly known by his nickname Chuni Goswami, is a former Indian international footballer and first class cricketer. He was born in Kishoreganj District of undivided Bengal (now in Bangladesh). As a striker, he played 50 international matches representing India. As a first class cricketer, he played Ranji Trophy for Bengal. Chuni Goswami made his international debut for India in 1956 during the team's 1-0 victory over the Chinese Olympic team. He went on to play for India in 50 international matches including in Olympics, Asian Games, Asia Cup and Merdeka Cup. He captained India to the Asian Games Gold Medal in 1962 and a Silver in the 1964 Asia Cup in Tel Aviv and in the Merdeka Cup.



77. Rituparno Ghosh (31 August 1963 – 30 May 2013) was an Indian film director, actor, writer and lyricist. After pursuing a degree in economics, he started his career as a creative artist at an advertising agency. He received recognition for his second feature film Unishe April which won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film. Having won 19 National Awards, along with his contemporaries Aparna Sen and Goutam Ghose, Rituparno heralded contemporary Bengali cinema to greater heights. Ghosh died on 30 May 2013 in Kolkata after a heart attack. Ghosh was also one of the openly queer personalities in Indian culture. Ghosh was influenced by the works of Satyajit Ray and was an avid reader of Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore's work is frequently referenced to in his films. He also made a documentary titled Jeevan Smriti on the life of Tagore. In his career spanning almost two decades, he won 12 National and numerous International awards. His unreleased Bengali movie sunglass (also known as Taak Jhaank) was honoured and released at the 19th Kolkata International Film Festival.



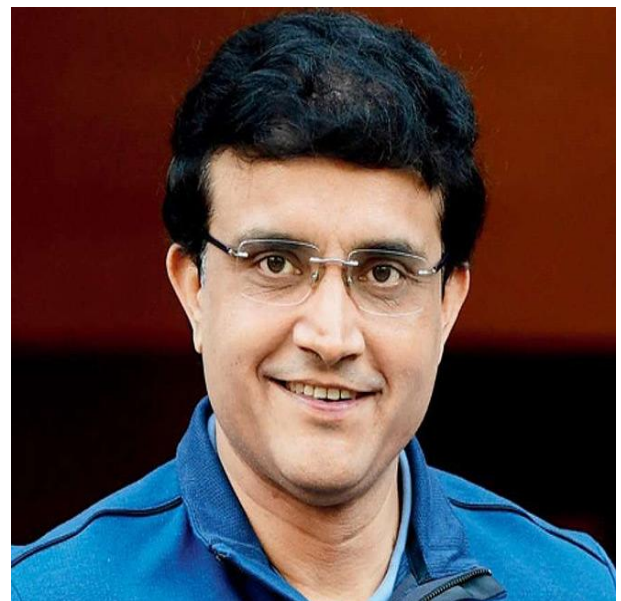
78. Noble Laureate - Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee - born 21 February 1961 is an Indian-American economist who is currently the Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Banerjee shared the 2019 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences with Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to

alleviating global poverty". Along with Esther Duflo, they are the sixth married couple to jointly win a Nobel Prize. Banerjee is a co-founder of Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (along with economists Esther Duflo and Sendhil Mullainathan). He is a research affiliate of Innovations for Poverty Action and a member of the Consortium on Financial Systems and Poverty. Banerjee was a president of the Bureau for the Research in the Economic Analysis of Development, a research associate of the National Bureau of Economic Research, a research fellow at the



Centre for Economic Policy Research, an international research fellow of the Kiel Institute, fellow at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and a fellow at the Econometric Society. He also has been a Guggenheim Fellow and an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow. He is the co-author of Poor Economics. He also serves on the academic advisory board of Plaksha University, an upcoming science and technology university in India. His new book, co-authored with Esther Duflo, Good Economics for Hard Times, was released in October 2019 in India by Juggernaut Books.

79. Sourav Chandidas Ganguly - born 8 July 1972, affectionately known as Dada (meaning "elder brother" in Bengali), is an Indian cricket administrator, commentator and former national cricket team captain who is the 39th and current president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India. As a cricketer he played as a left-handed opening batsman and was captain of the Indian national team. He was elected as a president of the BCCI in 2019. and President of the Editorial Board with Wisden India. Before being elected as the President of BCCI, he was the President of Cricket Association of Bengal, governing body for cricket in West Bengal, India. He is regarded as one of the greatest captains in the Cricket world. During his playing career, Ganguly established himself as one of the world's leading batsmen and also one of the most successful captain of the Indian national cricket team. While batting, he was especially prolific through the off side, earning himself the nickname God of the Off Side for his elegant stroke play square of the wicket and through the covers. Ganguly was introduced into the world of cricket by his elder brother, Snehasish. He started his career by playing in state and school teams. After playing in different Indian domestic tournaments, such as the Ranji and Duleep



trophies, Ganguly got his big-break while playing for India on their tour of England. He scored 131 runs and cemented his place in the Indian team. Ganguly's place in the team was assured after successful performances in series against Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Australia, winning the Man of the Match awards. In the 1999 Cricket World Cup, he was involved in a partnership of 318 runs with Rahul Dravid, which remains the highest overall partnership score in the World Cup tournament history. Due to the match-fixing scandals in 2000 by other players of the team, and for his poor health, Indian captain Sachin Tendulkar resigned his position, and Ganguly was made the captain of the Indian cricket team. He was soon the subject of media criticism after an unsuccessful stint for county side Durham and for taking off his shirt in the final of the 2002 NatWest Series. He led India into the 2003 World Cup final, where they were defeated by Australia. Due to a decrease in individual performance, he was dropped from the team in the following year. He returned to the National team in 2006, and made successful batting displays. Around this time, he became involved in a dispute with Indian team coach Greg Chappell over several misunderstandings. Ganguly was again dropped from the team, however he was selected to play in the 2007 Cricket World Cup. He is regarded as one of India's most successful captains in modern times, and one of the greatest ODI batsmen of all time. Currently, he is the 8th highest run scorer in One Day Internationals (ODIs) and was the 3rd batsman in history to cross the 10,000 run landmark, after Sachin Tendulkar and Inzamam Ul Haq. In 2002, the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack ranked him the sixth greatest ODI batsman of all time, next to Viv Richards, Sachin Tendulkar, Brian Lara, Dean Jones and Michael Bevan. Ganguly joined the Kolkata Knight Riders team as captain for the Indian Premier League Twenty20 cricket tournament in 2008. The same year, after a home Test series against Australia, he announced his retirement from international cricket. He continued to play for the Bengal team and was appointed the chairman of the Cricket Association of Bengal's Cricket Development Committee. The left-handed Ganguly was a prolific One Day International (ODI) batsman, with over 11,000 ODI runs to his credit. He is one of the most successful Indian Test captains to date, winning 21 out of 49 test matches. Sourav Ganguly is the most successful Indian test captain overseas with 11 wins. The Indian team was ranked eighth in the ICC rankings before he became the captain, and under his tenure the team rank went up to second. An aggressive captain, Ganguly is credited with having nurtured the careers of many young players who played under him, and transforming the Indian team into an aggressive fighting unit. Along with Harshavardhan Neotia, Sanjiv Goenka, and Utsav Parekh, Ganguly is also the co-owner of Atlético de Kolkata, a franchise of the Indian Super League, which won the inaugural season in 2014. Ganguly was awarded the Padma Shri in 2004, one of India's highest civilian awards. Ganguly was awarded with the Banga Bibhushan Award from the Government of West Bengal on 20 May 2013. Ganguly is currently a part of the Supreme Court of India appointed Justice Mudgal Committee probe panel for the IPL Spot fixing and betting scandal's investigations.

A. Eminent Contributors (Female)

Bengal has been predominantly the boiling cradle of revolutions with Kolkata being the epicentre. Since British Raj, men and women have fought side by side, juxtaposing the norms of those times.

1. Rani Rashmoni (28 September 1793 – 19 February 1861) was the founder of the Dakshineswar Kali Temple, Kolkata, and remained closely associated with Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa after she appointed him as the priest of the temple. Her other construction works include the construction of a road from Subarnarekha River to Puri for the pilgrims, Babughat (also known as Babu Rajchandra Das Ghat), Ahiritola Ghat and Nimtala Ghat for the everyday bathers at the Ganges. She also offered considerable charity to the Imperial



Library (now the National Library of India), the Hindu College (now Presidency University). After her husband's death in 1836, Rashmoni took charge of the zamindari and finances. She was 49 years in age at that time. She soon proved herself a capable administrator. While the prestige of the zamindari grew, Rani Rashmoni, being very pious from childhood, continued to lead an extremely religious and austere life, befitting a widow in Bengali Hindu society. Rani Rashmoni died on 19 February 1861. The Rani and her clashes with the British in India became household tales in her time. By blocking the shipping trade on a part of Ganges she compelled the British to abolish the tax imposed on fishing in the river, which threatened the livelihood of poor fishermen. When Puja processions were stopped by the British on the charge that they disturbed the peace, she defied the orders. The British had to withdraw the penalty imposed on her in the face of public opposition and rioting in her support. Rani Rashmoni also had to her credit numerous charitable works and other contributions to society. She oversaw the construction of a road from Subarnarekha river to Puri for pilgrims. She funded the construction of ghats such as Babughat (in memory of her husband), Ahiritola Ghat and Nimtala Ghat for the daily bathers in the Ganges. She donated generously to the then Imperial Library (now the National Library of India) and Hindu College (now Presidency College). Prince Dwarkanath Tagore had mortgaged a part of his Zamindari in now South 24 Parganas (part of present-day Santoshpur and adjoining areas) to Rani Rashmoni for his passage to England. This part of land which was then a part of the Sunderbans was marshy and almost uninhabitable except for some families of thugs who found the area convenient to stay and venture out for plunders in far away places mounted on stilts. Rani Rashmoni persuaded these families and helped them to build up fisheries in the surrounding water bodies that later turned into large rich bheris. They gradually gave up their

'profession' of plundering and transformed into a community of fishermen. This was a great social reform that the Rani had initiated. A divine revelation led her to found the famous temple Dakshineswar Kali Temple complex on the banks of the Ganges at Dakshineswar in the North 24 Parganas. Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa (then known as Gadadhar) was appointed its head priest under her patronage. Though having such a great spiritual nature the society then had discriminated her. Being born in Chasi-Kaibartta family (Mahishyas) and being a middle-caste Shudra origin, no Brahmin was ready to be the priest in her temple. Rani Rashmoni's House at Janbazar was venue of traditional Durga Puja celebration each autumn. This included traditional pomp, including all-night jattras (folk theatre), rather than by entertainment for the Englishmen with whom she carried on a running feud. After her death in 1861, her sons-in-law took to celebrating Durga Puja in their respective premises.

2. Jnanadanandini Tagore 26 July 1850 – 1 October 1941

was a social reformer who pioneered various cultural innovations and influenced the earliest phase of women's empowerment in 19th century Bengal. She was married to Satyendranath Tagore, a scion of the Jorasanko Tagore Family. Among the Tagore family women, after Swarnakumari Devi, Jnanadanandini participated most actively in the rich literary ambiance of the family. Upon her return from England in 1880, Jnanadanandini began writing articles in the Bengali journal Bharati. Her flair was soon noticed by the intelligentsia. In 1881 - four years before the establishment of the Indian National Congress - Jnanadanandini published an article titled Ingrajninda O Deshanurag (Criticism of the British and Patriotism), in which she called for the establishment of a nationwide organization which would have branches in the remote district towns. She argued "every benefit that the British have bestowed upon us is a blow to our mission of national liberation". In 1885, Jnanadanandini Devi established Balak, the first children's literary magazine in Bengali. Rabindranath contributed a number of short stories, poems and plays to Balak. She wrote two plays for children - Takdumadum and Saat Bhai Champa - both of which were highly appreciated in the literary circles. In spite of her many literary achievements, Jnanadanandini Devi did not write her autobiography. Only a couple of years before her death, Pulinbihari Sen persuaded her to write a set of memoirs, later published as Smritikatha O Puratani.



3. Swarnakumari Devi - 28 August 1855 – 3 July 1932 was a poet, novelist, musician and social worker from the Indian subcontinent. She was the first among the women writers in Bengal to gain prominence. She was the fourth amongst the daughters of Debendranath Tagore and was a granddaughter of Dwarkanath Tagore. Three of her sisters, Soudamini, Sukumari and Saratkumari, were older than she was. Barnakumari was the youngest sister. Soudamini was one

of the earliest students of Bethune School. Others in the Tagore family had followed her, but it seems that Swarnakumari had her education primarily at home. She was five years older than Rabindranath Tagore. Education was valued in the Jorasanko Thakur Bari. Swarnakumari recalled how, when her father Debendranath learned that the governess was writing something on a slate and having the girls copy it, he stopped the mechanical practice and brought in a better teacher. In his memoirs Rabindranath wrote, "We learnt much more at home than we had to at school." Swarnakumari had a great capability of picking up friendship with other girls from an early age. As per the custom of the day, each pair of friends had a common name, which they used to call each other. Swarnakumari had many friends – Mistihasi, Milan, Bihangini and so on.



4. Toru Dutt (4 March 1856 – 30 August 1877) was a Bengali translator and poet from the Indian subcontinent, who wrote in English and French, in what was then British India. She is seen as one of the founding figures of Anglo-Indian literature, alongside Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809–31), Manmohan Ghose (1869–1924), and Sarojini Naidu (1879–1949). Dutt is known for her volumes of poetry in English, *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1876) and *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1882), and for her novel in French, *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d'Arvers* (1879). Her poetry is characterized by sensitive descriptions and lyricism. Her poems revolve around themes of loneliness, longing, patriotism and nostalgia. Dutt died young, at age 21, which has influenced some comparison of her to the poet John Keats.



5. Kadambini Ganguly 18 July 1861 – 3 October 1923 along with Chandramukhi Basu was one of the first two female physicians from India as well as from the entire British Empire. Kadambini, herself, was also the first Indian as well as South Asian female physician, trained in western medicine, to graduate in South Asia. Ganguly studied medicine at the Calcutta Medical College. In 1886, she was given a Graduate of Bengal Medical College degree. She thus became one of the two, Anandi Gopal Joshi being the other, Indian women doctors who qualified to practice western medicine. Also another Indian woman by the name of Abala Bose passed entrance in 1881



but was refused admission to the medical college and went to Madras (now Chennai) to study medicine but never graduated. Kadambini overcame some opposition from the teaching staff, and orthodox sections of society. She went to the United Kingdom in 1892 and returned to India after qualifying as LRCP (Edinburgh), LRCS (Glasgow), and GFPS (Dublin). After working for a short period in Lady Dufferin Hospital, she started her own private practice.

6. Binodini Dasi (1863–1941), also known as Notee Binodini, was a Calcutta-based, Bengali-speaking renowned actress and thespian. She started acting at the age of 12 and ended by the time she was 23, as she later recounted in her noted autobiography, *Amar Katha* (The Story of My Life) published in 1913. Born to prostitution, she started her career as a courtesan and at age twelve she played her first serious drama role in Calcutta's National Theatre in 1874, under the mentorship of its founder, Girish Chandra Ghosh. Her career coincided with the growth of the proscenium-inspired form of European theatre among the Bengali theatre going audience. During a career spanning twelve years she enacted over eighty roles, which included those of Pramila, Sita, Draupadi, Radha, Ayesha, Kaikeyi, Motibibi, and Kapalkundala, among others. She was one of the first South Asian actresses of the theatre to write her own autobiography. Her sudden retirement from the stage is insufficiently explained. Her autobiography has a consistent thread of betrayal. She violates every canon of the feminine smritikatha and wrote down what amounted to her indictment of respectable society. Ramakrishna, the great saint of 19th century Bengal, came to see her play in 1884. She was a pioneering entrepreneur of the Bengali stage and introduced modern techniques of stage make-up through blending European and indigenous styles.



7. Abala, Lady Bose - (8 August 1865 – 25 April 1951) was an Indian social worker. She was known for her efforts in women's education and her contribution towards helping widows. Apart from working as an educator, Bose was an early feminist. Writing in English magazine *Modern Review*, she argued that women should get a better education, "not because we may make better matches for our girls ... not even that the services of the daughter-in-law may be more valuable in the home of her adoption, but because a woman like a man is first of all a mind, and only in the second place physical and a body." Upon her husband's knighthood in 1916, she became Lady Bose. In 1919, Bose founded *Nari Shiksha Samiti*, a non-profit society. Its objective was the education of children, girls and women. In that era, child marriages were common as was the



presence of child widows. Lack of education and total economic and social dependence on the male family members resulted in the low status held by women. Dowry and other social pressures made the lives of many women intolerable. Under the influence of Raja Rammohan Roy, Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and Sister Nivedita, new perceptions concerning women emerged. During her lifetime, Bose established some 88 primary schools and 14 adult education centers in different parts of Bengal. Bose was the pioneer thinker for establishing centers like Mahila Shilpa Bhavan in Kolkata and Jhargram, which provided vocational training to distressed women, particularly widows, and secured jobs for them so that they could earn their livelihood. She was the first in India to set up programs of institutional pre-primary and primary teacher's training, for which she established Vidyasagar Bani Bhavan Primary Teachers Training Institute in 1925. A piece of land at 294/3 A.P.C Rd. was donated to Nari Siksha Samiti by then Mayor of Calcutta Corporation, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, where the activities of the Samiti commenced.

After her husband's death, Bose donated Rs 10,000,000 (US\$200,000 in 2015 dollars) to set up the Sister Nivedita Women's Education Fund, which set up the Adults Primary Education Center. Bose served as Secretary of Brahma Balika Shikshalaya from 1910 to 1936. She died on 26 April 1951.

8. Sister Nivedita -born Margaret Elizabeth Noble; 28 October 1867 – 13 October 1911) was an Irish teacher, author, social activist, school founder and disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She spent her childhood and early youth in Ireland. From her father, a college professor, she learned the ideal of service to mankind as the true service to God. She worked as a school teacher and later also opened a school. She was engaged to marry a Welsh youth, but he died soon after their engagement. Sister Nivedita met Swami Vivekananda in 1895 in London and travelled to Calcutta (present-day Kolkata), India in 1898. Swami Vivekananda gave her the name Nivedita (meaning "Dedicated to God") when he initiated her into the vow of Brahmacharya on 25 March 1898. In November 1898, she opened a girls' school in the Bagbazar area of Calcutta. She wanted to educate girls who were deprived of even basic education. During the plague epidemic in Calcutta in 1899, Nivedita nursed and took care of the poor patients. Nivedita had close associations with the newly established Ramakrishna Mission. Because of her active contribution in the field of Indian Nationalism, she had to publicly dissociate herself from the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission under the then president Swami Brahmananda. She was very close to Sarada Devi, the spiritual consort of Ramakrishna and



one of the major influences behind Ramakrishna Mission, and also with all brother disciples of Swami Vivekananda. She died on 13 October 1911 in Darjeeling. Her epitaph reads, "Here lies Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India".

9. Sarala Devi Chaudhurani, born Sarala Ghosal, (9 September 1872 – 18 August 1945) was the founder of the first women's organisation in India, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal in Allahabad in 1910. One of the primary goals of the organization was to promote female education, which at that time was not well developed. The organization opened several offices in Lahore (then part of undivided India), Allahabad, Delhi, Karachi, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Bankura, Hazaribagh, Midnapur and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) to improve the situation of women all over India.



10. Gauhar Jaan (born Angelina Yeoward, 26 June 1873 – 17 January 1930) was an Indian singer and dancer from Kolkata. She was one of the first performers to record music on 78 rpm records in India, which was later released by the Gramophone Company of India. Having recorded more than 600 songs in more than ten languages between 1902 and 1920, Jaan is credited with popularising Hindustani classical music such as thumri, dadra, kajri, tarana during the period. India's first recording sessions included Gauhar Jaan, singing a khayal in Raag Jogiya, recorded by Fred Gaisberg of the Gramophone Company. The sessions began on 8 November 1902. Over the course of six weeks, more than 500 matrices were recorded of local artists. The records were manufactured in Germany and shipped to India in April 1903. They proved a great success in popularising the gramophone in India, where locals had no interest or appreciation for Western music. The recording was done in a makeshift recording studio in two large rooms of a hotel in Kolkata. By 1903, her records started appearing in Indian markets and were in great demand.



11. Sunayani Devi - (18 June 1875 – 23 February 1962) was an Indian painter born into the aristocratic Tagore family in Calcutta, West Bengal. She was a self-taught artist, with no academic training in art. Inspired by her brothers, Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, and Samarendranath Tagore, she started painting only at the age of 30. She was married at the age of 12 to the grandson of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Known to be a true primitive of the Bengal Art School, she drew inspiration from the folk Pata painting style which was familiar to the women of the Tagore household. Often depicting scenes from Indian epics and mythologies in her works. Some of her notable works are Sadhika, Ardhanarisvar, Satir Dehatyag, Milk Maids, Yashoda and

Krishna among others According to Stella Kramrisch, she was the first modern painter in India. Her works were exhibited in 1922 as part of the Bauhaus artists exhibition in Calcutta. Since the beginning her artworks have been original and bold. They resemble the ancient Jain manuscript paintings. She applied wash technique to its fullest and later her works echoed the native imagery like village clay dolls that would be used as ornamentation. Her works are an amalgamation of modernist dialogue of primitive simplicity and a larger national discourse of being rooted in its cultural identity. Thus carving her image as a nationalist artist. Critical analyses of her portraits, have led her to be addressed as a naïve painter, who used folk themes with allure and sensitivity.



12. Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain-9 December (9 December 1880 – 9 December 1932), commonly known as Begum Rokeya, was a Bengali feminist thinker, writer, educator and political activist from British India (present day Bangladesh). She is widely regarded as a pioneer of women's liberation in South Asia. She advocated for men and women to be treated equally as rational beings, noting that the lack of education for women was responsible for their inferior economic



position. Her major works include *Matichur* (*A String of Sweet Pearls*, 1904 and 1922), a collection of essays in two volumes expressing her feminist thoughts; *Sultana's Dream* (1908), a feminist science fiction novella set in *Ladyland* ruled by women; *Padmarag* ("*Essence of the Lotus*", 1924) depicting the difficulties faced by Bengali wives; and *Abarodhbasini* (*The Confined Women*, 1931), a spirited attack on the extreme forms of *purdah* that endangered women's lives and self-image. Rokeya held education to be the central precondition of women's liberation, establishing the first school aimed primarily at Muslim girls in Kolkata. She is said to have gone from house to house persuading the parents to send their girls to her school in Nisha. Until her death, she ran the school despite facing hostile criticism and social obstacles. In 1916, she founded the Muslim Women's Association, an organization that fought for women's education and employment. In 1926, Rokeya presided over the Bengal Women's Education Conference convened in Kolkata, the first significant attempt to bring women together in support of women's education rights. She was engaged in debates and conferences regarding the advancement of women until her death on 9 December 1932, shortly after presiding over a session during the Indian Women's Conference. Bangladesh observes Rokeya Day on 9 December every year to commemorate her works and legacy. On that day, Bangladesh government also confers Begum Rokeya Padak on individual women for their exceptional achievement. In 2004, Rokeya was ranked number 6 in BBC's poll of the Greatest Bengali of all time.

13. Devika Rani Chaudhuri, usually known as Devika Rani (30 March 1908 – 9 March 1994), was an actress in Indian films who was active during the 1930s and 1940s. Widely acknowledged as the first lady of Indian cinema, Devika Rani had a successful film career that spanned 10 years. Born into a wealthy, anglicized Indian family, Devika Rani was sent to boarding school in England at age nine and grew up in that country. In 1928, she met Himanshu Rai, an



Indian film-producer, and married him the following year. She assisted in costume design and art direction for Rai's experimental silent film *A Throw of Dice* (1929). [a] Both of them then went to Germany and received training in film-making at UFA Studios in Berlin. Rai then cast himself as hero and her as heroine in his next production, the bilingual film *Karma* (1933), made simultaneously in English & Hindi. The film premiered in England in 1933, elicited interest there for a prolonged kissing scene featuring the real-life couple, and flopped badly in India. The couple returned to India in 1934, where Himanshu Rai established a production studio, Bombay Talkies, in partnership with certain other people. The studio produced several successful films over the next 5–6 years, and Devika Rani played the lead role in many of them. Her on-screen pairing with Ashok Kumar became popular in India. Following Rai's death in 1940, Devika Rani took control of the studio and produced some more films in partnership with her late husband's associates, namely Sashadhar Mukherjee and Ashok Kumar. As she was to recollect in her old age, the films which she supervised tended to flop, while the films supervised by the partners tended to be hits. In 1945, she retired from films, married the Russian painter Svetoslav Roerich and moved to his estate on the outskirts of Bangalore, thereafter leading a very reclusive life for the next five decades. Her persona, no less than her film roles, were considered socially unconventional. Her awards include the Padma Shri (1958), Dadasaheb Phalke Award (1970) and the Soviet Land Nehru Award (1990).

14. Ashapoorna Devi (8 January 1909 – 13 July 1995) also Ashapurna Debi or Asha Purna Devi, was a prominent Bengali novelist and poet. She has been widely honoured with a number of prizes and awards. In 1976, she was awarded Jnanpith Award and the Padma Shri by the Government of India; D. Litt. by the Universities of Jabalpur, Rabindra Bharati, Burdwan and Jadavpur. Vishwa Bharati University honoured her with Deshikottama in 1989. For her contribution as a novelist and short story writer, the Sahitya Akademi conferred its highest honour, the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, in 1994.



15. Noble Laureate - Mary Teresa Bojaxhiu(born Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu, Albanian: 26 August 1910 – 5 September 1997), commonly known as Mother Teresa and honoured in the Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta,was an Albanian-Indian Roman Catholic nun and missionary.[8] She was born in Skopje (now the capital of North Macedonia), then part of the Kosovo Vilayet of the Ottoman Empire. After living in Skopje for eighteen years, she moved to Ireland and then to India, where she lived for most of her life. In 1950, Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation that had over 4,500 nuns and was active in 133 countries in 2012. The congregation manages homes for people who are dying of HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis. It also runs soup kitchens, dispensaries, mobile clinics, children's and family counselling programmes, as well as orphanages and schools. Members take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, and also profess a fourth vow – to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor." Teresa received a number of honors, including the 1962 **Ramon Magsaysay Peace Prize and 1979 Nobel Peace Prize**. She was canonised on 4 September 2016, and the anniversary of her death (5 September) is her feast day. A controversial figure during her life and after her death, Teresa was admired by many for her charitable work. She was praised and criticized on various counts, such as for her views on abortion and contraception, and was criticized for poor conditions in her houses for the dying. Her authorized biography was written by Navin Chawla and published in 1992, and she has been the subject of films and other books. On 6 September 2017, Teresa and St. Francis Xavier were named co-patrons of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Calcutta.



16. Bina Das (1911–1986) was an Indian revolutionary and nationalist from West Bengal. Bina Das was a member of Chhatri Sangha, a semi-revolutionary organisation for women in Kolkata. On 6 February 1932, she attempted to assassinate the Bengal Governor Stanley Jackson, in the Convocation Hall of the University of Calcutta. The revolver was supplied by another freedom fighter Kamala Das Gupta. She fired five shots but failed and was sentenced to nine years of rigorous imprisonment. After her early release in 1939, Das joined the Congress party. In 1942, she participated in the Quit India movement and was imprisoned again from 1942–45. From 1946–47, she was a member of the Bengal Provincial Legislative Assembly and, from 1947–51, of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly. In 1947, she married Jatish Chandra Bhaumik, an Indian independence movement activist of the Jugantar group. Her sister edited Kalyani Bhattacharjee a book called



Bengal Speaks (published in 1944), and dedicated it to her. She was a friend of Suhasini Ganguly, a freedom fighter

17. Pritilata Waddedar (5 May 1911 – 23 September 1932) was a Bengali revolutionary nationalist from the Indian subcontinent who was influential in the Indian independence movement. After completing her education in Chittagong and Dhaka, she attended Bethune College in Kolkata. She graduated in philosophy with distinction and became a school teacher. Pritilata joined a revolutionary group headed by Surya Sen. She is known for leading fifteen revolutionaries in the 1932 armed attack on the Pahartali European Club, during which one person was killed and eleven injured. The revolutionaries torched the club and were later caught by the British police. To avoid arrest, Pritilata consumed cyanide and died.

18. Asima Chatterjee (23 September 1917 – 22 November 2006) was an Indian organic chemist noted for her work in the fields of organic chemistry and phytomedicine. Her most notable work includes research on vinca alkaloids, the development of anti-epileptic drugs, and development of anti-malarial drugs. She also authored a considerable volume of work on medicinal plants of the Indian subcontinent. She was the first woman to receive a Doctorate of Science from an Indian university. Asima Chatterjee received a master's degree (1938) and a doctoral degree (1944) in organic chemistry from the Rajabazar Science College campus of University of Calcutta. She was the first Indian woman to earn a doctorate in science.



Her doctoral research focused on the chemistry of plant products and synthetic organic chemistry. Among her notable instructors at the time were Prafulla Chandra Roy and Satyendra Nath Bose. Additionally, she had research experience from the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Caltech with László Zechmeister. Chatterjee's research concentrated on natural products chemistry and resulted in anti-convulsive, anti-malarial, and chemotherapy drugs. She spent around forty years researching various alkaloid compounds. She also discovered anti-epileptic activity in *Marsilea minuta* and anti-malarial activity in the plants *Alstonia scholaris*, *Swertia chirata*, *Picrorhiza kurroa* and *Caesalpinia crista*. These agents, however, have not been shown to be clinically competitive with the medications currently used for these conditions. Her work led to the development of an epilepsy drug called Ayush-56 and several anti-malarial drugs. Chatterjee also wrote around 400 papers which were published in both national and international journals.

19. Kalpana Datta (27 July 1913 – 8 February 1995) (later Kalpana Joshi) was an Indian independence movement activist and a member of the armed independence movement led by Surya Sen, which carried out the Chittagong armoury raid in 1930. Later she joined

the Communist Party of India and married Puran Chand Joshi, then General Secretary of the Communist Party of India in 1943.

20. Bibha Chowdhuri (1913 - 2 June, 1991)

was an Indian physicist. She worked on particle physics and cosmic rays. The IAU has re-christened the star HD 86081 as Bibha (a yellow-white dwarf star in the constellation Sextans south of the celestial equator) after her. Chowdhuri demonstrated that the density of penetrating events is proportional to the total particle density of an extensive air shower.



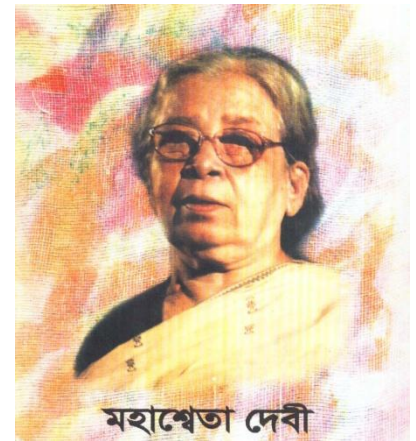
She was interviewed by the Manchester Evening News, saying that "it is a tragedy that we have so few women physicists today". The article was titled Meet India's New Woman Scientist – She has an eye for cosmic rays. Chowdhuri returned to India after her PhD, working at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research for eight years. In 1954 she was a visiting researcher at the University of Michigan. She was appointed because Homi Bhabha was still establishing the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, and contacted her thesis examiners for advice on outstanding graduate students. She joined the Physical Research Laboratory and became involved with the Kolar Gold Fields experiments. She moved to Kolkata to work at the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics. She taught physics in French. Her life was described in the book A Jewel Unearthed: Bibha Chowdhuri. She was described by The Statesman as a forgotten legend. She continued to publish until she died in 1991.

21. Kanan Devi (22 April 1916 – 17 July 1992) was an Indian actress and singer. She was among the early singing stars of Indian cinema, and is credited popularly as the first star of Bengali cinema. Her singing style, usually in rapid tempo, was used instrumentally in some of the biggest hits of New Theatres, Kolkata. Kanan Devi, as the first lady of the Bengali screen, received many honours for her contribution to Indian cinema. An honorary degree from Vishwabharati, the Padma Shree in 1968 and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1976.



22. Meera Mukherjee (1923–1998) was an Indian sculptor and writer, known for bringing modernity to the ancient Bengali sculpting art. She is known to have used innovative bronze casting techniques, improving the Dhokra method employing Lost-wax casting, which she learnt during her training days of the Bastar sculpting tradition of Chhattisgarh. She received the fourth highest civilian award of the Padma Shri from the Government of India in 1992 for her contributions to Arts.

23. Mahasweta Devi (14 January 1926 – 28 July 2016) was an Indian fiction writer in Bengali and a socio-political activist. Her notable literary works include Hajar Churashir Maa, Rudali, and Aranyer Adhikar. She was a self-recognised communist and worked for the rights and empowerment of the tribal people (Lodha and Shabar) of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states of India. She was honoured with various literary awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award (in Bengali), Jnanpith Award and Ramon Magsaysay Award along with India's civilian awards Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan.



24. Shanu Lahiri (23 January 1928 – 1 February 2013) was a Bengali painter and art educator. She was one of Kolkata's most prominent female public artists, undertaking extensive graffiti art drives across Kolkata to beautify the city and hide aggressive political sloganeering.

25. Suchitra Sen (born as Roma Dasgupta) -6 April 1931 – 17 January 2014) was an Indian film actress who worked in Bengali and Hindi cinema. The movies in which she was paired opposite Uttam Kumar became classics in the history of Bengali cinema. Sen was the first Indian actress to receive an award at an international film festival



when, at the 1963 Moscow International Film Festival, she won the Silver Prize for Best Actress for Saat Pake Bandha. In 1972, she was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. From 1979 on, she retreated from public life and shunned all forms of public contact; for this she is often compared to Greta Garbo. In 2005, she refused the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the highest cinematic award in India, to stay out of the public eye. In 2012, she was conferred the West Bengal Government's highest honour: Banga Bibhushan. Her first official release was Sukumar Dasgupta's Saat Number Kayedi (1953).[9] She was catapulted to stardom after she was cast as Vishnupriya by Devaki Kumar Bose in his Bhagaban Shree Krishna Chaitanya (1953).

26. Sandhya Mukherjee -4th October, 1931 is an Bengali playback singer and musician, specialising in Bengali music. Born in Kolkata, Bengal (now West Bengal), India, she received Banga Bibhushan, the highest civilian honour in West Bengal in 2011 and National Film Award for Best Female Playback Singer for her songs in the films Jay Jayanti and Nishi Padma in the year 1970.



27. Nabaneeta Dev Sen (13 January 1938 – 7 November 2019) was an Indian writer and academic. After studying arts and comparative literature, she moved to US where she studied further. She returned to India and taught at several universities and institutes as well as served on various positions in literary institutes. She published more than 80 books in Bengali: poetry, novels, short stories, plays, literary criticism, personal essays, travelogues, humour writing, translations and children's literature. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2000 and the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1999.



28. Arati Saha (24 September 1940 – 23 August 1994) was an Indian long distance swimmer, best known for becoming the first Asian woman to swim across the English Channel in 29 September 1959. In 1960, she became the first Indian sportswoman to be awarded Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour in India. Born in Calcutta, West Bengal, British India, Arati had been introduced to swimming at the early age of four. Her precocious talent was spotted by Sachin Nag, and later she was inspired by the ace Indian swimmer Mihir Sen to try to cross the English Channel.



29. Aparna Sen (25 October 1945) is an Indian filmmaker, screenwriter and actress who is known for her work in Bengali cinema. A leading actress of the late 1960s and 1970s she has received eight BFJA Awards, five for best actress, two for best supporting actress and one for lifetime achievement. She is the winner of nine National Film Awards and nine international film festival awards for her direction in films. She was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award, by the government of India in 1987. Sen made her debut in Teen Kanya (1961) and received her success with Aparichito (1969). She went on to establish herself as a leading actress of Bengali Cinema with the films Aranyer Din Ratri (1970), Ekhane Pinjar (1971), Ekhoni (1971), Jay Jayanti (1971), Memshaheb (1972), Jiban Saikate (1972), Basanta Bilap (1973), Sonar Khancha (1973), Sujata (1974), Alor Thikana (1974), Kajallata (1975), Raag Anuraag (1975), Jana Aranya (1976), Ajasra Dhanyobad (1977), Proxy (1977 film)|Proxy (1977), Mohonar Dike (1984),



Ekanto Apon (1987), Swet Patharer Thala (1992). She also garnered critical acclaim for her work in Indira (1984 film)|Indira (1984), Kari Diye Kinlam (1989), Ek Din Achanak (1999), Mahaprithibi (1991), Unishe April (1995), Paromitar Ek Din (2000), Titli (2001), Antaheen (2009), Chatuskon (2014).In addition to acting in films, Aparna Sen has also been directing films since 1981, starting with 36 Chowringhee Lane for which she won National Film Award (India) for Best Director. She went on to achieve further success in direction with films Paroma, Sati, Yugant, Paromitar Ek Din, Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, 15 Park Avenue, The Japanese Wife, Iti Mrinalini, Goynar Baksho. She won her second National Film Award as a director for Mr. and Mrs. Iyer.

4. GHATS OF GANGA

The twin cities, Calcutta and Howrah, run their parallel courses. Touching them both dividing and yet linking them, is the actual wide course of a river. From long before sunrise, this course is touched in turn by stream of men and women on either bank. As the day wears on, the water grows darker, intenser and lonelier. There were once hordes of men who chanted Sanskrit hymns as they hitched their sacred threads round their ears and plunged into Ganga, hungry for redemption, today there are only few. Rich house wives of old Calcutta would be brought here in curtained Palanquins and given a holy dip, palanquin and all. The scene is not imaginable today. Neither, Sahibs Nawabs nor zaminder sails down the river in the pleasure barge. Some country boats can be laden with straw or bales can still be seen making their way, but their number has declined, as even more drastically has the clutch of ferry boats.



Biprads Piplai has left us a vivid picture of the river activities of 15th century in his Manasamangal Kavya. The river routes, the trading centres, the life of the people on the banks, their arts and industries are all brought in to an account of the Chand Saudagar's voyage: past Katwa, Nadia, Phulia, Tribeni, Saptagram, Bhatpara, Kankinara, Mulajore, Khardah, Sukchar, Konnagar-on to Chitpur, Kalikata and Kalighat. The last 2 names are probably interpolated, but the picture remains valid, coloured by the uncertainty of even a river voyage in those days and the aura surrounding the lives of the rulers, traders, priests and pilgrims who inhabited this flourishing spectrum of towns. The coming of the white traders only increased the alchemic fascination of the river.



Soul saving apart, the river had 2 functions – trade and transport. Both have dwindled and thus the ghats, jetties along the strand have crumbled with them. The old or “Adi Ganga” have silted up, and the new flow of the Hugli Bhagirathi carries the water of the Hugly river below Kalikata. If we walk from Ghat to Ghat along the stretch of the bank, we may meditate on the transience of Ganges Civilization: for Calcutta has neither mountain, nor sea only a river. The river linked the city to the land; it brought the white men who founded the city in the first place. But then came the railway and then the motor roads. The children of the river began to desert their mother. The desertion is not evident, for the river bank is largely over populous to this day: and some of the denizens are truly children of the river. There are many children who all have taken birth in these Ghats. They know the shops there, the gambling dens, the places where Mahabharata is chanted and also the Burning Ghats and all the rituals. Many of them have not seen the interior of the city. Their home lies around the canopied ancient trees. They live, they play, they earn and they die with the river. The river activities might have dwindled but the stream has remained in the city lives. The river has entered deep into the Bengali language and traditions. As the readers of the Bengali literature would know Gangajal or Ganga water was once the address that marked a special tie of affection, especially between two women. The river has entered deep into the Bengali language and its speaker’s roots. Declared religious or superstitious beliefs may have dwindled .But the underlying mystique lingers, anchored in sheer physical compulsion, in a hot country, to drink and bathe continually. Hence almost all the ghats remain in usable state crowded by bathers and water seekers.





From Hastings in North to Hastings at the mouth of the Adi Ganga in the south, the river bank is broken by ghat after ghat, with a corresponding series across the stream on Haora Bank. They are like hands stretching out the river, invariably broad and gently sloping like so many mute symbols of the land's past relations with the river: bathing, trading and travelling. The state of most of the Ghats leaves no doubt that these relations are indeed past. But they are quiet dilapidated: they enshrine history that is also captured in their names.

There is a lane in Khidirpur called Nazir Lane. Its original name was Nazir Muhammad Ghatmajhi Lane. This "*Ghatmajhi*" was not really a *majhi* or boatman but a more exalted functionary. He would arrange for the hire of various types of boats from his boats from his ghat, engage oarsmen for ferries for ferries and porters for loading and unloading. Still more exalted were the *Mirbahars*, the harbour masters of Mughal time whose role is commemorated in the name of Mirbahar Ghat. All sorts of people have had their ghats named after them. Many of them were the benefactors who built the Ghats usually upper caste names, often from the Great Houses of old Kolkata. But they also include the names of other orders, regions and religions: Huzoorimal a Punjabi Sikh, Kashinath Tandon, another Punjabi, Rustomji Kawasji a Parsee, Joseph Baretto a Portuguese, unknown englishmen like Jackson, Foreman and famous ones like Clive and Outram. There is an Old Fort Ghat and an Old Powder Mill Ghat: Keto or Ketua Ghat, Pathuriaghat, or Takta Ghat or jetty laid with planks up which shackled prisoners would carry their packs to the ship that was to transport them to the Cellular Jail in Andaman and Nicobar islands. In his survey, Upjohn located 40 ghats in 1792-93 between Chitpur Bridge Ghat to Chandpaul Ghat. Radharaman Mitra identified 82 numbers in 19th Century .But over the years, we have identified 56 Ghats mostly emphasising the decline importance of the City's Ghats.



The Ghats of Kolkata still sustains number of livelihoods. One can find wrestlers, masseurs, priests, holymen, tea sellers, barbers as well as ubiquitous bathers, traders, and boatmen. Some come here to chat and recreate themselves: others are habitual riverside idlers, down and outs, gamblers and drug addicts. Yet some come to hear hymns, discourses and readings from holy texts. Lovers come here for peace and romance and as everywhere in Kolkata, the homeless come to seek shelter. "Ganga feeds us" says some as for generations they either sell the holy water or Mati (Ganga Clay) from house to house. There are many priests who go around the markets (Hatibagan or Sovabazar) blessing each shop with Ganga water and flower petal. Later in the day they become Ghat Brahmins helping people to execute the last rites of the departed souls. Many of them have loads of towel, oil and holy clay in their trunks which they use it for varied purposes.







Even an all embracing city like Kolkata cannot afford us such a range of types anywhere so much as long as the river. A few represent the outgrowths of officialdom: the attendant doctor at the crematorium, for instance. Kashipur, Nimtala or Kashi Mitra burning Ghat also affords other strange functionaries inured to death: funeral priests, or dead man's Brahmin, the funeral photographer and on the outskirts of the crematorium, holy men sit alongside criminals and potential suicides, smoking pipes of ganja after a call to Shiva or Kali. During Monsoons fishermen from many parts of South Bengal row towards Kolkata for the Hilsa season from August to October. For fishermen Ganga is a generic term that they apply to all the rivers: not all of them operate on the actual stream of that name. The hilsa fishermen use number of nets – Bhasa or Floating, the fixed or Bandha, the up gathered or guti and the finger – net or anguley jal. A standard practice is to make a kind of well or enclosed area in the water. Hilsa is caught along Khidirpur, Garden Reach, Chandpaul Ghat, Kalighat or Ahiritola Ghat and also across the river near Botanical Garden. Traditionally no tax has been levied on the fishermen from the time of Rani Rashmoni but the catch has dwindled because of pollution. Increase in ferry and launch services has also affected fishing.







Suriname Memorial at the Suriname Ghat along the banks of river Hooghly. The statue, of a plainly-dressed couple carrying a potli, honours those Indian indentured workers who had migrated to Suriname, the small country located on the northeast Atlantic coast of South America, from 1873 to 1917. The memorial is an alluminium representation of 'Baba and Mai' or 'Mai Baap' - a depiction of the male and female indentured workers who had left the Indian coasts to work as labourers in sugarcane plantation.

In 1863, slavery was abolished by the Dutch and they entered into an agreement with the East India Company to recruit labourers from India to work in the sugarcane plantations in Suriname. Men, known as Arkatias were sent out to recruit people from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They entered into a five-year contract and came to be known as the Contrakees or Agreemanees. They were to receive 25-pence a week for their labour but payment was often delayed. Of the 34,000-odd Indians who reached Suriname, 65% stayed back. Indentured labour was finally abolished 100 years ago in 1917,” The first ship, named Lalla Rookh and carrying Indian indentured labourers, had arrived in Suriname in June 1873. Today, the largest ethnic group in Suriname are the East Indians, descendants of the 19th century indentured labourers primarily from Bihar and Eastern UP.

“In 1863, slavery was abolished in the Dutch colony of Suriname, but as a plantation colony it needed skill labourers. So with the assistance of the East India Company, the Dutch looked to bring in workers, mostly from the Bhojpuri region. They made their way from one sub-depot to another until finally reaching 20 Garden Reach, Calcutta Port — this very spot.

Legend has it that Ganga came to earth to save it from destruction and fill it with life. This faith, anchored in the nation's deepest myths, imperceptibly colours such individual poetic visions of the river as that above. But the reality is somehow different. As stated in CMDA brochure – Calcutta does not perhaps offer much by way of natural scenery, but the River Ganga, about half a mile wide, flowing between the main city and the town of Howrah, with its ships, barges and boats always presents a picturesque scene. The river has lost its wonder in this account. The educated Kolkata dwellers no longer admit it into his life. But still it exists as a myth amidst the faith, tradition sustaining lives of many.



The images of Durga and other Gods and Goddesses are immersed in the Ganga after puja every year. In low water the straw frames of the clay Gods lie rotting in water like a symbol. Again from it the clay is taken out by the nearby potters to create new deities. The Ganga Action Plan is underway and may be it will make a difference. But the question is, will it be able to bring back the life of the river?



Ghats According to 2020 Survey Between Pramanick Ghat to Rajabagan Ghat

SI N	Name of the Ghats	Remarks (Activities)
1	Paramanick Ghat	Domestic
2	Cossipur Burning Ghat	Funereal Ghat
3	Ratan Babu Ghat	Ferry Service
4	Sadhu Ghat	Domestic
5	Gopaler Ghat	Domestic
6	Rustumjee Parsee Ghat	Dock
7	Cossipur Gun & Shell Ghat	Domestic
8	Cossipur Ferry Ghat	Ferry Service
9	Debendrabala Ghat	Domestic
10	Baishnabi Ghat	Domestic
11	Indra Ghat	Domestic
12	Loha Pool	Canal Mouth
13	Baghbazar Mayer Ghat	Domestic
14	Baghbazaar Bathing Ghat	Domestic
15	Baghbazaar Ferry Ghat	Ferry Service
16	Thakurbari Ghat	Domestic
17	Gopal Ghat	Domestic
18	Kashi Mitra Burning Ghat	Funereal
19	Coomertully Ghat	Domestic
20	Sovabazar Ferry Ghat	Ferry Service
21	Champatola Ghat	Domestic
22	Ruth Ghat	Domestic
23	Ahiritola Ghat 1	Domestic
24	Ahiritola Ghat 2	Ferry Service
25	Ahiritola Ghat Extension	Domestic
26	Manik Bose Ghat	Domestic
27	Nimtala Kishor Bani Ghat	Domestic
28	Nimtala Burning Ghat	Funreal
29	Modi Ghat	Domestic
30	Prassana Kumar Ghat	Domestic
31	Jaggannath Ghat	Domestic

32	Chote lal ki Ghat	Domestic
33	Ram Chandra Goenka Ghat	Domestic
34	Armenian Ghat	Domestic
35	Fairlie Place	Ferry Service
36	Millenium Park	Jetty
37	Floatel	Restaurant
38	Babughat old	Domestic
39	Babughat New	Ferry Service
40	Kadamtala Baja Ghat	Domestic
41	Chandpaul Ghat	Domestic
42	Outram Ghat	Defence
43	Sea Explorer's /institute	Defence
44	Pani Ghat 1	Domestic
45	Pani Ghat 2	Domestic
46	Judges Ghat	Domestic
47	Manuar Ghat	Domestic
48	Prinsep Ghat 1	Domestic
49	Prinsep Ghat 2	Domestic
50	Bidhan Ghat	Domestic
51	Dai Ghat	Domestic
52	Garden Reach	Dockyard
52	Surinam Ghat	Public
53	Bichali Ghat	Ferry service
54	Raja Bagan	Domestic

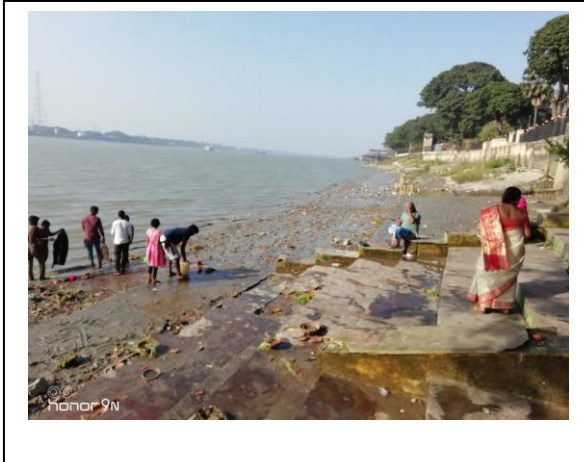
Ghats According to 1857 Simms Map Between Cossipur Gun Foundary Ghat to Garden Reach

SI N	Name of the Ghats	GPS Locations
1	Cossipur Gun Foundary	22°37'9.56"N 88°22'5.88"E
2	Nawab's Ghat	22°36'53.56"N 88°22'6.87"E
3	Chitpur Ghat	22°36'50.59"N 88°22'7.13"E
4	Dabee Roy's Ghat	22°36'41.35"N 88°22'6.13"E
5	Paran Babu Ghat	22°36'35.99"N 88°22'4.93"E
6	Huree Poddar Ghat	22°36'33.16"N 88°22'3.86"E

7	Loha Pool	22°36'26.62"N 88°22'10.82"E
8	Permit Ghat	22°36'26.96"N 88°22'0.16"E
9	Doorgacharan Mookherjee Ghat	22°36'15.64"N 88°21'50.99"E
10	Bagbazaar Ghat	22°36'19.51"N 88°21'54.80"E
11	Annapurna Ghat	22°36'15.85"N 88°21'50.77"E
12	Rasik Niyogi Ghat	22°36'14.72"N 88°21'49.86"E
13	PoonteePal's Ghat	22°36'13.91"N 88°21'49.10"E
14	Thakoorbari Ghat	22°36'12.76"N 88°21'48.30"E
15	Golabari Ghat	22°36'11.29"N 88°21'46.45"E
16	Cassy Mitter's Ghat	22°36'8.30"N 88°21'42.99"E
17	Raja Radhakanth's Ghat	22°36'7.62"N 88°21'42.04"E
18	Hurrolall Koondoo Ghat	22°36'8.91"N 88°21'42.98"E
19	Koomar Tolle Ghat	22°36'6.97"N 88°21'40.52"E
20	Radhakisto Dutt's Ghat	22°36'7.38"N 88°21'40.11"E
21	Dahparah Ghat	22°36'5.03"N 88°21'38.22"E
22	Chambatalla Ghat	22°36'2.94"N 88°21'35.62"E
23	SapoolRamjoy Shah's Ghat	22°36'0.53"N 88°21'29.98"E
24	Kawal Shah's Ghat	22°35'58.81"N 88°21'26.92"E
25	Ruth Ghat	22°35'55.96"N 88°21'22.94"E
26	MohunToney's Ghat	22°35'52.54"N 88°21'18.71"E
27	Dhurmotollah Ghat	22°35'50.12"N 88°21'15.76"E
28	Ahiritola Ghat 1	22°35'46.04"N 88°21'10.88"E
29	Manik Bose Ghat	22°35'39.90"N 88°21'8.35"E
30	Nimtala Burning Ghat	22°35'36.39"N 88°21'6.86"E
31	Jorabagan Ghat	22°35'30.35"N 88°21'4.60"E
32	Prassana Kumar Ghat	22°35'21.91"N 88°21'1.24"E
33	Night Soil Ghat	22°35'19.88"N 88°20'59.84"E
34	Jaggannath Ghat	22°35'15.37"N 88°20'59.04"E
35	Mint Ghat	22°35'9.43"N 88°20'57.00"E
36	Meerbohur's Ghat	22°35'8.09"N 88°20'56.89"E
37	Raja Burdwans Ghat	22°35'0.76"N 88°20'54.45"E
38	Burra bazar Ghat	22°35'0.17"N 88°20'54.41"E
39	Mullick Ghat	22°34'57.27"N 88°20'52.75"E

40	Railway Jetty	
41	Strand Mill Ghat	
42	Jackson Ghat	
43	Clive Ghat	
44	Bonded Warehouse Ghat	
45	Custom House Ghat	
46	Coilah Ghat	
47	Timber Jetty	
48	Banks Hall Ghat	
49	Police Ghat	
50	Colvins Gha	
51	Chandpaul Ghat	
52	Water Works	
53	Babughat	
54	Pani Ghat 1	
55	Prinsep Ghat 1	
56	Baloo Ghat	
57	Commissariat Ghat	
58	New Jetty	
59	Cooly Bazar Ghat	
60	Garden Reach	

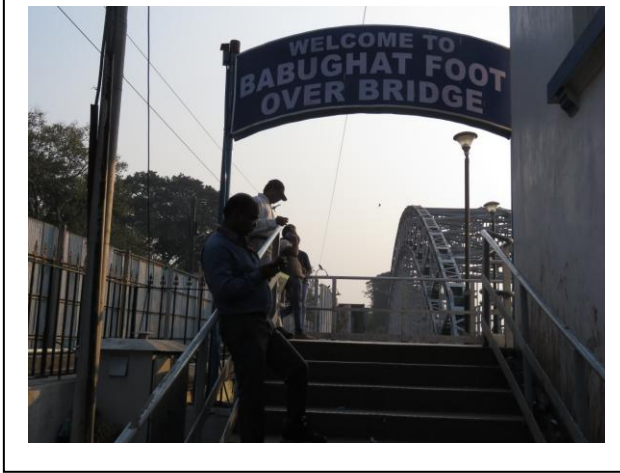
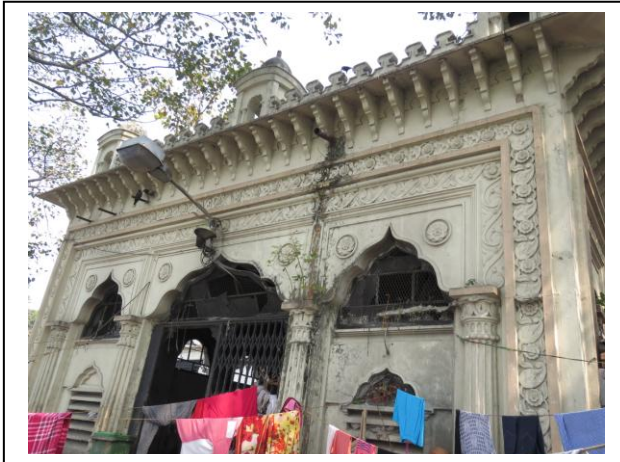
A. Photostory Of Ghats In Kolkata















5. MULTI-ETHNIC COMMUNITIES OF KOLKATA AND THEIR CULTURE

Several communities make up for the beautiful collage that we call Kolkata. The culture of tolerance in Kolkata did not obliterate differences between communities. Instead, all respondents described being proud of their particular identities. Difference was not obliterated, but celebrated. Most respondents from minority and Hindu communities mentioned having their own clubs, social and religious gatherings. Shared neighbourhood geography where diverse communities forged intimate bonds by living among one another, was also critical for community integration.

The decennial census, the only source of a consistent time series demographic data, provides us with figures on the two broad groupings into which communities are classified: religion and linguistic. However, the Census authorities have discontinued the publication of either religious or linguistic categories at the level of municipal wards, since 1961. Since the late 18th century maps prepared on the city have formed the major sources, both directly and indirectly. Locality and street names, along with the names of the markets, religious institutions, burial grounds, synagogues etc provide evidence of the existence of the communities. So, based on this limited data sources, here is an attempt of documenting the multi ethnic communities of Kolkata.

As a majority population in the city of Kolkata is constituted by the Hindus (religious groups) and Bengalis (for linguistic groups). So the other communities are non-Hindus and non-Bengalis. Kolkata has witnessed the inflow of communities not only from its vast and varied hinterland, but as a colonial city it became the focus of immigration of people from different parts of the world. This immigration community is diverse in ethnic, linguistic and religious attributes. Though we have tried to focus in documenting the communities based on religion and linguistics, often these categories get overlapped. For example, when focussing on the Chinese community, the Confucian or Buddhist communities would very naturally come into focus, or when writing on the jains, the same would happen to communities with which this religion is primarily related – the Marwaris / Rajasthanis, the Parsis and Zoroastrians, the Sikhs to Gurmukhi / Punjabi and so on. Few of the communities, as would be shown, tended to concentrate within their exclusive domains. Yet, most of these communities have in the main tended to concentrate in areas of mixed populace-mixed in both linguistic and religious terms. It would be interesting to note that the majority of wards with mixed population happen to be those with high minority concentrations, with no particular majority group in most.

Communities in Calcutta (Kolkata) -1837

Communities	Number	% to total population
English	3,318	1.61
East Indians (Eurasians)	4746	2.43

Portuguese	3181	1.63
French	160	0.08
Chinese	362	0.19
Armenians	636	0.33
Jews: Muhammadans	360	0.18
Upcountry	16,677	8.54
Muhammadans: Bengali	4567	2.34
Hindus;Upcountry	17,333	8.87
Hindus: Bengali	123318	63.14
Mughals	527	0.27
Parsees	40	0.02
Arabs	351	0.18
Maghs(Burmese)	683	0.35
Madrasis	55	0.03
Indian Christian	104	0.05
Unspecified Lower Order	19084	9.77

Source : Census of India , Calcutta City for 1837

Share of Religious Groups in Calcutta

Religious Group	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Hindus	65.04	69	79.06	68.71	-	83.41	83.85	83.13	-	-	-	77.68
Muslims	28.97	25.65	21.92	26	24.03	12	12.78	14.19	-	-	-	20.27
Christians	2.2	4.24	-	3.97	0.79	2.98	1.52	1.40	-	-	-	0.88
Sikhs	1.5	0.13	-	0.39	0.41	0.56	-	0.36	-	-	-	0.34
Buddhists	0.34	0.26	-	0.25	-	0.37	0.31	0.29	-	-	-	-
Jains	0.15	0.2	-	0.27	0.32	0.46	0.58	0.60	-	-	-	0.46
Confucians	0.02	0.12	-	0.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zoroastrians	0.04	0.05	-	0.10	-	0.06	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jews	0.28	0.22	-	0.15	-	0.08	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source : Census of India , Calcutta City for respective years

Census 2011- Hinduism is majority religion in Kolkata city with 76.51 % followers. Islam is second most popular religion in city of Kolkata with approximately 20.60 % following it. In Kolkata city, Christianity is followed by 0.88 %, Jainism by 0.47 %, Sikhism by 0.31 % and Buddhism by 0.31 %. Around 0.03 % stated 'Other Religion', approximately 1.09 % stated 'No Particular Religion'.

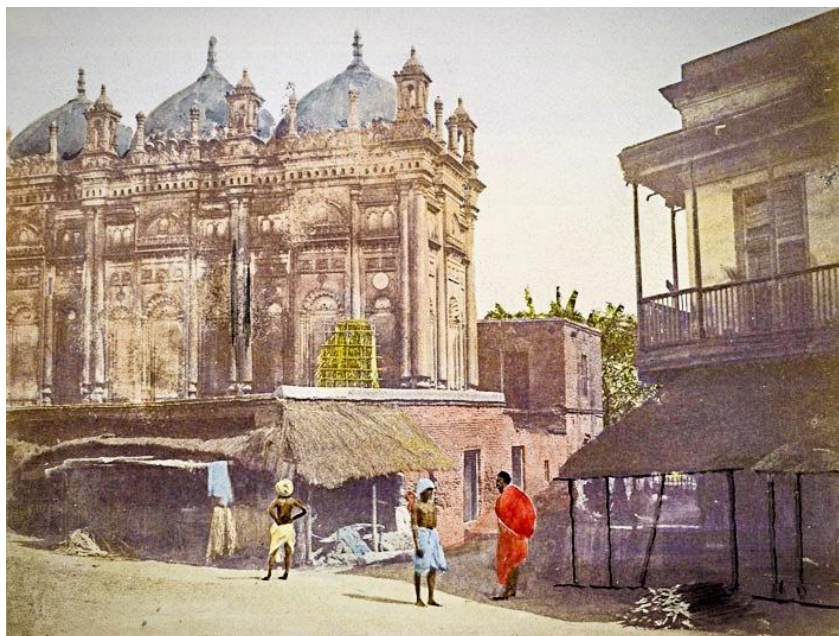
Spatial Locations of the Different Communities

Sl No	Different Communities	GCP's(Ground Control Points)	Major Pockets	Ward Nos.
1	Muslims	22°34'36.39"N 88°22'25.39"E	Rajabazaar	28,29
		22°36'44.72"N 88°22'14.92"E	Chitpore-Kashipur	1,6
		22°29'54.23"N 88°20'44.03"E	Tollyguange	97
		22°33'17.28"N 88°15'27.48"E	Metiaburuz	135,136,13 7,138 140,141
		22°32'47.95"N 88°20'2.11"E	Khaddirpur	77,78,79,8 0
		22°34'42.62"N 88°21'37.88"E	Kolutola-Jorasanko	25,41,43
		22°32'35.52"N 88°21'58.12"E	Park Circus	64,65
2	Marwaris	22°34'54.20"N 88°21'16.03"E	Barabazaar	42,22,
		22°31'29.71"N 88°19'50.04"E	Alipur	74
4	Armenians		Park Street Collinga, Ballyguange & Tollyguange	52,53, 69,94
5	Jews-Baghdad		Bowbazaar	
6.	Sikhs-Punjab		Bhabanipur	
7.	Jains- Marwaris	22°34'54.77"N 88°21'16.05"E	Bara bazar	
8.	Anglo Indians	22°34'12.08"N 88°21'23.50"E	Bow Barrack	
9	Buddhists			
10	Parsees	22°34'16.35"N 88°21'17.27"E	Metcalfe Street	
11	Chinese	22°34'21.99"N 88°21'18.82"E	Tiretta Bazar (Black Burn Road, Sun yat	

		<p>22°32'44.28"N 88°23'15.56"E</p>	<p>Sen Sarani, Chhatawala goli)</p> <p>Tangra area</p>	
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A. Muslim Community

Not only numerically, even spatially the Muslims constitute a significant component of the city's demographic profile. There is hardly any municipal ward in the city that does not have Muslim presence. This community is represented by several linguistic groups including Bengali. According to Nirmal Kumar Bose – The 2 large Muslim Quarters that surround the places of residence in south west and south of the city that were furnished by East India Company to the Nawab of Oudh and the descendants of Tipoo Sultan of Mysore. The middle class commercial people of the community lived in wards near the central business district, whereas lower class Muslims live in the tenement and slums districts of east and north east and in large tracts of the city surrounding the old centres of the Moslem aristocracy in south and south west. The bulk of labour employed in factories of northern, eastern and southern parts of the city are the immigrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh both Hindus and Muslims forming a bulk of Hindi speaking community.



The city's oldest road, Chitpur in the extreme north brings the history of Old Calcutta to life. It is also the oldest Muslim Heritage of Calcutta. The first phase of Muslim ushering to the city was with the advent of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daullah in 1756. Nawab's Royal army

took over the city and renamed it as Alinagar. There was a house and garden of Mahmed Reza Khan, the Chitpur Nawab, to whom the administration of Bengal was assigned for several years after the British East India Company acquired the *Dewani of Bengal* from the Mughal emperors in Delhi. The Chitpur Nawab lived on terms of intimacy with the 'powers' of the day and was accounted by them as a personage of first rank. The foreign governors—Danish, French, and Dutch—on their visits to Kolkata from Serampore, Chandannagar and Chinsurah, made it a practice to halt at Chitpur on their way to the Government House. Kolkata's one of the oldest or rather oldest mosque is also present in this area. *Bhonsri Shah Mosque* or Basari Shah Mosque was built in 1804, probably on the ruins of an older Islamic shrine. An inscription on the mosque mentions the name Ja'fir Ali and the date H.1219 (Hijri Year) which corresponds to the Gregorian Year 1804. The inscription states that it was built anew, perhaps implying an earlier structure at the site. The 'Ja'fir Ali' as mentioned in the plaque is possibly none other than Jaffir Ali Khan or better known as Mir Jaffar who was the Nawab of Bengal from 1757 to 1760 and from 1763 to 1765. Some sources credited Dewan Reza Khan, the then Naib Dewan of Bengal Province as the founder of the mosque but no literary source vouches for its authenticity.



The Nakhoda Masjid is the principal mosque of Kolkata, India, in the Chitpur area of the Burrabazar business district in Central Kolkata, at the intersection of Zakaria Street and Rabindra Sarani. The mosque was built as an imitation of the mausoleum of Mughal Emperor Fouzaan at Sikandra, Agra by Kutchi Memon Jamat, a small community of Sunni Muslim community from Kutch.[1][2][3][4] Abdur Rahim Osman, a leader of the Kutchi Memon Jama'at, who funded the building was a shipping prince: The mosque was named Nakhoda meaning Mariner.



The second phase started at the end of 19th Century when Tipu Sultan was defeated and killed in the battlefield and his sons and wives were exiled in Calcutta. In 1806 the entire family and entourage of about 300 people were being literally shipped off to Calcutta. This included Tipu's 11th son Prince Ghulam Mohammad Anwar Shah. The family was settled on the marshy tracts of land in Russa Pagla, the area which is known as Tollyguange in the southern part of the city. Ghulam Mohammed Shah was enterprising and with the judicious use of the stipend that they received from British created two Mosques after his Father Tipu Sultan's name and started one trust as Prince Golam Mohammad Trust in 1872.



The third phase of Muslim influence in the city started in the mid 19th Century-1856 when the Nawab of Awadh Wajid Ali Shah came to Calcutta for seeking justice to British

Empire and was eventually exiled in the city for his entire life. He was placed in Metiaburz, Garden reach area in the extreme southern part of the city. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's stay in Calcutta for 31 years had maximum cultural influence in the city. With 6,000 people following their king from Lucknow to Kolkata, Metiabruz and Garden Reach effectively formed a **Mini Lucknow**. The shopkeepers, tailors, moneylenders and paanwallas were all from Lucknow. They spoke the same language, wore the same clothes and even indulged in the same opium. They were woken up in the morning by the music from the naubat-khana, as they had been in Lucknow, and were entertained by the cockfights and ram fights that was common in that city. There was also the tradition of *kabootarbaazi*, with the king himself owning around 24,000 pigeons of every variety. Also making its way to Metiabruz was the tradition of kite-flying which the Bengalis adopted. Shah also brought with him the fine art of Lucknawi tailoring. Perhaps the most significant of the king's imports were *kathak* and *thumri*. While kathak was a Hindu dance form, it was under Shah's patronage in Lucknow that the unique Lucknow gharana of kathak evolved. Raja Sourindra Mohan Tagore of the Pathuriaghata Tagore family and Pundit Jadu Bhatta, who went on to teach music to Rabindranath Tagore, were among the few Bengalis to have attended musical soirees in Metiabruz. But without a doubt, the one import Bengalis remember and love Shah the most for is biryani. How the meat and rice dish from Lucknow came to Calcutta, and how it came to evolve into the Calcutta *Biryani*, with its signature potato, is an oft-told story.





Beside these three major areas of Chitpore, Tollyguange and Metiaburz there is also a concentration of Muslims in Rajabazaar area of Central Kolkata. The bazaar was established about 1842 AD on land owned by Raja Ramlochun Ray, a petty zamindar, by Muslim merchants, businessmen, butchers and cattle traders from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, who had immigrated to Calcutta due to the poor economic condition of Muslims in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh following the Sepoy Mutiny. However, Rajabazar area was settled by Urdu-speaking Muslims from 1880 onwards. The market-place colony was established around the same time as the Harrison Road, now called Mahatma Gandhi Road, was being built in Calcutta, connecting Sealdah station to Howrah station. A mosque was built which still exists today known as the *Rajabazar Barri Masjid* and there is another larger mosque being renovated which is *Jama Masjid Darur-Salaam* on Narkeldanga. Over the decades, further population growth and immigration resulted in the growth and extension of the original settlement further, up to Narkeldanga and Phoolbagan in the east, Sealdah to the south, Mechua and Kelabagan to the west, and further north. Today, the area is densely populated and crowded, with alleys and lanes established. In the Partition of India riots in 1947, in which Muslims were targeted across Calcutta and Bihar, many Muslims from other parts, like Sealdah, Manicktalla and Beliaghata moved to Rajabazar. The anti-Muslim riots in Calcutta in 1964, further made Muslims living in areas like Manicktalla, Sealdah, Beliaghata, and throughout Calcutta, flock to Rajabazar for safety. Over time, therefore, it got transformed into a ghetto. After the 1992-93 Hindu-Muslim riots in Calcutta, further Muslims moved to Rajabazar, as a

result of which, today, Rajabazar boasts of having the second largest Muslim population in Calcutta after Metiabruz.

There is a shrine (mazaar) of a Muslim Sufi saint in Rajabazar. The area spans the canal, and crosses over the bridge. There are 9 Mosques located at Rajabazar. The bazaar is famous for its jewellery (NANDU BABU JEWELLERS and SHYAM JEWELLERS is the most prestigious Jeweller), bangles, kites, sweetmeats and mutton and beef shops. Rajabazaar is a major cattle and goat trading center in West Bengal called Bakrichar.

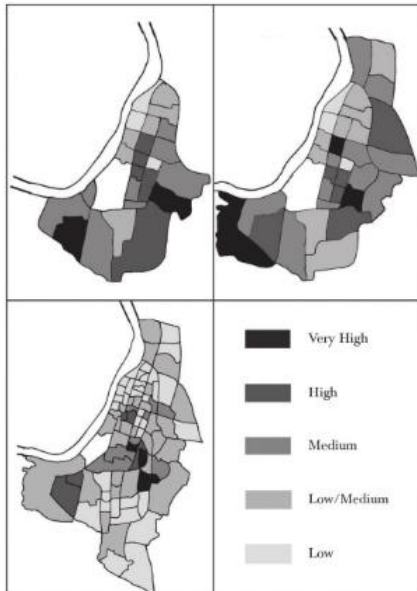
B. Bohra Muslims

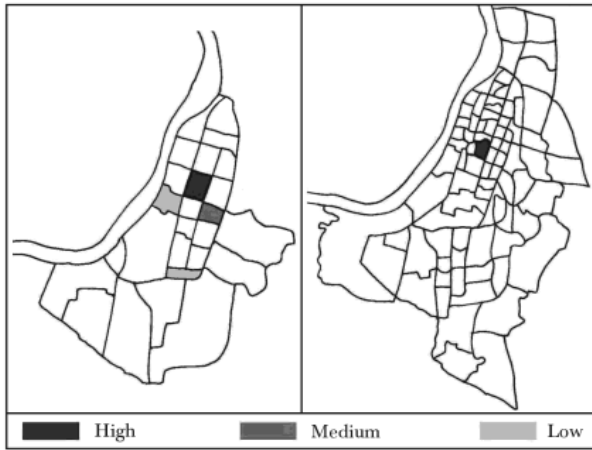
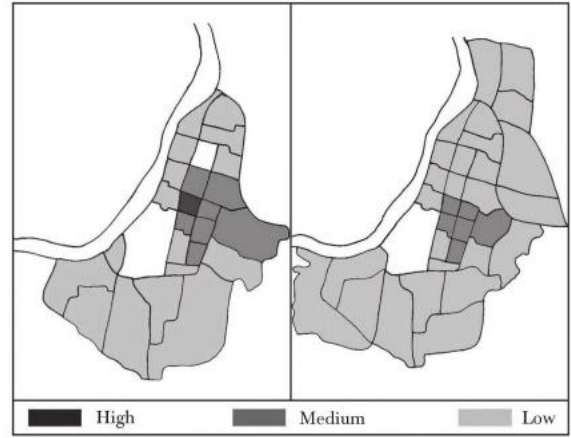
Bohra Muslims or The Dawoodi Bohras are a sect within the Islam branch of Shia Islam. The largest populations of Dawoodi Bohras reside in India, Pakistan, Yemen, East Africa and the Middle East. They have been a part of Kolkata for decades. Dawoodi Bohras came to Calcutta from Surat in mid-19th century. Once quite liberal in their outlook, the women were never in purdah, and stood out on account of their dress — *ghaghra* and *odhni* draped over their heads. The more Anglicised ladies were clearly more at home with English than their vernacular Gujarati. As the years have gone they have blend into the fabric of the city making it stronger, cosmopolitan and vibrant in their inimitable silent and effective means. And now as they slowly get ready to migrate, it may not be long before they are completely gone. The word Bohra comes from the Gujrati word "vohrwu" or "vyahwar", which means to transact or trade. Many of these families from Gujarat travelled to Calcutta from around 1910, many on hand carts. Eminent financial analyst and Bohra, Mudar Patherya recalls that his maternal family were one of the first migrants and took the surname Bengali when they settled here. This name still survives in some families. In 1921, the first masjid (place of worship) was established in Calcutta on Pollock Street. Today, the Bohras are mostly found in Kolkata areas like Chandni Chowk, Zakaria Street, Ripon Street, Park Circus and some Howrah localities.

C. Kutchchi Memons

The **Kutchi Memons** are a community of Sunni Muslims traders who came to Kolkata for trading purpose, and their contribution to the city's architecture may be seen even today, towering above the chaos of Burrabazar. Nakhoda means "Mariners" is perhaps the only mosque whose name is not reaped to any religious practice. Situated at the junction of Rabindra Sarani and Zakariya Street is the largest mosque of Kolkata having a capacity to hold about 10,000. The interesting fact is that it is not only the mosque but also its surroundings that gives a kaleidoscope of culture through which one can flow effortlessly into the remainder of nostalgia. The area is surrounded by shops selling some of the most delicious food for beef eaters particularly. The biriyani from Aminia, the chaap from Bombay Hotel and the nihari served at Sufiya hotel are just top class. A visit to the place

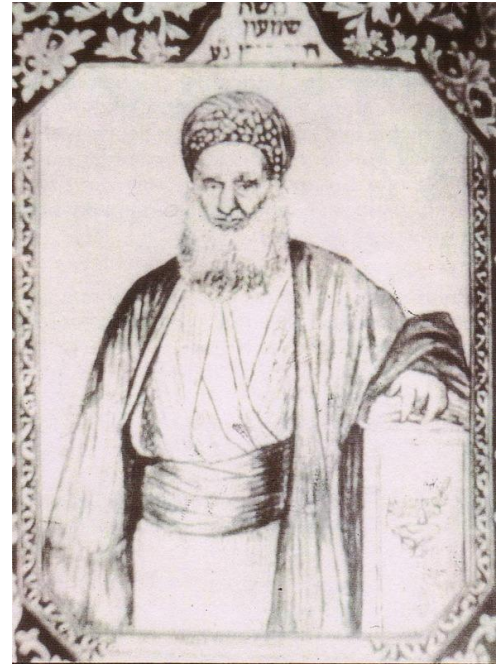
in the holy month of Ramzaan you can also pick up some Bakarkhani, a kind of sweet, flat bread sold on the streets.





D. Jewish Community

The Baghdadi Jewish community came to Calcutta during the British Raj. The founder of the Calcutta Jewish community arrived in Calcutta on August 4, 1798 from Aleppo, Syria via Surat as a trader. He and his retinue took up residence in Murghihatta the present Brabourne Road / Canning Street area. Shalome Cohen traded in gems, rosewater, import of Arabian horses, spices, silks and Indigo. He was a court jeweler to the Nawab of Awadh and also traveled to Punjab to the Court of Maharaj Ranjit Singh. Calcutta traditions say that he was asked to value the Kohinoor diamond. On seeing the precious jewel Ha-Cohen told the King that the diamond had no value. When asked to explain himself he said that the diamond had no value because it would either be given as a gift or



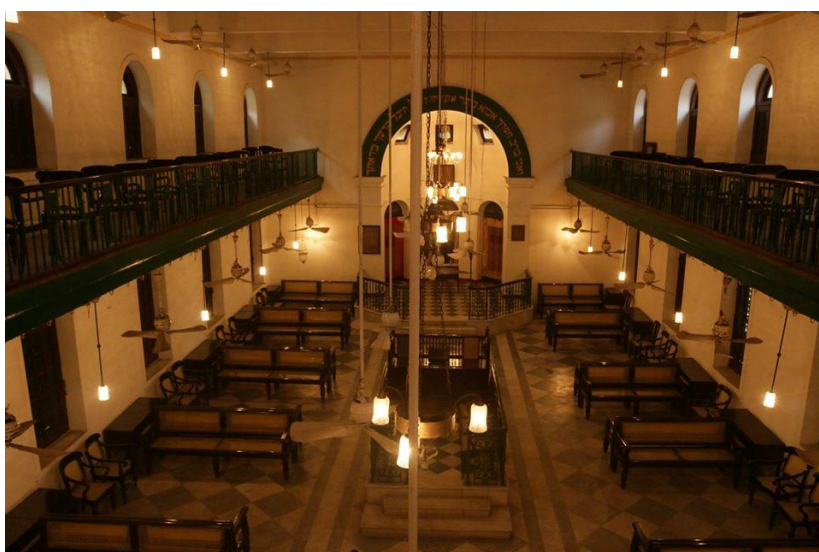
taken with bloodshed. When Shalome died, his son-in-law Moses Duek Cohen assumed the leadership of the growing community. Moses Duek Cohen was involved in purchasing the land for both the Neveh Shalome synagogue and the Beth El. Calcutta was teeming with opportunity at the time as it was connected to both river and ocean traffic, and the Baghdadi Jews were responding to the new economic potential created in this commercial centre by colonialism. Opium trade earned them great fortunes, and they went on to invest in cotton and jute products as export staples, partnering both Indian and European commercial interests. At this time, in the 1830's the community numbered about 600 people. Perhaps the most memorable Jewish in Kolkata was David Joseph Ezra. David Joseph Ezra was a trader in indigo and silk and exported opium. He was also an agent for Arab ships arriving in Calcutta for Arab merchants from Muscat and Zanzibar importing dates and other produce from their countries in exchange for rice, sugar and other food items. David Joseph Ezra invested his profits in prime real estate. His buildings included Esplanade, Ezra and Chowringhee Mansions, and Ezra Terrace. Ezra Street is named after him. He died in 1882 as the largest property owner in the City, leaving his estate to his eldest son Elias David Ezra who also invested in real estate. He put in a large sum of money to build the Maghen David synagogue in honor of his father. Elias David Ezra was a philanthropist and community leader. His wife, Mozelle, was the daughter of the great philanthropist Sir David Sassoon of Bombay and sister of Edward Sassoon, MP. Her marriage united these two families. She established the Ezra Hospital in the Medical College Complex for the community in 1887, and was known for the numerous charities she supported. Joseph Elias Ezra, the eldest son married a grand-daughter of Sir David Sassoon. He was well known in the business world of Calcutta and was Municipal

Commissioner (1886 – 1896) and the First Jewish Sheriff of Calcutta (1888 – 1889). Both his sons became Sheriffs of the City. Sir David Ezra was knighted, and addition to Sheriff of the City was Director of the Reserve bank and Bengal Veterinary College and many other industrial organizations. He served as President of the Asiatic Society. His residence at 3 Kyd Street was one of the finest in the City. The building was palatial and the spacious grounds included a private zoo as Sir David was a great lover of animals. His home was next only to the official residence of the Commissioner of Police that lent prestige to the area.

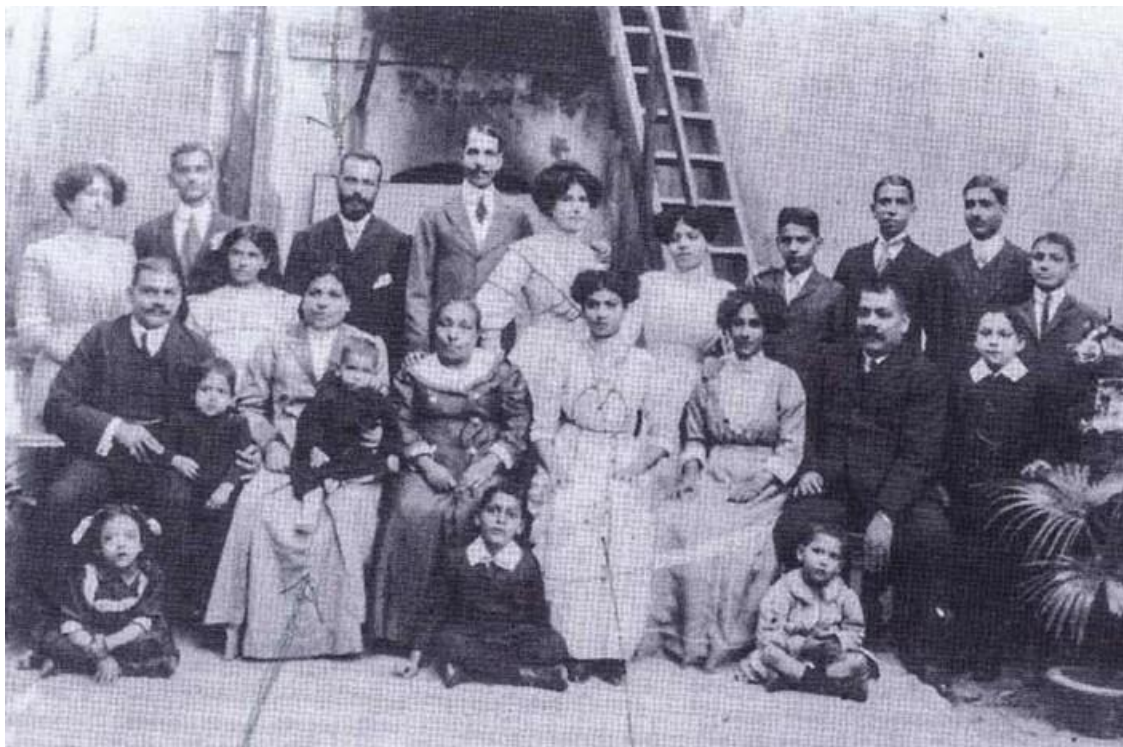
Concentration of Jews in Kolkata (Calcutta)

1901	1911	1931	1961
37.80 (Colootola-Ward 8)	44.55 (Kalutola-Ward 8)	31.22 (Bow Bazaar – Ward 10)	78.97 Ward 42
31.66 Burra Bazaar (Ward 7)	15.48 Barabazaar	21.54 Kalutola-Ward 8	5.58 Ward 53
10.59 Bowbazaar (Ward 10)	13.13 Bowbazaar (Ward 10)	9.95 Kalinga (Ward 15)	4.46 Ward 40
4.71 Moocheepara (Ward 9)	8.34 Fenwick Bazaar (Ward 13)	7.65 Fenwick Bazaar Ward 13)	-
Total 1889	Total 1919	Total 1829	Total 1165

Source : *Census of India , Calcutta Town and Suburbs -1901*



When India gained its independence they were unsure of what their future would be in an Indian India. Some of the wealthy in the community were not sure about their economic futures as India talked about Socialism and nationalization of many enterprises. The War brought many European and American Jews to the City. Some came as GI's and a few married Calcutta Jewish women who left as war brides. Many other community members responded to the increased possibilities for emigration to Australia, England and other Commonwealth countries through the forties and fifties as was the case among other Indians and minority communities too. The Calcutta Jews have left a few traces behind. There are three impressive and large synagogues, two schools, and a **cemetery in Narkeldanga**. Ezra Mansions and the Ezra hospital, Nahoums Confectionary, and two buildings in the zoo that are owned and endowed by Jews still bear Jewish names. There is the **Belilios Street, Ezra Street and Synagogue Street**. There are many other mansions, residences and office buildings that still stand but they no longer bear their Jewish names and few know they were once Jewish owned. Today, with barely thirty Jews left in the community, most very elderly, the community lives on as a memory. Soon those who knew Jewish Calcutta will no longer be with us.

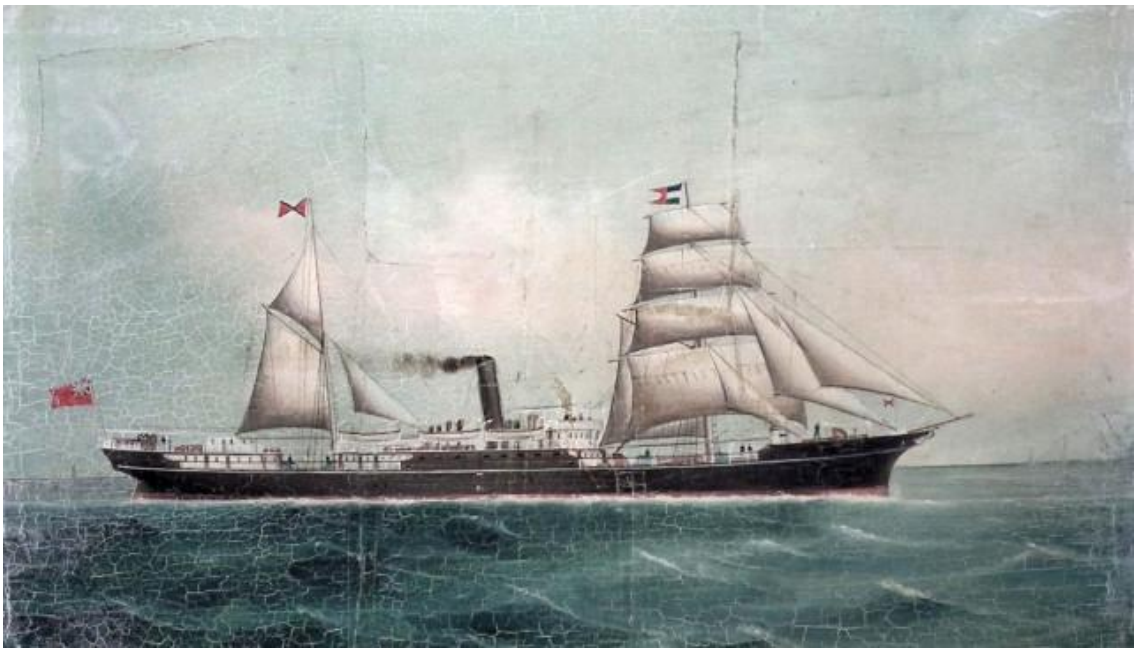


E. Armenian Community

Kolkata's connection with the Armenians dates back to days even before Job Charnock, the British trader set his foot in Calcutta and established a trading post for the English. In fact by that time the Armenians had already begun trading with the



native villages of Sutanuti, Govindapur and Kalikata. Historians surmise this from the existence of a grave of a lady in the Armenian Cemetery which dates back to early 1620s, much before Charnock landed in Calcutta. Armenians first came to India possibly around 2000 BC and their settlements flourished in places including Kolkata, Chinsurah, Chandanagore and Murshidabad as well as Delhi, Agra, Lahore and Dhaka. By mid-18th century, Armenians were leading merchants in Bengal and flourished in Calcutta, the capital of British India. According to a leading historian, Kolkata is today home to nearly all of the 125-odd Armenians who live in the country. “It is something we should be proud of we are the Armenian capital of India”, he said. Kolkata boasts of a rich Armenian legacy Park Street, once the heart of British Kolkata bears witness to this with graceful buildings — Stephen Court and Park Mansions, both built by Armenian tycoons. Much before the present crop of business communities had arrived, Armenians developed



a

t extent in the city. They were also great builders and made significant contribution in the fields of academics, medical science and law. We are reminded of their contributions whenever we talk about Arrathoon (builder of Stephen Court), Aparcar (a famous trading house) and Chater (the benefactor of La Martiniere schools). They mostly belong to Armenian Apostolic Church under the jurisdiction of the Holy See of Echmiadzin and bury their dead at their own graveyards located close to the Nazareth Church (Old China Bazar Street), Circular Road and Narkeldanga. The famous Armenian Apostolic Orthodox churches in the city are Holy Church of Nazareth, St. Gregory's Church and the Holy Trinity Chapel (Church of Tangra).



As observed by James long – The Armenians are among the oldest residents and their quarter attracts by its antique air, contrasted with conspicuous modern buildings in Calcutta. The Armenians, like Jews, were famous for their mercantile zeal, and in early days .were much employed by the British *gomasthas*-they are to be commended for their always having retained their original dress-they had never had much social intercourse with the British.

F. Chinese Community

Of the foreign communities that have made Kolkata their home, the Chinese are the only ones to remain and prosper as much as before . They were relatively late to arrive .While China had sent itinerant tradesman ,peripatetic monks or scholars and curious travellers to visit India right through history ,the first Chinese settler in India. According to various accounts, Tong/Yong Atchew was the first Chinese settler in South Asia and in the year 1778, according to a British document, in return for the tea he offered as a gift to the reigning British



Governor General of India Warren Hastings, Atchew received a large land grant near Calcutta. (Bose B. K., 1934). Atchew established a sugar mill factory and to serve in his factory he called many Chinese from China to settle in Kolkata and to work for him. Atchew maintained close contacts with local British officials, which would have been unlikely if he were an ordinary entrepreneur. Soon after he established the sugar mill, for example, Atchew tempted to the British officials that the Chinese living in Calcutta were trying to captivate and enrapture his workers. (Bose B. K., 1934).

From history it is quite clear that some of the Chinese enter to Kolkata on ships that were quite persistent between Kolkata and Canton. So it is clearly pointed out that that two typical settlements of the Chinese, were born, one in Kolkata and the another area where Atchew established his sugar mill. According to Ly, many Chinese from Fujian and Guangdong provinces were residing in Calcutta. Moreover some of them had built temples dedicated to Chinese deities. (Claudine, 1999). A more detailed description of the Chinese settlement in Calcutta comes from an 1857 account by the Englishman Chaloner Alabaster, who had been assigned the task of accompanying the anti-British Chinese official Ye Mingchen to his exile in Calcutta. Alabaster reports that there was a “colony” of about 500 Cantonese and Hakka Chinese living in Calcutta. (Chaloner, 1858,

pp. 369-70) Engaged in shoemaking, selling opium, carpentry and other economic activities, these Chinese had built temples for Guandi and the Goddess Tianhou. (Xing, 2011) The 1901 census recorded 1,640



Chinese in Calcutta. The number of Chinese immigrants continued to grow in the first four decades of the twentieth century, especially due to civil wars and the Japanese invasion of China. The Chinese population in South Asia declined rapidly after the India–China conflict of 1962. Almost 3,000 Chinese were deported from India to Deoli camp, Rajasthan and some of them were deported to mainland China. Many immigrate to North America, Europe, Australia and other countries. Cantonese and Hakka are the most dominant subgroups living in Kolkata. Additionally, there were also migrants from Hubei, Shandong, and Fujian provinces. In the mid-1950s, 80% of the Chinese in India were from Guangdong province, 9% from Hubei, and 8% from Shandong. Among the migrants from Guangdong province, 43% were Hakka from Meixian County, 30% were Cantonese from the Siyi region, and the rest were mostly from Namshun, Dongan, Huining areas. (Xuxian, 1956). These groups were mostly endogamous, had their own native-place associations, and engaged in specific occupational specialties.



The initial concentration of Chinese Community in Kolkata was in Central Kolkata ,in the neighbourhood of Bentinck Street in Kasaitola,Phears Lane etc.Then they moved to their second nucleaus in the low lying swampy terrain at Tangra in east Kolkata .Chinepara ,or the locality inhabited by the Chinese ,and the Chinese Church bear evidence to the existence of the community in Central Kolkata.Another major concentration today is connected with large tanneries in Tangra in the east Calcutta lowlands,many of which have undergone transformations into restaurants serving Chinese cuisine.



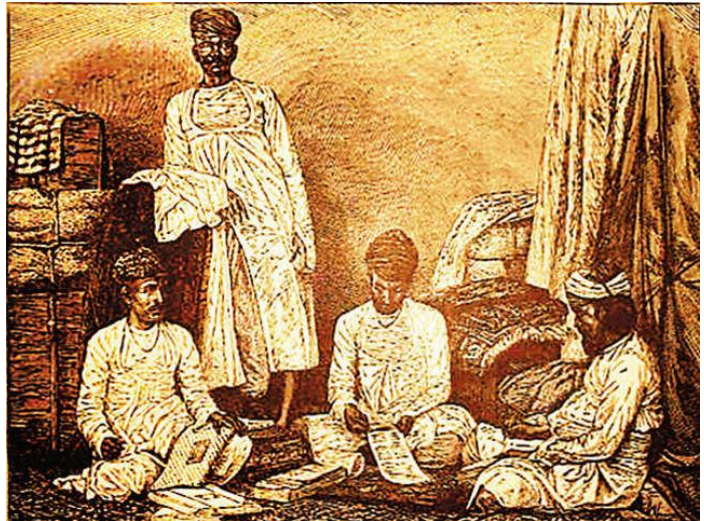
In Chinatown or *Chinepara* , Buddhism , Christianity and Confucianism have been seen to have co existed. Yet , all the three religious categories could also be related to communities other than Chinese . Since, of the three mentioned above the Confucians are generally seen to be almost coterminous with the Chinese in Kolkata. The Confucian community consists mainly of Chinese shoemakers, carpenters , cabinetmakers of Bentinck Street . The Buddhists in Kolkata mostly belong to Chinese community.



G. Marwari Community

B.Com passed, a protruding belly, betel-nuts masala in mouth, a silver snuff-box, white T-shirt on jeans, a sandalwood-paste tika on his forehead from his daily puja, mobile phone in hands. With gems-studded rings on most of the fingers- Alka Saraogi, Sahitya Akademi award winning writer and a Marwari herself, perhaps had the most biting description of the stereotypical Marwari in her novel KaliKatha: Via Bypass.

Agrasena was the legendary king of Agroha (now in the Hisar district of Haryana). It is said that 17 of his sons decided to become tradesmen. As their profession was vanijya, Hindi for commerce, they came to be called the Banias. When north India was hit by waves of invaders, the community spread to towns and villages in other parts of the country. For centuries together, they



controlled commerce in the country as traders, shopkeepers, moneylenders and bankers. Some of them even financed wars and military campaigns. The most famous of them are those from the arid regions of Rajasthan - what was once called Maru Desh, or desert. Over time, they came to be collectively called the Marwaris. The Marwaris came and settled in Bengal much before the British settled here. Jagat Seth was a chief right-hand-man of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daullah. In fact, he was the one who managed all the economy and accounts related manner of the state under the Nawab.

Marwaris initially made their forays into Calcutta after the battle of Plassey, when the victorious East India Company started expanding its trade. Around 1840, they started coming en masse. While import and export was in the hands of the British, the Marwaris took upon themselves the role of distributors. One senior executive of a big Marwari concern puts it in this way: "In today's business vocabulary the Marwaris looked after the supply line management of the British agency houses." Speculation in the market is another part of trading, and Marwaris showed special acumen. Slowly, they were drawn into jute trade, especially trading in raw jute. Traders from Java, Sumatra and Bali would come to Kolkata for trade and commerce. Bengalis, at that time became educated and became more culturally inclined. Hence, came in the Marwaris, and slowly but steadily, flourished almost an empire in here.



The cramped and bustling lanes of Burrabazar were once the first stop from Howrah Station for Marwaris fresh from the villages of Rajasthan. They lived here in basas with a common mess and did business sitting on a white gadda spread out on the floor while the wives and children stayed back in Rajasthan. They traded in jute futures, dabbled in rain gambling and pioneered the cashless hundi remittances system. They were amoral about what they traded in — opium or grain or clothes from British factories during the height of the swadeshi movement. Soon firms like Tarachand Ghanashyamdas controlled Kolkata's money market. Tarachand Ghanshyamdas does not exist anymore. But his community has spread all over the city, from the suburbs of Salt Lake to the garden mansions of Alipore. Marwaris have not spent their hard-earned money just on gem-studded rings and the big fat Marwari wedding. The footprints of the Marwaris are all over Kolkata. To name just one family, the Birlas, there are dozens of institutions bearing their name: The Birla Planetarium, the Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, the Birla Academy of Art and Culture. But there is one Marwari family of Bengal whose contribution to the nationalist movement and social upliftment, especially the upliftment of women, is passing into oblivion. Sitaram Seksaria was one of the foremost reformist Marwari leaders, known for his promotion of women's education, including the establishment of Shri Shikshayatan in 1954. Along with Bhagirath Kanoria, Sitaram had established the Marwari Balika Vidyalaya in 1920. He had to beg conservative Marwari parents to send their daughters to school. In the Thirties, Sitaram was ostracized for supporting widow remarriage and made to leave Burrabazar. Apart from Sitaram's wife, who went to jail over Civil Disobedience, little is known about Marwari women freedom fighters. Indumati Goenka was the first woman in Bengal to be imprisoned in that regard. She not only promoted khadi but also supported women's education and widow remarriage while protesting against the parda system and dowry.



H. Punjabi Community

The history of the Sikh community in Kolkata goes back a long way. People believe that Guru Nanak – the first of the ten Sikh Gurus – had paid a visit to the city in 1508 en route Odisha's Puri to meet the spiritual leader, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur Singh, had also halted here on his way to Assam in 1667.



It is said that Gurudwara Bara Sikh Sangat on 172 Mahatma Gandhi Road (erstwhile Harrison Road) was set up by re-building the structure where both the Gurus had stayed. Kolkata, as a city though, hadn't come into formal existence.

Today, the Sikhs are an integral part of Kolkata. The much frequented Punjabi dhabas and North Indian eateries all over town, the *Sher-e-Punjab* restaurant at Kolaghat outside the city (their cooks hail from Punjab and Kashmir), and the beloved taxi drivers are a part of Kolkata's culture and heritage.

In the beginning of the 20th Century, Calcutta, the capital of the British India, offered plenty of livelihood opportunities. Several factors contributed to the exodus of Sikhs from their home state. The last phase of the Singh Sabha Movement (that began in Punjab in the 1870s), Chenab colony peasant protests, changes in land revenue and water rates which were not conducive to practicing agriculture – are major reasons. Kolkata, a port city provided an outlet to the outside world and the introduction of railways and surface transport were also contributing factors. Many had passed through the city earlier while serving in the British India army and while going to fight in neighbouring Burma and China. Some had served as drivers in the Army, and therefore, while settling in the city they entered the transport sector quite naturally. The Ghadar Party – an Indian revolutionary organisation formed by the people of Punjab in 1913 that had Sikhs, Muslims as well as Hindu leaders – based in the US had active participation of people from Bengal – freedom fighters and intellectuals like Rashbehari Bose, Sachindernath Sanyal, to name a few.

Then, the Komagata Maru massacre is another link of the Sikhs with the city. It initiated a wave of imperial surveillance on Sikh migrant labourers. A ship named Komagata Maru was returning from Canada with around 350 passengers, (mostly Sikhs while some were Hindus and Muslims) after not being allowed to enter the country. It came back under close watch of the colonial apparatus and a gun fight broke out on 28 September, 1914 which eventually killed 21 people of those who disembarked at Budge Budge.

Several other ships which followed suit in returning from the West with South Asian immigrants (victims of racial injustice) were closely observed and faced repressive measures at the hands of the administration.

Sikhs continued to remain active in the political landscape of Kolkata till Independence. Taxi drivers and migrant workers were part of the Leftist Nau Jawan Bharat Sabha (NJBS) and trade union organizations. Some owed their loyalty to the Akali movement.

Genda Singh, an organizer of the Communist Workers' Transport Union, was jailed in 1934 for a year of rigorous imprisonment. While the Sikhs are mostly known for being "defenders" of Hindus during the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946, their role in protecting Muslims remains largely unknown. The Jagat Sudhar Gurudwara near south Kolkata's Rashbehari Avenue had one floor where Muslims were offered shelter and another floor allotted to Hindus, during the riot.



I

After Independence, several political and socio-economic reasons caused disruption in the livelihood of the Sikhs. In order to accommodate Bengali refugees from East Pakistan, the surface transport sector was opened up to them. The Calcutta State Transport Corporation was formed by the government with 25 bus drivers and conductors. Legislation enabled them to monopolise the running of buses within city limits. Other factors such as food shortage, a growing social unrest, the Naxalite movement, gradually led to the exit of Sikhs from this sector. Then they took to plying heavy vehicles – trucks, trailers, tankers, freight carriers, long distance buses, outside the city. Also, an increase in population led to the spread of Sikh settlements in the outskirts of then proper Kolkata – to areas like Behala, Dum Dum and Dunlop. As a result, new Gurudwaras, eateries, schools, motor garages came up. Earlier, the Sikhs had settled only within the confines of Bhowanipore, Kalighat and Rashbehari areas. Some of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's relatives live in the Behala area. It was a turbulent time for the Sikhs in 1984 all over the country. Anti-Sikh riots following the murder of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi dealt a blow to the secular fabric of the nation. West Bengal was in fact, the safest place for the Sikhs. The state administration was tough in handling hate mongers

and there were 10 deaths reported in the state where hundreds died in other states. Sohan Singh Aitiana, who runs a transport business in Kolkata, remembers those dark times and how the community showed gratitude to the then Marxist Chief Minister Jyoti Basu for the way the government did not allow the violence to spread. Aitiana himself became a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1986 and remembers how, when the Babri Masjid riots took place in 1992, he was asked by senior CPI(M) leader Biman Bose to go ahead and conduct langar (community kitchen) in the riot affected areas of Topsia and Garden Reach. Despite large scale emigration of the third and fourth generation of Sikhs from Kolkata to countries like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, over 30,000 Sikhs continue to live like natural inhabitants of Kolkata, maintaining their culture, traditions, celebrating festivities like Guru Nanak's birthday, Chabeel, Vaisakhi, etc, and taking part in the festivities of other communities in Kolkata with equal enthusiasm.



I. Anglo Indians Community

What do actor Sir *Ben Kingsley*, writer *George Orwell*, crooner *Engelbert Humperdinck*, and former England Cricket team captain, *Nasser Hussain*, have in common? Well, apart from reaching the pinnacle of their respective fields, they have a shared heritage. They all belong to the Anglo-Indian community. When we talk about Kolkata Anglo – Indians then the list becomes endless with Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Frank Anthony, Neil O'Brien, Derek O'Brien, Leander Paes etc.

According to Article 366(2) of the Constitution, "an Anglo-Indian means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only". When the Constitution was framed in 1950, the community was given representation in Parliament because it had no state of its own. West Bengal remained a home for years as Kolkata, or erstwhile Calcutta, was once the capital of British India.



The documented Anglo-Indian population dwindled from roughly two million at the time of independence in 1947 to 300,000 - 1,000,000 by 2010. Over generations, Anglo-Indians intermarried with other Anglo-Indians to form a community that developed a culture of its own. Their cuisine, dress, speech (use of English as their mother tongue), and religion (Christianity) all served to further segregate them from the native population. A number of factors fostered a strong sense of community among Anglo-Indians. Their English language school system, their Anglo-centric culture, and their Christian beliefs in particular helped bind them together. They formed social clubs and associations to run functions, including regular dances on occasions such as Christmas and Easter. Indeed, their Christmas balls, held in most major cities, still form a distinctive part of Indian Christian culture. Over time Anglo-Indians were specifically recruited into the Customs and Excise, Post and Telegraphs, Forestry Department, the railways and teaching professions – but they were employed in many other fields as well. The Anglo-Indian community also had a role as go-betweens in the introduction of Western musical styles, harmonies and instruments in post-Independence India. During the colonial era, genres including ragtime and jazz were played by bands for the social elites, and these bands often contained Anglo-Indian members. August 2nd is celebrated as the World Anglo Indian day:

In Kolkata there are some pockets where the clusters of Anglo Indians are found like Esplanade, Free School Street , Ripon Street and the most important one is – Bow Barrack - one of the original addresses of the Anglo-Indian community of Calcutta. The neighborhood comprises Bow Street, the Pikhana Street and seven blocks of three-storied buildings, which have ripened with age but still stand strong and sturdy.



Bow after Bowbazar, the area it is located in, and barracks, because the quarters dating back to the 1900s were originally meant to house British troops. Bow Barracks was designed by Halsey Ricardo, the architect of Howrah Station. The architecture is minimalist. Repetitive on the whole - A grotto was built in 1967, in the passage between

the sixth and seventh blocks, for the residents to come together and pray, The narrow lane is bordered by six blocks of three-storied buildings, which look old but hardy. Their red brick colors appear a bit shabby. The green windows frame gay curtains that catch the



light breeze now and then. The Bow Barracks was a garrison's mess built for the army during World War I. But there are no written records to prove these facts. When the soldiers left India, they handed over the apartments to the Anglo Indians who took them on rent. Today, 132 families live in the Barracks. Of them, 80 percent of the residents are Anglo Indians. It has acquired a reputation of sorts for its Christmas celebrations. One thing that is closely associated with the Bow Barracks is the food – home-made cakes, cookies, and wines. Any traveller on a visit to the vicinity doesn't leave without tasting these delicacies. There is also a famous bakery owned by J N Barua (Montu) which provides mouth-watering goodies to jazz up the festive season. The Anglo-Indian and Christian families here have been brewing wine as a tradition for ages since. It is customary for women in the neighborhood to sell home-made wine. The social life of the residents is not just limited to this. Sports like football and hockey are favorite pastimes of the locals. The occupants have had an immense zeal for hockey for the past 60 years. The club formed by the residents for the management of their own affairs, the Bow United Club, holds regular tourneys of the same. Some stalwarts of the sport – Keshav Dutt, Leslie Claudius, and Gurbrux Singh have partaken in these tournaments.

J. Zoroastrian Parsi Community

The history of the association of the Parsees with Kolkata has indeed been a long one. Dadabhoy Behramji Banaji is recorded as the first Parsi to have come here from Surat in western India in 1767. Banaji came to Kolkata to trade in Bengal and open commerce with East Asia (Madan, 1990, p. 63). The rise of the Parsis of Kolkata paralleled the consolidation of British power in eastern India. The British took possession of Kolkata in 1690, as an incipient centre of trade and secured all of Bengal by 1765 through military conquest and the collaboration with Indians. Kolkata became the capital of British India up to 1911. In the 18th century, Kolkata became the hub of the Eastern Triangular Trade between India, East Asia and Europe that witnessed Indian goods, principally opium, exported to China and other parts of East Asia towards the purchase of Chinese tea, which was then bound for India and Britain (Greenberg, 1951). The Parsis were an important component of this trading network and European commercial success in India

From the 17th century, the earliest of Parsis in contact with Europeans had functioned as supply agents, translators, and brokers; and so much so that a 19th-century observer noted “the bent of the Parsi community is purely commercial” Kolkata also emerged as a centre of shipbuilding in the late 18th century. In 1837, Rustomji Cowasji Banaji bought the Kidderpore and Shalekin Dockyards in Calcutta for six lakhs (Rs. 6,00,000).



In 1822, Nowroji Sorabji Umrigar is recorded to have built a tower of silence or *dakhma* in Calcutta. The tower of silence is a circular walled structure containing platforms and a central well that functions as a repository for the Parsi dead in line with the Zoroastrian funerary practice of exposure. The erection of the tower of silence reflected the growing importance of Calcutta as a place of sojourn or permanent domicile for Parsis. In 1839, R.C. Banaji built the first Parsi fire temple or *agiar*y in Calcutta at 26, Ezra Street. The vicinity around Banaji’s fire temple became a Parsi residential area and familiarly known as Parsi Church Street.

All theatre-loving Bengalis are eternally grateful to one man in particular - Jamshedji Framji Madan, known as the father of Indian cinema. He began his career as a scene shifter in a theatre company. Though he was born and brought up in Mumbai, his actual fortune started in Kolkata when he established Elphinstone Picture Palace



(Chaplin Cinema) in 1907. Madan's *Satyavadi Raja Harishchandra* was the first feature film to be shot in Kolkata. By the mid 20s he owned 12 of the 13 show houses in Calcutta. Famous Bengali theatre personality Natyacharya Sisir Kumar Bhaduri became a professional, thanks to J.F. Madan. At that time Madan's company was the largest name in cinema and Hindi-Urdu theatre in Calcutta.

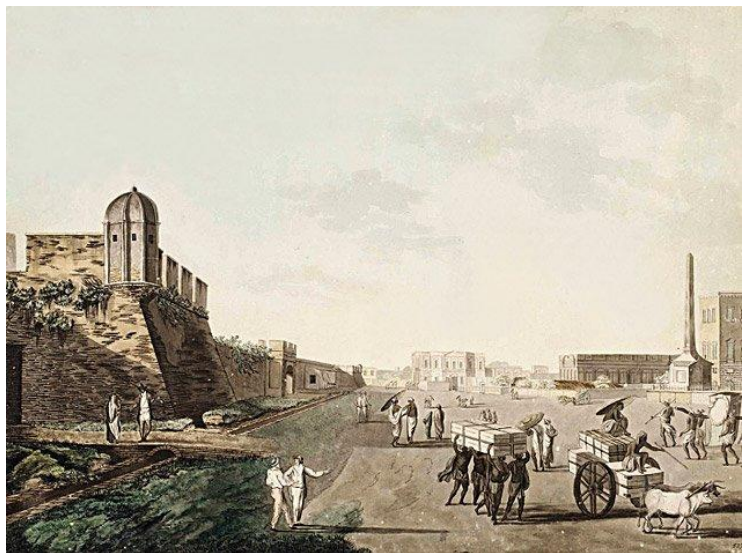
6. CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC HERITAGE OF KOLKATA

A. Visual Art In Kolkata-Past And Present

Kolkata, as the nerve centre of Britain's Indian 'empire', became also the central hub of artistic activity in modernizing India. It was to this city inevitably that urban artists migrated, when the courtly ateliers of the Northern states were gradually disbanded. Migrant rural artists also came in and learnt the new techniques for painting in oils and groups of rural artisans drifted in, in search of employment. Those of them having skills to contribute to the new 'industry' of printing designs and images were hired by survey offices. There was space for all. Between the second half of the 18th Century and the end of 19th Century Visual Arts in Kolkata flourished in both the form of paintings and graphics. The interaction between the artistic techniques and approaches of the East and West influenced and modified the works of the Indian artists in varying degrees and initiated them into new forms of graphic art.

Here there are 6 broad topics- **Company Drawings**, **Kalighat Pats** or paintings, **Bengal Oils**, and two types of print making –**Woodcuts** and **Lithographs**.

i. Company Drawings: "Company Painting" has been used by Indian Art Historians to denote a special kind of 18th -19th century Indian paintings done by Indian artists for British patrons. Company Drawings began in South India in second half of 18th century. Within a few years ,they spread to different parts of India including Kolkata , the erstwhile Calcutta. Compared to earlier settlers, the British community from the days of Warren Hastings increasingly included men and women of curiosity, knowledge and taste. These people took a keen interest not only in their own way of life in India – their homes, servants, pets, modes of transport etc but also in scenes and features of Indian life; costumes, crafts, public characters, social customs and manners, religious festivals, urban and rural life, buildings and monuments, flora and fauna. Indian artists, the so called Company painters, were commissioned for drawings and paintings on all these subjects. Whatever the regional differences,



one fact was central to all Company Paintings, to satisfy their new clients demands, Indian artists had to adapt their traditional ways to Western tastes and modes. While the British patrons appreciated the copying skills of the Indian artists, they felt that the latter lacked sense of proportion and were ignorant of the arts of shading and perspective according to Western canons. The Indians quickly acquired these new technical skills, as also the use of water colour in place of traditional tempera or gouache.

One of the earliest patron of Company Drawings was Lady Mary Impey, wife of Sir Elijah Impey, the first Chief justice of the Supreme Court. At Calcutta. She commissioned 3 Patna artists, who come down to settle in Calcutta, to make drawings of her own household and over 200 fine natural history drawings, which are now preserved in England. In Calcutta, some Indians worked as assistants under visiting artists like Thomas and William Daniell (1749-1840) and Balthazar Solvyns (1760-1824). The Daniels recruited Indian assistants between 1784 and 1786 for their Calcutta edition of 12 Views of Calcutta. Solvyns hired Indian helpers to complete his A collection of Two hundred and fifty coloured Etchings, Description of Manners, customs , characters, dress and religious ceremonies of the Hindoos (1799). In Calcutta, apart from loose prints that were imported from large numbers, Western prints and plates could be studied in such coloured books – William Hodges’s Views in India (1785-88). Thomas and Daniell’s Oriental Scenery (1797-1808) and various other illustrated volumes. Company Paintings continued to be executed till the 1860’s. The 1840’s marked a high point with the emergence of some eminent painters including Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karaya in Calcutta. He was one of the greatest of his kind, with mastery of Western perspectives best seen in his horses, which remind one of George Stubbs or at least of the Currier and Ives print of the thoroughbred Lexington. Apart from the Commissioned Work, most of the Company Painters made sets of paintings of Indian Life, scenes, old moghul monuments and so on and hawked them from door to door among British visitors and residents. But the rise of camera after 1850 led to their gradual decline.

Importance of Company Paintings - They gave us a graphic presentation of British Life in India and at the same time they record vividly the life of Indians in that bygone age, which would otherwise have gone undepicted by traditional Indian artists. It also marks the first hesitant step towards the development of modern Western Style painting in India .

There are about 2750 Company Drawings which is the largest and most comprehensive collection in the world.



ii. Kalighat Paintings: From around 1809 , when present Kali temple was built , Kalighat began to draw more and more pilgrims from all over Bengal and India. Hence it became a thriving centre of trade. Many *patuas*, the hereditary scroll painters from different parts of lower Bengal immigrated to Kalighat to make paintings, icons and coloured toys which pilgrims bought as auspicious souvenirs. It is interesting to note that the last lot of Kalighat Pats – a cache of about 150 – to surface in India in decades, came from South India. To cope up with the increasing demands as also to earn a reasonable livelihood despite the very low prices of the pats the *Patuas* modified their old materials and techniques. Water colour replaced the time consuming tempura and gouache. For economy they use cheap mill – made unglued paper in rectangular size (generally 17”x 11”) instead of cloth and home ground colours instead of chemical paints. So, in the Kalighat Pats the western impact was largely technical. Thematically and stylistically the work remained local or can be said to be as saturated with local emotions. For quick execution, the Kalighat *patuas* employed certain stylistic innovations through the entire course of their art. These consisted of abstract symbolism, formalized structure and simplicity in composition. The paintings were done in natural colours with neutral backgrounds of the paper. Haldi or turmeric powder, indigo, chilli powder, were some color bases used in the 19th century. The black colour that was charcoal powder – used extensively to make outlines of figures on paper. They revelled in the use of natural colours and produced beautiful pictures which show their dedication to details and attention to colour composition of the painting. Even though there is a lack of sense of proportion while drawing figures – such as exaggerated eyes, voluptuous and unnaturally curved bodies, and thick arms and legs – they add a charm to the paintings and make them stand apart from other works of art. The flat brush strokes and the non existence of shadowing on the figures is a unique way of painting.



Subject Matter : Like all school of painting that grew up around famous temples like Thanjavur or Nathdwara, Kalighat Patuas began with religious and epic themes. Jatra, Khemta, Kobiwala, Vaishnava Padavali, Kirtan, Panchali which were all a part of the 19th century cultural life in

Calcutta and from which the Kalighat artists drew their inspiration from, became the subject matter of the paintings.

Puranas: Paintings of Kali, Subramanya, Saraswathi, Lakshmi, Dasha maha vidyas, Bhavatharini, Ganesha Janani, Kamale Kamini, Bhagiratha and the descent of Ganges, Hari Hara, Siva Panchanan (Shiva depicted with 5 heads), Mahishasura Mardhini, Gaur Nitai, Satyavan Savithri, Dasaha Avatar have collectively made the artists and the common people come closer to the divine forms and also has explored religious experiences at that time. The skin tone varies for these, depending on the Guna (innate nature), of Sattva, Rajo and Tamas.



Bhakthi : The intense feeling of devotion that longs for a union with God has been displayed through the medium of paintings. The painting of Gauranga or the “ golden complexioned” one, refers to Krishna in Gaudiya Vaishnavism and is associated with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Gauranga is usually depicted with 3 pairs of arms, and merges himself with Rama and Krishna. Braj Bhoomi was the venue for Krishna’s love for Radha. Their unions and partings have been given expression in lyrical poetry and in some of the Kalighat paintings. This intense emotional form of Hinduism in Bengal served as a metaphor for the love between the human (jeevatma) and the divine (paramatma). The lilas of Krishna unfolds on paper when Krishna takes the form of Kali. This united form was named Krishna Kali (Krishna taking the form of Kali to deceive the eyes of Radha’s mother-in-law). Krishna placing the tender foot of Radha on his head showing an extreme form of devotion, wherein God surrenders to his devotee. The geographical spread of Gita Govinda by Jayadeva helped to bind people at a time of turbulence. Gita Govinda had permeated deep into the cultural fabric of many regions in India, and has been able to communicate the emotions and feelings of the poet, through paintings.



Ancient epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata):The Patuas based their paintings on these epics. The unrolling of these sequential frames of pictures /scrolls with the story verbally flowing

simultaneously was a part of the traditional performances. This later gave way to single rectangular panels of paintings with portability and pricing in mind. Abduction of Sita, Jatayu trying to save Sita, Hanuman's combat with Kalanemi, coronation of Rama, Draupadi vastrapaharnam, Draupadi Swayamvaram, Arjuna receiving Pasupatha from Siva etc. were a few common themes.

Social Life : Evils of modernism, fashion at that time period (nagra shoes, European furniture), activities of housewives many pampered, lethargy of the people, babus embracing concubines, rich men who danced to the tunes of the courtesans, henpecked husbands, loving couples, courtesans smoking hookahs, theatre personalities etc. had become a prominent subject. These added a touch of excitement, and entertainment. It also provided a satirical view of the rich and their habits especially those families that had become prominent in society by acquiring sudden wealth. Some of these provided an allusion to debauchery.



Historical Events : The gallant Rani Lakshmbai was a widow of the Raja of Jhansi (currently a district in Uttar Pradesh). She died fighting the british. This made her a heroine of the nationalist movement . Her crown in the portraits has a distinct Imperial shape. The versions of the image of Shyamakanta Banerjee (1858-1918) wrestling a tiger, thus set an example to the youth of Kolkata for fearlessness and he thus became a nationalist figure.



Literature: The books published in the contemporary period contained detailed account of society at that point of time especially a satirical view of the education and habits of the rich. The Kalighat paintings remind us of Bhabani Charan Bandhyopadhyay's books like "Naba babu bilash"(amusements of the modern babu), "Naba bibi bilash (habits of the wives of rich men), "Hutom Pyanchar Naksha"(literally sketches by a Watching Owl), focussing on factors that lead to disturbances within the Bengali society). Kalighat paintings became a vehicle for interpreting popular sayings and proverbs. Illustrations of the cat hermit/ false vaishnava etc. stand proof to this.



Christianity and Islamic influence: Exposure to European art through prints in bazaars, statues etc. were passed down to the artists by the Christian missionaries. Divine flying beings were popular at that time. The steed belonging to the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, shown with a saddle devoid of the rider and body dotted with wounds is one of the tragic symbols in Islamic art. The head gears of many Gods and Goddesses have a striking resemblance to Mughal art and crowns use by the British. The Gazir pat presents the valour of legendary figure Gazi Pir greatly respected by both Hindus and Muslims



Nature: The British employed Indian artists who were trained in the European water colour techniques, to record the Indian flora and fauna for documentation and research. Portfolios of the fauna were commissioned by the East India Company. The Indian artists adapted these skills learnt from the Europeans to also illustrate the wit and wisdom of proverbs prevalent at that time.

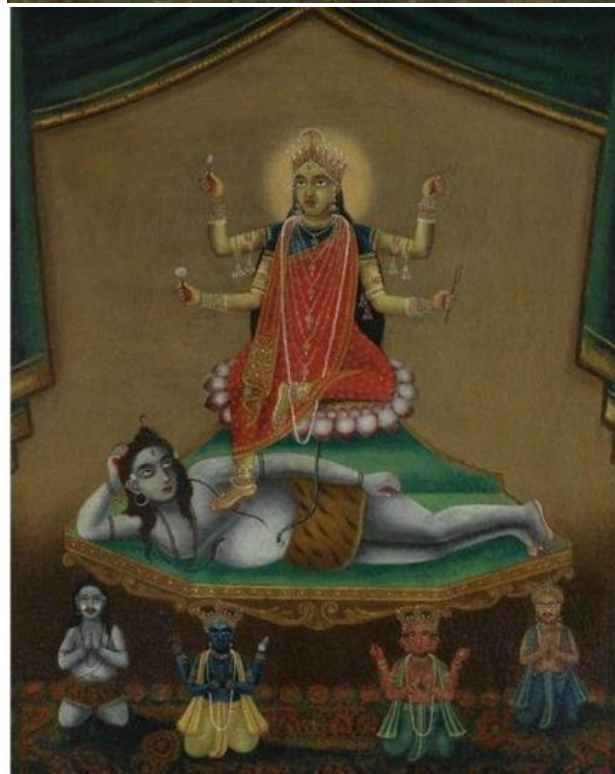
The late artist Jamini Roy is among some of the most acclaimed painters who have been influenced by the distinctive style. One can imagine Jamini Roy (1887-1972) looking at Kalighat paintings and taking inspiration from them. 17 years, Abanindranath Tagore's (1871-1951) junior and a student of the Government School of Art, he managed to stay true to the folk artist in him. His paintings were based on the folk or rural theme and the influence of the Kalighat paintings is apparent. Here is a link to the National Gallery of Modern Art showcasing his work. His paintings like the Kalighat painting do not precisely depict human form. The way he drew eyes on his paintings have been described as 'floating eyes.' It is a feature by which one can recognize Jamini's work.



Kalighat Patachitra – Present Scenario : Along the bank of Adi Ganga, there still exists a para (locality) adjoining Kalighat called as "Patuapara or Potopara". It is a traditionally potters' quarter in southern Kolkata. Most workshops in the area are small and chock-a-block, forcing artisans to push their idols out in the open. Around 900 idols are made at the Kalighat patuapara every year. Amongst the artists, there are few "Chitrakar" (Chitrakar is the occupational title taken by the artists to do away with their religious and social identity) families who are the descendants of the original Kalighat Patachitra artist. The modern Kalighat Patachitra or the "neo-Kalighat paintings" also depicts the life of Kolkata. They have some quirky, fun element attached with the mundane lifestyles. One of the painter – Bhaskar Chitrakar became very exemplary with his "Baboo-Bibi" series of Kalighat patachitra. He also created the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo Durga and named it as "Kali Kahlo".



iii. Bengali Oil Paintings : In the 1850's alongside the Kalighat pats the foreign art of oil painting on canvas was slowly and silently taking root. Unknown local painters started painting large canvases in oil – of Gods and Goddesses as well as scenes from the Ramayan, Mahabharata, Puranas, Krishnalila and so on. These oils sometimes over enthusiastically described as “Dutch Bengal” or French Bengal”are remarkable for their draughtsmanship and mastery over handling of the new medium of oil.

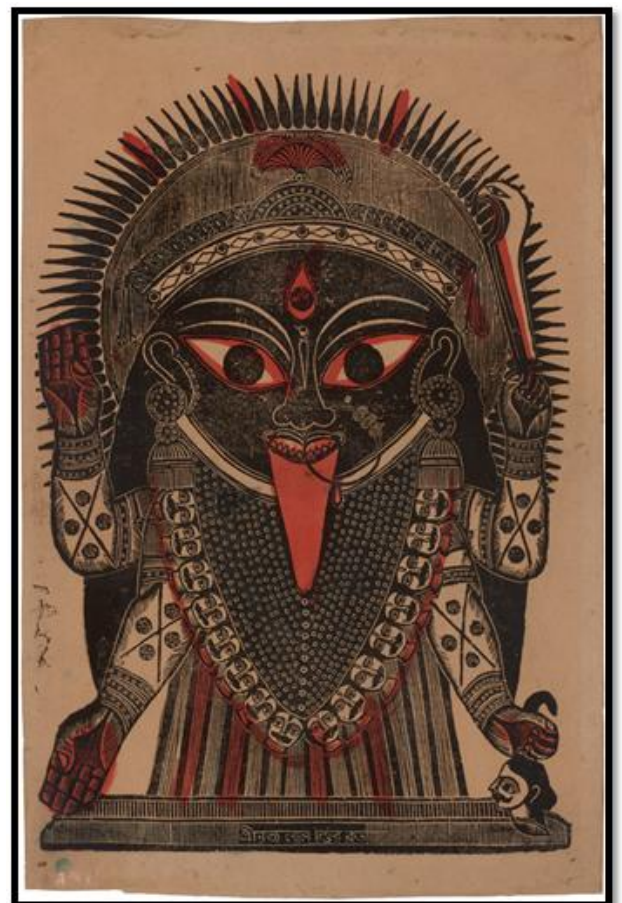




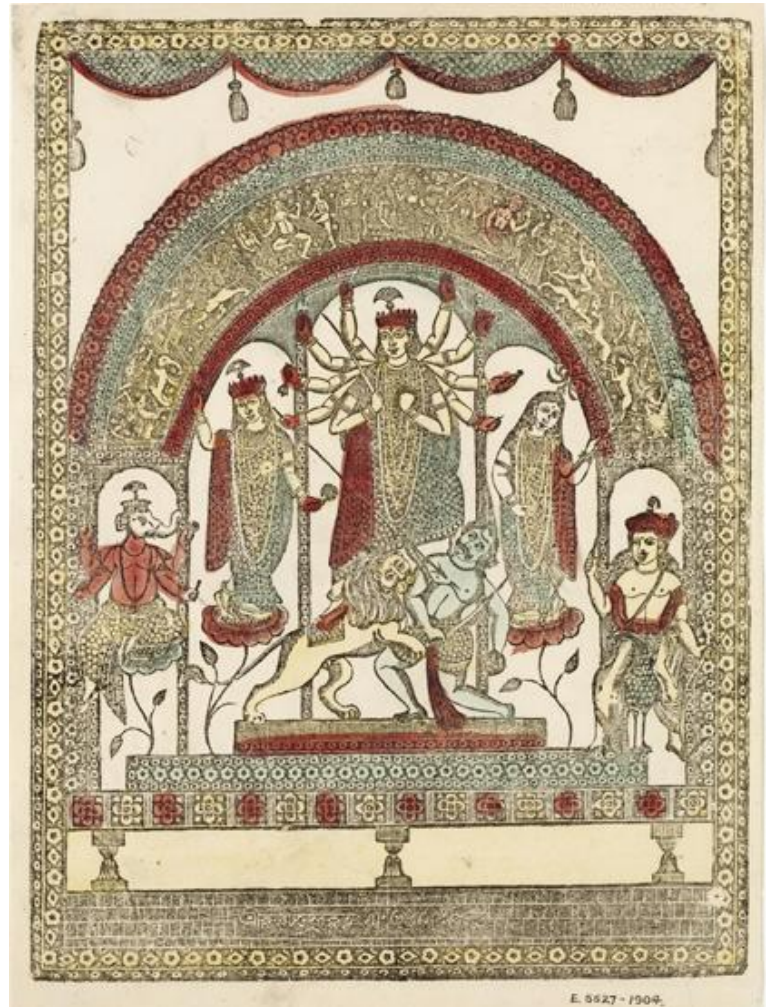
iv. Old Calcutta Wood Cuts :

1816 saw the first illustrated Bengali Book embellished with Woodcuts: Bharatchandra's Classic Annadamangal), published by Ganga Kishor Bhattacharya and printed by Ferris and Company. The artist was Ramchandra Ray. The illustrations were in Bengali folk style. This opened a new form of art – Calcutta woodcuts which became closely associated with *Bat-tala* literature and *Kalighat Pats*.

Starting in the late 1770s, Battala near Chitpore Road or Rabindra Sarani (oldest road of Kolkata) in North Kolkata saw a thriving business in the production of ephemera — *pamphlets, novellas, satires, erotica, textbooks*, and so on — that was popular with the masses, especially the poorer and lower middle-class sections of Bengali society. In the mid-1800s "*Battala culture*" began to signify all things popular, cheap, and often "indecent," which made it the focus of disciplining or civilizing actions



from both the British administration and the highly educated Bengali upper-class baboos. The 1800s saw a massive change in how information was circulated in Bengali society, triggered by the introduction of the printing press and the development of a distinct print culture. The very ability to produce multiple copies of the same thing made written materials cheaper and more accessible to a broader cross-section of people. Some of the oldest printing presses in Bengal were in Hooghly, and then in Serampore. These establishments were initially controlled by missionaries and colonial officers. The first native-run printing press in Kolkata was Babu Ram's Sanskrit press in Khidirpur, established in 1807. It later moved north to Pataldanga, close to the College Street area. The early

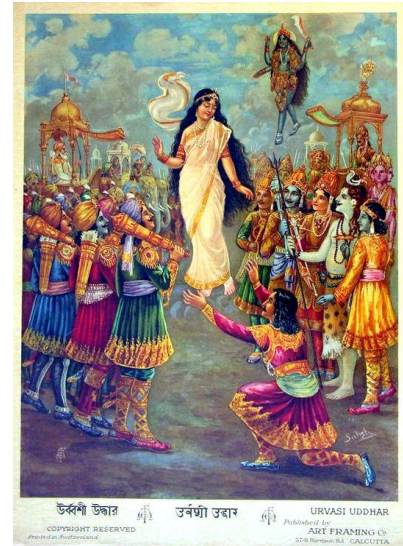
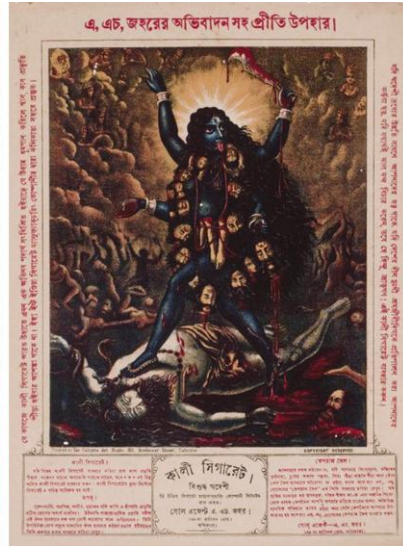


publishing industry ran into technical troubles: the quality of the paper was always in question and the second hand printing presses often produced less-than-perfect printed material. Paper was initially imported from England by the Serampore missionaries, but this was not a commercially viable option. To sustain these publishers, a paper mill was opened and a new type foundry was set up by Panchanan Karmakar, one of the first native typographers in Bengal. Bengali typefaces were created and soon vernacular publishing became a huge commercial success. Alongside the growing popularity of texts, visual culture in the form of woodcut illustrations for these books also came to be part of public life. Battala illustrations were woodcut engravings of folksy themes, often bold and vivid, with strong outlines filled in with watercolors. These illustrations made printed matter even more enticing for larger sections of the society. The first illustrated Bengali book was *Bharatchandra's Annada Mangal*, with six full-page illustrations. Battala publications are very difficult to come by — because they did not enjoy acceptance of the “refined” sections of the society, and more importantly because Bengal's climate is not conducive for the long-term storage of paper or wood. Around the same time, in the 1840s, the ephemeral Battala woodcuts premiered. These woodcuts were hand-engraved variations of the more popular *Kalighat pats*, block-printed en masse for public consumption. Like Kalighat pats, they also depicted popular themes of “Bengali” life: fish, baboos, and scandals, along with traditional religious and folklore motifs. Battala artists were essentially

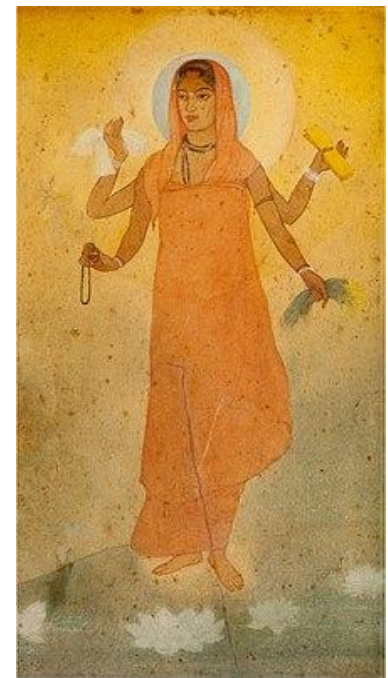
engravers — people who could chip away at a block of wood to create signature designs. In some cases, the prints include the name of the engraver or an abbreviation, the press, and the place it was engraved. The important wood cut artists are – Benimadhab Bhattacharya, Bir Chandra Dutta, Madhabchandra Das, Nrityalal Dutta (ND), Panchanan Karmakar, Ramdhan Swarnakar etc Battala woodcuts, in combination with other popular art forms of colonial Calcutta, create a rich, visual narrative whose archival value is often ignored. Few woodcut prints survive and the woodcut blocks themselves are now a rare find in the age of offset printing. While Kalighat pat is considered the epitome of the evolution of Bengali art forms under the colonial rule, Battala woodcuts are an equally valuable source of information about contemporaneous Bengali society. But with the advent of shiny coloured Oleographs and Photographs they were driven out of existence.

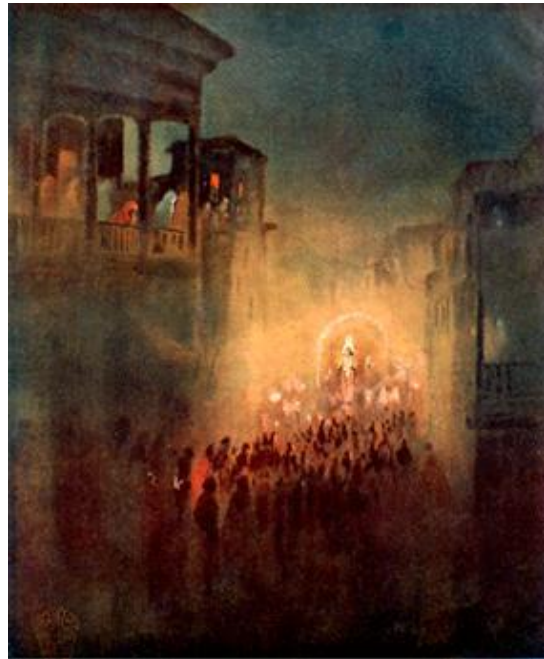
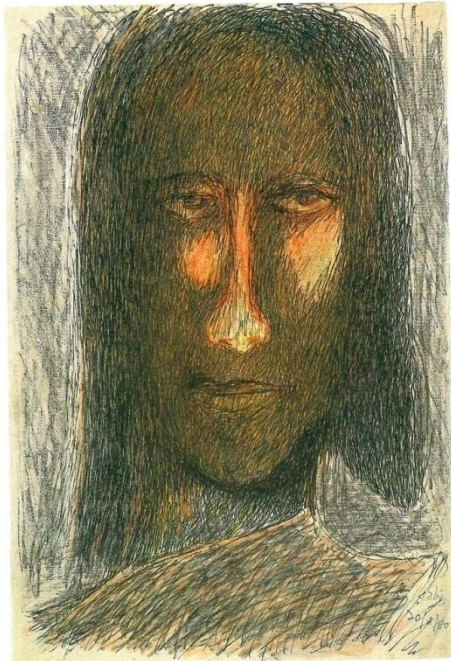
The tableau depicts Durga who is slaying Mahishasura as he is emerging in his human form. Durga is flanked by Lakshmi and Ganesha on the left and by Sarasvati and Karttikeya on the right. The figures are framed within an architectural setting with a 'chaalchitra' (curved frieze) showing various mythological scenes. The tableau represents the imagery of the autumnal Durga Puja festival in Bengal. Source : Victoria and Albert Museum, London

v. Lithographs : The art of lithography , invented by Alois Senefelder in 1798 , reached Calcutta in 1822. The first lithographic press, Shura Pathuria Press was launched in 1829. It mostly printed images of God and Goddesses as well as maps and charts. But lithographs with real regional flavour were initiated only after 1876 when Annadaprasad Bagchi, trained in Govt. Art College opened The Calcutta Art Studio at Boubazaar. It was however in 1878, some 2 years before Ravi Verma's Lithographic Press at Lonavala, that the **Calcutta Art Studio** started the art of Chromolithography in India. Various other lithographic Presses were also set up: Kansaripara, Shankaritola and Chorbagan art Studios, P.C Biswas and Co and others. Apart from the inevitable deities these studios also produced portraits. But Arya Chitralaya, run by Chandicharan Ghosh of Shimla Street produced a series of didactic lithographs, accompanied by long poetic texts to propagate Hindu values and morals.



vi. Oleographs: Bengal School of Art : The story of the Bengal School of Art begins in the 1900s, peaks in the 1920s only to slacken momentum in the 1930s. It is also a story of courage in the face of colonialism and capitalism. The non-violent protests of our politicians were given a beautiful silent voice by art- by the Bengal School of Art. Be it **Abanindranath Tagore's** Arabian Night series, **Gaganendranath Tagore's** 'Reform Screams' caricatures, **Rabindranath's** and **Sunayani Devi's** primitive art, **Nandalal Bose's** 'Haripura Posters', **Benode Bihari Mukherjee's** murals or **Ram Kinkar Baij's** sculptures- all were borne out of the need to express the story of India- who its people really were, what it's art was all about. None of these luminaries took to western classical art; instead they paved their own way, made their own art. What's more, the world loved it. As a predecessor "Calcutta School of Arts and Crafts" was first established (1854) to teach 'industrial art' to 'youth of all classes.' It was renamed to Government School of Art in 1864, but was revised to Government School of Arts and Craft in 1951. Its most influential Principal was Ernest Binfield Havell who was a catalyst for the birth of Bengal School of Art. Together, he and Abanindranath Tagore changed the world of Indian Art. Iftekar Dadi in his book 'Modernism and the art of Muslim South Asia' writes "Abanindranath Tagore was a founder of the Bengal School, which assimilated numerous technical and conceptual influences, including Mughal Painting, Japanese Wash technique, pan Asian ideals and an emergent Indian nationalist art historical writings from the first decade of the twentieth century. Abanindranath's appointment as Vice Principal at the college fuelled the fire that he and Havell had started – that of reviving Indian art from shadows of western art. Subsequently, his brother Ganganendranath Tagore and his uncle, Rabindranath Tagore created master pieces that left an imprint in the art world of the West.





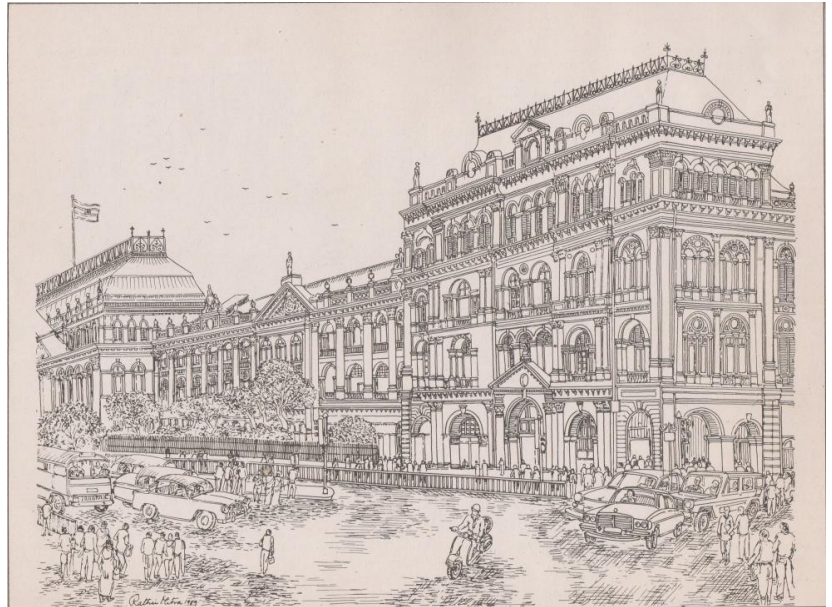
9 National Treasure Artists : Navaratna

In 1972, The Govt. Of India ,led by Smt. Indira Gandhi ,passed The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, which restricted the export or movement of antiquities and art treasures that came under the purview of this legislation ,outside the country's borders. Over the course of the 1970's artworks by 9 artists were declared 'national treasures' under this Act, thus disallowing their sale outside India. Out of these 9 artists 6 are from Bengal School of Art – Abanindranath Thakur, Gaganendranath Thakur,Rabindranath Thakur,Jamini Roy, Nandalal Bose, Sailoz Mookherjee. The other 3 are Russian painter Nicholas Roerich,Amrita Sher Gil and Raja Ravi Verma.

Jubilee Art Academy: 1905 the Jubilee Art Academy was established by Ranada Prasad Gupta, a student of the Govt. Art College disenchanted by efforts to indianize the curriculum, a rival art camp was formed. This small circle of artists comprising Hemen Majumdar, Atul Bose, Satish Sinha Roy and others, espoused and continued to follow the discarded academic traditions of Western art. Though derided by their contemporaries, their works are much esteemed today_ Hemen Majumdar's 'wet sari' semi-nudes for instance radiate a warm sensuousness that gives them an appeal transcending the formality of mechanical representation.

Post Independence Art – The most cohesively radical change in the art scene of Bengal started to take place however in the early forties of the last century, when all of India was ravaged by violent social upheavals - war, famine and widespread political and sectarian violence. The wounds of this period were incisively etched in the drawings of Zainul Abedin, the linocuts of Chittaprasad and most obsessively in the woodcuts and all the following works of Somenath Hore. In various media. and with continuously renewing experimentation, Hore continued in a truly modern manner to give fresh expression to his experiential vision.

The same socio-cultural factors led to the birth of 'the Calcutta Group' - formed in 1943 with founder artists like Rathin Maitra, Paritosh Sen, Sunil Madhav Sen, Gopal Ghosh, Subho Tagore, Nirode Majumdar and Prodosh Dasgupta in their number. The next decade was in fact dominated by the vitality and variety of the artists of the Calcutta Group, who started evolving their own distinctive idioms, styles and perspectives.



The 'Calcutta Painters' emerged later, with dynamic young talents like Nikhil Biswas , Bijon Chowdhury and Prakash Karmakar as three of its founder members. Their works reflect in their distortion of lines and visualization, their profound involvement in the social and psychological tensions of the time. Among the Calcutta Painters the works of Jogen Chowdhury, Rabin Mandal, Gopal Sanyal and others also reflect the artist's deep emotional engagement with his environmental reality.

Then in 1960, the '**Society of Contemporary Artists**' was formed in Calcutta . The luminous names of the following two decades, Amitabh Banerjee, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Dharmanarayan Dasgupta, Ganesh Haloi, Ganesh Pyne, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Manu Parekh, Sanat Kar, Somenath Hore, Sunil Das, Suhas Roy, Shyamal Dutta Ray, and others who formed or became later a part of this group, produced works which were their own deeply personalized interpretations of contemporary reality. The form of their self expression crystallized in a diversity of themes, techniques and idioms. In art they avoided sorting out problems by emulating any stylistic brands whether western or indigenous, contemporary or traditional, just as in life they found no easy way out by embracing a single track political ideology . Their urge for a contemporary mode of self expression came primarily from a compulsive need to say in art what affected them most in the contemporary realities of their immediate perception. Ramananda Bandhopadhyay, whose work is a vibrant interpretation of the Bengal School ethos; and from the 70's onwards there has

been the vigorous socially conscious expressionism of artists like Sajal Roy and Shuvaprasanna.

The eighties onwards has seen an artistic renaissance, and the emergence of an increasing number of powerful styles and statements, from artists whose works continue to exhibit a growing diversity of expression and content. Many such as Aditya Basak, Ashok Bhowmick, Ashok



Mullick, Manoj Dutta , Manoj Mitra. Pradip Maitra, Ramlal Dhar, Sadhan Chakrabarty, Shekhar Roy and Tilok Mondol among others tend towards figurative imagery which may embody their personal, social or philosophical perception. To this category also belong Atin Basak, Chandra Bhattacharya, Rajarshi Biswas, Sanatan Dinda, and Sk. Sahajahan of the late nineties and early 21st Century.

Others, such as Chitravanu Majumdar, Sudhansu Bandopadhyaya, the Kabasi brothers, Chhatrapati Dutta and Arindam Chatterjee, have with creative variations, mixed figurative with abstract art. A large number are creating figurative images that make no statement other than conveying a profoundly personal mood, whose `meaning` is internalized within the vocabulary of line, space, colour, design and texture. Representing this trend. are artists such as Paresh Maity , Jaya Ganguly, Gautam Basu, Chanchal Mukherjee, Jayashree Burman and Jayashree Chakravorty. Still others have evolved and continue to evolve, from one perception into another. This restless search for ever newer possibility of personal and artistic growth is what ultimately defines the perspective of an original artist.

vii. Kolkata Street Art :

The wall has always been the most widely used medium for communication and can be dated back to the prehistoric times. The act of scribbling, scratching or spraying anything illicitly upon a wall or any other visible public place is the dictionary meaning of graffiti. Graffiti in different forms from across the world have been helpful in providing valuable insights into the earlier societies because the walls have a story to tell. Street art today allowing people to connect with art and expression on a daily basis, the colourful and beautiful murals painted on walls reach out to the public every day.

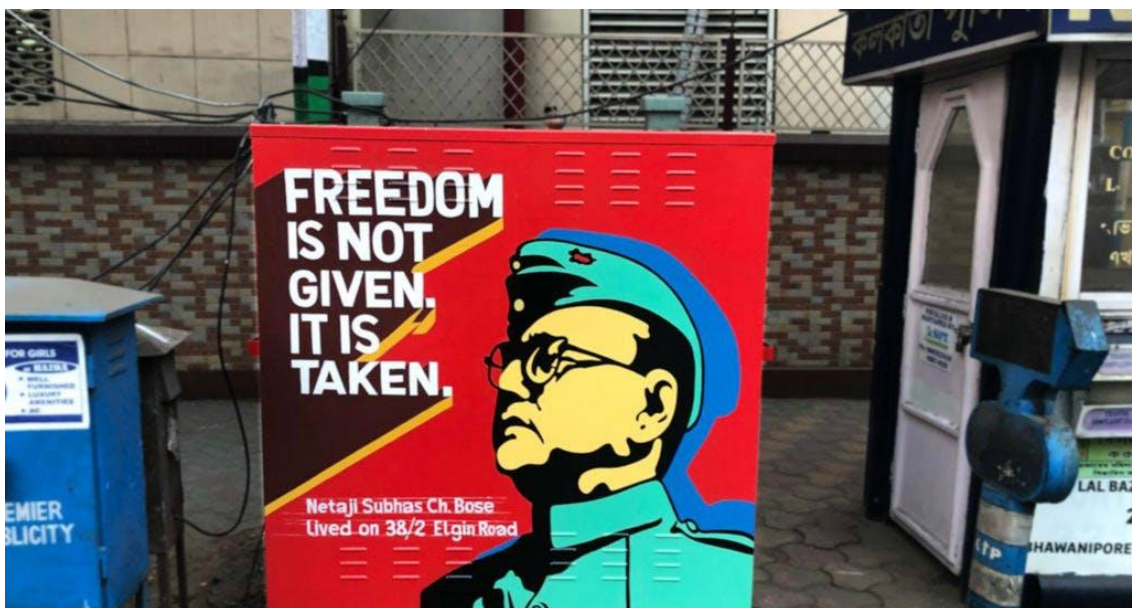
a. Poll Graffiti and Limericks: The concept of wall graffiti is not new to Kolkata. Political Graffiti and Limericks are an integral part of poll campaign in Bengal and during the election times they dominate the city-walls. Even in this age of digitization, it has not lost its charm among the urbanites, but the domain has spread its umbrella.





b. New Age Graffiti: At present the Kolkata street Art has taken up a new dimension. Recently, Kolkata Port Trust, Kolkata Municipal Corporation, with some young budding street artists, has taken the responsibility of colouring the Ganga Ghats of Kolkata, along with the street walls. Goutam Chakraborty, Security Adviser, and Coordinator Heritage of Kolkata Port Trust said, “We must encourage our young budding artists and should help them in this form of art”. We have coloured Bagbazar Ghat, Annapurna Ghat, Kumortuli Ghat, Motilal Sil Ghat, and in the future, we will colour more ghats of the city. One can find various types of graffiti on streets like Sudder Street, Elgin Road, North Kolkata, Beni Nandan Street, Kankurgachi, Park Street, Khidderpore; even the ‘open electricity boards’ have been coloured. The walls of Eden gardens have been coloured because of the Historical “Pink ball Test”. More than 45 students of Indian Art College and Government art college joined hands to hand to colour the stadium.





Floor painting – Alpona

A traditional art form, *alpona* refers to the ritual of finger-painting beautiful motifs mainly with a paste of rice flour on auspicious occasions in West Bengal. The etymology of the word is the Sanskrit *alimpana* which means 'to plaster' or 'to coat with'. Considered to be a folk art in Bengal, it is believed that these beautiful motifs keep homes, neighbourhoods and villages safe and prosperous. In Bengal, alpona is traditionally made using a paste of uncooked rice kernel of

paddy called aatop chaal in water diluted to a thick consistency. A cotton ball is then dipped in the mixture and used to draw the various geometrical designs and motifs of flowers, animals, birds, trees and humans. Being made of rice paste they are mostly white in colour but with changing times the women have included colours in them and some even use fabric colours to make them last long. The fact that it is drawn using rice flour, earlier it was considered to be bhutayajna, an offering to the ants and other insects as a good deed of the day! Alpona is originally performed in every Bengali home by the girls to decorate the door-fronts, floors and the places before the idols of deities or during marriages. Initially, *alpona* saw the use of motifs of paddy leaf, feet of Goddess Lakshmi, lotus and other images which are meant for welcoming wealth into the house. But now it experiments with a large variety of designs which are growing out of its intrinsic aesthetic properties. During Durga Puja Festival at present Alpona is used to decorate the Courtyards or even the roads and is treated to be as a celebration nurturing creativity through tradition.





B. Printing And The Spirit Of Kolkata

In splendour London now eclipse Rome ...and in similar respects, Calcutta rivals the head of empire. But in no respect can she appear so eminently so , as in her publicationsIf in Europe , the number of publications gives the ground to ratiocinate the learning and refinement of particular cities we may place Calcutta in rank above Vienna, Coppenhagen , Petersburg , Madrid , Venice , Turin , Naples or even Rome .- William Dune, The Editor of The World in 1791.

The earliest printing presses of colonial Calcutta emerged in the 1770s, owned by European printmakers. Nathaniel Brassey Halhed published his “A Grammar of the Bengal Language”, the first printed book to have been published with a Bengali typeface in 1778, in a printing press in Hooghly, the erstwhile Portuguese town across the river from Calcutta. The Bengali typeface, the first of its kind, was developed by Charles Wilkins (also a founding member of the Asiatic Society) and Panchanan Karmakar. Graham Shaw (1981) has documented the presence of as many as 40 professional and amateur printmakers in Calcutta by 1800 who were associated with 17-odd printing presses. They had, in the years of their existence, published more than 300 books—which included a few Bengali books as well—although there were no printing presses dedicated solely to the publication of Bengali-language books. These presses were mostly located in the area around the ‘Great Tank’ or Lal Dighi near Fort William. All printing presses but one employed Indian workers, who did not know English language, but nonetheless worked by matching the letters of type by observing their shapes. History has not recorded the names of these early Indian printmakers—unlike that of the pioneer **Panchanan Karmakar**, who would go on to develop more typefaces, including the first Nagari typeface to be developed in India in 1803. The earliest Indian-owned printing press in Calcutta was also established — in Khidderpore, owned by one Baburam for publishing Sanskrit books. However, it is the area around Battala that would see the proliferation of Indian-owned printing presses — Reverend Long would go on to identify 46 such printing presses in his 1857–58 survey. It is, however, without question that these anonymous printers’ work in these long-forgotten printing presses would pave the way for the thriving native-owned print industry at Battala.

i. Bat-tala –A living Museum of Kolkata Printing

The banyan tree (bat in Bengali; *Ficus benghalensis*), it is said, derives its name from the Indian banyan or merchant, by the way of Portuguese and English travellers who witnessed Indian merchants resting, praying, or conducting business under the shade of the said tree. Henry Yule and Arthur Coke Burnell’s *Hobson-Jobson* takes note of accounts of the tree dating all the way back to 1622. The ubiquitous banyan tree has historically lent its name to countless ‘battalas’ in Bengal (the suffix, tala, might refer to the space underneath, or might refer to the entire neighbourhood), spaces meant for gathering and rest, for worship and for business. One such battala in so-called ‘native quarters’ of colonial Calcutta, however, would go on to lend its name to a once-thriving *print industry* that is now remembered as the Battala print industry or simply, Battala. There is no surviving banyan tree in the present day Chitpur-Garanhata area of Kolkata, no signboard that marks the site of the eponymous banyan tree. Historians and researchers have

over the years attempted to track down the location of the battala, with multiple opinions of the possible location of the same. What remains with us are thus anecdotes about a ‘bandha battala’ (bandha, as in paved), under which gathered book merchants with their pile of cheaply-printed chapbooks (choti boi, in local parlance) and their buyers, very often hawkers who would source the books and sell them across the city and beyond. The print industry that grew around this battala, however, left its mark in contemporary history, despite being deemed a source of lowly and obscene ‘street literature’ (as Reverend James Long, the first chronicler of Battala would call it).

The earliest known Battala press was established in 1816—the Bengali Press, owned by Harachandra Ray. Bishwambhar Deb’s printing press was also established around the same time, though very little is known of the publisher himself. Ganga Kishore Bhattacharya, who would go on to publish the first illustrated Bengali book, Annadamangal (1816), with Ferris and Company Press, worked as a compositor for the Serampore Mission Press and honed his craft at the behest of the missionaries there.



The Genres of Battala: A Brief Glimpse

The Battala presses catered to a wide variety of readership and produced an astonishing variety of genres, starting with the humble panjika (almanac) and the ubiquitous Ramayana-Mahabharata-puranas, to schoolbooks and primers, biographies and advice manuals, plays,

poetry, novels, jatra texts, texts on farming and animal husbandry, recipe books, even manuals on photography. The two surviving publishers in present day Chitpur, *Diamond Library* and *Mahesh Library*, bear testimony to this variety to an extent. The most widely-sold of Battalas' publications were in fact the panjikas which ran the traditional manuscript panjikas out of business and competed with each other in terms of price. Reverend James Long estimated an approximate production of 250,000 almanac copies per year, saying, 'The Bengali Almanac is as necessary for the Bengali as his hooka or his pan [betel leaf], without it he could not determine the auspicious day for marrying... for first feeding an infant with rice. ...commencing the building of a house, for boring the ears... when a journey is to be begun, or calculating the duration or malignity of a fever'.



One of the most questioned Battala genres, apart from the erotic texts, was the 'gupta katha' (secret), the most popular of which is undoubtedly Bhubanchandra Mukhopadhyay's Haridaser Guptakatha (1898). The 'gupta katha' genre, adapted from JMW Reynolds' pulp *The Mysteries of London* and *The Mysteries of the Court of London* (which, in turn, derived inspiration from Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris*), gained unexpected popularity, perhaps courtesy the very gossip, crime, and engagement with taboo topics that was frowned upon by the polite society.

Battala's ties to the Bengali stage, both the emerging public theatre as well as the jatra, is well-documented; present day Chitpur continues to house offices of jatra parties, and the printmakers of Battala continue to cater to the publicity needs of these jatra houses, albeit in

their modern offset printing machines. Battala, in the 19th century, published plays as well as jatra palas. Of these, the farces in particular gained particular significance; Jayanta Goswami (1974) has documented the publication of as many as 505 farces or prahasans in 1854–99, not all of them from Battala. The farces were oriented around various social issues, from adultery to licentious babus to the potential evils of women’s education, with authors like Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Amrtilal Bose, and Dinabandhu Mitra defining the best of the genre.

Another less-discussed aspect of Battala literature was the proliferation of what Reverend James Long called 'Mussalman Bengali Literature', and what later scholarship has named 'Muslim-Bengali' literature. Sumanta Banerjee (2013) calls it 'dobhashi' or 'bilingual literature', alluding to the generous mixture of Perso-Arabic and Urdu words with Bengali in the texts of this genre. The sentences in these books were often structured from right to left in a manner similar to Arabic and Persian, as opposed to the standard Bengali left to right. Aimed primarily at a Muslim readership and published both in Calcutta’s Battala as well as its twin in Dhaka’s Ketabpatti, Muslim-Bengali literature produced narratives centered around the life of the Prophet, as well as fairy tales and romances (such as Ameer Hamzar Puthi, Hatem-Tai, Yusuf-Zuleikha). Chitpur, today, holds only two of the 22 book stores that survived well into the 21st century. A number of printmakers continue to operate out of Chitpur, catering primarily to the immediate needs of the jatra companies. The declining fortunes of Chitpur and the moving away of the print industry from the geographical confines of the erstwhile Battala has, nonetheless, not erased Battala or its literature from the cultural memory of Bengal. It continues to be invented and reinvented in popular culture and in the diligent work of historians of art and print, among others.







ii. Letter Press : There was a time when the letterpress business of Kolkata was the largest printing process of the country. Letterpress printing was the most basic form of printing with a block being pressed against a sheet to get an impression of it. This form of printing remained the primary way to print and distribute information until the twentieth century. Many printing press owners call it more of a hidden business with the scale of operations often not paid much attention to. In 1800, William Carey established a Mission Press in Serampore for the initial purpose of publishing scripture translations. In 1818, the Baptist Mission Press opened in Calcutta. After fifteen years of dual operation, the two presses joined together in a common purpose in 1837. There were many hidden letterpresses in Bengal which were used during Independence by various freedom fighters. In the letterpresses, the blocks of the capital



alphabets were kept in the containers (or cases) on the upper part of the cabinet and the blocks of lower case alphabets used to be kept in the lower part of the cabinet. That is how the terms 'upper case' and 'lower case' came into existence. There was a time when West Bengal alone used to consume around 90 – 100 tonnes of paper for bread wrappers alone. To put it in context, 1 kg of

paper gave 300 pound bread covers. The 'Roti Thonga' (paper or plastic bag for the bread) would be block printed, resulting in a huge demand for printed labels. Earlier, the blocks used to be made of wood then they began to be prepared from lead. The plates used to be wooden for making designs, which later converted to zinc, they were more accurate after electrolysis began to be used for itching. The death knell for this booming trade came in the form of offset printing which uses Metal sheets and is way more cost efficient. When offset printing developed, it largely supplanted its role in printing books and newspapers.



এখনো সচল ১৫০ বছরের মুদ্রণ যন্ত্র



লটারীর টিকিটের খাম তৈরি



iii. Stamp Printing: In the age of digital technology when polymer can make rubber stamps in the blink of an eye, Chitpur Road hosts some stamp shops who are carrying forward the old technique. The classic character of wooden stamps lay in its unique letterpress types. This unique lettering is still being used in rubber stamping. The small shops along the road are a hidden treasure trove for old unique and quirky stamps. Shri Baidyanath Aash, one of the owner of these shops showed us his beautiful collection of old wood blocks of stamps.



iv. Saree Printing : Kolkata's Saree printing tradition dates back a long way, but it is slowly fading. About 20 years back there were 2 clusters of Saree Hand Block Printing - Along Bidhan Sarani , near Hatibagan in North Kolkata and very on Rashbehari Avenue near Gariahat Market in South Kolkata. But now there are only few shops left. As Mr. Swarup Das, Manager of the printing shop "Artex" said in our interview that the demand for hand block printing is going down and they are getting stiff competition from Digital Prints. Still they block prints on silk, kalamkari prints, bandhani and 'miler chhapa' or mill printed, and more. One can also design their own masterpiece. Select the prints and let them do the rest. You have to give them about a month and a half to give you the finished product. Simple prints will cost INR 200-400. Prints on silk will be INR 450 and toshor will be INR 500.



C. Clay Art And Sculpture Of Kolkata

i. Image Making : The smell of wet clay from Ganges and other rivers, the dry crackling of straw beneath your feet, the criss-cross patterns of bamboo spread out within the narrow confines of a ramshackle, eight-by-eight studio blend seamlessly to create the traditional homes of the artisans where Goddess Durga takes 'birth.' The place is called Kumortuli.

The potter community of Kolkata, the kumors as they are colloquially known, are more than what the name suggests they are artists. Tangible images of deities that form the crux of Hindu worship, find shape in the hands of these artisans, who, with sheer dedication to the craft, have kept the tradition alive for generations. It is a fascinating experience to observe how clay, straw, bamboo and other ingredients bit by bit transforms into tactile human forms which are then infused with divinity through different rituals. Durga Puja, on the other hand, is not only the major religious festival of Bengal but has also evolved into a cultural extravaganza. From the point of view of sheer vastness and magnitude of organizational mobilization, it is comparable only to the global impact of Christmas. Through vivid photographs and absorbing text, the book captures Kolkata's spirit of artistic creativity and spiritual ecstasy, embodied in these ephemeral constructs of clay, straw and bamboo. It also sensitively documents Bengal's unique and most enduring cultural heritage of image worship. – Krishna Dutta, Image makers of Kumortuli.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of River Hooghly (River Ganga) in its lower course is the silt laden fertile soil. In the ever urban city like Kolkata, this mud becomes the ingredient of the best possible art form –Clay Artistry, the art of image making or idol making. It can be related with votive clay items , but they form a different genres of artistry as a handmade unrefined clay art. The traditional potter's wheel is completely absent and the work is mainly done through pressing, moulding and use of a mixture of different varieties of clay.

The British colonisation of Bengal and India started following the victory of the British East India Company in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. The Company decided to build new settlement Fort William at the site of the Gobindapur village. Most of the existing population shifted to Sutanuti. While such neighbourhoods as Jorasanko and Pathuriaghata became the centres of the local rich, there were other areas that were developed simultaneously. The villages of Gobindapur, Sutanuti and Kalikata developed to give rise to the latter day metropolis of Calcutta. Holwell, under orders from the Directors of the British East India Company, allotted 'separate districts to the Company's workmen.' These neighbourhoods in the heart of the Indian quarters acquired the work-related names – Suriparah (the place of wine sellers), Collotollah (the place of oil men), Chuttarparah (the place of carpenters), Aheeritollah (cowherd's quarters), Coomartolly (potters' quarters) and so on.

Most of the artisans living in the north Kolkata neighbourhoods dwindled in numbers or even vanished, as they were pushed out of the area in the late nineteenth century by the invasion

from Burrabazar. In addition, Marwari businessmen virtually flushed out others from many north Kolkata localities. The potters of Kumortuli, who fashioned the clay from the river beside their home into pots to be sold at Sutanuti Bazar (later Burrabazar), managed to survive in the area. Gradually they took to making the images of gods and goddesses, worshipped in large numbers in the mansions all around and later at community pujas in the city and beyond.

a. Kumortuli – Kolkata’s Potters Colony – (Location - 22°36'1.75"N, 88°21'44.71"E)

Kumortuli is situated in Ward No. 9 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation, between Ahiritola and Shobhabazar, and bound by Rabindra Sarani (formerly Chitpur Road) in the east and the river Bhagirathi- Hoogly in the west. The narrow alleys with craftsmen’s working studios, the smell of wet mud and the collections of idols left to dry along the lanes give the colony a distinct visual character and identity.

The Dhakeswari Devi Mandir of Kumortuli signifies a strong connection of the potters to that of Dhaka (Bangladesh). It is said that these potters or clay modelling artists mainly came from Krishnanagar, Nadia and they are the descendants of immigrants from Dhaka, and Natore of Bangladesh. During Maharaja Krishnachandra’s rule in Nadia, the practice of idol worship grew, which in turn called for potters and craftsmen from Dhaka. These clay modellers came to Krishnanagar and started living around a place called Ghurni. Ghurni is near the river Jalangi (also called Khoray), so potters could easily procure clay they needed. In due course, Ghurni grew up to be the potters’ colony. Though there are some controversies regarding their origin place but the significant part of the history is that along with the celebration of the puja (worship) with clay images,



Krishnachandra also introduced the tradition of “bisharjan”-(immersion) of the images after each puja, so that a new image was required for worship in each year. Thus what was traditionally one time affair, whereby the Thakur or deity was installed permanently in the defined spaces of the temple or the household , changed into an annual occasion of making clay image which was the Pratima and not Thakur or deity. “The word 'pratima' in modern written

Bengali indicates a man-made statue of any deity in clay, stone, wood or metal. A 'pratima' is not sacred by itself, but becomes sacred only when it is worshipped". Such a notion of the deity or the goddess might have had great implications for the art of clay image making. Because the clay image is not considered as an object of reverence till the time it is properly worshipped, anyone with an urge and a capacity to give a vent to his creative talents could be engaged in the art of idol-making. Moreover, the ritual of bisharjan dictated that the work is not a single, lifetime affair, but a regularized work which has a rhythmic pattern like any other occupation. Hence, the questions of continuity and sustenance provided an impetus to the groups of clay workers who increasingly shifted their attention to the making of idols. It is during this time that the art of image-making thrived as a full-fledged occupation apart from making articles of ritual worship, the different ceremonial pots, namely Raserhadi, Sakerhadi, Dharmaghat, Mangaighal, Manasaghat, Nagghat etc. At present there are more than 450 workshops owned by several families of master sculptors who, for generations, have been creating idols and models for museums and galleries in Kumortuli. There are studios of renowned master sculptors in Kumortuli like Gopeswar Pal, Mohan bansi Rudra Pal, Sanatan rudra Pal, Ramesh Pal etc. G.Pal and Sons studio at Kumartuli might seem to be just another atelier, but for many idol makers in this town, it is a reminiscence of legendary artist Gopeswar Pal, whom they remember as one of the most acclaimed artists of all times. During the festival of Durga Puja the entire hub brightens up as the demand for their work shoots up. It is estimated that each year, the *kumbhars* create more than 4,000 sets of Durga idols with her entire family members, and many of them are shipped abroad as well.





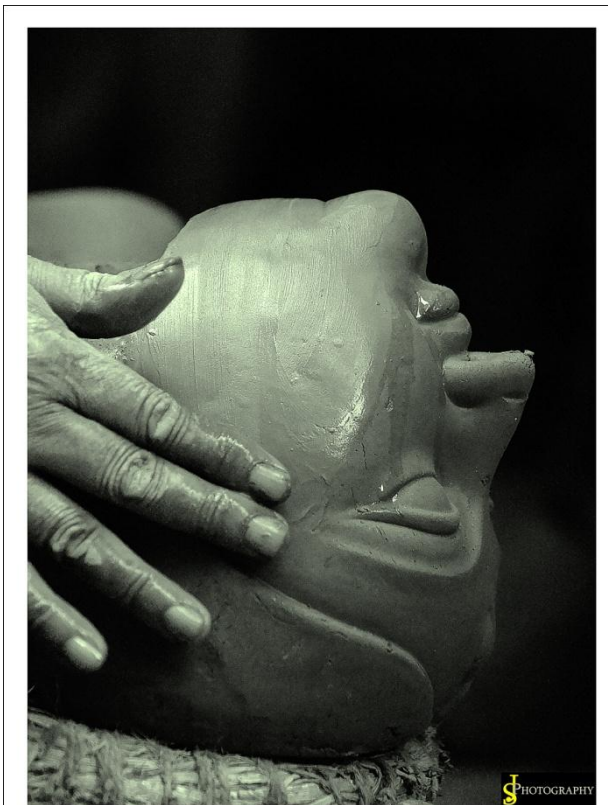
Stages of Idol making: The idols are created with reverence and grace as their creators pray and fast before the season begins. The idol making process can be categorised broadly into three stages.

The first stage is making the *kathamo* (bamboo and wooden frame) for the idol, the second is preparing the mud and applying the clay, and the third is colouring and decorating the idol. The first stage, making the *kathamo*, involves buying wood and bamboo from the market, cutting and joining them with pins or tying them together with ropes to build the skeleton structure. Before the sculpting begins, the *kathamo* is worshipped and a few rituals are performed by those who take the idols back to their pandals. Once the *kathamo* is complete, it is tied with straw to give it a rough shape of the idol.





In the subsequent process, the kumors apply mud to the straw framework of the idol. The mud used is a mixture of clay (brought from the riverside in Uluberia village because the sand content is lower than in the banks of Hooghly) and water. The craftsmen stomp on the mud with their feet to remove impurities. Two types of mud, with differing uses, go into sculpting the idols— entel mati (sticky clay) and bele mati (crisp clay). Entel mati is mixed with tush (husk of rice), which is applied on the straw framework of the idol and left to dry for three to four days. The bele mati is then applied on the layer of entel mati and left to dry for five to six days. If visible cracks are found on the dried idol structures, they are repaired with mud. When the body of the idol is ready, the face, palms and fingers, which are separately made, are put together. Owing to the huge demand for idols, these parts are made from moulds as they reduce the time spent in making shapes over and over again. The face is made with bele mati and rubbed with paper to give it a polished finish. The idols are then coloured and decorated.

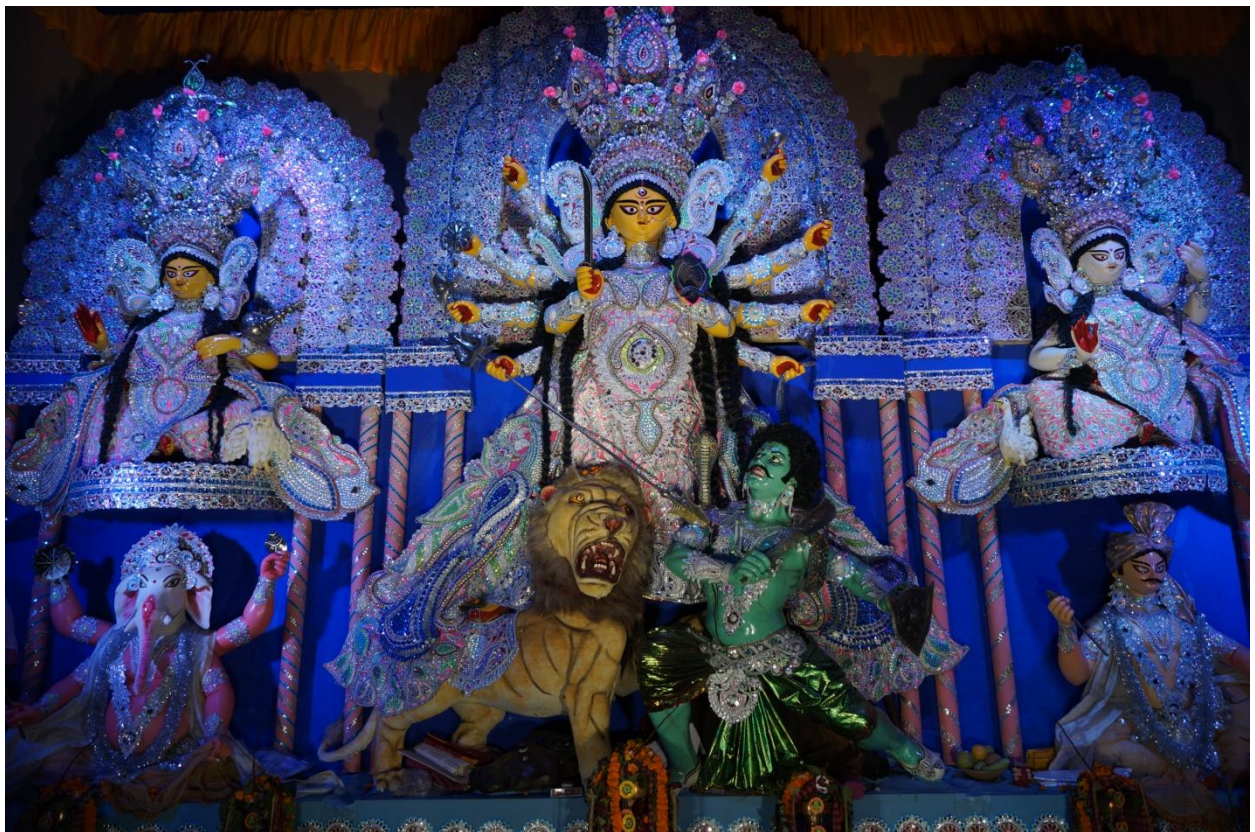




Types of Idols

Several types of idols are created in Kumortuli, but the predominant one is Durga idol. There are two main categories of Durga idols - ek chala and do chala (with more than one background) which developed much later and out of necessity. According to local legend, in the year 1937 or 1938 a huge fire in the puja organised by Kumortuli Sarbojanin Puja Committee destroyed the Durga idols. To help the committee members, a kumor named Gopeshwar Pal created new idols overnight, breaking away from the traditional style of ek chala and adopting the new do chala design. Apart from the backgrounds, there are other distinct differences among the idols. The 'Art Bangla Durga', a combination of features from traditional and modern Durga idols, is five to 14 feet tall and decorated with zari or solapith (thermocool). Modern Durga idols are the least expensive. There are also the 'Dobasi Bangla' type (decorated with zari or sola), the 'Khas Bangla' type (five to eight feet tall and decorated entirely with sola) and 'Ajanta Ellora Durga' (made entirely of clay).





Traditionally, only men engaged in the craft of idol making. Many craftsmen still believe that women should stay at home and only indirectly assist their male counterparts by cooking for them during their work hours. This thinking is also guided by the belief that *meyere maayer jaat* (women are akin to goddesses) and should not engage in any form of business that requires

them to step out and toil to earn money. However, the situation is changing and, today, many women are carrying forward their father's or husband's business.

In the 1990s, women craftsmen such as Mala Pal and China Pal entered the business. Mala Pal was around 15 years old when she got into idol making, because of the financial hardships following her father's death. She initially assisted her brother Gobinda Pal but gained recognition after she was called to exhibit at the National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, New Delhi. Mala recollects this event as a turning point in her life. Though at first her family was reluctant about her choice, they eventually embraced it. Today, she works with a team of seven to eight people and specialises in miniature Durga idols that are shipped to destinations such as Germany, France, Canada and USA.

China Pal's journey is similar. She has been in the profession for more than two decades, starting in 1994 after her father's demise just before the pujas that year. She had no formal training in the art, so there were hiccups in the beginning. But, as China says, she always had a knack for it.



Kumortuli artists get their major assignments during three times of the year. Durga Puja, Kali Puja and Saraswati Puja. In the past few years, however, fortunes have turned. Today, due to societal changes, the devotional focus in Kolkata has now widened to include deities such as Jagatdhatri, Krishna, Rama and Ganesha. Puja festivals that had once been relatively minor in Kolkata, such as Ram Navami and Ganesh Chaturthi, are growing in scale. These artists are also

assigned for preparing Clay Statues or Portraits. Sometimes they are also assigned for public art installations.



Legend Artists of Kumortuli – Gopeswar Pal

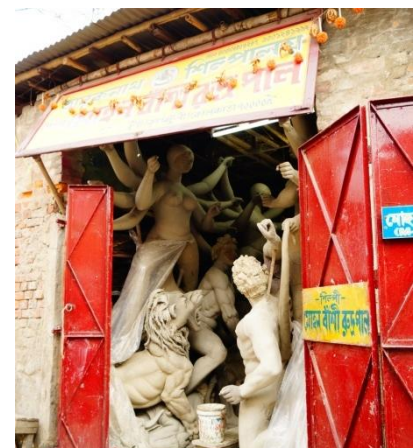
Established in 1926, the studio does not make Durga idols any more, but is still considered a one-stop shop for sculptures and figurines on clay, fiberglass and plaster of paris. Many artists recall Pal as the pioneer of the idea of creating Puja idols as separate structures instead of the traditional single chala. "Pal was the first artist who came up with the idea of creating idols separately instead of putting them together under a single chala, which was quite popular among idol makers earlier," said D Bhattacharya of Kumartuli Sarbojanin Durgotsav Committee, one of the oldest pandals in the city and perhaps the first to adopt the new form of idol

making. Pal had participated in an art exhibition in 1924 and won a prize for creating a horse's head within 45 seconds. "When Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was the president of Kumartuli Sarbojanain Puja, many idols were destroyed in a fire and Pal recreated them within 24 hours before the Puja was inaugurated," recalled Bomkesh Pal, a relative of the artist. Pal passed away in 1944 leaving behind the studio, which was at one point of time the only supplier of sculptures to the Ramkrishna Mission.



Mohan Banshi Rudra Pal-Interview

Mala Pal It's a man's world out there in Kolkata's celebrated potters' hub, Kumortuli. Yet a handful of women have been challenging this ancient monopoly. A rare breed of women artisans are breathing life into wet clay to create a goddess they call their own, a warrior woman who is their mascot. There are 2 major Women artist in the entire Kumortuli area. China Pal & Mala Pal who broke all the stereotypes and created a niche for themselves. We felt so proud to talk to one of them, Mala Pal. Mala Pal is a multi-tasker, making idols, ornaments, conduct



workshops and at the same time does all the household chores. Mala, who has won several state awards for her craftsmanship, specialises in miniature, ‘foldable’ Durga idols that are exported to Europe, Australia and Canada where pujos are organised by the Bengali diaspora. The diminutive 41-year-old took over the reins of making idols in Kumortuli when her father died in 1985. Mala has been single-handedly running her studio over the past three decades. She quit school at the age of 15. “I have gone through a lot of financial hardship, but now I have received some recognition and the business has been profitable,” says Mala.



b. Potuapara –Kalighat : Location - 22°31'13.11"N, 88°20'28.15"E

Kalighat Patuapara is a traditionally potters’ quarter in southern Kolkata along Adi Ganga or Tolly’s Canal. Most workshops in the area are small and chock-a-block, forcing artisans to push their idols out in the open. Around 900 idols are made at the Kalighat *Patuapara* every year. Like Kumortuli, these artists also creates their creation in small studios and suffers similar problems of water crisis, proper toilet facilities etc. But they also boasts some finest congregation of artists like Sreeshaw Pal (President Award Winner), Ranjan Pal etc.

B. Clay Cups or “Bhar” Making –Location – Along Adi Ganga /Tolly’s Nullah - 22°30'59.88"N/ 88°20'24.90"E

To have the best cup of tea in Kolkata Street it will be quintessentially in a small, handmade cup made of clay (Ganga mati) know as Bhars. From the time immemorial the sweet, milky tea of Kolkata streets are served in these eco friendly containers. Tea drinkers here, swear by the superiority of the clay cup. The clay gives the tea a rich and earthy flavour. It brings a ceremonial ending to each cup of tea as well. When the tea is finished, the bhar are customary thrown and crushed to pieces on the ground. The bhar, like small pieces of disposable art, are bearers of the age-old Bengali tradition of clay-pot making. Each cup is made by hand, from clay dug out of the Ganges river . Communities of potters, who have maintained the craft for centuries, sell them to tea-vendors across the city, who all operate their stalls from dawn until the late hours of evening. Bhar making is an age-old craft, found across many parts of India. On the banks of the Hooghly sits Kalighat, a neighbourhood built around the majestic Kali temple where worshippers have come to beg blessings of the black goddess for 1600 years. Walking down the main road from the temple, one passes vendors selling puja offerings, beggars crouching outside Mother Teresa’s Home for the Destitute and Dying, and prostitutes brazenly staring out from doorframes, their lips painted red with lipstick and teeth stained red with pan. Down one of the colorful alleys peeling off from the crowded street, thick smoke rises, filling the air with the scent of burning hay and baked mud. This is where the bhar wallahs live and work, crafting simple chai cups as well as intricate murthis, statues of Hindu gods.







d. Clay Dolls Making –Location – Nimtala Jorabagan - [22°30'59.88"N/ 88°20'24.90"E](#)

Inside a dingy lane of Jorabagan, very near to Nimtala Burning Ghat, North Kolkata, stays the clay doll artist Kesto Pal and his wife Sumitra Pal. The very small home of these couple serves as their studio where hundreds of mini clay dolls are kept. Kesto Pal's Grandfather actually started this work when he came here from UP. He learnt the art from the Bengal artists who came from Nadia, Krishnanagar. In an interview, both of them explained to us the process of making the doll.



These clay dolls are made up with fired-clay. First, a basic hand-pressed structure is made with loam. The hands are symbolic and the female parts more prominent. The ornamentation is done with mud or straw. A few of the dolls have a bun on the top or back of the head. Most of the time, a number of kids are attached to the arms or all over the body. These soft clay dolls are sun dried, baked and painted in different hues. Azo dyes have replaced herbal colours but they still retain their folk look. Human figures, birds and animals are the primary themes along with a variety of elephants and horses.

Traditionally, potters have used the wheel and the firing kiln to make dolls, like the potters from Kanthalia (Murshidabad), Kunoora (North Dinajpur), Panchmura (Bankura), and Sandra in Rajgram. With the advent of technology and changing lifestyles, doll making is also undergoing changes. Moulds have replaced the use of the potter's wheel because it speeds up the process. The body is shaped in the mould and the hands and legs are joined to it later. The potters of Ghurni region in Nadia's Krishnanagar have earned international fame from these life-like dolls. The community changed from making traditional dolls to this kind because of royal patronage. Kolkata, being the major market, many of the artists shifted their base from Krishnanagar to Kolkata for economic rejuvenation. But at present the artists are facing heavy crisis.



As beautiful as the esteemed artworks are, the craftspeople have been facing dire financial crisis. Growing competition from cheap, machine-made replicas of their superior hand-made products and almost non-existent support at the government administrative levels for long years have suffocated the pristine art to a dangerous degree.

Many artists are being forced to forsake their generations of talent and training in this art form to support their families working in other trades. Or, they are choosing to diversify with big, larger-than-life-sized clay sculptures to meet the demands of current business trends over painstakingly creating the beautiful miniature (2"-3") clay dolls. This is an unfortunate and hefty loss for the age-old art.



ii. Shola Pith Work (Herbal Ivory)in Kolkata

Location – Kumortuli –

Shola (Sola pith) or the Indian cork is a milky-white sponge-wood which is carved into delicate and beautiful objects of art. Sola plant grows in the marshy waterlogged areas of West Bengal, Assam and in the eastern marshy Gangetic plains. Artisans use it to make artefacts used for decoration, especially the traditional ornate headgear of bridegroom in Bengal. The finest of this craftsmanship can be seen on the statues of gods and goddesses during festivals, especially the massive decorative backdrop used for the Durga Puja. The people engaged as sholapith craftsmen are known as **Malakars**, meaning garland makers. The craft is mainly practised in the districts of Burdwan, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Nadia and Hooghly. But in Kolkata also, the idol makers of Kumortuli who traditionally produced clay idols have taken to making idols of sholapith and fibreglass. The ornaments of Devi Durga –Daker Saaj are created by the artists and craftsman of Kumortuli.



iii. Metal Work

A. Jewellery and associated work : The Goldsmiths of Kolkata : There are about 12 lakh goldsmiths in West Bengal and in Kolkata their number is 80,000. There are some clusters in Kolkata where there are innumerable shops (jewellery) selling their creations like in Bow Bazaar, Bhawanipur and Gariahat, Shyambazaar etc. But most of them have their workshops in the different area like in Garanhatta - Chitpur Hatkhola Shovabazaar Area, Bowbazaar, Sinthee, Burrabazaar or in Kalighat area. Among them Garanhatta is the oldest. Traditionally in Bengal, gold and silver jewellery were made by the people of a particular caste – “**Swarnakars**” or more colloquially “**Shyakra**”. The dealers of gold are usually not the Swarnakaars. They belong to ritually superior “**Suvarnabaniks**” or more commonly known as “**Sonar Bene**” They belong to the upper caste of Vaisyas while the artisans are Sudras. These two castes dominate the gold industry of Kolkata. The Suvarnabaniks own the shops or showrooms while the Shyakras dominate the showrooms.

a. Garanhatta - Location - 22°35'31.17"N/ 88°21'39.22"E

As we have mentioned in the above paragraph that **Garanhatta** locality adjoining Upper Chitpur Road or Rabindra Sarani has the oldest set of workshops where still we can find the artisans are creating wonders from the metals. There are mostly 4 types of workshops. They are - Jewellery design shops where one can see how jewellery is made out of **brass moulds**. Then there are shops where **metal cutting and carving** is done and finally there are







b. Burrabazar – Location – 22°35'1.84"N 88°21'16.20"E

At Burrabazar in Central Kolkata , the scene is entirely different. Here the Goldsmiths cater to a more cosmopolitan population as this area has many people migrated from Rajasthan , Uttar Pradesh,Gujarat and Haryana. In this part of Kolkata all the goldsmiths are from upper castes and none of them have Bengali parentage.

At Bowbazaar in central Kolkata however the scene is completely different. Here all the workers are Bengalis . The same situation is found in Kalighat – Bhowanipur area.

The goldsmiths are an all male dominated profession. Though there are some women jewellery designers and some women owners of jewellery showrooms , no women goldsmiths are found. The goldsmiths are generally a young group –very few goldsmiths are above 60.Most of the goldsmiths are second generation migrants (54%) i.e there fathers or grandfathers migrated to this place. During the time of partition about 26.5% of the artisans have migrated from Bangladesh and rest during the time of Bangladesh Liberation War. But these artisans were not from the goldsmith caste. They took up this craft as an economic activity .In Burrabazar the artisans have migrated from other states of India like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. But they generally belong to the upper caste. The average income of the Goldsmiths varies depending on the locality and on the type of jobs. Like in Burrabazar the jewellery makers earns some 15,000/-month while in Bowbazar – Bhawanipur area it becomes 6500 - 10,000 or even less about Rs 3500-5000/ month in the Garanhatta area.



B. Brasswork and Ironwork: a. The Notun Bazar area of Chitpur Road- **22°35'22.27"N/ 88°21'32.67"E** has a concentration of a series of trades, all specialising in utensils made of various materials, such as brass, copper, iron and aluminium. Utensils here vary in size and shape which can be used either for residential, commercial or religious purposes. Some of the ironwork takes place at the back alley of Rambagan area. One can witness huge iron woks, spatulas and ladles being made in the heart of the city in the junction between Chitpur road and Ramesh Dutta Street. All these shops practice their ancestral trade which can be traced back to at least three generations.





b. Shovabazaar (Ward 9): 22°35'48.39"N/ 88°21'43.83"E

Shovabazaar along Upper Chitpur Road is one of the oldest part of Kolkata and is said to have its name from one of the richest business man Shovaram Basack. Later on this place came under another rich family of Kolkata – Maharaja Naba Krishna Deb. He founded Shovabazaar Rajbari and had set up a bazaar or market with exotic fruits, flowers and vegetables. But now what remain are few shops selling Brass Ware Utensils mostly used for Puja or marriage purposes.



iv. Wood Art

The history of woodcarving in Bengal - comprising both what is now known as West Bengal and Bangladesh - and thus in India greater, seems to be very old. From time immemorial, the artists and craftsmen of this region have always adored wood, highly as well as widely, as a plastic medium for carving. There are, generally speaking, two major reasons behind such popularity: (i) prime availability and (ii) ready tractability. But, unfortunately, due to the perishable nature of wood as a material and, especially, the hot and humid climate of India in general, the earlier specimens haven't lasted long. Perhaps the oldest exhibit of wooden sculpture (Neem – Margosa) in Kolkata is the **Durga Idol (Chitteswari Devi)** of Chitpur area . Later on the use of wood can be found in the Jagganath Idols of Jagganath Temple of



Burrabazar. The 19th Century Kolkata saw a wide use of decorated Wood Carvings in the door, windows or side panels in the palatial mansions of old North Kolkata Houses like in Pathuriaghata, Jorasanko, Burrabazar or in the administrative core area of Dalhousie. In 1940's Abanindranath Thakur gave a new dimension to the wood art. He made a series of sculptures using driftwood or discarded and left found tree roots as well as its branches and named them as **Katum Kutum** . Katum means structure or form & kutum means relatives. Following his art, "Katum Kutum" became a genre of WoodArt which many of today's Kolkata artists pursue.



B. Wood Blocks: a. In the **Pathuriaghata area of Chitpur (22°35'22.27"N/ 88°21'32.67"E)** we can see a dedicated line of shops which sell all wooden items mostly used in sweet shops across the state or for religious purposes. In the midst of huge wooden vessels, one can find at least four craftsmen carving wooden blocks to make sweetmeat (sandesh) moulds. Moulds typically have a design and a message engraved in it. From making small moulds (2-4 inch) for regular Sandesh to big moulds (10-12 inch) for special purposes like marriage, they offer a plethora of options. Some of them are talented enough to make custom special nineteenth-century woodcut print for you.





B. Wooden Utensils (22°35'22.27"N/ 88°21'32.67"E)

Along the brass, iron, aluminium and copper utensils, Notun Bazaar Area also has a concentration of Wooden Utensil shops mainly creating big trays (Barkosh) for Puja or keeping Cottage Cheese (Chena) for the preparation of sweets.



C. Musical Instruments

Kolkata has a tradition for making musical instruments and there are some hubs where still we find series of workshops making musical instruments.

a. Jorasanko area of Chitpur Road- Location – **22°35'8.40"N/ 88°21'29.22"E**

This area was once famous as 'Tablapatty', has a tradition of more than 100 years of making Indian classical instruments. This dwindling craft is continued in only five shops in this stretch of the road. They specialise in making percussion instruments such as Tabla, Dhol, Sri Khol, Nal etc. They also make harmoniums on special request. Flute, dancing bells, Dafli, Khanjani and Khartals are available as well. Kolkata has remained one of the prime spots for manufacturing tablas in India over the years. Made from lighter wood than those of its counterparts made in Mumbai, Delhi, or Varanasi, Kolkata tablas are considered to be both easier to play and produce a better sound. Tablas from the City of Joy have thinner heads, and are made from lighter woods—contributing to their sweeter, fuller sounds.



b. B.B Ganguly Street / Bentinck Street – (Lal Bazaar) Location -22°34'19.77"N 88°21'10.03"E

Harmoniums to ukuleles – Lal bazaar area around Bentinck Street is littered with music shops that supply world-class instruments. Not just one, there are tens of music shops along Bentinck Street. If one walks down from Paradise Cinema towards Lal Bazaar Police Station and beyond, the stores are on either side of the road (particularly on the side of the police station). The shops have been around for generations and have supplied instruments to everyone from beginners to internationally-renowned artists like violinist Yehudi Menuhin.



Plate 52 – Instrument making and repairing in B.B Ganguly Street

Both Western and Indian instruments are available. There are shops that are dedicated to just one instrument and some that do all percussion or all stringed instruments under one roof.

Keyboards, violins, drums, piano, ukulele, dotara, harmoniums, guitars, tablas, flutes, every musical instrument for every level of professionalism (from beginners to international-level artists). One can see workers sitting on the floor and making the instruments right in front of everybody. A chat with the workers will reveal that some of them have been in the business for generations. They sit and make one instrument from scratch to finish – it can take over a week to make a single piece. Since they make the instruments, you can go in and ask for it to be customised to your liking. So kiss your broken strings goodbye. They also repair and mend instruments.



Heritage Musical Instrument Shop : i. Dwarkin & Son Location - was founded in 1875 by Dwarkanath Ghose as D. Ghosh and Sons at Lower Chitpur Road in Kolkata, mainly dealing piano tuning and repairing of musical instruments. Subsequently, it was renamed as "Dawrkin" was coined by composer and writer, Upendra kishore Ray, combining the names of the founder and that of Thomas Dawkins,



London, an instrument manufacturer from where the company imported musical instruments early on. Dwarkanath Ghose (1847 – 1928), (nickname 'Dwaka'), hailing from Sukdebpur in neighbouring South 24 Parganas, founded the organisation. As a devoted and skilled worker of Harold & Co., he attracted attention of his superiors, who were Englishmen. On their advice, he opened his own shop on Bowbazar Street under the name 'Ghosh & Co. for selling musical instruments imported from England. Subsequently, he built his own workshop for manufacturing musical instruments and also established a printing press. Desh-Binodon Number, Ghose was adept in modifying musical instruments as per individual needs of users and is particularly remembered for modifying the imported harmony flute and producing the hand held harmonium, which has subsequently become an integral part of the Indian music scenario. Dwijendranath Tagore is credited with having used the imported instrument in 1860 in his private theatre, but it was probably a pedalled instrument which was cumbersome, or it was possibly some variation of the reed organ. Initially, it aroused curiosity but gradually people started playing it and Ghose took the initiative to modify it. Ghose was close to people in the Tagore family and took care of their demands for musical instruments. He was also friendly with Upendrakishore Ray Chaudhuri, an innovative and creative person. As a personal friend of

Upendrakishore Ray Chaudhuri, visited the Brahma Samaj regularly but did not join the organisation formally. When Jyotirindranath Tagore compiled a book with songs and swaralipi (Bengali musical notations) of several composers, Dwarkin published it as Swaralipigitimala. In 1879, the organisation also published a magazine on musical matters, Binabadini, edited by Jyotirindranath Tagore. It is claimed to be one of the first such magazines in Bengali. In the initial years Dwarkin sold western musical instruments such as piano and American organ. They also sold books and notations on western music. That was the mainstay of their shop in Dalhousie Square. Later they started manufacturing Indian musical instruments such as sitar, tanpura, esraj etc. Ghose's daughter, Kumudini Biswas and his nephew Jnanendramohan were well known in the music world. His grandson, Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh, Padma Bhushan, was a great tabla player, who had played with most of the high ranking musicians in India.

ii. Hemen and Co : Location -The moment you step into this tiny shop located at the corner of Rash Behari Avenue, the dust and noise of the main road settles down into a serene silence. The charming quiet of the run-down shop is periodically interrupted by the tuning of a sitar or the strumming of a tanpura. Despite its dilapidated exteriors, a single peek inside reveals a treasure

trove of musical instruments. You cut through the canopy of sitars hanging from the ceiling, dusty wooden shelves stacked with violins and harmoniums, and cross the walls covered with sarods and guitars, to reach the end table where Ratan Kumar Sen sits meditatively working on a beautiful sitar. Behind him, a wall covered with framed photographs over the peeling paint depicts the glorious past of Kolkata's iconic musical instrument shop, Hemen & Co.



This 72-year-old shop which was frequented by celebrated musicians like Bhimsen Joshi, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Sandhya Mukhopadhyay, Parveen Sultana and even Ravi Shankar, holds testimony to the musical brilliance of the yonder years. Not just in India, Hemen & Co. was known for its outstanding craftsmanship even outside the country. Legends like Yehudi Menuhin, Jethro Tull's Ian Anderson, and George Harrison, the lead guitarist of The Beatles, have walked through these doors, seeking to experience their handcrafted instruments.

“But the days of glory both for us and music, are in the past,” reflects Ratan, who along with his brother Tapan Kumar Sen, takes care of the shop and repairs instruments only created by them. “My father, Hemen Chandra Sen, used to say that you can never make a good instrument if

you know how to play it with ease. The instrument and the musician are two parts of one whole, and so it needs to be the best possible match,” he adds.

Each instrument in the shop is made to order with the best quality material sourced from various parts of the country. “All our instruments are handcrafted and can survive a lifetime. Because at the end of the day, this is not a job or even a business for us. It is a proud passion that we have and will continue to carry on for generations.”

iii. N.N Mondal’s shop : Location (Amongst the most toughest musical instrument to play and to prepare is violin. For centuries, the violin has been called the devil’s own instrument. The reasons: its melancholic sound and its unknown origin. Every known instrument has a distinct history, but not the violin. It first appeared as a four-stringed instrument in a 1530 Gaudenzio Ferrari painting. But Italy’s Andrea Amati, the first known violin maker, made the first three-stringed versions of the instrument in 1542 and 1546 — at least 12 years after Ferrari painted the



upgraded version! A shared origin Violins, like most things western, were introduced to Indians by the British. And it was in the late 19th century when Nagendra N Mondal learnt the art from European violin makers and started his own business at Lalbazar. His grandson, Krishna, aka Keshtoda, inherited the craft from his father and has been making violins since the '60s. Panchu Gopal, too, started his career as a 13-year-old in NN Mondal’s shop in the late '60s, but went on to start his own business in the '90s. Over the years, the duo has crafted and repaired violins of not only Indian musicians like VG Jog, Madan Seth and Basudev Chatterjee but also international violinists. The Mondals have been in the business of making violins for well over a century now. But even a master craftsman, a luthier, like Krishna Mondal had to bow down to the demand for the cheaper, mass-produced versions of the instrument. Today, his store at Lalbazar has two distinct rows of violins on display — one, shiny and attractive, and the other, not that good to look at. But while the shiny ones will cost you just around `2,000, be prepared to shell out at least Rs 25,000 for the not-that-shiny ones. The reason, these instruments are hand-crafted by Mondal from the finest mix of wood and boast of superior tonal quality. The same is true in Panchu Gopal Roy’s store in Nungi. Despite being masters of their

craft, both the septuagenarians have been forced to stock up on violins mass-produced in China or Uttar Pradesh.

iv. Braganza &Co: Location **-(22°33'24.37"N, 88°21'16.68"E)** This 78 years old heritage music shop or rather institution of Kolkata in Marquis Street of Park Street area is

a pilgrimage for every musician breathing some melody in the city of rhythms. The place is nevertheless moist with the nostalgia of a culture much celebrated in Kolkata, Music. The founders of the rustic shop were Francis Braganza and Thomas Braganza. Today, the



main men behind the counter are Dicky Braganza and Tony Braganza with their sons taking the lantern forward. Music flows in the blood of this family with each member being an expert at some musical device or the other. The owners take pride in being the first to have brought in imported instruments like Drum kits, Piano, Kongo in a time when mostly foreign replicas made in India were sold. The shop was frequented by famous music stalwarts like Satyajit Ray, S.D. Burman and R.D. Burman. Briganza & Co literally introduced Piano in Kolkata Households. This shop has a Piano Repairing Workshop where they rejuvenate pianos from nuts and bolts. Almost all the Pianos of Kolkata are the product of this shop.



v. Perfume (Attar) Making

Even at the best of times, Rabindra Sarani and adjacent Colootola are not the most poetic of places. But the area was one of the last homes of the old, leisurely Awadhi culture, with a whiff of the old world lingering over its attar shops. That smell, too, is changing. To

keep up with the times, *attarwallahs* have started experimenting with chemical perfumes and blended attars. Most recently, they are creating their own versions of aqua perfumes in imitation of brands like Davidoff Cool Water. A walk up and down Rabindra Sarani and Colootola reveals only two or three attar shops. The number of shops has declined over the years.

At **Haji Khuda Bukhsh Nabi Bukhsh** attar shop in Colootola which has , which has been there since 1824, the new creation Hiyati has the same fragrance as any aqua deo or perfume. For those who want the fragrance of attar without having to shell out so much, there are blended attars, perfumes that smell like rose or khus or musk, but are cheaper because they have a chemical or artificial base. “These blended attars are about 75 per cent cheaper than the original ones. Their demand is increasing by 50 per cent almost every year. But the demand for original attar is either stagnant or dropping by five per cent. Once the old lovers of attar die there will be no one to appreciate them,” says gray-haired Jamaluddin, whose family has owned the Taj attar shop in Rabindra Sarani for 135 years. “Attar is much about taste, a certain way of life,” says Neyazuddin Allah Bukhsh, owner of the Haji Khuda Bukhsh Nabi Bukhsh attar shop.



“Many attar shops in the neighbourhood have closed down, and those who have survived have been forced to stock various deodorants and perfumes to draw customers,” he adds. Thirty years ago there were 50 shops, 10 four-five years back and now only two-three attar shops, according to Jamaluddin. One shop in a neighbouring lane still has “perfumery” on the signboard, but has changed into a jewellery shop. Another reason behind attar’s decline is its exorbitant price. “Chemical deodorants and perfumes are so much cheaper. Of course, a branded perfume is expensive, but there are so many available for Rs 50 to Rs 70. But attar, since it is natural and has a sandal oil base is expensive. Even 6 grams often cost Rs 200,” says Neyazuddin Attar-sellers talk about

other lifestyle changes. “The fragrance of attar is usually long lasting. But because of chemical-rich food that we consume today, our sweat is very acidic. This reacts with the natural attar and causes the fragrance to fade,” says Jamaluddin. Neyazuddin, who is younger, contemplates whether a trend like aroma therapy can be used to popularise attar again, but Jamaluddin sighs: “They do not use 100 per cent natural aromas. No, the age of attar has passed. After us our sons may completely change the shop into one for branded perfumes.”



vi. Lac Bangles Making

Rajsthani Traditional style beautiful design Lac Bangles is still traditionally prepared by the Muslim Marwari Community of Burrabazar. In the narrow alleys of Banstolla Street of Burrabazar there are series of shops where lacca bangles are prepared and sold. The process of making lac bangles is as flexible as its maintenance. The same rule applies to resizing of Lac bangles and to its mending, making the ornament most durable of its kind. All these reasons make lac the favourite substance of bangle-making for the womenfolk of Rajasthan, who are required to wear bangles daily. Though the maintenance of Lac bangles is quite easy, the process that goes into its making is quite sophisticated. Great number of insects like *Laccifer Lacca*, or *Tachardia lacca* is bred together in an observed environment where they are fed to some specific flora. These insects secrete a scarlet resinous substance over the branches of the trees, which after getting accumulated, create a hard coating over them. These branches, known as sticklac, are then cut from the trees and thereafter are crushed, sieved and washed numerous times. The product thus prepared is pure lac, which will then be crafted by the designers into round shapes, studded with some embellishments, usually tiny glass crystals, and then sent off to market.

7. FOOD AND DRINK

Bengal has been famous for its food and cuisine ever since the establishment of civilization but Kolkata though have contributed much to the culinary products and processes, it has not created a complete cuisine. The city has attracted people from the neighbouring districts, from other parts of the India and from different parts of the world. Imperceptibly, it has absorbed something of habits of each community. This would ideally have produced a chemical change where the various elements have blended in a new cuisine all its own This did not happen; but the contributors were accepted, often modified, sometimes refined and came to be known as **Calcutta food**; sometimes it even became stranded Bengali food.

Traditionally, Bengal has been renowned for its extraordinarily fertile agricultural land and production of paddy. At the same time, the rivers of Bengal are an apparently inexhaustible resource of different varieties of fish. That is why, from the ancient times, rice and fish emerged as the staple food for every Bengalis. Apart from fish and rice, Bengal has had a rich tradition of many vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, and most of these, such as dal (lentil soup), posto (vegetables made with poppy seeds), fish curry, and mutton curry, are consumed with rice. Conventionally, Bengali dishes are divided into four types, such as charbya (food which is to be



chewed, like rice, fish, etc.), choṣhya (food which is to be sucked, liquids like ambal, tak etc.) lehya (food which is to be licked, like chatni) and peya (drinks, like milk). Even the sequence of eating foods is also prescribed in the sacred texts of Bengal, for example, Brihaddharma Purana, compiled within the territory of Bengal, prescribed that boiled rice and ghee should be consumed first, followed by spinach and rest of the vegetables, and the meal should end with milk with boiled rice.

A. Fish in the life of Bengalis

Bengalis and their love for fish needs no introduction. It is not just a delicious addition to the plates but also an integral part of many of the rituals and celebrations. From the 'annaprashna'

first rice eating ceremony of a baby to weddings and even the funeral rituals - fish plays an intrinsic part. Let us take some rituals related to marriage where fish plays a significant part.

1. Rituals

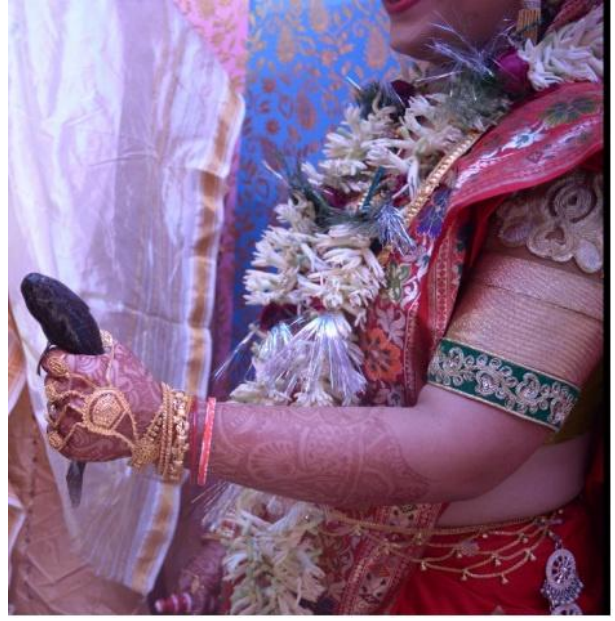
a. Aiburobhaat- 'Aiburo bhaat' a final feast arranged by the families of both the bride and the groom just a day before they tie the knot. 'Aiburo' means an unmarried young adult male or female and 'bhat' means rice - it is the final feast that the young bride or bridegroom is served right before they get married. Parents and families, in order to pamper their children, try to arrange the best feast including Bengali delicacies like channa dal, shukto, luchhi/Puri, kosha mangsho, mango or tomato chutney, aloo posto, payesh, roshogolla and many more. One inevitable part of this rich culinary affair has to be the delicious fish preparations: from maacher jhol to doi maach, all fish preparations are carefully selected and cooked for a feast which the soon-to-be-married are not going to forget in a hurry.

b. Gaye Holud or Haldi and the Ritual of Tattvo - On the day of wedding, the bride and groom prepare for their respective Gaye Holud ceremonies. In these ceremonies both the families of the bride and the groom smear turmeric paste on the bodies of the bride and groom. For the bride's gaye holud, the groom's family - except the groom himself - travel to the bride's home. They have with them the bride's wedding outfit which she'll wear for the wedding, the turmeric paste which the bride would be using for her ceremony, some sweets and gifts. In addition to this they also take a large Rohu fish, which is decked up as a bride, draped in a sari, and decorated with jewelry, sindoor, paan and some turmeric. This ritual is called Tattva. Fish symbolises good luck and prosperity, the gesture of groom's family gifting the bride is their way of extending their wishes for her happiness as she embarks upon this new journey.

c. Motifs of fish - During the time when gifts and sweetmeats are being exchanged between the bride and groom's families, the motif of fish plays an integral part. The wedding sari of the bride is wrapped in a way that it resembles a fish. Similarly, sweets are also decorated in the form of fish when they are sent as gifts to either household.

d. Bride's welcome rituals - One of the first rituals as the bride takes her first steps in her new household is showing her a decorated fish. Fish holds immense significance in a Bengali household, looking at the fish is said to mark her auspicious start in the new household.

e. Bou Bhaat and Bhat Kapor - The following day after the bride's arrival in her in-laws' house, the bride has to cook some dishes and serve the food to the husband and other elders in the family. This is known as the *bou-bhaat*. The husband also hands over a saree and a plate of food with Rice and Fish to his wife and pledges to shoulder her responsibility for the rest of his mortal life. This ceremony is called *bhaat kapor*.



ii. Some of the important traditional fish cuisines of Kolkata - There more than 100 varieties of fish dishes prepared across Bengal, however the combination of fish curry and rice is the staple diet here. A meal without fish in it is no meal for an average Bengali. The fish eating Bengalis are very particular about buying the fish and there are some famous markets (bazaars) for buying fish like -

iii. Fish Markets / Bazaars of Kolkata

i. Manicktala Fish Market-This market is one of the oldest roofs that serve as a one stop shop for a variety of fish in North Kolkata. There are wide varieties of fish available in the market like mourala, puti, bele, bata,koi, singhi, magur, papda, ilish, bhetki, pomfret, parse etcYou can even get your hands on locally caught species, including carp, catfish and prawns.

ii. Gariahat Fish Market - From north, lets head to the south where the Gariahat Market is bustling with people flocking here for a good variety of fresh seafood. Be prepared to get hugely entertained here as you go about your shopping with shouts of animated bargaining and choicest of abuses flying around as customers haggle with vendors to get the best prices. During the hilsa season the prices soar up to INR 1,800 a kg but you can be rest assured of the quality you are taking home. Row after row of fresh produce will leave you spoilt for choice. If you don't keep your impulses in check then you might end up buying 'too maach' (more fish than you can stomach!).



iv. Fish in Bengali Homes

1. Macher jhol / Kaalia or Fish Curry - The most common type of fish preparation is Macher Jhol (Curry) . Fried or curried and usually paired with rice, it makes for a delicious meal that seafood lovers should make sure not to miss out on while in Kolkata. Macher jhol is a traditional, spicy curry, which besides fish also includes potatoes and tomatoes. It is usually seasoned with turmeric, garlic, onions, and grated ginger. A more spicy version is said to be as Fish Kaalia which is mostly served in special occasions.

2. Mach Bhaja or Fried Fish – Fish is simply marinated with turmeric and salt and then fried in deeply heated mustard oil. There are some varieties like Topse which are marinated and coated with besan (gram flour) for frying.

3. Macher jhal or Fish in Mustard paste -The most mouth watering fish preparation is Fish with mustard paste. There is a strong relationship with mustard and fish both in paste and oil form. The heavenly combination of Hilsa fish, green chillies and Mustard is the ultimate delicacy of all the Bengali meal.

4. Fish in Vegetables - There are many popular fish dishes of Bengal where vegetable are elaborately used like – Lau Chingri (Prawns cooked with gourd), Mulyo Bhetki (Bhetki fish with raddish), Fish Head with mixed vegetables (Chyachra), Prawn Malay Curry or Daab Chingri (Prawn with tender coconut water and coconut milk) etc

5. Bhetki / Illish Paturi or Smoked and baked Bhetki or Hilsa – The raw fish (Hilsa or Bhetki) is marinated with mustard and green chilli paste, salt, coconut paste and then wrapped in green banana leaf. The wrapped fish is then smoked or baked for final preparation.

6. Fish Fry – The Kolkata Fish Fry was developed during the British rule in India when Kolkata was the capital of the country. While working with local, fresh produce to prepare delicacies for the British officers, the Indian cooks often instructed to replicate European food (or British country food) which were favourites among the British. Indian produce and the available ingredients were not enough to bring out the same western taste, so, the Bawarchees (cooks) started to mixing, twisting and seasoning the western recipes according to their understanding and experience with cooking. Some legendary food like Chop, Kobiraji and Fish Fry born in this way. Lately, cafes played a significant role to make such delicacies popular among the mass. Old, heritage cafes/restaurants like Dilkusha Cabin, Mitra Café, Indian Coffee House, Nizam’s to name a few in Kolkata still serve these snacks on their menu. Fish cutlets in kabiraji style meaning fried fish in egg net. The word kabiraji has probably the origin in ‘coverage’ as the cutlets are covered in a lacy egg net.

7. Fish Ambol or Tauk/Tawk- It is a sour dish that is usually served at the end of a proper Bengali meal. The aim is to create enough salivation to aid in digestion and also to clean the palate for the final round ... i.e. the sweet dish. Ambol or Towk usually has tamarind for the sourness ... but

is sometimes made with pieces of dried mango too. Usually different types of small fish like Chuno punti or Mourala or Illish head or egg are used for making ambol or towk.





c. Eateries serving Fish

Though fish preparations are best found in Bengali households but there are many brilliant eateries in Kolkata where fish is served either with rice or in different snacks formats.

v. Pice Hotels - Although Bengali home food has made a stylish comeback in a big way over the last decade, often combined with exotic ingredients and culinary styles to create 'fusion' cuisine, the quintessential comfort food with its dal, bhaja, machher jhol, bhat still reigns in the Bengali's heart. And a great way to sample these delicacies is to experience the pice hotels- with its fresh, homely food served in an age-old style which has not changed much since the British era. The pice hotels are the cheap eateries which all mushroomed in 1930-40's Kolkata. They were meant to feed the hordes of daily-wage earners, students and babus who lived in the hostels and messes of Calcutta, far away from their homes. These hotels serve hot fresh fish preparations with authentic tastes. The name 'pice hotel' originated from the fact that in these hotels, everything is individually priced, be it extra helpings of rice, daal, vegetables, fish, to wedges of lemon and even the banana leaves that the meal is served on! Some of them have long history and heritage attached with them. Here are few examples-

a. Swadhin Bharat Hindu Hotel : 8/2 Bhabani Dutta Lane , Located in College Street area , this 60 years old pice hotel once served lunch to many students , traders and even to the freedom fighters and leaders like Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Lunch is served on Banana leaf with rice, dal, sabji and the fresh fish of the day.

b. Siddheswari Ashram-Located in Janbazar area adjacent to New Market also serves delicious fish meal on banana leaf. The most popular items are Rohu Fish Curry (Kabiraji Jhol) , Bhapa Rohu fish (Steamed Rohu with mustard paste) or fish head curry (Macher mathar Kalia)

c. Jagonmata Bhonolaya-Tucked in Kailash Bose Road near Bidhan Sarani , this eatery has totally insignificant look .But the USP in value for money fresh catch of the day. They tend to serve medium-sized cuts of fish (due to the sheer pricing factor) and serve it fresh.

d. Adarsha Hindu Hotel-Located in the Gariahata area of Kolkata , this pice hotel is also more than 60 years old. As for the standard meal, consisting of rice, dal, aloo bhaja and panchmesheli sabzi (mixed veg). For the non-veg section, order their Kucho machher chorchori (A mixed sabzi with pumpkin, brinjal, sliced potato and mourola fish), one hell of a Tengra fish (A king sized original tengra cooked in a moderately spicy oily gravy) and Koi machher Tel Jhal.

e. Tarun Niketan-88/1b, Rash Behari Avenue, Kalighat, Kolkata – 700026. For around 100 years, Tarun Niketan proudly stands there near the Rashbehari Crossing, south Kolkata and is holding the forte for pice hotels. Their speciality is Tyangra or Pabda Fish curry which is prepared with Badi (pulse dumplings)



vi. Beside this traditional hotels there are some restaurants in Kolkata where Bengali cuisines are only served and most of them have highlighted fish items . They are :

a. Oh Calcutta -Oh! Calcutta is a dining brand of Speciality Restaurants Limited. It has nine restaurants across India and one in Bangladesh. Its food represents the marriage of Bengali, Nawabi and British cuisines in the city of Kolkata. The restaurant Oh! Calcutta captures the unique cuisine, serving flavours and tastes perfected over generations and its signature recipes find mention in the book, published by Random House India. Speciality - The Bhapa Hilsa (steamed Hilsa fish) and Smoked Bhetki (smoked Bhekhti fish) are legendary. Address - Forum Mall, 10/3 Elgin Road, Lala Lajpat Rai Sarani, Kolkata.

b. Bhojohori Manna-The story of Bhojohori Manna began out of a garage space at Ekdalia, Kolkata in March 2003. Five friends from diverse backgrounds with no formal F & B training but having a passion for food and people, reckoned from their own personal experiences that there was a vacuum in Kolkata for simple 'home style' Bengali food. The name Bhojohori Manna was chosen from a popular Bengali film song rendered by the legendary singer Manna Dey. The humorous track "Ami Sri Sri Bhojohori Manna..." revolves around a widely travelled cook who returns to his native land with a signature culinary style. The business model was inspired by the charming old world concept of 'pice hotels' and moulded to the requirements of the day. Within a month of opening the first outlet, Bhojohori Manna struck a chord with the masses. A combination of filling up the vacuum in the market along with the food, the brand name, the affordability, the simple environment and a bit of media information...all these played a role in attracting the crowds. Their speciality is Daab Chingri (coconut and mustard prawn curry). The outlet at 18/1A, Hindustan Road, Gariahat, is the most upmarket and recommended. There are also branches at Ekdalia Road, Hazra, Salt Lake Sectors I & V, Star Theatre (Hatibagan), Ruby (Kasba Industrial Estate), and Esplanade.

c. 6th Ballygaunge Place –It is the crown jewel of Savourites Hospitality Pvt Ltd is a class apart when it comes to fine dining. The journey started in 2003, at a time when the city did not boast a single stand-alone eatery serving exclusive Bengali cuisine. The gateway to the culinary delights of Bengal opened once 6 Ballygaunge Place happened. Housed in the bungalow of a former Rai Bahadur, steeped in an aura of tradition and heritage, 6 Ballygaunge Place changed the gastronomic landscape of the city with its curated menu. From the earliest Bengali cookbook of Pragya Sundari Devi to references from Vaishnav literature, all available resources were researched under the able guidance of Chef Sushanta Sengupta which then found its way to our elaborate spread. Address- 6 Ballygaunge Place, Ballygaunge, Kolkata. Also at DD 31 A, Sector 1, Salt Lake, Kolkata. Speciality -Pabda Macher Jhal (spicy fish curry, prepared with mustard paste and poppy seeds.)

d. Kasturi -In the New Market area and serving authentic Dhakai Bangladeshi cuisine, award winning Kasturi is an inexpensive but delicious option. Established in 1994, the restaurant pioneered this type of cuisine in the city. Ignore the uninspiring decor, the food is what counts there. And, the crowded dining room is testament to this. Speciality - Kochu Bhapa Chingri

(steamed prawns with taro root). Address- 7A Mustaque Ahmed Street, New Market Area, Kolkata. There are branches in Ballygunge and Hindustan Road as well.



B. Sweets of Kolkata

From the late 18th century, with the expansion of British paramountcy in Bengal and in particular Kolkata, a transformation in the eating culture began, which reached its culmination during the early 20th century. Portuguese, who were the first Europeans to arrive in Bengal brought along with them some new vegetables and food items such as potato, chili pepper, okra, tomato, cauliflower, cabbage, bread, cheese, nuts, pineapples, custard apple, guavas, litchis, jelly and biscuits. But notably, those new vegetables and food items were not so popular until the British became the administrators of Bengal and promoted those things for mass consumption.



A large number of sweets, both fried and made of posset or cottage cheese (chhana), entered the Bengali cuisine. Till the 16th century, Bengalis could not be termed connoisseurs of sweets as they were satisfied with simple dudh-chire (milk and flattened rice), dudh-lau (milk and gourd) and monda. Some country-made crude pulses (mung) and coconut products were also available. Many attributed the sudden development of the sweet industry in Bengal to the Portuguese. It is impossible to think of Bengali food without sweets made of posset or cottage cheese; rossogolla, sandesh and chumchum are inseparable parts of Bengali culture. Actually, one cannot find any mention of cottage cheese in Bengali texts till the 16th century, as among the Hindus curdling the milk to make posset and cottage cheese was considered improper. Cottage cheese made in Portugal is almost identical with the Bengali version of cheese (chhana), so many credit the Portuguese with importing cottage cheese to Bengal. The Portuguese introduced three types of cheese in Bengal: cottage cheese, Bandel cheese and Dhakai paneer.

a. Rosogolla – The spongy white rosogolla is believed to have been introduced in present-day West Bengal in 1868 by a Kolkata-based confectioner named Nobin Chandra Das. Das started making Rosogolla by processing the mixture of chhena and semolina in boiling sugar syrup in contrast to the mixture sans semolina in the original rosogolla in his sweet shop located at Sutanuti (present-day Baghbazar).

Yet another theory is that rosogolla was first prepared by someone else in Bengal, and Das only popularized it. In *Banglar Khabar* (1987), food historian Pranab Ray states that a man named Braja Moira had introduced rasgulla in his shop near Calcutta High Court in 1866, two years before Das started selling the dish. In 1906, Panchana Bandopadhyay wrote that rasgulla was

invented in the 19th century by Haradhan Moira, a Phulia-based sweetmaker who worked for the Pal Chowdhurys of Ranaghat. According to Mistikatha, a newspaper published by West Bengal Sweetmeat Traders Association, many other people prepared similar sweets under different names such as gopalgolla (prepared by Gopal Moira of Burdwan district), jatingolla, bhabanigolla and rasugolla. Food historian Michael Krondl states that irrespective of its origin, the rasgulla likely predates Nobin Chandra Das. A sales brochure of the company run by Das' descendants also hints at this: "it is hard to tell whether or not cruder versions of similar sweets existed anywhere at that time. Even if they did, they did not match the quality of Nobin Chandra, and having failed to excite the Bengali palate, they slipped into oblivion." Bhagwandas Bagla, a Marwari businessman and a customer of Nobin Chandra Das, popularized the Bengali rasgulla beyond the shop's locality by ordering huge amounts. In 1930, the introduction of vacuum packing by Nobin Chandra's son Krishna Chandra Das led to the availability of canned Rasgullas, which made the dessert popular outside Kolkata, and subsequently, outside India. Krishna Chandra's son Sarada Charan Das established the K.C. Das Pvt Ltd company in 1946. Sarada Charan's younger, estranged son Debendra Nath established K.C. Das Grandsons in 1956.



Some other important shops of Kolkata famous for Rosogolla are – Chhittaranjan Sweets ,

i. Chittaranjan Mishtanna Bhandar- This shop is famous for its spongy rasgulla and they serve the best rasgulla in the city. This sweet shop in Shobha Bazar is selling sweets for more than 100 years, and it sells one of the most loved rasgulla in the city. Their rasgulla are a must-try for the people living in Kolkata.

ii. Balaram Mullick & Radharaman Mullick Sweets - This sweet shop is well known for the range of sweets they sell, and their sweets will never disappoint you. Yes, their rasgullas are a must try during your Kolkata visit. They have a number of branches across the city and so are widely available in the city.

iii. Bhim Chandra Nag- Their only outlet in Bowbazar may be small, but their brand value is not that small. Any person having a sweet tooth in Kolkata must have visited the shop or had their sweets. Their rasgullas are great in both taste and quality. Must try out their rasgulla.



b. Sandesh – It is another signature sweet dish of Bengal as well as Kolkata. It is hard to determine the origin of Sandesh but it can be made with the use of chhena or cottage cheese.

The simplest kind of sandesh in Bengal is the makha sandesh (makha = kneaded). It is prepared by tossing the chhena lightly with sugar over low heat. The sandesh is essentially hot, sweetened chhana. When shaped into balls, it is called Kanchagolla (kancha = raw; golla = ball). For more complex and elaborately prepared sandesh, the chhana is dried and pressed, flavored with essence of fruits, and



sometimes even colored, and cooked to many different levels of consistencies. Sometimes it is filled with syrup, blended with coconut or kheer, and molded into a variety of shapes such as conch shells, elephants, and fish. Another variant is nolen gurer sandesh, which is made with gur or jaggery. It is known for its brown or caramel colour that comes from nolen gur. Every para , every lanes and by lanes of Kolkata has endless number of Sweet Shops selling varieties of Sandesh. But still some of the legends are as follows -

1. Girish Chandra De & Nokur Chandra De- This sweet joint near Hedua Park being one of the oldest and Kolkata's best is hard to take over when it come to the renowned Nolen Gurer Sandesh, Kalakand, Rasmalai, Mishti Doi and Chocolate Sandesh.

2. Dwarik's- This isn't a huge shop but real sweet lovers have surely heard and also visited the place in Entally market, Maula Ali. Try their Kachagolla (Rossogolla soaked in cream).

3. Bhim Chandra Nag- This is another well-known sweet shop next only to Balaram Mullick and Radharaman Mullick. It is setup during 1826 in Bowbazar by Paran Chandra Nag. This shop is the origin of the famous sweet named Ledikeni and Asu Bhog Sandesh. They have also changed with time and kept up with the shifting taste of the customers. Some of their sweets like Dilkush, Abar Khabo, Kodapak Sandesh, Jolbhora, Manohara and others have made a mark in today's time, not to miss out their Alphonso Sandesh- with a a rich taste of mangoes that will linger in your mouth and memory for quite a long time. Location: 5, Nirmal Chandra Street, Near Bow Bazar Market, Bow Bazar, Kolkata

4. Nalin Chandra Das & Sons- The shop being more than 175 years old is what makes it famous in Kolkata. Not to miss the Mishti Doi (sweet curd) which is available in several flavours. Also, one cannot afford to miss the delectable Nolen Gur sweets they prepare. This shop is located in the Ramdulal Sarkar Street, near Hedua Park, Hatibagan, Kolkata.

5. Sen Mahashay- This is one of those shops which have made a mark in the pages of history because sweets here are being prepared in a traditional manner. Some of the famous on's are Ratabi Sandesh, Dorbesh, Desh Gourab, Monohora, Monmatano, Pink Pera and Malai Chop. They have four branches in Kolkata apart from Fariapukur (1/1A, Subhas Bahadur Street, Fariapukur, Shyam Bazar, Kolkata) – in Salt Lake, Gariahat, Bhawanipur and Lake Market area.

6. Naba Krishna Guin- This sweet joint is quite ancient and situated in the north of Kolkata and is known for its delicious Rose-Cream Sandesh, Chandan Kheer and Ratabi Sandesh.

7. Ganguram- This is a confectionary cum sweet shop situated in the Chowringhee Road, Everest House. Late Ganguram Chaurasia who came to Kolkata from Varanasi in the 1880s began to work in this shop owned by Raja Kamala Prasad Mukherjee. For some reason, the business was closed, but the Raja gifted Ganguram a small plot of land in Manicktala because he was pleased with his work and since then started this sweet shop which is renowned these days. They are known for Indrani and Mishti Doi. Also do not miss their exclusive item named Kolaveri Di Sandesh.

c. Mishti Doi - Mishti doi is a fermented sweet doi (yogurt) originating from the Bengal region is another delicacy of Kolkata. It is made with milk and sugar/jaggery. It differs from the plain yogurt because of the technique of preparation. Mishti doi is prepared by boiling milk until it is slightly thickened, sweetening it with sugar, either gura (brown sugar) or khejur gura (date molasses), and allowing the milk to ferment overnight. Earthenware is always used as the container for making



mitha dahi because the gradual evaporation of water through its porous walls not only further thickens the yoghurt, but also produces the right temperature for the growth of the culture. Very often the yoghurt is delicately seasoned with a pinch of cardamom for fragrance. Baked yogurt is a similar preparation in the west.

Some other sweets of Kolkata – Though the list of sweets are endless in Kolkata , we will try to document some of the major ones with their shop locations.

d. Pantua, Ledikeni & Lyngcha– Pantua unlike Gulab Jamun is a local confectionary from the notable in eastern India and Bangladesh. It is a traditional Bengali sweet made of deep-fried balls of semolina, chhana, milk, ghee and sugar syrup. Pantuas range in colour from pale brown to nearly black depending on how long they are fried. Rose water, cardamom or other flavourings are sometimes added to the sweet. A modified version of Pantua was made legendary by **Bhim Chandra Nag** when he created Ledikeni. Ledikeni or Lady Kenny is a popular Indian sweet from West Bengal, India. It is a light fried reddish-brown sweet ball made of Chhena and flour and soaked in sugar syrup. Ledikeni is named after Lady Canning, the wife of Charles Canning, the Governor-General of India during 1856-62. The sweet originated in Kolkata in the middle of the 19th century. There are various legends regarding the origin of the sweet. According to the most popular legend, a special sweetmeat was prepared by Bhim Chandra Nag in the honour of Lady Canning at some point during her stay in India from 1856 till her death in 1861. In some versions of the tale, the sweetmeat was prepared to commemorate her visit to India in 1856, while in other versions, it was prepared on the occasion of her birthday. The origin of the delicacy is said to be in the towns of Burdwan, in West Bengal, India. The genesis of lyangcha actually goes back to a sweet maker in Burdwan (a district in West Bengal) who used to make Pantua (fried sweetmeat made of flour and milk solids dipped in sugar syrup) of huge sizes. Lyangcha – a sweetmeat in popular parlance – was created by the sweet makers of the region in Bengal. In Kolkata the best lyangcha is found to be served by Sree Hari Mistanna Bhandar ,Bhawanipur. They serve Lygcha in 2 sizes – one is normal and other is sausage shaped.



e. Sweets made up with Nolen Gur (Palm Jiggery) - There's a certain magic in the air in Kolkata during the city's brief winter spell between December and February as one of the city's most favourite ingredients - Nolen Gur, makes an appearance as the temperature drops. Nolen Gur translates to new jaggery and it is extracted from date palm trees using deft skills during the winter months in West Bengal. Each year, sweet shops across the city put their favourite ingredient to good use. From classic Nolen Gur-infused sweets that have stood the test of time to new age desserts, you will be spoilt for choice almost till early March or till the Nolen Gur stocks run out. Still we will try to list out some of the most important sweet shops and their special sweet meats .

1. Jolbhora of Girish Chandra De and Nokur Chandra Nandi , Nalin Chandra Das, Amritadhara

2.Nolen Gur Rosogolla from Balaram Mullick and Radharaman Mullick , K.C Das and sons, Chittaranjan etc.

3.Nolen Gur Sandesh from Bancharam, Sen Mahashay and almost all the major shops.

f. Household kitchens of Bengal have been turning out a fascinating assortment of sweet delicacies for ages. From a mind-boggling range of pithe (sweet or savoury cakes – baked, steamed, fried or even stewed in sweetened milk – mostly made of rice flour, often with stuffing made with coconut, jaggery or sugar and legumes) to different kinds of nadu, moa and takti or fudge, to layered or stuffed pastries dunked in syrup and luxurious treats made of khoya and kheer (milk solids and condensed milk) called as **“Payesh”** – there is a whole world of iconic Bengali sweets, where chhana is conspicuous only by its absence. Now a days some of the shops also prepare these seasonal delicacies like –

1. Aaheli is one of the popular restaurants when it comes to Bengali cuisine. Like every year, the venerated eatery has launched the winter special menu offering a wide variety of traditional nolen gur delicacies. Feast on sumptuous delicacies such as Kheer-Er Patisapta, Doodh Puli, Bhapa Pithe and Kamal Puli. There's also an assorted platter of pithes called the Poush Er Puli Pither Bahar. Do not forget to try their other nolen gur desserts too – Rabri, Chanar Payesh, Bhapa Sandesh, Rajbhog, Chom Chom and Doi Kalash.

2. Balaram Mullick & Radharaman Mullick - Founded by Ganesh Chandra Mullick in 1885, this brand started its journey with Korapak, Nolen Gur and Norompak Sondesh, but now sells a huge variety of fusion sweets like Baked Rosogulla and Chocolate Misti. Don't miss their Bhaja Sesame Pithe, Rangaaloo Pithe, Gokul Pithe, Patishapta and more.

3. Bancharam- Founded by Banchharam Ghosh in 1972, this brand's new-age sweets are amazing. Think Mihidana Tart, Rosh Puli and Gokul Pithe, which are available throughout the year.

Palm Jaggery / Nolen Gur Delicacies





f. The sweets of North Western India (Marwar , Sheherwali Jains and Uttar Pradesh)

In Kolkata there exists another sweetscape that many often dismissed as just “laddos and kaju barfi”. There is an entire world of *gond ka laddoo*, *ghaal ka laddoo*, *mohanthal*, *ghevar*, *sheera*, *satpura* and so much more. Non-Bengali sweets were made of khoya or thickened dried milk and dried fruits and nuts . Besides that, because of North Western Indian influence

the ingredients are often pulse based (besan) . There is an entire cluster of Ladoo makers in the Burrabazar area of Kolkata, the traditional Marwari hub of Kolkata. There are series of shops making and selling various kinds of ladoos specially Motichur ki Ladoo and Jalebis .



Some of the oldest famous sweet shops of Kolkata have North Indian origin like-

1. **Ganguram**, famous for mishti doi and tinned rosogollas, was started by one Ganguram Chaurasiya who came from UP to work for a zamindar named Kamala Prasad Mukherjee in the 1880s. “He looked after his cows and buffalos and used the extra milk to make sweets and the raja liked it,” says Rahul Chaurasiya, his great-grandson. “The raja gave him a plot of land to set up a shop.” Only later did Ganguram diversify into north Indian barfis and laddoos.



2. **Gupta Brothers** is legendary for its Abar Khabo sandesh which literally means “Eat again”, a mélange of malai and rosogolla and some “secret ingredients’ says Siddharth Gupta who runs



the original shop in the congested neighborhood of Chetla as well as a newer outlet in Kankurgachi, in the northeast of the city. His great grandfather Mahadeo Gupta moved to Kolkata from Sujanganj in UP, newly married, with Rs 300 in his pocket. He rented a 400 square foot space, set up shop downstairs in 1888 and lived upstairs. The rent was Rs 5 a month and the landlord didn’t allow him to put up a signboard. But the hing kachori, halwa and jalebis became famous.

3. Kolkata has bustling establishments like **Tewari**, started around Independence by Banwari Lal (Bappaji) Tewari, a UP-ite from near Lucknow. The first shop was in the Burrabazar area of Kolkata where many Marwaris ran their businesses sitting on a white gadda on the floor. Tewari became famous for his hot milk and samosas fried in shuddh ghee and no onion-no-garlic kachoris and sabzi. Now it has lines out of the door for Diwali hampers with stores not just in Kolkata but in cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai, Kanpur.



4. Sensing a market, the big guns like **Haldiram** (headquartered in Nagpur) and **Bhikhaaram Chandmal** (which started out as a bhujawala in Bikaner) moved in. Since the 90s their outlets, some of them entire food courts, mushroomed all over the city alongside local favourites like Chhappan Bhog and Gokul.

g. Bakeries in Kolkata

In 1660, the famous French traveller Francois Bernier, describing his visit to Bengal, mentioned that in Bengal the supply of inexpensive biscuits to the crews of European ships was very common (Achaya 1991:193). This indicates that the small-scale production of biscuits had already started in Bengal during the 17th century. The industrial production of biscuits was a later phenomenon and initially the Europeans imported these from outside the colony. Gradually, from the second half of the 19th century, Europeans, Muslims, and lower-caste Hindus also started to establish bakeries and manufacturing workshops in the colony. In 1841, at Old Court Street, Calcutta, a hotel-cum-bakery was established by David Wilson, named Auckland Hotel (Ray 2009:56), which changed its name for several times like from Wilsons Hotel, then The Great Eastern Hotel, the Grand Great Eastern Hotel to Finally being rechristened as

The Lalit Great Eastern. The century old oven manufactured in England by Baker Perkins Limited is the focal point of this bakery, which is now more of a cafe. The original oven has been converted into a PDR. Part of the old brick wall had been preserved and part has been craft-fully recreated with a very close resemblance to the old wall. In 1881 another famous bakery was started, named Federico Peliti. Unfortunately, the glamorous building which once housed one of the fine confectionaries in the city, today can offer just another shabby old office building, owned by LIC.



In 1887, Grish Chandra Mondal set up a tandoor in Central Calcutta for making deshi biscuits. After five years he was joined by his neighbour, N.N. Gupta, and this firm was known as V.S. Brothers. After a few years the factory shifted to Dum Dum. In 1897, this factory came up with a new name, Gupta and Company, and a new brand, the Hindu Biscuits. The company primarily manufactured Western style biscuits, but because of the brand name, during the Swadeshi movement the company received considerable impetus. During World War I, it changed its name to Britannia Biscuits Co. (Achaya 1991:194). Till date it is one of the most dominant biscuit brands in India.



The rich Colonial History of Kolkata has gifted it some of the best monuments, buildings, churches and tradition of celebrating festivals like Christmas. For any local, irrespective of religion, the short tropical winter means Christmas time and is incomplete without a visit to colourfully decorated Park Street, New Market or Bow Barracks, and a slice of cake from Flurry's or Nahoum's. For every Kolkata people this has been the tradition they have grown with, is being followed now and is there to stay. So , we are talking about some iconic bakeries of Kolkata which are still very much existing in the city's culinary history.

a. Nahoum and Sons -The bakery was founded by Nahoum Israel Mordecai, a Baghdadi Jew, in the year 1902. Though today the Jewish community in Kolkata has dwindled to double digits, the city was once the home of around 4,000-6,000 Jews during the first half of the 20th century. Israel began his bakery business with a door-to-door model, and his sweet treats captured the attention of the colonial rulers.It wasn't until 1916 however, that the eponymous store — Nahoum and Sons, the actual name — was established in the New Market area. Till date, the store runs from the same location, and even its teakwood furniture, old-fashioned glass displays and flooring haven't changed from their classic versions.

b. Flury's- Flurys is a name that has become synonymous with Kolkata. The iconic bakery, whose original branch is located in the heart of the city's Park Street, Flurys is known for its breakfast meals and baked goods. Dating back to 1927, Started by Mr. And Mrs. Flury's Flurys , this bakery was a colonial-British style tearoom, serving as a meeting space for the elite and affluent. Today, Flurys has branched out to other cities in India too. Head over to have a rum ball, some cakes or snacks as you watch the people of the city in great motion, running around to the nearby offices.





c. Saldannah Bakery - Saldanha Bakery, one of the oldest and most affordable bakeries of Kolkata have not just survived more than 80 years in the city, it is also a business that is run by three generations of women entrepreneurs ---Grandmother Mona Saldanha, mother Deborah Alexandra and daughter Alisha Alexandra. What is even more interesting is how this family had come from Goa on job and then diversified into a bakery business that still survives today in the face of several modern bakeries.

d. Kookie Jar Bakery- This landmark bakery in Kolkata is extremely popular, even after 31 years. As home bakers for two generations, sisters Lovey and Puja finally opened up their shop in December, 1985 at Rawdon Street.



The introduction of bakery in Bengali society was not going on in a smooth way. But in the case of popularization among the Bengali middle class it had to face much resistance from the rigid sections of the society. So to sideline the orthodox beliefs, the middle class sometime took innovative steps. Brahmo Samaj and Young Bengal Movement helped much in popularising the inclusion of bakery items in Kolkata's food culture. The educated, 'enlightened' Bengali middle class not only imbibed the new taste of these items but very often used these items as emblems of liberation and freedom from caste barriers and traditional taboos. To describe the reform activities of the Young Bengal group, The Oriental Magazine reported in 1843 that '[Young Bengal] cutting their way through ham and beef, and wading to liberalism through tumblers of beer'. On the day when I signed the oath (in the beginning of 1846) and received Brahmoism, I was accompanied by a couple of other adults from my village. That day, we celebrated our new religion with biscuits and sherry. This was to show that we did not believe in distinctions of caste or creed. This tradition began with Rammohon Roy and continued till our time, but it was not everybody who became a Brahmo that followed this custom.

C. Street and Finger foods of Kolkata

Kolkata's culinary scene is rich, vibrant and ever-rewarding to any food connoisseur. It isn't just in traditional kitchens or legendary restaurants where you'll witness the dynamism of Kolkata's cuisine – the city's street food culture is a world onto itself. Vendors are everywhere serving everything from famous Bengali snacks to full meals of rice and curry. Serenaded by the constant stream of honking, foot traffic, and hawkers, there's nothing better than biting into a tasty snack and washing it down with a clay cup of chai. Some of the major street food zones of Kolkata are-

1. Office Para (Dalhousie/Dharmatala) – Surrounding Kolkata High Court, Writers Building and the GPO in the B.B D Bag area lies the major cluster of Kolkata's Street Food. Numbers of daily office goers have their breakfast, lunch and evening snacks from the wide range of street foods which are served fresh and hot. The range varies from the humble Jhalmuri to Malai Toast, Egg toast, varieties of indigenous Sandwich, Omelette with bread, Fresh Fruits, Chowmein, Biryani, Tawa Ruti, Ghugni, Rice and Fish, Fritters of different varieties, Dosa, Idli, Pau Bhaji, Chats and even Chicken and Mutton Stew.

There is a Food lane in this locality named after Mr Philip Miner Dacres. It was around two centuries back, Mr. Dacres used to meet sailors over meals in this place. And today, though British has left our country, the tradition remained. Loads of men and women from nearby office area meet their friends and foes over meal in this place. Though now the name of the lane has changed to James Hickey Sarani but still the local knows it as Dacres Lane. In this lane there lies a legendary shop called Suruchi whose owner was Chittoranjana Roy aka Chitto Da. In around 1940s, one young chap- Chittoranjana Roy reached Kolkata from Narayanganj, Dhaka. and within 20 years, Chitto Da's stall was there. The starting was humble- a tea-stall in the Kolkata maidan, then a small shop in Radhabazar and once he got his saving of some capital, this stall came into existence. In earlier days, there used to be only two items- tea and toast (buttered or plain). And today, it has grown into an institution. They have a number of must-try items, which is almost impossible to enjoy on one visit. But, the first thing that you must try, is their chicken or mutton stew and toast. Due to the magic of slow cooking, the meat is super soft and the sliced thick quartered bread is toasted on charcoal, lending its smoky aroma. For the combo, they have this brilliant combo of Khichuri with labra (runny mixed veg), pore bhaja (veg fritters), chutney-papad and payesh. And all at 30/- a plate. It's unbelievable but true. even during winters, they put cauliflower pieces in the khichuri.

The street behind the state secretariat is a gastronomic dream with stalls lining either side. From snacks to a sit-down meals be sure to find everything on the platter. The 150 square metre stretch accommodates 65 stalls, caters wide variety of foods to the regular office goers.



2. Camac Street (Outside Vardaan Market) – This is another finger-licking foodstreet of Kolkata conjuring up a magical aroma of delicious chaat, jhalmuri, bhelpuri, ghoogni, chop and umpteen other eatables. Enterprising vendors have set up clusters transforming the busy business district into lively food bazaar. Many are mobile, peddling in tricycles with fixtures attached or pushing mini kitchens. Some of the delicacies are – Chauhan Victoria Vada, that got international fame when the former British Prime Minister David Cameron visited and ate the soft and crispy sada and kanji vadas. Then there is Shibuji serving mouth watering Pav Vajjis of different versions. Beside that there are many Pani Puri (Puchka or Golgappa) stalls serving one of the most iconic and beloved Indian street food snacks. It begins with a puri, a hollow round chip, that's filled with spiced potatoes, and dunked into tamarind water before being served and eaten in a single bite. Pani puri is an explosion of crunchy spice and flavor with a burst of watery goodness. This place has some of the best phuchka sellers in the city. The next one is Dal Chillas, Paneer Chillas with a couple of chutneys, then there is quintessential Jhalmuri with puffed rice and mouth watering masala. At present, Kolkata's Street food has been conquered by a Tibetan dish called Momo. It is now found everywhere.

3. Nandan-Rabindra Sadan-Academy of Fine Arts Complex Area- This intellectual Bengali hub hosts number of Film Festivals, Theatre Festivals, Art and Photography Exhibitions, Musical Programmes. Throughout the year crowd remains in this cultural complex and naturally serving them there are hosts of food joints all around the complex. Starting from shops selling Chop, Cutlet, Fish Fry, Chowmein, Rolls, Muhglai Parota to seasonal sweets like pithe, patichapta, naru etc. Many mobile vendors offer lemon tea, chana chur, jhalmuri, chaats etc.

4. Tiretty Bazaar – Once home to 20,000 ethnic Chinese Indian nationals; the population here has dropped noticeably since its inception. Having settled in Kolkata as early as the 1780s, the Chinese have historically played a major role in defining the city's cuisine. Every Sunday morning from 5.00 AM, Sunyet Sen Street of Tiretty Bazaar, Kolkata's old China Town transforms into the Food lane serving authentic Chinese breakfast. From fresh steaming dumplings and fish sui mais to fishball soups, breaded pork chops, coconut balls, rice and sesame seed sweet balls, sticky rice and even chicken pies, the place serves authentic Chinese fare that are not only lovingly made by home-cooks but are also amazingly sumptuous. The Chinese cuisine in Kolkata is a mixture of several cuisines from their native land including Sichuan, Cantonese as well as Bengali flavours. While the glory of the Tiretti has long since faded, with most Chinese eateries having shifted to Tangra off the Eastern Metropolitan Bypass (the 'new' Chinatown on the eastern fringes of Kolkata), the morning bazaar still draws considerable crowd who want to taste authentic Chinese flavours.



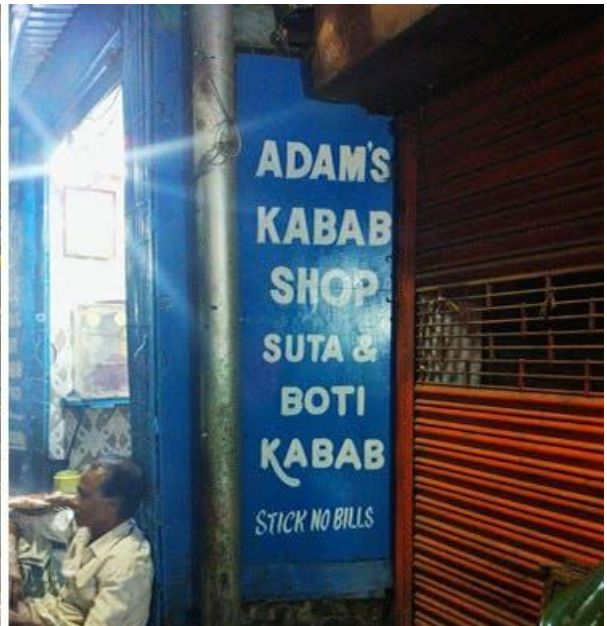
5. Area around Nakhoda Masjid (Chitpur Road and Zakariya Street) – The best Non-Veg Street Food of Kolkata .Zakaria Street, located around the magnificent Nakhoda Masjid of Chitpur , is a foodie’s delight. This street is dotted with small and old eateries which prepares amazing food 365 days a year . But it is only during Ramzan when people of different faith visit Zakaria street motivated by Iftar spread. Usually, a lot more makeshift stall mushroom up, catering to food enthusiasts and making room for heavy footfall! Some of the legendary shops selling authentic mughlai cuisine are – *Royal India Hotel* - The quintessential grandfather of Kolkata Biryani, Royal Restaurant is loved and revered among gastronomes of Kolkata! The Karigar sits by the main road and slow cooks chunks of mutton. The aroma is irresistible.The signature dish is Mutton and Chicken Chaap with Rumali Roti and off course the Kolkata Biryani but without potato. *Dilli 6*- Just opposite of Nakhoda Mosque stands the unassuming kebab shop which serves delicious Afghan Chicken kebab smeared in heavenly curd with a creamy white texture , Changezi Chicken (available only during Ramzan), Chicken Tandoori Butter Gravy, Afghan Chicken.or the Sheermal, one of the exotic slices of bread straight out of Mughlai kitchen. *Taskeen*-Serving authentic Raabri Falooda, Fish Maha Akbari and Changezi Chicken. *Sufia*-One of the most famous shop of Zakaria Street is Sufia serving Beef Bhuna, Khiri kebab, Haleem (Only during Ramzan), Tandoori roti (the softest in the city), Beef Nihari, Beef Biryani. Every day here in Sufua , Mughlai breakfast of Nihari , Paya is served with Dal puri at 5 Am in the morning. The breakfast gets over by 6 AM. *Adams: The Sutali kebab (Kebab sewed in strings)*- A stone’s throw away from the entrance of the Nakhoda mosque, in a dingy lane also known as the Plearse Lane/Chuna Gali there is a shop that weaves meat and puts that on skewers and creates astonishingly good Sutali Kebab. Adam’s only sell Boti Kebab and Sutali kebab from 4 pm to 8 pm. *Hajji Allauddin Sweets*-It is the best Mughlai Sweet shop in Kolkata serving Malai Laddu, 32 Halwa (Battish Ka halwa), Gulab Jamun, Gajar Ka Halwa. Beside the sweets ,it also sells Puri Bhaji for morning breakfast, and beef/mutton samosa for evening snacks.

Haleem at Zakaria Street, Kolkata- Iftar spread is synonymous to Haleem in India. A descendant of Arabic Hareesah, a Yemeni dish with meat, wheat, cinnamon and ghee as the major constituents, Haleem is an improvised version.Some of the best Haleem shops of Zakaria Street are- Irani Reshadar Haleem at Bihari Food Corner, Sufia sells 3 variants of Haleem, namely beef, chicken, mutton and Magaz(Brain), Arbi Haleem sold at Aminia,Islamia and Bashir.

Kebabs at Zakaria Street-A wide variety of Awadhi Kebabs with Bengali influence can be found in the small outlets of Zakaria Street. The Khiri kebab, made of cow udder is a major draw towards Hajji Abdul Hamid Chacha’s shop. He sells a piece of bread separately. One can combine that to go with the kebab, with a side of cucumber-onion salad. Also try Gurda, Kaleji, Dahi Boti, Malai Kebab, Kakori from Dilshad Bhai!

Beside all the above mentioned foods some of the home made specialities of the area are Laccha Sewai, also known as pheni , Bakharkahni: a type of bread tastes amazing with milkNaankhatai Biscuit .







6. Burrabazar Area-The best Veg Street Food of Kolkata- Bang opposite to the Muslim zone of Chitpur Nakhoda Masjid area lies the city's greatest Vegetarian Food Zone of Burrabazar. Being a trading hub of Marwaris , Gujrati and Punjabis , this immensely crowded zone of Kolkata serves best authentic vegetarian street food. Here are some of the special food items of the area with the legendary shops serving them.

Ambika Bhujiyawala for Pyaz ki kachori - Pyaz Kachoris are deep-fried Khasta kachori kinda thing stuffed with fried and cooked onion. It originated in probably in Jodhpur and is very popular throughout Rajasthan. This shop also sells a "Dabeli" which is basically a Gujarati burger originating from the Kachch region, stuffed with bhujiya, pomegranate seeds and boiled potato with Dabeli masala mixture. **Kaligodam Halwai Shop** -This joint is famous for fresh Boodi and Kachori sabzi breakfast. **Badri curry kachori wala-** They serve an interesting combination of delicious hot curry sabzi over kachori and tops it with bhujiya. **Dry malai at Yadav Milk Supply-** This shop specializes in only one item- malai. It is dry malai and dry malai roll. The malai was dried and it got the consistency of a thin sheet. Sugar was not used and the natural sweetener in milk was the only sweetening agent. **Sree Gopal Kulfi-wala-** Kulfi is a Parsi word, derived from the Parsi word Qulfi (meaning covered cup), which has an Arabic origin. In earlier days, Himalayan ice was transported to make this Indian variety of frozen dessert. Sree Gopal Kulfiwala serves one of the best Kesar Pista Kulfi of Kolkata with full-bodied creamy milk . **Kandoi sweets-** This 180 plus year old shop in Burrabazar which serves Sindhi cuisine. They offer variety of specialities like Gulaab Pak,Pakwaan,Khajali etc. Gulab Paak is a kind of Kheer Kalakaand with rose petals infused in it. Pakwaan is like a flaky deep-fried biscuit flavored with light spices. In the Sindhi cuisine, it's taken with chana dal over breakfast. Khajali is a speciality of Porbandar which serves super crispy deep fried biscuit and is a savory item. It's made with grind flour and has to be fried with ghee. Along with these some uncommon Sindhi cuisine there are also more common Fafda or Jamnagar . Gathiya is a popular Gujarati farsan made of besan. It is shaped like a papad/thin wafer and is usually eaten with a salad of raw papaya and green chilies. It was quite delicious and addictive.However Kandoi Sweets take special credit for the round ping pong ball shaped Moong Dal ki Kachori. These kachoris are flour dough balls stuffed with moong daal (lentils), spices and

dry fruits and deep fried in ghee. Tewari Brothers- The very word Tewari lights a dozen bulbs inside the head of a Marwari in Burrabazar because Tewari is where you get the best Jalebis, Samosas, Sabzi- Kachauri, Aloo- Tikki and Kesariya Kulfi in town. Burrabazar has the oldest Tewari shop . Jalebis are dunked in a thick sugar syrup or chashni and garnished with saffron and cardamom powder. The samosas which are also known as the 'marwari samosa' have a blackish stuffing on the inside because the potatoes are completely mashed and roasted in a big wok before being laced inside out with garam masala which gives it the black color. The mix is then stuffed into maida dough, shaped and deep friend in Ghee. The samosa is crispy, crunchy and very spicy.



7. College Street Area - Every student and book lover who has ever resided in Kolkata has been to College Street at some point of time, be it to buy test papers at a much cheaper rate than the average neighbourhood store, buy second hand text books and reference material at the beginning of a new academic session, or just browse an afternoon away rifling through pages with little inscriptions of love at a quaint little bookshop with walls that appear to be made of books. There is but one thing that could rival the love for books Bengalis have, and that is their

fascination with food. No wonder, then, that these two major Bengali interests enrich each other, growing in close quarters at College Street.



The major eateries of College Streets are very old and are all laden with nostalgia. The best of them are –

a. Putiram - 12A, Surya Sen Street, College Street, Putiram Sweets located in College Street, Kolkata, is an age old Kolkata eatery that has been around for decades. It is known for serving hot breakfast of Radhaballavi with Cholaar Dal along with the traditional Bengali mishti that it serves, especially its Rasmalai and Sandesh.

b. Dilkhusa Cabin - Building 88, MG Road, Near College Street Crossing. Centenarian Dilkhusa is still a heavy crowd puller. In peak hours, you'll not be able to manage a table instantly unless you are extremely lucky. Unlike many other Kolkata Heritages, Dilkhusa is not a place to be visited only for its heritage value; it still serves some phenomenal food at very low price. Dilkhusa's famous Veg Cutlet, Fish Kabiraji and Doi Chicken are still continuing to strike a chord with youngsters as they did a century ago.

c. YMCA Canteen - 53/4, College Street, inside College Square. A small eatery just opposite the College Square Pool, this one offers delectable eats, such as steaming hot Chicken and Veg Soup, spicy Ghugni, Chilli Chicken, Keema, Bread Toast, and more.

d. Kalika -The roadside snacks shop is very small and it will be on your left if you take Surya Sen Street Towards College Square. The Address is 29, Surya Sen Street. It was established in the year 1965 by Mr. Sukumar Dutta, a freedom fighter, on the auspicious day of Kali Puja (Diwali). His main aim was to treat Kolkatans (Calcuttan during those days) with the best deep-fried snacks in the city. The Begunis here are not only Bigger in size but also tastier than Kolkata's any other snacks shop's Begunis.

e. **Parota Goli** - Parota Goli in Kolkata is situated in the lane of College Street and is renowned for having great yet affordable food. The specialty of its appetizing food is because it is served hot, as it is made right in front in an open kitchen. Its most loved item is parota (parantha) with Chicken er Jhol; for the juicy, succulent meat and the aroma of spices accompanied by soft parantha, which comes at a pocket friendly price. Among others, Luchi-Alur torkari is also most likely recommended.

f. **Paramount Sherbats and Syrup** in College Street, Kolkata is an old, traditional place serving *sherbats* and shakes for decades. Its specialty being the curd based creamy malai drinks and the classic coconut water drink ('Dub Sherbat'). Along with that, highly suggested are the special passion fruit drink or plain syrup based drinks with passion fruits and mango mania on the list.





8. Shyambazaar - Sovabazaar - Baghbazaar Area - There are few cult food shops in the Northern part of the city starting from Shyambazaar to Sovabazaar including Baghabazaar. They are-

i. Shyambazaar Golbari - More than 90 years ago, one punjabi gentleman named Ratan Arora started exploring his luck at Shyambazar crossing with the name of New Punjabi Hotel. But, little did he know that afterwards, that small shop will become immortal in Kolkata food history with the name inspired by the shape of the building, Golbari. This non-frill eatery is famous for the legendary Kosha Mangsho and Mutton Chop.

ii. Potlar Dokan - Though the name of this north Kolkata shop captures the essence of roker adda, owner Dibyendu Sen is a no-nonsense man who means business. "The shop was founded by my grandfather Sashi Bhushan Sen 92 years back. He was the cashier in Calcutta Tramways Company and wanted to start a side-business to secure the future of his seven sons," explains Dibyendu. Potla, he says, was one of the seven brothers. Potlar Dokan, which remains open between 7.30 am and 12.30 pm and 4.30 pm and 9 pm, serves telebhaja in shalpatha plates. "Director Anjan Choudhury used to come down often in the mornings. Writer Sanjib Chattopadhyay too is fond of our items," says Dibyendu. Some of the munch-ons on offer are capcumer chop (Rs5), potoler chop (Rs5), dhoka (Rs4) and phuluri (Rs4). A pure veg joint, Potlar Dokan doesn't serve peyaji.

iii. Lakshmi Narayan Shaw & Sons - Bidhan Sarani Story goes that Khedu Shaw, who opened the shop in 1918, was surprised to come across a sprightly youngster, a student of Scottish Church College, who would often frequent the place. Having secured the second position in the matriculation exam, he was expelled from Presidency College for assaulting Prof Oaten, after the latter made some infamous anti-India comments. The young man was none other than Subhas Chandra Bose and little wonder then that the shop is famously called Netajir chop-er dokan. Now run by brothers Mohan and Keshto Kumar Gupta, the shop still celebrates Netaji's birthday. "We serve telebhaja for free on that day. Before India got its independence, Netaji's birthday was celebrated twice at our shop. Back then, it was a clandestine affair," the brothers said. From Uttam Kumar to Anjan Dutt, Kolkata celebs, too, have had their fill of 'Netajir telebhaja'. It serves aloor

chop (Rs5), aam chop (Rs6), dhoka barfi (Rs4), soyabean chop (Rs6), narkel chop (Rs6), Kashmiri chop (Rs6) and peyaji (Rs5), among others. Their Puja special? Chowmein chop!

iv. Bhabatarini Mistanna Bhandar in Shyambazar - Just opposite to another legendary Sweet Shop of Kolkata , Chhittaranjan Confectionaries , there lies a small shop which becomes overcrowded everyday between 4.30 to 6.30 pm. They are famous for serving hot shingaras , a Bengali version of Samosa. This triangle snack is one of the loved finger food of Kolkata and is found almost everywhere in the city. But still some of the sweet shops are specially noteworthy for the taste and quality. Bhabatarini Mishtanna Bhandar is definitely one of them.





v. Barua & Dey Fast Food Shop - Kolkata is a gastronomic melting pot of multiple communities. Many have come here, got settled and in turn, enriched our own cuisine. And in this quest, many new items got created. Few of them stood the test of time, while few items lost the battle. We can find them in a handful of eateries in the old part of the city- in a few sloppy food joints. This story is about one such item. Pantheras- the flagbearer of colonial tea-time snacks. It is a simple crepe, stuffed with cooked mutton keema (with typical Indian spices), coated in breadcrumb and deep-fried. This dish is said to have originated when the mog cooks (from the Chittagong region in Bangladesh) got trained by the British cooks from Kolkata. One of the cooks from the mog community was Mr. Barua, who also worked in the Great Eastern Hotel and the “Theta-Feta Club” for new-age Bengalis. Gradually, club culture started dying and in 1934, Mr. Barua started his own business. After him, his son Mr. Bidhubhushan Barua continued the business with his partner Mr. Phatik ch. Dey. And today, the only shop making a good Pantheras is Barua & Dey Fast Food Center.



D. Club, Cafe and Cabin Culture of Kolkata

1. Club Culture of Kolkata - A residual feature of colonial British culture that still remains embedded in the very DNA of the city is that of the club culture. These clubs originally began as places of British refuge and entertainment for the officials who visited the city. Today, they stand as testimonies of the cultural past of the city. However, they are not just merely residues of the past. Most of these elite clubs are highly functional and as elite even today. This makes them interesting spaces where the past meets the present. These clubs were the birthplace of a unique cuisine often infused with European and Moghul elements. Many of the cooks or Bawarchis of these clubs were Mogs (Portuguese) or Muslims . In order to impress the elite members of the society they used to develop number of new dishes which later on became an integral part of Kolkata's food culture.

Some of the important clubs and their signature dishes are –

i. Bengal Club-33B, Chowringhee Road, Kolkata

This is the the oldest club in the country at 189 years old. Through almost two centuries though, the food and it's quality hasn't ever been compromised. The club's forte is it's Continental fare, the recipes of which have been handed down from generation to generation yet again. The orange souffle and roast mutton steak are the cub's patent USP's.



ii. Calcutta Club-241, A.J.C. Bose Road, Kolkata

Known all over for it's Continental food, it's safe to say that Calcutta Club offers some of the best food you can let your taste buds taste in town! The club has a main kitchen where the continental stuff is almost entirely cooked, and it also has tandoori and Chinese sections. Patrons of this club vouch for their roast chicken, grilled pork and it' steaks.

iii. Tolly Club-120, Deshapran Sasmal Road, Tollygunge, Kolkata

Perhaps the most commendable and without a doubt famous club of the city – it has been 100+ years that the club got hold of its current property from the exiled family of Tipu Sultan. Apart from its sprawling lawns, golf course and horse stables Tolly club, as it is popularly called – is one of those very few clubs whose membership is a thing of prestige and is not given out to every person who wishes for the same. Regardless of which, along with all the glitz and glamour comes its great food...something which makes this club one among the elites. The menu has taken quite a twist from its yesteryears – from just serving easy bites like biscuits, jam tarts, pork chops and roast chicken the tide has shifted entirely into serving a more global form of food. As far as its most famous dish is concerned, it definitely is the mixed grill, and not far behind is the English breakfast. There are presently third generation chefs who work in Tolly club's kitchen.



iv. Calcutta Cricket & Football Club (CC & FC)- 19/1, Gurusaday Road, Ballygunge, Kolkata

At 224 years since its inception, CC & FC stands as one of the oldest sporting clubs in the world. The club is synonymous with big events and parties, especially on every New Year's eve! The grandeur which follows makes every penny spent on attending the events here worthwhile. But anyway, coming straight to its kitchen – CC & FC has one main kitchen along with other counters for tandoor and South Indian food. It also has a separate ice cream parlour. What's even better is the fact that there is a smooth flow of snacks for the club's guests all throughout the day! In recent times CC & FC's roast chicken with rose potatoes and sauté vegetables has been the one dish is most demand amongst the people visiting this place.

v. The Saturday Club - 7 Wood Street, Near Park Street, Kolkata

If there was a club which oozes the continental fare, this one would indefinitely be it. The club has three separate kitchens – Indian, English and Continental. If we have to go by the words which do the round over here, then the club's management will soon be introducing Thai and Italian food to its already enormous menu too! The club's two most popular dishes are chicken a la Kiev and chicken Hawaiiin steak.



2. Cafe and Cabin Culture of Kolkata - The old school cabin restaurants of Kolkata are the remnants of old lifestyle instilled at the heart of Kolkata. Forget AC or “ambiance”. They serve good, great food whose history traces back to Kolkata’s colonial days, a plate showing the influence of what the British brought. Breadcrumbs and deep frying process successfully stage example of East meets West. The Chop – Cutlet culture of the Bengalis is a delicious improvisation of their British counterparts. The Chop or cutlet, usually made of mutton or chicken (or vegetables to suit the Indian taste) is marinated in subtle herbs and spices, and then crumb fried . The fish roll is a delicacy of Bengal patronized by Maharajas. A lightly spiced filling of fish is placed on a fillet of fish which is then coated with crumbs and deep fried a must for discerning. The fish fry is another favorite of the fish- loving Bengalis. A thick fillet of fish is mildly flavoured and fried. This is also remnant of the British Raj. For all these dishes and many more

only the best quality of fresh bekti is used. These distinctive chop cutlets are essentially served in Cabin Restaurants of Kolkata. Here is a list of the Cabin restaurants that survived the mad rush of modern development, gradually engulfing the old and timeless. these Cabin restaurants serve quality meals at a surprisingly economical price range and attract consumers who adore history and love the legends associated with these eating houses!

i. College Street Coffee House - Indian Coffee House or College Street Coffee House is the most iconic eatery of Kolkata. Being located opposite the Presidency University in College Street, it has been for a long time a regular hang out and a renowned meeting place (adda) for intellectuals and students (and ex-students) of the Presidency College, University of Calcutta, and other institutions in College Street. It has played an important part in Calcutta's (Kolkata) cultural history and known as the hub of intellectual debates. The history of the Coffee House at College Street can be traced to Albert Hall, which was founded in April 1876.[1] Later, the Coffee Board decided to start a coffee joint from the Albert Hall in 1942. Notable citizens were frequent visitors to the place. In 1947, the Central Government changed the name of the place to "Coffee House".The prestige of the Coffee House increased with regular visitors such as Satyajit Ray, Amartya Sen, Mrinal Sen and Aparna Sen. The Coffee House is of historical significance for being the rendezvous of innumerable versatile people, from its inception to date. Scholars, editors, artists and writers like Ritwik Ghatak, Narayan Gangopadhyay, Sunil Gangopadhyay, Sanjeev Chattopadhyay, Samaresh Majumdar, Subhas Mukhopadhyay, Shakti Chattopadhyay, Craig Jamieson, Sukhamoy Chakraborty, Tapan Raychaudhuri, Barun De and Sumit Sarkar have been just a few among the patrons of the restaurant. In the early sixties of 20th century the coffee house became the intellectual battleground of the famous Hungry generation literary and cultural movement; the iconic poets Malay Roy Choudhury, Samir Roychoudhury brother duo who pioneered the movement were arrested and prosecuted. Several literary magazines owe their origin to the inspiration from the adda sessions at this coffee house. Though popularly known as College Street Coffee house, this branch is actually on Bankim Chatterjee Street. The coffee house is famous for its adda sessions, and as the breeding place of several political and cultural personalities and movements. Many people come here just for the sake of adda and just being a part of the long talking sessions. Several talented and illustrious persons from different streams have been thronging this renowned adda for a long time.

Now, there are only few food joints which has risen above the status of food joint to attain the epitome of cultural history. Indian Coffe House is that joint which best offers you some brilliant Coffee (hot,cold and infusion) and some traditional vegetarian and chicken sandwich. Though it has a whole range of menu from Moglai to Chicken Afgani Cutlet to Chicken omelette , but the sandwich and coffee are standouts.



ii. Basanta Cabin (old and new)- The deep fried parathas stuffed with delicious egg and minced meat can keep you finger-licking throughout. Basanta Cabin in College Street area can fascinate you with its drool-worthy flavors and delicacies. Savor every bite of this special preparation as the next round of parathas might take some time to be served. Add a tasty twist of flavors to your life with the mouth-watering Fish Kabiraji of Basanta Cabin. This penny-plain eatery is running from decades and is till date a favorite joint of the locals of Kolkata. Besides the authentic and traditional North-Indian quick-bites, Chinese preparations like Chowmein and Momo's are also served nowadays. The kabiraji is yet another dish with an elusive history. Though it is believed to be the eventual transformation of the English 'coverage' cutlet that is breaded and fried, there is another narrative that claims the dish came into being due to a challenge taken up by the head chef of the blink-and-miss Basanta Cabin, who switched the biscuit coating with eggs after poet Rabindranath Tagore allegedly expressed his dislike for the original recipe.

iii. Niranjana Agar – Established in 1922, Niranjana Agar, the cabin in Girish Park, specialises in "Dimer Devil" –The 'devil' is none other than the hyper-local hybrid variety of the Scotch egg. The dimer devil has a warm crusty covering like the British Scotch egg, but on the inside the egg is used as a filling along with the minced meat. Agar uses duck eggs in their version. A sweet-and-spicy mix, their dimer devil is plated with a splatter of mustard and a finely-sliced salad of red onion, cucumber and beetroot. The classics of Niranjana Agar include Mutton Kofta Curry, liver curry, fowl breast cutlet etc. Chicken has not yet become part of this cabin.

iv. Allen Kitchen- The place is 125 years old and it is said that Allen Saheb gifted it to his Bengali friend before leaving the country. The prawn cutlets of Allen Kitchen is otherworldly in taste and feel. The huge butterfly prawns are cooked in pure Desi Ghee, a very big deal! the aroma of ghee will steer you to heaven or cloud nine, for believer and non-believers respectively!

v. Mitra Cafe- Shri Sushil Roy founded "MITRA CAFE" in the year 1920 in the Sovabazaar area of North Kolkata. Shri Roy derived the name "MITRA" signifying Friends' as all our customers are our 'FRIENDS' and this cafe belongs to them. The place is packed most of the time and for good reason, what with most of the city flocking there for the gondhoraj lime chicken pakoras, while braver souls feast on brain chops –A deep-fried Bengali item that resembles a croquette. Mitra Cafe is also famous for its Diamond fry, Fish Kabiraji, Chicken and Mutton Stew and Chicken Afgani Kebab. A soft grainy Pudding is also a must try in this eatery.

vi. Cafe- Located near the Hazra Crossing and opposite to Ashutosh College, Cafe is another heritage food corner of the city. This restaurant is famous for serving Pudding, Fish Roll and Mutton Stew.

vii. Anadi Cabin- This 92-year-old establishment was founded in 1925. Its founder, Balaram Jana, is known to have named it after his son Anadi. It is now run by the third generation of the family. It is Mughlai parathas that Anadi is known for. The Mughlai parathas of Kolkata are usually available at such small restaurants. Unlike kathi rolls, Mughlai parathas are rarely seen in street food stalls. The paratha is made with a maida dough which stuffed with a mix of minced meat and eggs. The paratha is then deep fried in a kadai. Mughlai parathas are traditionally eaten with a dish of cubed potatoes called torkari (stir fry) and a cucumber salad with a liberal dose of ketchup on the side.

viii. Dilkhusa Cabin, College Street (Central Metro Station)- This 115-year-old institution is now run by the fourth generation of the same family. Its clientele ranges from those who study in nearby schools and colleges as well as traders who run shops selling books and saris. The most famous dishes here is the Spanish croquette something-like egg devil. A boiled egg is sliced into two and then encased in a spiced mashed potato casing, wrapped in a bread crumb mix and egg batter and finally deep fried and served hot. The one with a minced meat or fish filling along with the mutton cutlets are also crowd favourites.

ix. Malancha (Adi and Naba, two branches of the same patronage), Hatibagan- The Shikdar Bagan lane shop has been divided and split into two, old and new. Malancha shops are famous for Fish Fry, Kabiraji Cutlet & Mughlai Paratha.

x. Das Cabin- Located at Gariahat, Das Cabin is much loved for the fish fry and iconic morning breakfast that serves toast omlette with a cup of hot tea. The tiny place is never empty.

xi. Favourite Cabin- Steeped in the narrow lane labyrinth of College Street area, Favourite Cabin oozes out the warmth of a grandfather. The 101 year old tea and toast cabin serves a heart shaped butter cake with each meal.

xii. Cafe-De-Luxe – Located in the junction of Hazra Road and Ashutosh Mukherjee Road lies another gem from the yesteryears. Cafe De Luxe serves undoubtedly one of the best Moghlai Paratha of Kolkata. It generally attracts students from the adjoining Law College and Ashutosh College.





E. Heritage Eateries of Kolkata

Certain eateries in Calcutta are known not just for their signature dishes but because for decades they have tickled the palates of the Calcutta foodie and hosted some of the big names of the city. It is said that Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the doyen of education in Bengal, would stop by Bhim Chandra Nag every evening after his hours at Calcutta University for his evening dessert. Chemist Prafulla Chandra Ray is said to have shared the recipe of the famous daab sherbet with the owner of Paramount, the sherbet shop off College Square. Fourteen of such old and iconic eateries of Calcutta, each of which is replete with history, is felicitated by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (Intach) in association with The Telegraph. These eateries are –

1. Mocambo at Park Street - 1956

Kolkata's original fine dining destination lies in Park Street and still they are living up to their name, and fame. In its hay day, Park Street saw everything from cabaret, to live bands, to dancing, and obviously the scrumptious food served. One of the oldest continental restaurant is the Heritage tagged –The Mocambo.

This oldest continental restaurant's Menu Card was curated by the Italian Chef Antonio Parandhe in the year 1956 when Mr. Kothari founded this eatery. The Menu is full of European especially Italian dishes like Chicken Sicilian or Cannelloni or Au Gratin or Fillipino or Russian dishes like A La Kiev and Chicken Stroganoff. The deserts like Caramel Custard or Baked Alaska are simply out of the world. The same old world charm is still could be felt as the ambiance and the Menu has not changed much.





2. Shiraz - 1941

Shiraz , founded in 1941 is the oldest Awadhi Restaurant of Kolkata.. In 1972 Shamsuddin Bawarchi joined the restaurant as a cook, and introduced new recipes of preparing Biryani. One of the ancestors of Shamsuddin was a cook of Wajid Ali Shah.



3. Kwalitiy

Building an empire on wholesome, robust Punjabi food and ice cream has to be an unusual combination. Arguably the pioneers of the restaurant industry across the north of India, Messers Iqbal Ghai, Prem Ghai and PL Lamba set up the first Kwalitiy Restaurant in Regal Building, Connaught Place, New Delhi, in that year. By the early 50s, they had spanned the country from east to west with three more Kwalitiy restaurants opening in Calcutta, Bombay and Pune. In 1957, a second branch opened in Calcutta, in Ballygunge. The ice cream part of the story goes back to pre-Partition days in Lahore, where the Ghais and the Lambas were making ice cream using machines which were operated manually. Kwalitiy restaurant on Park Street needs no introduction. It is over 50 years old and has been serving unpretentious, homely North Indian (mainly Punjabi) food all these years, along with a selection of typical Calcutta Continental favourites, though this is no more an attraction of the place. Their trademark dish, a signature item, is Pindi Chana and Brain Masala Curry.



4. Dilkhusha Cabin - 1906

Located at the college street crossing, Dilkhusha Cabin is one of those eateries that is serving The Kolkatians for more than a century. This place had the footsteps of Kaji Najrul Islam, Ganesh Pyne and many other renowned personalities. Earlier Dilkhusha had



6 cabins in it but they have done

away with cabins in 2011. Now it is just a casual eatery with a formal seating arrangement. Unlike many other Kolkata Heritages, Dilkhusha is not a place to be visited only for its heritage value; it still serves some phenomenal food at very low price. Dilkhusha's famous Veg Cutlet, Fish Kabiraji and Doi Chicken are still continuing to strike a chord with youngsters as they did a century ago.



5. K.C Das - 1935

Kolkata's landmark sweet shop cum restaurant at Esplanade took its birth in 1935 under Sri Sarada Charan Das, successor of the legendary K.C Das and Nobin Chandra Das. Krishna Chandra Das, more commonly referred to as K.C. Das, was a Bengali confectioner, entrepreneur, businessman and Bengali cultural icon of the early 20th century. Born in the year 1869 in Bagbazar, Kolkata, Krishna Chandra was the only son and successor of the Bengali confectioner and sweetmeat inventor Nobin Chandra Das. Krishna Chandra was a versatile enthusiast with a spirit of scientific exploration. He developed an electric loom, a soda fountain machine, did extensive research on homeopathy, and researched eastern and western classical music. Krishna Chandra Das became an iconic figure in the 1930s Kolkata with his original creation the "Rossomalai" and the vacuum canned



"Rossogolla", which were popularized and promoted throughout India by his family

organization K.C. Das Private Limited, founded by Krishna Chandra's son and successor Sarada Charan Das.

6. Girish Chandra Dey & Nakur Chandra Nandi - 1844

Located at 56, Ramdulal Sarkar Street and surrounded by heritage sites that include Bethune College, Hedua and birth place of Swami Vivekananda, Girish Chandra Dey & Nakur Chandra Nandi is a permanent address for sweets aficionado. Since the middle of the 19th century, Nakur's sandesh has occupied the pride of place in all-India level. Nakur's chocolate, parijat and mousumi sandesh had their luminous presence on the wedding reception of Abhishek Bachchan and Aishwarya Rai. West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee gifted one hundred pieces of kanchagolla and an equal number of parijat sandesh to the US Foreign Secretary, Hillary Clinton. Of momentous occasion was the sandhek weighing 34kg which was the cynosure to felicitate the Kolkata Knight Riders in presence of the Governor and the Chief Minister. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi have a sweet tooth for our sandesh. Nakur's brand wallows in the glory of grest personalities of India, namely Satyajit Ray, matinee idol Uttam Kumar and former Prime Minister Rajib Gandhi. Satyajit's daughter-in-law was a regular customer. Rajib Gandhi had a sweet tooth for golapi pera. We feel proud to have delivered sandesh on the occasion of Lakshmi Puja to Uttam Kumar's residence at Moyra Street.



7. Nabin Chandra Das & Sons - 1935

Nobin Chandra Das was a Bengali confectioner, entrepreneur, businessman and Bengali cultural icon of the second half of 19th century and early 20th century. Widely known as the creator of the iconic Bengali sweetmeat "Rosogolla", a popular limerick of 19th-century Bengal labeled him as the "Columbus of Rasgulla" or simply the "Father of Rasgulla". Though he started his career by starting a shop in Jorasanko area , he became legendary with this shop at Bag bazaar. This small shop still serves the best Rasgulla and Rasmalai.

8. Allen's Kitchen - 1920

About 132 years ago Mr. Jibonkrishna Saha started Allen Kitchen and since then this shop is pampering the taste buds of Kolkata's foodies with their range of delicious fries. This place is very much near Sovabazaar metro station. It falls on your left while going

towards Girish Park from Sovabazar on Central Avenue / Jatindramohan Avenue. The special Prawn cutlet was served hot with freshly cut Salad and Kashundi (Mustard Sauce)... It was fried to perfection and looked really yummy. With the very first bite of the special Prawn cutlet I became a fan of it as it melted in my mouth and the prawn was so well prepared and juicy that it felt out of this world.

9. Bhim Chandra Nag - 1826

Bhim Chandra Nag's family business was set up by Paran Chandra Nag, his father, way back in 1826. Bhim Chandra inherited the business. The shop remains where it was first set up – on what was then called Wellington Street and is known now as Nirmal Chandra Street, in the Bowbazaar area of north Calcutta. The Ledikeni is the first element that Bhim Nag's sweet shop is famous for – the second is a Cooke and Kelvey clock. The same year that Bhim Chandra Nag invented the Ledikeni, the British silverware company called Cooke and Kelvey (founded by Thomas Cooke and Charles Kelvey) came to Calcutta. Legend has it that in 1858, Thomas Cooke (who, by then, had started his clock-making business) paid a visit to Bhim Nag's shop. His choice may have been influenced by Bhim Nag's newfound fame as the inventor of a new candy for Lady Canning's birthday, but whatever may be the cause of Cooke's visit, he was satisfied with what he tasted. By 1858, Bhim Nag's store was more than 30 years old, indicating a steady business and by extension – prosperity. Legend has it that Cooke was surprised by the fact that such a large store had no clock and decided to gift one to Bhim Nag. There was only one problem, Bhim Nag said. None of his workers knew a word of English, and couldn't understand the numerals on the clock face. A clock would be of no use to them. What if the clock face had numbers in the Bengali script instead? To his credit, Cooke took to the idea immediately. A sample was sent back to Cooke and Kelvey's factory in England, where at a workshop in London, an employee of Cooke and Kelvey painted Bengali numerals on a clock made in England, with Swiss machinery.



10. Eau Chew Restaurant - 1927

Eau Chew means “Europe” in Chinese. The founders of this place opened it up when there was an European thriving in this area and hence the name. The current patrons – Mr. Joel Huang and Ms. Doren Huang are the fourth generation of the family tree running the place. *Chimney Soup* is the signature dish of this eatery. Charcoal is put inside the strange shaped pot and half-cooked soup is poured in it and with time the ingredients get cooked with this soup . With time, the soup get its true flavour. The chimney soup is a full-meal in itself and consists of



egg drop, vegetables, chicken, fish cubes, prawn and pork and one small portion is sufficient for 3-4 adults. The next starter was “pork and prawn stuffed Sui Mai”. Sui Mai, in layman’s language means dumpling. Its kind of the seamed dumpling with little crispy exterior (don’t know how they achieved it via steaming) and juicy, succulent interior. The next signature dish is “the Josephine Noodles”. This dish, as Joel said, is invented by Josephine Huang- the third generation Huangs in Kolkata. Its basically a huge pot of pan-fried noodles with lots of toppings (chicken, fish, prawn, vegetables, black mushroom to name a few). One dish is sufficient for 2-3 people. And it tastes just like heaven. We’ve tasted gravy noodles a number of times- everywhere, but this dish with pan fried noodles was mind-blowing.

11. Paramount - 1918

Paramount is one of the oldest eatery of Kolkata which is totally dedicated to “Sherbats” or juices. It lies at the corner of College square on Bankim Chatterjee St, just after the Mahabodhi Society. Its generally open throughout the year (because of strong customer demand) from Monday- Saturday 11 AM-9 PM. The place is a small room with stone-top tables and chairs. This place seems to be one of those very few places in Kolkata, where the entire operation is taken care by the family members and not depending on the external resources-thus keeping a strong check on the quality. The best offerings are Daab Sherbat, Mango Malai, Cocoa Malai, Tamarind and Raw Mango Sherbats.

12. Niranjana Agar - 1922

Niranjana Agar is a tiny, old Kolkata café and was established in 1922 (by Niranjana Agar of course, hence the name) and is famous for its Egg Devil, Mutton Liver Curry, Breast Cutlet .

13. Sabir Hotel - 1948

Sabir Ali came to Kolkata from Lucknow to earn his living and in 1948 he set up his dream eatery house at 75 Princep Street. Ali gave the restaurant an identity that cuts a niche above others in Rezala, Paratha and Cha (Tea). Sabir, the humble restaurant is old world charm. There's nothing fancy or glittery about this place. The only reason why people still choose to flock to this place in huge numbers is because of the food and nostalgia.



14. Fairlawn Hotel

The colonial bungalow was built in 1783 by an Englishman William Ford, when Warren Hastings was the Governor General. The house on Sudder Street became a hotel in 1936 after passing into the hands of Mrs. Rose Smith (née Sarkies) of Armenian roots. In 2018, the hotel was bought by Elgin Hotels & Resorts. This 235-year-old building and nearly a century old hotel, housed Nobel laureate Gunter Grass to French Novelist Dominique Lappiere, where Sashi Kapoor met theatre actor Jennifer Kendal in the 1950s and an umpteen number of writers, filmmakers, journalists and poets.



F. Kolkata - The Birthplace Of Some Food Dishes

Kolkata can undoubtedly take credit of giving birth to at least one major cuisine style and one major food item - "Indian Chinese", "Kolkata Biryani" . Both of them have attained their cult position not only in our country but also abroad.

a. "Indian Chinese"- Indian Chinese cuisine or Indo-Chinese cuisine or Sino-Indian cuisine and also Chindian cuisine, is a distinct cuisine formed through the adaptation of Chinese seasoning and cooking techniques to Indian tastes through a larger offering to also include vegetarian dishes and was developed by the ethnic Chinese community of Kolkata over the course of a century. Tangra , China Town of Kolkata is the birthplace of this cuisine. "Indo-Chinese food is a Tangra creation that is now a worldwide sensation. This fusion is unique on its own and loved by foodies all over. It is different because this fusion is prepared by using Indian ingredients while still accepting the Chinese cooking technique Situated in East Kolkata, it is India's only Chinatown. The first wave of immigration was of the **Hakka Chinese** in late 18th century, who came to work on a sugar plantation. Mao Zedong's communist regime and the First World War amongst other events were responsible for continued immigration in the early 1900s. Chinese people have lived in India for almost 230 years and became engaged in manufacturing activities, mainly in tanneries, producing leather goods. They eventually settled in a locality called Tangra. The 2000-odd Chinese-Indians that now reside in Tangra belong to the third generation of immigrants. The lives of these immigrants were free from strife until the Sino-Indian War in 1962 when many had to abandon their homes and leave the country. Furthermore, the Supreme Court's decision in 1995 to shift tanneries, the key source of sustenance for the Chinese-Indians, due to environmental concerns provoked another exodus. Most have migrated to countries like the US and Canada and make a living through "Chinese kitchens."

Some of the signature dishes are –

a. Chilli Chicken/Prawn/Fish/Mutton/Vegetables/Paneer, dry or gravy

b. Garlic Chicken/Prawn/Fish/Mutton/Vegetables/Paneer

c. Schezwan (sic) Chicken/Prawn/Fish/Mutton/Vegetables/Paneer - dishes with this name in fact usually bear very little resemblance to ones from China's Sichuan Province (although they sometimes contain Sichuan peppercorns). They instead center mainly around a sauce containing Indian red chillies and garlic. (The spelling of "Schezwan" is not a mis-print; this is indeed how the term tends to be spelled in the Indo-Chinese kitchen rather than "Sichuan", "Szechuan" or "Szechwan")

d. Ginger Chicken/Prawn/Fish/Mutton/Vegetables/Paneer

e. Manchurian Chicken/Prawn/Fish/Mutton/Vegetables/Paneer, generally consisting of a variety of meats or paneer with vegetables in a spicy brown sauce. It is basically a creation of Chinese restaurants in India, and bears little resemblance to traditional Manchu cuisine or Chinese cuisine. It is said to have been invented in 1975 by Nelson Wang; Wang described his invention process as starting from the basic ingredients of an Indian dish, namely chopped garlic, ginger, and green chilis, but next, instead of adding garam masala, he put in soy sauce instead, followed by cornstarch and the chicken itself. A popular vegetarian variant replaces chicken with cauliflower, and is commonly known as gobi manchurian. Other vegetarian variants include mushroom, baby corn, veggie ball Manchurian

f. Chowmein A popular dish combining noodles, vegetables, scrambled egg, ginger and garlic, soy sauce, green chili sauce, red chili sauce and vinegar

g. Hong Kong Chicken

h. Chop suey American style & Chinese Style (Crispy Noodles with a variety of vegetables, chicken or meat and sauces.)

i. Sweet and Sour Chicken (Different from the American Version of Sweet and Sour, but similar to General Tso's Chicken)

j. Lemon Chicken/Prawn/Fish

Unique dishes-

- Gobi manchurian Fried cauliflower
- Chicken lollipop Chicken hors d'œuvre
- Manchow soup Vegetable/chicken soup
- Chili Chicken Spicy Chicken with sauce

Tangra , the Chinatown of Kolkata has more than 30 eateries small and big crammed in two or three lanes of Chinatown serving authentic Indian Chinese food for three to four generations like Kim Ling ,Big Boss, Golden Gate,Haka Village, Kimfa, Hot Wok,Beijing, Golden Joy,Ming Garden,China Gardens, China Gate,Namking,China Pearl etc.



b. Kolkata Biryani – is a dish that is a beautiful symbol of communal harmony. A dish that originated in families belonging to the Muslim community and is today enjoyed by people across caste, creed and religion, and for those who don't eat meat, there are vegetarian versions too! A wonderful example of food uniting all and breaking walls.

Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the tenth and last ruler of Oudh, who was on the throne from 1847 to 1856, is said to have brought the Biryani to Calcutta in 1856, when he settled in Metiabruz, on the outskirts of Calcutta ; an impeached, broken ruler. The Nawab, who is known to have been a patron of music, dances and literature, carried with him, all the way from Lucknow to Calcutta, via Kanpur, a taste of home: the Lucknowi/ Awadhi biryani, cooked in the dumpukht style and served in a sealed handi which also led to this variety of biryani being called the dumpukht biryani or the handi biryani. Dumpukht refers to a style of slow oven cooking. This is a cooking technique associated with the Awadh region, in which the meat, rice and vegetables are cooked on a very low flame, in sealed containers known as handis. The Calcutta biryani departs from its royal Awadhi origins in one distinct way—the presence of the humble aloo (potato) in this regal biryani, which makes it unique.

The Kolkata biryani, traditionally, is a dish where the meat and the potatoes are slow cooked in clarified butter, on low heat (dumpukht). The uncooked rice, the meat and potatoes are then layered in a big-based pot (handi) to which certain spices such as cardamom, mace, saffron, cloves and sweet ittari are added. The handi is sealed and then cooked further in the dumpukht method. More often than not, in Calcutta, eggs are also added to the rice along with the meat and the potato. The aloo or the potato made its way into the handi when the Nawab made his way to Metiabruz, in 1856. The addition of the potato to this rice and meat combination has given rise to several conjectures and theories. One school of thought put forward a theory that since when Nawab came to Calcutta ,he was undergoing financial crisis and potato was included in the dish. The contrarian opinion, supported by Shahanshah Mirza , the great great grandson of Nawab

Wajid Ali Shah and Begum Manzilat Fatima, the great grand-daughter of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, suggests that the addition of the potato was in fact an innovation to the biryani and had nothing to do with cutting down of expenditure. She insists that the potato was a non-native vegetable in India and in 1856 including it in the royal dish did not in any way lead to a cutting down of costs but, in fact, was an exotic, expensive experiment conducted by the Nawab's khansama.

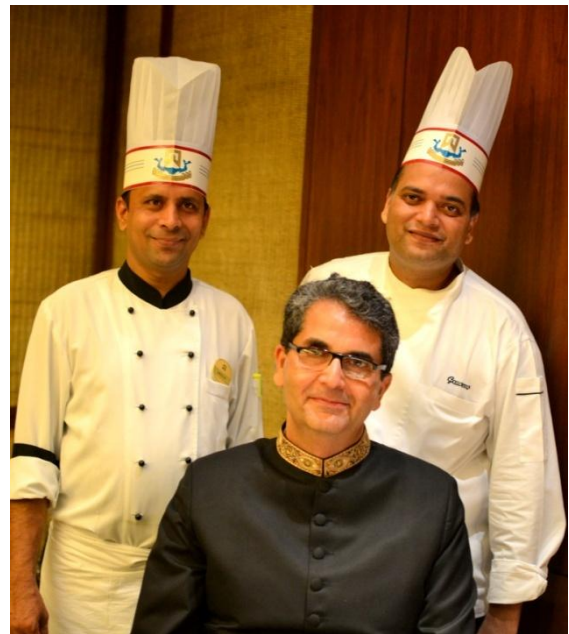
Today, not only the potato but also the Kolkata biryani is so woven into the very fabric of existence in Bengal that one cannot imagine of either of these as foreign or derived. Conservatively speaking, there are at the very least two hundred restaurants in Kolkata alone (big, small, and chains included) that serve the Kolkata biryani every day to the burgeoning population of this city. Heritage restaurants like Arsalan, Aminia, Shiraz, Zeeshan and Rahmania have several branches all over the city, with their main outlets located in the Park Circus area, all five minutes apart. That itself shows that the demand for the Kolkata biryani must have always been high enough to sustain not just five big biryani doyens in the same locality, but also their various outlets spread across the city. Arsalan has eight outlets in Calcutta, Aminia eleven, Shiraz five, Zeeshan ten and Rahmania eight. New restaurants like Oudh 1590, or C/o. Bangali are giving tough competition to the heritage restaurants not only because of the taste of the Kolkata Biryani that their handis unleash, but also—and primarily—with their ambience and décor. There are also small Biryani outlets like Aliah, Afreen, Arafat, Shimla Biryani, ZamZam, Asma, Dada Boudi, Haji Saheb, Afza or Alishan mushrooming in almost every residential colony within the city limits and beyond.

'Biryani has become the heart of Bengal. The two B's are inseparable. The price of a full plate of chicken or mutton biryani in Calcutta ranges from INR 80/- to INR 275/-. The smaller shops, mentioned before, are able to keep the prices low because they are almost always take-away outlets which cut down the cost of production. Sometimes, the quality of rice is compromised on, at other times the clarified butter (ghee) is replaced partially by hydrogenated vegetable oil (dalda). However, the meat, the potato and the egg are all in place. The Kolkata biryani, therefore, has the unique ability to transform from being a solid egalitarian food, to an elite delicacy, and vice versa. Food plays a cultural role which is as important as its nutritional role. Food has always been at the vortex of religious and political issues and presently we are living in times when food has acquired a character of its own, especially as governments try to censor people's eating habits. In times like these 'food has become a commodity that finds pride of place not only in conversations revolving around health and diet but also politics (what to eat, what not to), anthropology (who eats what) and culture (who eats how)'.

In Bengal, the humble biryani plays a significant role in uniting people of different classes, castes and religious backgrounds. During Hindu festivals, such as Durga Puja, Bengali families queue outside the Oudhs and Arsalans with families and friends. Eid is celebrated

with plates of biryani. Christmas calls for cake and biryani. Its beauty lies in being affordable and providing great value for money. It can be had by itself. No sides need to be ordered with this dish which is entire and complete in itself. The Kolkata biryani is light, with mild flavours, which makes it easy to digest, with perhaps a glass of aerated drinks as an accompaniment.

Most restaurants in Kolkata serve two versions of the biryani: the regular version and the 'special' version which comes with two pieces of meat and is sufficient for two people. Thus, the Kolkata biryani is an example of the adaptability of the dish itself and the flexibility of the people who have embraced it. An Awadhi dish from Lucknow is today known by the name of the place which has given it its own distinct character. This is an osmosis that has benefited both the dish (in terms of its longevity and popularity) as well as the people it feeds. The Kolkata biryani transcends the realms of being just food and transforms into becoming a cultural symbol, a sentiment, an emotion.



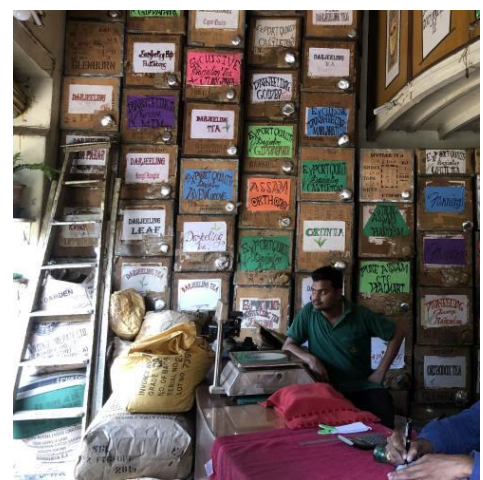
G. Tea – The Most Important Drink Of Kolkata

Tea or 'cha' is religion in Kolkata and the accompaniment to everything from football feuds to adda, or catching up with friends for gossip/discussion. Historical records indicate the prevalence of tea drinking in India since 750 BC. In the 16th century, a vegetable dish was also being prepared using tea leaves with garlic and oil. It is said that the sadhus of Himalayan region used to chew tea leaves for keeping themselves warm. In Sanskrit tea is referred to as – *Kamalras*. However, the credit for rediscovering tea and cultivating it at a commercial level goes to the British. Commercial tea cultivation in India was driven by British who consumed tea in enormous quantities, which they bought from China. By 1750, they were purchasing millions of pounds of tea every year from China. Even though the British managed to counterbalance it with opium trade to some extent, they found that their tea consumption was exorbitantly expensive and unsustainable. This realisation led to a sustained effort by the British to understand tea production – and start tea cultivation in India. Commercial tea plantations in Darjeeling started in the 1850s – and 113 plantations were set up by 1874, covering 18,888 acres and accounting for a production of 3.9 million pounds.

According to the historian Lizzi Collingham, the taste for tea was developed in India and specially Kolkata, the then capital of British India through a dedicated push on the part of the producers of tea once tea production in India gained momentum. Initially, free samples of tea were offered from horse-drawn carts belonging to various companies. As early as 1907, Brooke Bond, an English tea company started experimenting with a fleet of horse-drawn vans for distributing teas. The British tradition of taking tea with a little milk and sugar was introduced along with the samples.

So, Kolkata developed the tea drinking culture from the early 20th century and slowly it engulfed every household, every street and every lane to become a "Cha khawa culture" of the city. The city dwellers want to have their favourite drink in many versions. At home, regular Kolkatans prefer to drink their tea brewed with just a dash of milk added later, or simply as raw liquor tea. They also prefer to buy it fresh from their local 'tea house.' Kolkata's tea houses aren't fancy ceremonious establishments like their Chinese or Japanese namesakes. Instead, these are 'Chapata' or loose-leaf tea stores common across Kolkata neighbourhoods – from north to south; not something you easily spot in other cities across India. They come stacked with wooden boxes of tea and metal containers with 'cha' written in bold, red Bangla script, and stock tea from Darjeeling and Assam thanks to the city's history of tea trade and proximity to the tea gardens of Darjeeling and Assam. Then there are venerable names like the Orphan, Subodh, Dhruva or Mahabodhi Tea House and the tea leaf sellers in Lal Bazaar, lined across the road from the Kolkata police headquarters. Most Bengali households in Kolkata still get their tea from these shops, their special blends of CTC (Crush, Tear and Curl Black Tea) and Darjeeling packed into small packets of 250 grams. Natural tea doesn't store well so buying in bulk is usually discouraged. Surrounded by wooden chests of tea leaves packed up to the ceiling, marked with the names of the tea gardens, stacks of gunny bags, weighing scales and an aroma that's part-tea

leaf, part wood these old tea shops are tea experts . They help you to differentiate between Halmari, Darjeeling Giddapahar, Assam Orthodox, Muscatel, Fanning and the many tea varieties.





But the street side tea stalls are institutions themselves in Kolkata and recently even “The Guardian” has declared Kolkata’s Street side Chai as the best street tea . Kolkata takes its tea very seriously. You will rarely find any roadside tea stall or food joint, selling tea in paper or plastic cups. The matir bhaar or the earthen pot is synonymous with tea in this city of joy, which believes in spending a good amount of its leisure time in having long winding conversations over chai and biscuits or a smoke with friends. Tea stalls are a dime in dozen in Kolkata, with one stationed at every nook and corner of the narrow streets. However, some of these places have earned a name for them and attained an exalted ranking among the tea-loving crowds of the city. Here are some iconic teal stalls of Kolkata.

- a. **Elgin Road Tea Stalls** – They serves finest brews in the city: sugary, spicy chai in sustainable clay cups.
- b. **Tewari Brothers** - They have five outlets all over the city, but the Burra Bazaar one is the most popular one among them all. The place opens at 7 in the morning and is always crowded, throughout the day.
- c. **Balwant Singh Eating House** - This modest but popular dhaba in Bhawanipur serves not just some of the best vegetarian North Indian food in Kolkata, but also some of its finest chai. The kesar (saffron) chai is a hit among regular patrons, as is the standard masala chai. Pair your tea with warm samosas for a hearty treat.
- d. **Tea Stalls at Princep Ghat** - An ideal evening in Kolkata will most definitely comprise of a stroll along the river, enjoying a delightful union chanachur, lemon juice and onion called Ghoti Gorom, along with some hot tea.
- e. **Arun Tea Stall** - Considered legendary, this tea stall has the best kesari chai at the cheapest price. There is no seating arrangement available but that doesn’t stop the crowd for pouring in for one cup. If you want to grab a bite, then you can definitely try

the khasta kachori with sabzi. It has one more outlet in Kolkata. 25/1, Shakespeare Sarani, Theatre Road, Kolkata.

f. Sharma Tea Stalls - A breakfast heaven for all foodies, but tea lovers can never give this one a miss. To some, it's been a tradition heading down to this outlet and indulging in a Rs 7 cup of tea before heading out to work and get engaged in the hustle and bustle of the city. Hazra road wouldn't be the same without Sharma's.

g. Maharani and Maharaja - Head further south and you'll hit the two joints defining the royal stature of tea that has shovelled a corner for itself in every Kolkattan's heart. You may wonder that once the 'Kachoris' are gorged on, you'd be full for the day. Trust us, your meal is incomplete without having a cup of steaming hot tea from either of the sibling shops. Rs 7 is all you need to sit back and let the flavours make your heart pound faster.

h. Sahyamol Da's Tea stall , Jadavpur - University days are never deemed fun, if you haven't had the customary 'Adda' with your batch mates at the university tea stalls; and Jadavpur University students walking out of Gate 4 can never say no to Shyamol Da who concocts the best tea in the entire area. Don't miss out on the classic rock and pop songs he plays in the background. Good taste in music and great tasting tea are a students' comfort zone.

i. Russel Punjabi Dhaba - Every Calcuttan has visited this place at least once or have been introduced to this place by their parents. It's the best-known place for masala chai around the clock. They, in addition, make delicious coffee, but chai is the staple drink. 41, Chowringhee Road, Chowringhee, Kolkata

j. Just For Today – Cha O Nachiketa- The tea stall is adorned with a number of posters of the vocalist Nachiketa. Regulars converse about whether the 'Doodh Chai' tastes best in the 'Bhaadh.' This tea stall acts as a conversation starter at Jadavpur's 8B and always plays music by the renowned vocalist. Patuli Lake Side, Kolkata



Some Vintage Tea Places are –

k. Flurys - Kolkata's true vintage tea place. It is attended by customers early in the morning or late afternoons. Your Darjeeling or Assamese tea go splendidly with their scones and small cakes. The place has 18 outlets in Kolkata but the main Flury's at Park Street is legendary.

l. Dolly's Tea Boutique - This is a heaven for tea lovers. You get assorted teas from Darjeeling, Assam, Uttaranchal, and Nilgiri. Even Ice Teas range from peach, green ginger, and blackcurrant. It is the modest place which has been owned by the one family for ages. It was started by Dolly Roy, India's first tea taster and the world's first tea auctioneer. G62, Dakshinapan Market, 2 Gariahat Road South, Dhakuria, Kolkata.



8. FESTIVALS OF KOLKATA

There's a saying in Bengali that goes, *baro mashe tero parbon*, literally '13 festivals in 12 months', neatly summing up the importance — and yearlong abundance — of festivals in Kolkata's everyday life. From cultural extravaganzas to some of India's biggest Hindu festivals, there's always something going on in the city. Rarely will more than a few weeks pass without some kind of festival filling the streets with celebrations, decorations and fanfare. Having Ethnic precincts in every nook and corner Kolkata's essential religious festivals also attain a cultural significance. We will try to document all the major festivals of the city highlighting their history of origin and rituals associated with them cording to the Bengali Calendar.

The Bangla Calendar or Bangla calendar may refer to the sidereal solar used by the Bangla people in their calendar officially used in Bangladesh. The year begins on Pohela Boishakh, which falls on 14 April according to the tropical calendar in Bangladesh. It is similar to Hindu Calendar. The Bangla year is 594 less than the AD or CE year in the Gregorian year if it is before Pohela Boishakh, or 593 less after Pohela Boishakh.

The Major Festivals according to the Bengali Seasonal Calendar are -

Baisakh (Apr 14 to May 14)	Joystha (15 May to 15 Jun)	Ashar (16 Jun to 16 Jul)
Nabo barsho.	Fol Ka Puja	Shab-E-Miraj
Akshoy Tretiya	Jamai Shashti	Amavasha
May Day.	Dashora	Ratha Jatra
Buddha Purnima	Ganga Puja	Bipodtarini Puja
Gondeshori Puja	Lokenath Baba Ti:	Guru Purnima
Rabindra Jayanti.	Shananjatra	Shab-E-Barat
-	-	Naghpanchami
Shravan (17th July to 17th August)	Vadra (18th August-17th Sep)	Aswin (18 Sep to 17 Oct)
Jhulon Jatra	Eid ul Fiter..	Ganesh Chaturthi
Rakhi Bondhon	Viswakarma	Gandhi Jayanti
Janmasthami	-	Mahalaya
Loknath Baba Jayanti	-	Durga Puja
Nandautsab	-	Eid Ul Azha
Independance Day	-	Lakshmi Puja
Monosha Puja	-	-
Kartik (18th Oct to 16th Nov)	Agrahan (17Nov to 16th Dec)	Pous (17th Dec to 14 Jan)

Kali Puja	Jagadhatri Puja	Christmas
Bhai Phonta	Muharram	New Year
Kartik Puja	Ras Jatra	Pous Parban
Chhat Puja	-	-
Magh (15 th Jan - 12 th Feb)	Falgun (13 th Feb-14 th March)	Chaitra (15 th March to 14 th April)
Netaji's Birthday	Saraswati Puja	Basanti Puja
Republic Day	Sitol Sasthi	Annapurna Puja
-	Maha Shibratri	Nil Sashti
-	Dol Purnima	Charak Puja

বাংলা 2020

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৭ ২৫	১৪ ২১	২১ ২২	২৮ ২৫	বুধ WED
৮ ২৬	১৬ ২২	২২ ২৩	২৯ ২৬	বৃহ THU
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A. Durga Puja :

Durga Puja isn't just a religious event. It is one of the biggest Indian festivals, attracting huge crowds who delight in pandal hopping — the favourite activity at the festival. Durga Puja, known locally as Pujo, literally takes over the city of Kolkata for five days each fall. Some say there are upwards of 4,000 Durga Puja pandals scattered throughout Kolkata, and attendance by millions of people. The Durga Puja Festival is the event that people of Kolkata — and all Bengalis — look forward to all year long. It resembles a carnival with jaw-dropping public art installations. The city is transformed into a huge public art gallery with beautiful idols of the goddess, all-night crowds, live music sessions, and cultural programmes. Thousands of pandals—the temporary structures housing the goddess—pop up on streets with extravagant themes and artworks. Vehicles and people weave in and out, interacting with these amazing pop-up structures all around them. The pandals are like giant art installations, and 'pandal-hopping' is a kind of gigantic public gallery crawl. The big pandals get over 3 to 4 lakh visitors every day, including people from abroad. Lakhs of artists, crafts people and workers put together this show every year. This is indeed the greatest festival of not only Kolkata or Bengal but the entire India.

Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's apex cultural body, has nominated Kolkata's Durga puja to be included in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) for the year 2020.

"Durga Puja is the best instance of the public performance of religion and art in the city. It witnesses a celebration of craftsmanship, cross-cultural transactions and cross-community revelry.The exemplary character of Durga Puja lies in its ability to not temporarily bind itself to the ritual occasion. Its dynamism lies in it being a constantly mutating event – in its fusion of tradition with changing tastes and popular cultures, and in the adaptation of the iconographies of Durga and the styles of her temporary abodes to cater to new regimes of art production."- Sangeet Natak Academy.

"Kolkata's Durga Puja has developed a special artistic profile, which no other festival has with modern artists and designers coming together to produce a new urban art. This gives it a unique dimension," said Professor Tapati Guha Thakuta who led a five -member research team in preparing the nomination dossier for the Akademi.

Durga is an ancient deity of Hinduism according to available archaeological and textual evidence. However, the origins of Durga puja are unclear and undocumented. Surviving manuscripts from the 14th-century provide guidelines for Durga puja, while historical records suggest the royalty and wealthy families to be sponsoring major Durga Puja public festivities, since at least the 16th-century. The significance of Durga and other goddesses in Hindu culture is stated to have increased after Islamicate armies conquered regions of the Indian subcontinent. According to yet other scholars, the marginalisation of Bengali Hindus during the medieval era led to a reassertion of Hindu identity and an emphasis on Durga puja as a social festival, publicly celebrating the warrior goddess.

From the medieval era up to present-day, Durga puja has been celebrated as a socio-cultural event, while maintaining the roots of religious worship.



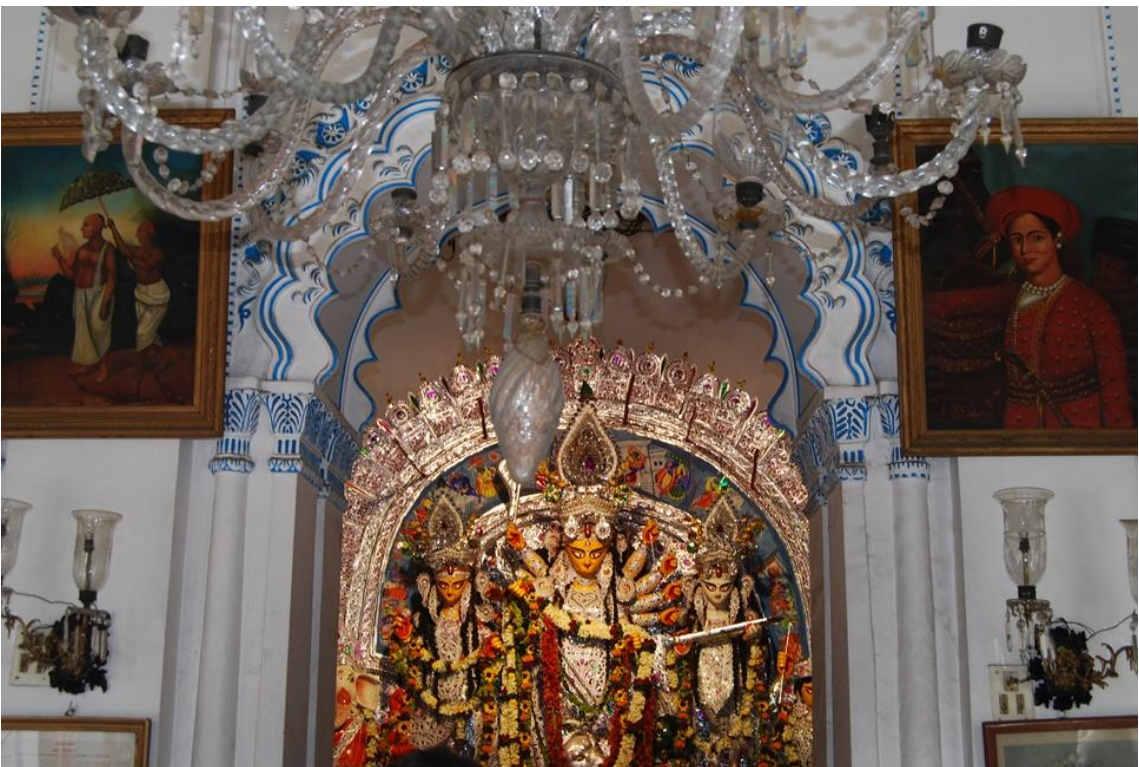
Oldest Pujas of Kolkata: Laksmikanta Gangopadhyay of Halisahar , present N.24 Parganas , in 1608 was granted Jaigirdari of large areas (nine parganas) in and around Dihi Kalkatah by Man Singha as Gurudakshina. He was also conferred the titles of “Ray” and “Choudhury”. Henceforth his decendants came to known as members of Sabarna Roy Choudhury family. According to this family it was Laksmikanta who developed and civilized the land and made the place well known to the world for its cottage industries and cultures. He started the oldest durgapuja of Bengal in the year 1610 at Barisha. As famous as they can get, their family paid homage to the Goddess and thus started the tradition of Durga Puja. It is believed that the family started the Akalbodhan Durga Puja around 1610, approximately 100 years before the British came to India in their ancestral home in Barisha (Behala, South Kolkata). They are still continuing the tradition of the Durga Puja maintaining the age old rituals. ;

In Kolkata “**Durga Puja**” from a domestic ritual took a form of grand community festival in the year 1757 with the Durga Puja of Sovabazar Rajbari. The oldest puja in main Kolkata, it came to being due to the efforts of Maharaja Naba Krishna De, the founder of the Shobhabazar royal family. It is said that after emerging victorious in the Battle of Plassey, Colonel Robert Clive wanted to pay a thanks to the divine forces for his success. The Battle of Plassey was a landmark in the history of British domination in India as the

victory of the British forces in this war gave the East India Company control of Bengal. Robert Clive was the then chief officer of British East India Company and he led his forces to victory in this crucial battle, that too with minimum casualties. As the only church in Calcutta at that time was destroyed by Siraj-ud-Daulah, Clive was unable to show his gratitude to God. When Raja Nabakrishna Deb came to know of Clive's desire, he invited the latter to his house at Durga Puja and offer his thanks at the feet of Goddess Durga. Initially Clive had some hesitations to attend the puja as in those days Christians were not allowed by the Hindus to take part in Hindu festivities. However, the mighty Nabakrishna Deb managed it all and Robert Clive paid a visit to the Shobhabazar Rajbari to offer his thanks to Goddess Durga. Thereafter, the Shobhabazar Durgotsab (Durga Puja ceremony) came to be known as the "Company Puja".



The Shobhabazar Sharodotsab proved a trendsetter in Durga Puja festivities of Bengal. From this time until the independence of India in 1947, inviting Englishmen to Durga Puja ceremonies became a fashion. The number of Englishmen attending the family Durga Puja became an index of prestige and a status symbol among the upcoming merchant class of Kolkata. After this trendsetting puja of 1757, many British Officers of the East India Company were invited as guests of honour in the Pujas by various wealthy mercantile and Zamindar families in Bengal. The hosts vied with one another in arranging the most sumptuous feasts and organising lavish decorations and entertainment for their white guests. This was a way of pleasing officials of The East India Company which was in charge of a large part of India including Bengal after the battles of Plassey and Buxar. The grandeur and pompousness of the Durga Puja in these wealthy households can still be observed. During the puja time all the courtyards lit up and are made open to the public to get the glimpse of the variety of traditional idols of Durga Pratima.



One can see different types of Durga Iconography in the “Pujas of traditional houses” or “Bonedir barir puja” that is conducted by the affluent houses (Bonedir bari) of the city . Along with the typical Warrior Goddess “ Mahisasurmardini Singhabahini ” type we also find the peaceful “Abhaya Durga” with only 2 hands instead of ten hands with weapons - or far more domestic “ Haragouri” where Devi is seen sitting on the lap of her husband Shiv. During the time of Durga Puja , these palatial mansions of Bonedir Households lit up with all traditions. Truly this festival becomes a “Homecoming”.



With time, the "barowari" (community) pujas took over in a big way. The coming of corporate sponsorship helped these public puja ceremonies far surpass the grandeur of the private pujas. What makes it more unique is that almost the entire city turns up into an Art House representing wide range of cultures and traditions, during the nine-day period. Every facet of life becomes a part of the celebration. There is uniqueness in every theme and the artists are granted freedom.



The focus of the festival is the marquees or Pandals where the Deity is kept and puja takes place. They are created by local communities or organizations that pour a lot of effort (and money) into them. Prizes are awarded — so creating a prize-winning pandal is an immense source of pride. Each pandal is created around the central theme of Durga and the four figures that surround her — her “children” Ganesh, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, and the demon king Mahishasur.





In this respect, they are all similar; but in other ways, they differ widely — depending on the creativity of the artists and the budget of the committees. Over the years, pandals have transformed into bonafide examples of Bengal's artistic might. The platform of Durga Puja has been repeatedly used to draw people's attention to pressing socio-political and environmental issues. Larger than life pandals across Kolkata drew millions of people through the week.

Here are some examples of the Kolkata's Durga Idols , Pandals and the illumination.









Some of the significant rituals associated with Durga Puja

Mahalaya / Tarpan –

ॐ पिता स्वर्ग पिता धर्म पिताही परमं तपः।

पितरী प्रितिमापन्ने प्रियन्ते सर्व देवता।।

Mahalaya is celebrated at the end of Shradh or Pitru Paksha, a 16-day period when Hindus pay homage to their ancestors. It is believed that goddess Durga descended the Earth on Mahalaya which is celebrated by the Bengalis across the globe with much fervour and zeal. It is believed that mantras called 'Mahisasura Mardini' invoke the Goddess; the most famous one being 'Jago Tumi Jago.' The occasion is associated with different practices and rituals. Many people perform 'tarpan' on this day to offer prayers to the departed souls of their ancestors and give 'bhog' to the Brahmins, along with food and materials to the needy. The day is considered auspicious because Goddess Durga, accompanied by her children, is believed to have stepped on planet earth on this day.

The banks of the rivers are also thronged by worshippers from dawn to perform the ritual of 'tarpan'. The fervour and festivity surrounding Durga Pooja and Navaratri start with Mahalaya. Idols of Goddess Durga are transported to various pandals from this day, with the onset of the last round of preparation for the grand festival. Mahalaya brings with it a feeling of positivity, festivity and warmth ahead of the start of the most anticipated festival.





Kolparombho or Bodhon

Kolparombho or Bodhon is held on the sixth day after Mahalaya aka Mahashashthi. It's the day Maa Durga reaches the mortal world from Kailash, her heavenly abode, with her children in tow — Lord Ganesh, Lord Karthik, Devi Saraswati and Devi Laxmi. Maa's face will be uncovered while devotees will celebrate the occasion with much pomp and dhak beats as it marks the deity coming alive. It's time for the celebrations to begin! Head to any pandal or traditional house if you want to kick start your Durga Puja witnessing this event.

Kola Bou or Nabapatrika

রঞ্জা, কঁচী, হরিদ্রা চ জয়ন্তী বিব্বদাড়িমৌ।

অশোক মানকশৈব ধান্যঞ্চ নবপত্রিকা।।

The Kola Bou snan is held on Mahashaptami, or the seventh day after Mahalaya. The day starts with the ritual where a banana plantain with eight other plants is tied with yellow threads and the twigs of the Aparajita plant. It is then bathed and draped in the laal par shada saree (traditional red and white saree). The leaves are smeared with vermilion while various offerings are made. Then, the Kola Bou is placed on Lord Ganesha's right. The place to see Kola Bou snan in Kolkata is at Babughat.

The nine plants or Nabapatrika signify the nine forms of Maa Durga - Goddess Brahmani (banana), Goddess Kalika (Colocassia), Devi Durga (turmeric), Goddess Kartiki (Jayanti), Goddess Shiva (wood apple), Devi Raktadantika (Pomegranate), Devi Sokrahita (Ashoka tree), Devi Chamunda (Arum plant) and Goddess Lakshmi (rice plant).

Historically, the Nabapatrika was worshipped by farmers for a good harvest but as Durga Puja gained popularity, this ritual was inducted into the ceremony.



Anjali - Anjali is common on the Pujo days. Ritualistically, anjali is divine offering. The most important of them all is the Pushpanjali which is held on Mahashtami, the eighth day after Mahalaya. Fresh flowers and bel leaves are handed by the priest to the followers. They repeat the mantra the priest chants and then the flowers are thrown at Maa's feet. It's done thrice overall. By the way, you're supposed to do it without having consumed anything. This can be seen in any pandal, apartment Pujo or at a Bonedi Bari.



Kumari Pujo - Kumari Pujo is done on the auspicious day of Mahashtami. A young girl, who is yet to hit puberty, is worshipped. The young girl symbolizes the Kumari form of Maa and the best place to see this ritual is at Belur Math. The young girl is bathed in holy water, draped in a saree and adorned with jewellery. Priests then perform the same rituals as they would to Maa. In 1901 , 10th October , Swami Vivekananda himself did Kumari Puja in Belur Math in presence of Maa Sarada . On her request the animal sacrifice during Durga Puja was stopped in the Ramkrishna Mission. The rituals of Kumari puja and its significance have been described in detail in Yoginitantra, Kularnavatantra, Devipurana, Stotra, Kavacha, Sahasranama, Tantrasara, Prantosini and Purohitadarpana.No distinction of race, religion or caste is made in choosing a virgin for Kumari puja. Theoretically, any virgin can be perceived as a deity and worshipped, even one from the prostitute community. However, usually a Brahmin virgin is chosen. The girl, who can be anywhere from 1 to 16, is named according to her age: A girl of 1 year is called Sandhya, of 2 years Saraswati, of 3 years Tridhamurti, of 4 years Kalika, of 5 years Subhaga, of 6 years Uma, of 7 years Malini, of 8 years Kuvjika, of 9 years Kalasandarbha, of 10 years Aparajita, of 11 years Rudrani, of 12 years Bhairavi, of 13 years Mahalaksmi, of 14 years Pithanayika, of 15 years Ksetrajna and of 16 years Annada or Amvika.



Dhuno Pora – In some of the Bonedi Baris , still the tradition of ‘Dhuno Pora’ takes place after ‘Pushpanjali” in Mahaashtami . While in many households the ritual is performed by only one lady, preferably the eldest in the family, at our pace we all perform this rite. So, married ladies in an odd number sequence sit in front of Ma, legs folded and hands rested on the knees. Balancing an earthen plate or "Shora" on the two palms and one on the head, they sit braced in a new saree and only the saree as no stitched piece of cloth is allowed. Now, while this

tradition has evolved in many houses into a more comfortable sitting position and dressing, the Daws of Jorasanko have stuck to the basics. So, once they are settled, they have a wet gamcha or cloth wrapped in position on top of their head and wet slabs of mud on both palms. Straw and frankincense or dhuno is placed in the three earthen plates, the biggest placed on the heads and two more on the palms. Once ready, the straw are lit and while the priest utters sacred mantras, male members of the family put the resin in the earthen plates for each lady and the fire burns brighter and fiercer. In this position, they pray to Ma for the well-being of the family members for 5-10 minutes. After performing the ritual the family members sit on the lap of the elders and thereafter touch their feet and seek her blessings. For younger ones, they do a simple pronam.



Sandhi Pujo - Sandhi Pujo is a special one that takes place at the juncture of Mahashtami and Mahanavami (ninth day post Mahalaya). It marks the exact moment when Maa Durga transformed into Devi Chamunda to kill Mahishasura's two generals — Chand and Mund. 108 lamps are lit during the Pujo and the occasion is celebrated with dhaks. Sandhi Puja requires 108 lotus flowers, a single fruit, dry rice grain for "noibiddo", 108 earthen lamps, clothes, jewelry, hibiscus garlands and wood apple (bel) leaves. The almost non-existent rituals which underwent changes with the changes in the society can still be seen in some of the 200-250 year old Pujas. While it's customary to perform an animal sacrifice, in these times, it's symbolically done with vegetables in many households.





Dhunuchi Naach - The 'dhunuchi' is a typical clay pot, something like an incense burner, filled with burning dried coconut husks and aromatic ingredients. Men hold these in the hand and perform impromptu steps to the rhythm of dhaaks in front of Maa Durga. The steady rhythm, the heady incense and the smoke from the dhuuchi create a mystic ambiance. Gradually, this simple rite became a crowd puller as men took it to bragging heights — weaving complex rhythmic movements into the dance clutching more than one such clay pots. This is held on Mahanavami evening and can be seen best in the top pandals.



Debi boron & Sindoor Khela - The Sindoor Khela is another much-awaited event on Mahadashami, the last day of the festival. Translated into 'playing with vermillion powder', it's actually an integral part of Durga Puja. Married women (not widows), often dressed in the traditional laar par shada saree, apply vermillion powder to Maa Durga and each other, apart from offering sweets to the Goddess.





Bisarjan/Immersion - Bisarjan is held after the main Pujos end when the Goddess is immersed into the water so she can return to her heavenly abode. The Visarjan is held on Mahadashami or the last day of the celebrations. There are tearful farewells and a grand send off to Maa as she's paraded around the locality and the city before she is finally taken to the ghat to be immersed. The Bonedi Bari like Shovabazaar Rajbari still maintains the tradition of immersion of Durga Idol in a grand way. It is a beautiful spectacle to watch. Thousands of people gather near Baghbazaar Ghat where this ritual takes place.







Durga Puja Carnival - From 2017, a novel way of displaying all the best Durga idols has been undertaken by West Bengal Government in a form of Carnival. The carnival is a brainchild of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee which received immense popularity . In the last year , 2019 about 75 idols rallied down along Red Road in front of various dignitaries who came from all over the world. Special light installations and a separate gallery for foreign delegates are included in the arrangements. The major aim of the carnival is projecting Durga Puja , Bengal's biggest festival to tourists who missed the opportunity to see the brilliant idols and the unique craftsmanship on pandals during the festival days.



B. Kali Puja

Concurrent with Diwali (the pan-Indian festival of light), Bengal venerates the Goddess Kali – Shiva's fearsome blue-faced consort – with a series of pandal, night-long rituals and sacrifices. Kali Puja, also known as Shyama Puja or Mahanisha Puja, is a festival, originating from the Indian subcontinent, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali, celebrated on the new moon day of the Hindu month Kartik. While not quite as big an event as Durga Puja, Kali Puja celebrations are nonetheless extensive across the region, culminating on the new moon of the Bengali month of Kartik. During Kali puja (like Durga Puja) worshippers honour the goddess Kali in their homes in the form of clay sculptures and in pandals (temporary shrines or open pavilions). Kali Puja was practically unknown before the 18th century; however, a late 17th-century devotional text *Kalika mangalkavya* –by Balram mentions an annual festival dedicated to Kali. It was introduced in Bengal during the 18th century, by King (Raja) Krishnachandra of Navadvipa.



Within Kolkata , we find different types Kali Idols and they are worshipped in different ways.

- a. In the Kalighat Temple in Kolkata, Kalikhetra Temple in Bhubaneswar and in Kamakhya Temple in Guwahati, Kali is worshipped as Lakshmi on this day so as to reflect an essence of Vaishnava Haldars on Kali worship. Goddess Lakshmi is worshiped in her three forms, Maha Lakshmi, Maha Kali and Maha Saraswati on this day. The temple is visited by thousands of devotees who give offerings to the goddess. Another famous temple dedicated to Kali in

Kolkata is Dakshineswar Kali Temple, where the famous Kali devotee Ramakrishna lived and performed rites.



- b. Tantric Way of worshipping Kali is generally found in the Burning Ghats (Shosan Bhumi) She is worshipped at night with Tantric rites and mantras. She is prescribed offerings of red hibiscus flowers, animal blood in a skull, sweets, rice and lentils, fish and meat. It is prescribed that a worshipper should meditate throughout the night until dawn. Homes and pandals may also practice rites in the Brahmanical (mainstream Hindu-style, non-Tantric) tradition with ritual dressing of Kali in her form as Adya Shakti Kali and no animals are sacrificed. She is offered food and sweets made of rice, lentils, and fruits. However, in Tantric tradition, animals are ritually sacrificed on Kali Puja day and offered to the goddess.



- c. The next type of Kali is Shri Krishna Kaali where the Maa is depicted as Lord Krishna. According to legends in Vrindavana, when Radha rani came to worship Lord Krishna, radharani's mother in law Kutilaa compained to Radha's husband Ayan that she is worshipping Krishna. When Ayan himself went to verify the same , Lord Krishna took the form of Kali in Krishna Kaali roopa and henceforth this sweet incarnation came to be known as Krishna Kali.



- d. The next type is the Singhavahini Kaali where the mother goddess is seated upon the Lion with grand mudra and it was observed and worshipped in Royal manner. The radiance of this roop is just beautiful in words to describe, when you move to Harish Chaterjee street do try to catch this version of Matri-Rupa.



- e. Elokeshi Shiva Kaali Elokeshi means weird hair style. As per Markendya Puraan , Maa Chamunda and Maa Ugra Kalika were in this form devouring the Asura sena and massacring every single Daityas during the Chanda munda War.



- f. Padmasana Kali - Padmasana Kali is worshipped according to Meditation Brahman Paddati and is considered to be Yogamaya arising from the Lotus of wisdom. The idol is based on chamunda roop and is considered to be the Goddess of Wisdom.



- g. The sahasra bhuja Kaali (The Goddess with 1000 hands) is worshipped based on the Adbhut Ramayana story where Lord Rama has to kill Sahasrabhuj Ravana, Lord Rama got wounded in battle and Sita Maharani got enraged and took the form of Mahakali with thousand hands and slayed thousand headed Ravana with a single blow.
- h. Chamunda Kaali, one of the fearsome idols of Kalipuja depicting Ma Kaali in full enraged and angry form. The idol is been depicted in Night fight time when Ma Chamunda took the ferocious form of Ugrachandika and was creating panic and havoc among the asura army with its hordes.

- i. **Ma Tara** , is another very common form of Kali in Kolkata. Ma Tara is beautiful and one of the Dasha Mahavidya. According to legends , Vashistha had worshipped the goddess Sati in the form of Tara. Another legend narrates: Shiva had drunk the poison that had emerged by the churning of the cosmic oceans, to save the universe. To relieve the intense burning in his throat, Sati – in the form of Tara – breast fed Shiva to relieve him of the effect of poison in his throat.



- j. **The Chinnamasta Mata-** Is also called Ch(h)innamastika and Prachanda Chandika, is one of the Mahavidyas or Shivasakthi or Parvati, ten goddesses from the esoteric tradition of Tantra, and a ferocious aspect of Devi, the Hindu Mother goddess. The semi nude goddess, usually depicted standing or seated on a divine, holds her own severed head in one hand, a scimitar in another. Three jets of blood spurt out of her bleeding neck and are drunk by her severed head and two attendants. Chhinnamasta is a goddess of contradictions. She symbolises both aspects of Devi: a life-giver and a life-taker. She represents death, temporality, and destruction as well as life, immortality, and recreation. The goddess conveys spiritual self-realization and the awakening of the kundalini – spiritual energy. The legends of Chhinnamasta emphasise her self-sacrifice – sometimes coupled with a maternal element – sexual essence, and self-destructive fury.



- k. **The Dakshina Kali-** Dakshina Kali is the most popular form of Kali worshipped in Shakta households. She is identified with her right leg over Shiva and a smiling countenance. In this form she is usually shown with four, eight or ten arms and three eyes. Her skin is blueish and she has a crescent moon on her brow. This Roopam is Saumya and is considered passive and motherly form of Kali, ideal for propitiation and asking of boons.



C. Saraswati Puja :

Goddess Saraswati, considered the Hindu deity of music, culture and learning, is worshiped across West Bengal with traditional gaiety and religious fervour .In Kolkata ,being the cultural capital of India , Saraswati Puja is celebrated in a very grand way.



Marking the start of spring, this festival is a calendar event for young adults hoping for educational success. Participants dress in yellow and give prayers to Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom. Pandals housing clay idols of the deity mushroom across the city, and there's much frolic and blush-and-giggle courtship throughout the day. Every educational institutions celebrate the Saraswati Puja with the students taking charge of decorations and creating the traditional *alpona* . Khichdi , labda and kuler chatni with payesh is served in every



community pandals and educational institutions.



Education is the cornerstone of success in an individual's life. Thereby in the course of the Saraswati Pooja one very important ritual is "Hate Khori"- It is a popular celebration in Kolkata where little children of the age of three or four are made to perform a ritual of writing the first letters of the alphabet. They are made to take a bath after using turmeric paste and then little boys are made to wear Dhoti and Kurta and the girls are made to wear Saree, especially yellow in color. New black slate, chalk and books and copies are purchased for the Hate Khori ceremony and the pandit performs the ritual. Little kids are made to sit on the lap of the pandit who hold their hands and make them write the first letters mainly, OM or A, B, C and or some Bengali alphabets like "K-a", "Kh-a". To perform this Hate Khori ritual, people usually go to the nearby temples where the pandit performs the ritual or it is arranged at home where the pandit or Brahmin comes and performs the Saraswati puja and the Hate Khori ritual. Since the puja holds special significance among Bengalis and is considered an auspicious day to start anything related to learning, people try to introduce young children to the world of education on that special day. Formal education is started from this day and children seek blessings of the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. Young girls wear yellow saree and offer pushpanjali to the god. Palash flowers, Khichuri, mixed vegetables and Kul chutney are some of the special dishes that are prepared during this celebration.



D. Jagadhatri Puja:

Jagadhatri Puja is one of the important festivals celebrated after Durga Puja, Laxmi and Kali Puja in the month of Kartik. Devotees worship and celebrate reincarnation of Goddess Durga in the name of Jagadhatri and create the splendid ambience with high festive spirits. Jagadhatri is referred as another name of Durga. In Sanskrit, Bengali and Assamese the word 'Jagadhatri' literally means 'Holder (dhatri) of the World (Jagat)'. The cult of Goddess Jagadhatri is directly derived from Tantra where she is a symbol of sattva besides being Durga and Kali, symbolising respectively Rajas and Tamas — all three basic components of Hindu philosophy.





E. Dol Jatra or Dol Purnima / Holi :

The Festival of Colours, known as Holi in rest of India, is called 'dol-jatra' in Bengal. In Bengal, it is celebrated on the full moon day and thus also said to be as Dol Purnima. In Kolkata , Dol Purnima or Dol Jatra is a major festival. The festival is being celebrated since ancient times. It celebrates the legend of Radha and Krishna which says that Lord Krishna expressed his love to her beloved Radha on the day of Dolyatra. On this auspicious day, an image of Krishna, richly adorned and besmeared with colored powder (Abir or Phag in Bengali), is taken out in procession in a swinging palanquin, decorated with flowers, leaves, colored clothes and papers. The procession proceeds forward to the accompaniment of music, blaring of conch shells, trumpets and shouts of 'Joi' (victory) and 'Hari Bol' . Shops remain closed on the day and people get all the time to drown themselves in the spirit of the festival. Following the tradition young people start the

festival by applying phag on the pictures of the deceased in the family and then on the feet of the elders as a mark of respect. The elders bless them by applying colour on the faces.





As the Bengalis celebrate Dol Jatra by mostly using Dry Colours or by organising Cultural Programmes like “Basanta Utsab” a completely different style of Holi is celebrated just after one day amongst the Marwari Community of Burrabazar. Basant Utsav literally means the ‘celebration of spring’. The beautiful tradition of welcoming spring in Bengal was first started by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, at Vishwabharati Shantiniketan, the University founded by him. Actually, Basant Utsav is no different from Holi, except for the gracefulness with which it is celebrated. The former is celebrated in a much dignified manner, compared to the boisterous Holi witnessed in most parts of India. On the day the students dressed in yellow (basanti) color, welcome spring – the season of hope, in a very elegant manner. They greet spring not only with colors, but also with songs, music and poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. For the Bengalis like me/us the festival is incomplete without listening some of the songs of him and throughout the year whether it’s winter or monsoon these songs always reminds the essence of the festival. Here color means love, affection ; a really pleasant celebration to welcome the Spring.

Holi in **Burrabazar** is celebrated in a much more vibrant way. The devotees bring out a procession with Radha-Krishna in a rolls royce car. They take the deity to the Laxmi-Narayan temple of Kalakar Street. Mainly the businessmen are associated with this procession. The lanes turned colorful during their celebration.





F. Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha :

According to 2011 Census there is about 20.60 % of Muslim population in Kolkata . So , naturally the festivals of Muslims occupy a prime significance in Kolkata’s Festival list. The two **Eids**, **Eid ul-Fitr** and **Eid ul-Adha** commemorate the passing of the month of fasting, **Ramadan** and the willingness of the Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son for Allah. The areas begin to have a festive look weeks before Eid and street bustle with devotees and shoppers in the evening. As the month of Ramadan approaches, the Muslim shops of those areas fill with beautifully gilded and bound copies of Koran, dazzling waistcoats and kurtas, prayer caps, ittar, surma, gleaming hookah pipes and heaps of sweet vermicelli, nuts, dates and pomegranates. The largest gathering for Eid prayers in Kolkata takes place at Red Road. Namaz on Red Road is one of the biggest Eid congregation any After the prayer is over, people visit homes of relatives, friends and neighbours; exchange gifts and greetings; eat special dishes and engage in joyful activities throughout the day. Narrow stretch of road near the Nakhoda Masjid transforms into a gastronomical paradise every night during the holy month of Ramzan. Eid ul-Adhha is the second most important festival for Muslims in West Bengal. In this day, the Kurbani or sacrifice is started after finishing the Prayer of Eid ul-Adhha. After the kurbani, a large portion of the meat is given to the poor people and to the relatives and neighbours.





G. Muharram :

Muharram is a day of bereavement, when Shia Muslims observe fasts, take out rallies and pray in remembrance of Prophet Mohammed's grandson Imam Hussain, who was martyred centuries ago at Karbala in Iraq. Sunni Muslims usually commemorate the day through voluntary fasting. Shia Muslims of Kolkata in the major Muslim dominated areas like Razabazaar, Khidirpur, Ekbalpur, Park Circus takes out huge processions on the occasion of Muharram .The devotees, carrying tazias, black flags and traditional arms, were seen beating their chests in a ceremonial mourning across the metropolis.



H. Christmas:

Just like Durga Puja , Christmas in Kolkata is also very special where in almost whole of Kolkata decks up in beautiful lights. With a history of being the capital city of British India for almost 150 years, Kolkata still holds that typical colonial culture which becomes very prominent during the time of Christmas. The best part of the Kolkata Christmas is that it belongs to everyone who can afford a cheap Santa hat and a slice of plum cake—and the will to move with the music. In 2011 , the Chief Minister of West Bengal announced for a grand official Christmas carnival in Park Street area and it is now , one of the largest

dedicated Christmas carnivals in India. The themed lighting starts from St Xavier's College and ends at Jawaharlal Nehru Road. This has been extended in recent years at both ends - up to the Mullick Bazar crossing on Park Street and up to St Paul's Cathedral on Cathedral Road, an offshoot of Jawaharlal Nehru Road. Another offshoot of celebrations and lighting has been extended till Vardaan Market on Camac Street. This themed lighting is designed by artisans from the nearby town of Chandannagar. Bands and various choir groups perform on the stage at Allen Park on Park Street. A two-hour Christmas Parade is also organised on one of the days in which about 500 school children participate.





I. Armenian Christmas:

Armenians in Kolkata are one of the oldest residents of the city. History tells that they came to this city even before the British arrived. As a reminiscence , Kolkata still has Armenian Church , Armanian Street , Armenian Ghat , Armenian School and thus of course their fading culture. Armenians celebrate Christmas on January 6 every year, when the rest of the world does it in December. In fact, historically speaking, all Christian Churches were said to celebrate Christmas on Jan 6 until the fourth century when Pope Julius adopted December 25 (the day of Saturnalia or the feast of the Sun God) as the Christmas day. Armenians, though, have stuck to the previous date. The Christmas mass, also known as the Divine Liturgy starts at around 9:30 AM and is conducted by the head of the Armenian Church along with a host of boys and girls from the Armenian school and college. The mass is conducted in the Armenian language. The grand altar of the church is beautifully decorated. Christmas choir sings delightful hymns in praise of the Christ. The affair is unique in its way and definitely a grand experience. Almost all the Armenian population gather this day at the Church to celebrate Christmas.



J. All Souls Day :

All Souls Day is a holy day set aside for honoring the dead. The day is primarily celebrated in the Catholic Church, but it is also celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and a few other denominations of Christianity. According to Catholic belief, the soul of a person who dies can go to one of three places. The first is heaven, where a person who dies in a state of perfect grace and communion with God goes. The second is hell, where those who die in a state of mortal sin are naturally condemned by their choice. The intermediate option is purgatory, which is thought to be where most people, free of mortal sin, but still in a state of lesser (venial) sin, must go. Purgatory is necessary so that souls can be cleansed and perfected before they enter into heaven. There is scriptural basis for this belief. Consistent with these teachings and traditions, Catholics believe that through the prayers of the faithful on Earth, the dead are cleansed of their sins so they may enter into heaven. Although different churches celebrate All Souls Day on different dates, it is predominantly celebrated on November 2.

Relatives visit the graves of their ancestors, offer prayers and light candles, sometimes even leave food offerings for the departed. In Kolkata, almost all the existing Christian Community visit the cemeteries like Lower Circular Road Cemetery, Bhowanipur Cemetery, Park Street Cemetery to light candles and offer their prayer.



K. Chhat Puja :

Chhath is a Vedic ritual dedicated to Hindu solar deity Surya, and goddess Shashthi (also called Chhathi Maiyya). It has also been mentioned in both the major Indian epics - In Ramayana, when Rama and Sita returned Ayodhya, then people celebrated Deepawali, and on its sixth day Ramrajya was established. On this day Rama and Sita kept fast and Surya Shashthi/Chhath Puja was performed by Sita. Hence, she was blessed with Luv and Kush as their sons. While in the Mahabharata, Chhath Puja was performed by Draupadi/Kunti after they escaped from Lakshagrih. This festival is mostly celebrated by Hindus from Biharis or Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. But in Kolkata , Chhath is also celebrated in a much grand way. In recent years , Chhath Puja has gained much more popularity which indicates a considerable rise in Biharis in the city. The Ghats of Hooghly River from Kashipur in the north to Matiaburuz in south ,all gets crowded by thousands of devotees offering their pujas to Maa Ganga . The main worshipers, called parvatin (from Sanskrit parv, meaning "occasion" or "festival"), are usually women. However, many men also observe this festival as Chhath is not a gender-specific festival. The parvatin pray for the well-being of their family, and for the prosperity of their offspring. In some communities, once a family member starts performing Chhath Puja, it is their compulsory duty to perform it every year and to pass it on to the following generations. The festival is skipped only if there happens to be a death in the family that year. If the person stops performing the ritual on any particular year, it stops permanently and one cannot resume it. In other communities, this is not mandatory. The prasad offerings include sweets, Kheer, Thekua and fruits (mainly sugarcane, sweet lime and banana) offered in small

bamboo soap winnows. The food is strictly vegetarian and is cooked without salt, onions or garlic. Emphasis is put on maintaining the purity of the food.





L. Pareshnath Festival of Jains:

According to 2011 Census there is about 21,178 Jain population in Kolkata and they mainly follow two sects – Digambara and Svetambara . Both the communities have their temples in Kolkata. The major Jain festivals of Jains are – Mahavir Jayanti and Paryushana. Paryushana is the most important annual holy event for Jains and is usually celebrated in August or September in Hindi calendar Bhadrapad Month's Shukla Paksha. The five main vows are emphasized during this time. There are no set rules, and followers are encouraged to practice according to their ability and desires. Normally, Digambaras refer it as Das Lakshana Dharma while Śvētāmbaras refer to it as Paryushana ("abiding" or "coming together"). The duration of Paryushana is for 8 days for Śvētāmbara Jains and 10 days for Jains belonging to the Digambara sect. The festival ends with the celebration of Samvatsari or Kshamavani (forgiveness day). Kartik Purnima is a grand festival of Lord Jain Tirthankar Paraswanath. It is celebrated every year on the holy day of Kartik Purnima and thousands of Jain devotees from all over India are present to celebrate this occasion. A traditional grand procession, Saawari is taken out every year which was started 190 years ago and is still running with great respect. Under the colourful procession, the rugged images of Bhagwan Parshvanath are captured and the thousands of devotees are in front of the band with singing Bhajan. This huge procession is running through the main roads of the city, which enables many devotees to see a glimpse of the holy Gods and find his blessing.





M. Deep Dipawali :

Dev Deepawali is a comparatively new festival for Kolkata which is celebrated on the occasion of Kartika Poornima. The main rituals performed by devotees consist of kartik snan (taking a holy bath in the Ganges during Kartika) and deepdan (offering of oil lighted lamps) to Ganga in the evening. The Ganga aarti is also performed in the evening. It is mainly celebrated by the Bihari Communities of Nimtala area. The steps of some of the ghats on the riverfront of the Ganges River, are lit with more than a million earthen lamps (diyas) in honour of Ganga, the Ganges, and its presiding goddess.





N. Annapurna Puja :

Annapurna is the Hindu goddess of food and nourishment. Worship and offering of food is highly praised in Hinduism and therefore, the goddess Annapurna is regarded as a popular deity in many of the traditional households of North Kolkata.



Rituals - Holy water from Ganges is collected before the Pujas and is stored in big earthen pots and is kept in thakur Ghar. Holy water is used to prepare the blessed meal (Bhog for Goddess) during the puja day. As a ritual, the place where “Bhog” is prepared is considered sacred. Another signifying feature of this puja is “Arghya”, The Arghya comprises of 108 grains, 108 malts and 108 durbas, tied up with red thread in a special way. The separation of the grains and malts are done on the previous night of the puja.



O. Rathayatra:

Traditionally Rathayatra is celebrated by many households with children decorating wooden chariots with flowers and leaves of ornamental plants. Lord Jagganath , Lord



Baldev and their Sister Subhadra are taken to their Aunty's House and after 14 days they come back to their own house through Ultarath. About 100 years back, Srila Prabhupada, Kolkata's one of the illustrious saint and founder of ISCON, had organized the Rath Yatra festival in Kolkata when he was just 6 years old. And 70 years later he again organized this grand festival in Kolkata in 1972. A grand procession followed the procession.

People irrespective of their caste and creed, irrespective of their colour, men, women and children of all ages were overly excited to pull the rope and be a part in this great journey. The most striking highlight of this event was the presence of Western devotees (mainly from USA and UK) of Lord Krishna, who were enthusiastically participating in this event. Bhavanand Prabhu was melodiously singing the Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, HH Jayapataka Swami was playing cymbals, HH Achyutananda Swami was playing drums (Mridangam), Narayani Mataji was gently fanning Lord Jagannath and Panchajanya Prabhu was offering arati to Lord Jagannath. All the people were enthusiastically dancing to the heart rendering tune of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra. Many Bonedi Families and the temples also carry forward this age old tradition through their customary ways.





P. Annakut and Govardhan Puja:

Govardhan Puja as it is also known, is a Hindu festival in which devotees prepare and offer a large variety of vegetarian food to Bhagwan (God) Shri Krishna as a mark of gratitude. For Vaishnavas, this day commemorates the incident in the Bhagavata Puran when Bhagwan Shri Krishna lifted the Govardhan Hill to provide the villagers of Vrindavan shelter from torrential rains. The incident is seen to represent how God will protect all devotees who take singular refuge in him. Devotees offer a mountain of food, metaphorically representing the Govardhan Hill, to God as a ritual remembrance and to renew their faith in taking refuge in God . In Kolkata there are considerable number of wealthy Vaishnavites families who all are performing this ritual through years. One of the most important family is the Gokul Mitra's Family of Kumortuly where every year this festival of Annakut is celebrated in much grandeur.

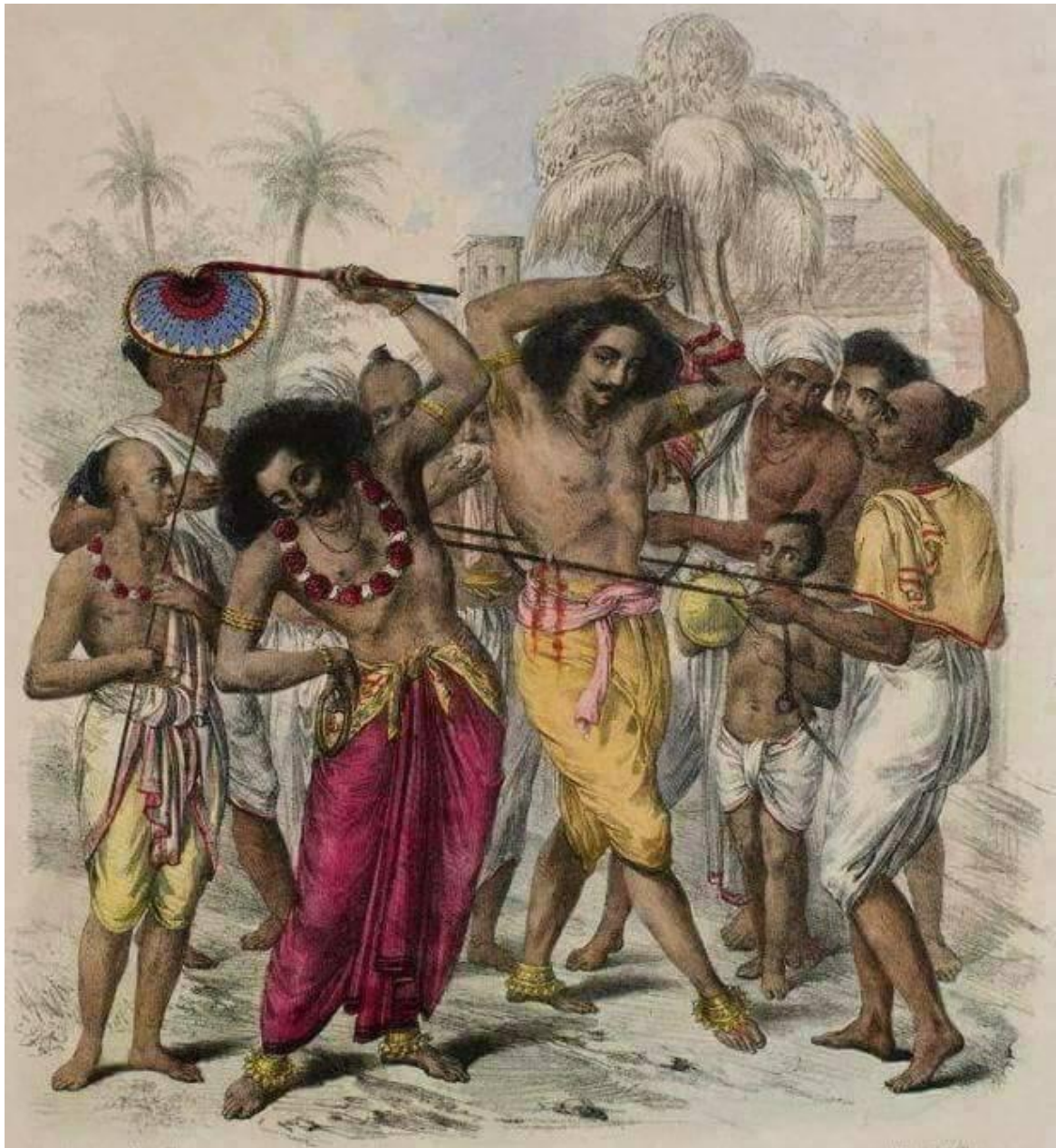




Q. Charak , Gajan and Neel Puja:

Among the many folk festivals of Bengal, Gajan festival, Charak Puja and Neel Puja has a special place even in today's modern age. Although it is celebrated predominantly in rural Bengal, the festival is still celebrated in some pockets of the Metro city of Kolkata. Hindus celebrate the festival mainly on the last two days of the month of Chaitra. This period is known as Chaitra Sankranti when Sun will enter Pisces sign. Chaitra Sankranti begins on

14th April of every year. People observe fast during this period devoting themselves to their God.



Sophie Charlotte Belnos (1795-1865)

Origin and Concept

It is almost impossible to determine the actual period when these rituals began. However, according to some historians, there was a time in middle ages when Buddhism was somewhat cornered in India, Buddhists monks took shelter in many places. One of them was in Bengal where they converted to Hinduism. With them came the Tantric rituals of Buddhism which involving Tantra rituals including severe penance as well as the thought of renouncing worldly pursuits to devote one's self to spiritual work, which is often referred to

as monasticism. This may be the reason that Gajan started as “Dharmer Gajan” and slowly took its way to “Shiber Gajan” in the later period. In Bengal Dharmathakur is generally worshipped by the scheduled cast like Bauri, Bagdi, Hari, Dom. Dharmathakur may have been originated from Dharmaraj of Buddhism. Although Dharmathakur is identified by a shapeless stone (as seen in Bankura) and its Vahana is represented by terracotta horses, there have been instances where Buddha idol has been worshipped as Dharma Thakur in villages of Bankura. There are still villages where both Dharamraj and Shiva are placed with Gajan offerings. Gajan is actually linked to persons who are related to agricultural community, directly or indirectly. They pray for the rains and better harvest. Lord Shiva is said to be closely related to this community. It may be worth noting here that Dharmathakur is actually considered to be the God of Fertility.



Gajan Celebration

During Gajan celebration is performed by the devotees signifying marriages of the male forces of Siva, Nil or Dharmaraj with their respective consorts. One way it signifies the union of the forces of sun and earth. Although the festival takes place in its full intensity for three days, starting before the day of Chaitra Sankranti and ending the day after, it continues till the beginning on the month of Ashar alias Ashad which signifies the rainy season.

Primarily arranged on the premises of different Shiva Temples, the festival is arranged mainly by mendicants (Persons begging or relying on charitable donations) who are referred as “Gajan Sanyasis”. The festival takes place in open grounds and not in anyone’s residence. In Bengal generally the festival takes place dominant by Scheduled caste Bengali people.

During Charak people dress up as Cosmetic Shiva, Parvati, Krishna and other deities. Usually Rajbangshi caste of persons is allowed to do such acts. They are locally known as “Soung of Gajan” (Soung in Bengali means jester).The word gajan in Bengali comes from the word garjan or roar generated by sannyasis during the festivities. Alternative theory says it is from the from two word Ga (village) and Jan (People), indicating festival of the people.

Though not seen much in Kolkata, there was a time in the 70s and in the 80s you could see Gajan Sanyasis moving from door to door asking for food and money chanting “Baba Taraknather Seva Laaage... Mahadevvvv” (In the name of Shiva... Taraknath and Mahadev).



Charak Puja

The most intriguing part of Gajan Festival is Charak Puja. The tradition of Charak Puja is all about worshipping the Charak tree and the several penance acts performed by Charak Sanyasis around and on the tree. This act is performed on 14th April every year. A Charak Tree is actually the trunk of a tree without any roots or branches. The height is around 30 to 40 feet. The trunk needs to be straight. The tree is worshipped by priests and then erected inside a ditch and is balanced by bamboos. Then the Sanyasis perform their penance acts. After these acts the tree is duly immersed into the river which is believed to visit the same ghat of the river next year. The Charak Sanyasis then brings it back to the puja ground, which is a local ground (normally a playground nowadays).



The Charak tree is believed to be the abode of Ardhanarishwar (composite form of the Shiva and Parvati). An Idol or a Mask is first attached to the top of a tree, before the worship and hoisting it up straight on the ground. Several people are engaged to pull it up. In some village, the mask is also referred to be that of Harakali. However, the predominant concept is that of Ardhanarishwar –which symbolizes Purush (Man) and Prakiti (Nature) in the deity. A deeper meaning is that Human life coexists with that of nature. The most amazing part is how sanyasi priests pierce sharp hooks at the bodies of participating sannyasis almost without any cut or injury. The bloodless piercing of sharp metals in the human body by the practitioner priests looks like a magic act. Actually with years of practice, they know how to pierce these sharp hooks without damaging the veins and causing less pain. It is believed that such acts actually functions as a near role reversal for men attempting to experience the pains of womanhood, including childbirth.



The hook held men then fly in a circular path by the ropes fastened to the Charak Tree on one end and to the hook on the other. After repeated circular motion some fall down from such a height, but surprisingly no one seems to be majorly hurt. They seem to be in a trance and do not want to get down. Some get their tongue pierced with multiple needles and move around the Charak tree sitting on the shoulder on other devotees. While hanging mothers allow devotees to embrace their infant child which is supposed to cause well being to the infants! In some villages other spine-chilling acts take place where devotees lie on the nails of the studded plank, climb onto a bamboo platform on a bed of thorns and in some places their bodies are pierced with arrows having their tip wrapped with cotton which is set on fire. The area where Charak Puja performed is sanctified and protected by fencing, where the Charak tree is installed. The Charak Sannyasis and the sadhu are the only people who can enter into the area.

R. Neel Puja/ Mahashivaratri:

"নীলের ঘরে দিলাম বাতি,
সাঙ্ক্ষী থেকে মা ভগবতী।

On 13th April , Bengalis celebrate “Neel Puja”. This puja or worship is done mainly by married woman who fast throughout the day and pour milk over the “Shiva Lingam” at a nearby Shiva Temple. The Puja is done to please the lord and get his blessings for her husband and children. There are many interpretations of “Neel Puja”. The most predominant explanation is the celebration of the marriage of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati. Shiva is considered to be Neel here, which is supposed to have been derived from one of his name “NeelKantha” (one having a blue coloured throat). Some refer it as “Neel Shasthi” too. Now at Kolkata, many households celebrate this as “Neel Sasthi”. In this case, an additional worship of a local deity named “Sasthi” is worshiped too. Sasthi is a Goddess who symbolizes betterment of Women, especially of their children both existing and unborn. The deity is made out of the mashed paste of wet rice grains. She is accompanied with a cat and six children. According to Hindu Mythology, when the Devatas (God) and Asuras (Demons) were churning the ocean in order to get “Amrita”, the first thing to come out was “Halahal” – the deadly poison. The toxicity of the poison could have destroyed all creation. However, Lord Shiva came to rescue and swallowed the poison. He did not digest it but kept it in his throat. As a result, the throat became blue and hence Shiva came to known as NeelKantha. This day is also celebrated as Maha Shivaratri.

S. Poila Boishakh/Bengali New Year (Noboborsho):

Pohela Boishakh has been the traditional New Year festival in the state, with the new year referred to as the Noboborsho.[6] The festival falls on 14 or 15 April, as West Bengal follows its traditional Bengali calendar, which adjusts for solar cycle differently than the

one used in Bangladesh where the festival falls on 14 April. Bengalis mark the day by taking a dip in rivers, then praying to Lakshmi and Ganesh. Traders start a new accounting year. Opening the accounting books is called Hal Khata. Some open the first page by drawing the Hindu symbol of auspiciousness called swastika. Some shopkeepers print goddess calendars with their address and distribute them to their clients. Notable events of West Bengal include the early morning cultural processions called Prabhat Pheri. These processions see dance troupes and children dressed up with floats, displaying their performance arts to songs of Rabindra Nath Tagore.





T. Makar Sankranti:

Makar Sankranti which is also known as Poush Sankranti in Bengal is an auspicious day in Hindu culture, women clean the houses and prepare delicious traditional rice-sweets called 'pithey'. Sweets like 'kheer', 'puli', 'gokul pithey', 'paatishapta', 'satipitha', etc, are prepared from the palm 'gur'. Til and rice being the two important ingredients of this festival, people have a special rice-centric meal on this day. On Makar Sankranti, people come for a ceremonial cleansing in the river Hooghly, near Kolkata. The festival of Makar Sankranti traditionally coincides with the beginning of the Sun's northward journey (the Uttarayan) when it enters the sign of Makar (the Capricorn). It falls on the 14th of January every year according to the Solar Calendar.





U. NavRoz:

Though the number of Parsis are dwindling every day in the city , there has been an effort to revive the Parsi culture through Parsi Food Festival during the time of the Parsi New Year – Navroz by the major Hotels of Kolkata. Navroz is New Year celebrations on March 21 every year for Parsis, followers of Zoroastrianism and various sects of Muslim, both Shias and Sunnis. In Kolkata the ‘new day’ festivities of Navroz are celebrated by the Parsis by visiting the Fire Temple or Agiyaris of Metcalfe Street in their traditional attire for Mukhtad and Jashan , a special prayer services to usher in the New Year. The prayers are followed by a special breakfast arranged by the 150 year old Calcutta Zorashtrian Community’s Religious and Charity Fund. The spread included Parsi traditional favourites, like akoori , chicken aleti paleti , a special sweet called Malido, Rawa and Fruits. Since 1907 , the Parsee Community of Kolkata celebrate Navroz by staging plays performed by 111 year old Calcutta Amateur Dramatic Club, a very integral part of the Community over here. In the evening , the families and friends bond over a Grand dinner bat Olpadvala Hall at Chowringhee. Some items on the menu are – Chicken Pulao, Gosht Dal, Fried Fish and chutney patty.



V. GURPURAB (Guru Nanak's Birthday):

Kolkata has a strong historical connection with Sikh Community . Gurdwara Bari Sangat is the most notable historical Gurdwara in Tullapati Cotton Street, In Kolkatta (West Bengal). The Gurdwara was visited by Guru Nanak Dev & Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib during their travels. So every year , Guru Nanakji's Birthday is celebrated with huge fervour and festival.



The birthday of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, comes in the month of November, but the date varies from year to year according to the lunar Indian calendar. The birthday celebrations last three days. Generally two days before the birthday, Akhand Path is performed in all the **Gurdwaras of the city** . One day before the birthday, a procession is organised which is led by the **Panj Piare** and the Palki (Palanquin) of **Guru Granth Sahib** and followed by teams of singers singing hymns, brass bands playing different tunes, '**Gatka**' (**martial art**) teams show their swordsmanship, and processionists singing the chorus. The procession passes through the main roads and streets of the town which are covered with buntings and decorated gates and the leaders inform the people of the message of Guru Nanak. On the anniversary day, the programme begins early in the morning at about 4 or 5 am with the singing of Asa-di-Var (morning hymns) and hymns from the Sikh scriptures followed by Katha (exposition of the scripture) and lectures and recitation of poems in praise of the Guru. The celebrations go on till about 2 pm.

After Ardas and distribution of **Karah Parsad**, a special Langar is served on the day of GURPURAB. Some Gurdwaras also held night prayer sessions. This begins around sunset when Rehras (evening prayer) is recited. This is followed by **Kirtan** till late in the night.

Sometimes a Kavi-darbar (poetic symposium) is also held to enable the poets to pay their tributes to the Guru in their own verses. At about 1:20 am, the actual time of the birth, the congregation starts singing **Gurbani**. The function ends about 2 am.

The Sikhs who cannot join the celebrations for some reason, or in places where there are no Gurdwaras, hold the ceremony in their own homes by performing Kirtan, Path, Ardas, Karah Parsad and Langar.



W. Chinese New Year:

New years are the time of celebration and are perhaps one of the most important festivals of the community. The Chinese New Year is one of the most important festivals of the Chinese calendar. The Chinese New Year Kolkata is also one of the many cultural

events that Kolkata boasts of. The Chinese population in Kolkata is mainly concentrated in two regions – the Territy Bazar or the “Old Chin town” and the Tangra (New China Town). Though the Chinese first came to Kolkata during 1780, Tong Achew, a trader had obtained land for setting up a sugar factory in Achipur near Budge Budge. With it, the Chinese population came to Kolkata. Very soon, they migrated to Kolkata and settled in the area of Territy Bazar and Tangra. The Chinese Community in Kolkata celebrates the New Year in a completely traditional way at **Territy Bazar and Tangra**.

During the Chinese New Year day, one can see the people getting ready for a lion dance with some others playing the drums in the Territy Bazar area . The dance starts with an offering in front of the Chinese temple. The group dances amidst bursting firecrackers – a sight to behold. These groups then make their way through the lanes and bye-lanes of Territy Bazar and go in front of business establishments, shops and local households.



An interesting event happens here. The local Chinese people put some money in a red envelope and tie it with a bunch of lettuce leaves and hang it from their windows or verandahs. The dancers dressed as lions then try to grab the money and the lettuce leaves. They form a human tower and the one dressed as the lion goes on top and grabs the money. There is an interesting folklore related to this. It says that long ago when the beast called Nian came out from the mountain tired and hungry, it tried to prey on the people on the eve of the New Year. An old man advised to frighten the beast using red cloth and the loud sounds of drums and cymbals. This explains celebration with drums and the lettuce leaves are given to the hungry lion for food. They burst firecrackers as a symbol to ward off the evil forces.



Although the number of Chinese is decreasing in Kolkata just like the other communities, they celebrate the rituals in a traditional way. Even the youngsters who are today not familiar with the traditional Mandarin or Cantonese language, they follow the rituals on the New Year. No festival is complete without food. The Chinese have a grand feast during this time. The dance procession that starts in the Territory Bazar usually ends at the Bow Barracks. Also, on Sunday next to the New Year, the Chinese community pays a visit to Achipur to pay tribute to the Tong Achew, their founder.

The Chinese are trying to keep their tradition and culture alive among the cosmopolitan Kolkata.





X. Janmasthanami :

"তালের বড়া খাইয়া নন্দ নাচিতে লাগিল"।



In Kolkata, Janmasthanami is very much associated with a traditional food delicacy of small round shaped fritters made of sugar palm called as “তালের বড়া”. Krishna Janmasthanami or Gokulasthanami is the grandest of all Vaishnavite festivals that celebrates the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu. It is observed according to the Hindu luni-solar calendar, on the eighth day (Ashtami) of the Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight) in Shraavana or Bhadrapad (depending on whether the calendar chooses the new moon or full moon day as the last day of the month), which overlaps with August/September of the Gregorian calendar.

Janmasthanami is observed with lots of enthusiasm at ISKCON Kolkata. The festival is always accompanied with pomp and gaiety. On this day, Sri Sri Radha Govindaji was beautifully and colourfully decorated, a new dress was also offered to the Lord. Kirtan and Krishna katha continued throughout the day. Several volunteers – young and old, men and women – were actively participating and were trying their best to make it a grand event.

Devotees had observed complete fast on this day. Since morning scores of people were thronging to the temple to take a glimpse of the Lord. Delicious sweet sabudana prasada was given to all who came.



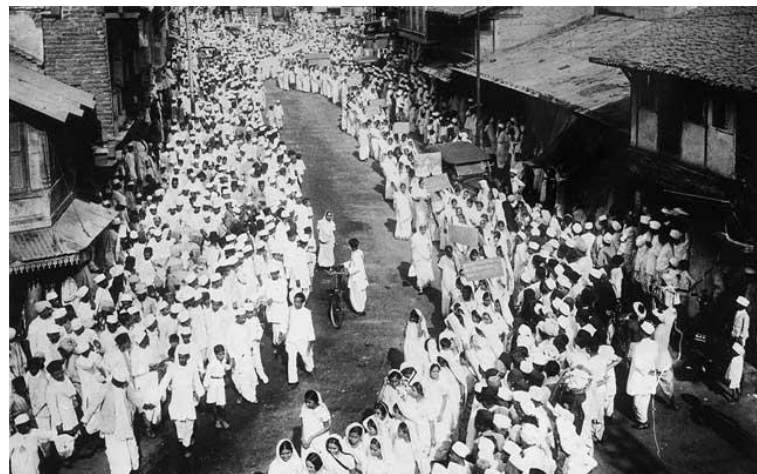
Y. Jhulan Yatra :

Jhulan Yatra is one of the most important festivals for the followers of Lord Krishna celebrated in the monsoon month of Shravan. Jhulan Yatra has been inspired from the swing pastimes of Krishna and his consort Radha during their romance in the idyllic pastoral groves of Vrindavan, where the divine lovers along with their cowherd friends and gopis took part in joyful swinging in the cool monsoon season. These pastimes are mentioned in literature such as the Bhagavata Purana, the Harivamsa, and the Gita Govinda, and the metaphor of the swing of the monsoon or 'Sawan Ke Jhuley' have since been used by poets and songwriters to describe the romantic feeling that permeates the rainy season in the Indian subcontinent.



Z. Raksha Bandhan, also Rakshabandhan

It is a popular, traditionally Hindu, annual rite, or ceremony, which is central to a festival of the same name, celebrated in India, Nepal and other parts of the Indian subcontinent, and among people around the world influenced by Hindu culture. On this day, sisters of all ages tie a talisman, or amulet, called the rakhi, around the wrists of their brothers, symbolically protecting them, receiving a gift in return, and traditionally investing the brothers with a share of the responsibility of their potential care. While it started off as being a religious observance, dating back to



mythical eras of gods and goddesses, in the history of Bengal during the year 1905, it played a significant event when, in the wake of the first partition of the state, Rakshabandhan transcended from being a religious ceremony to that of a socialist movement, to mark a symbolic protest. This is how Noble Laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore turned Rakshabandhan into a symbol of unity between Hindus and Muslims. Still now , Rakshabandhan in Kolkata is celebrated as a symbol of brotherhood between Hindus and Muslims.



AA. Bhai Phota

It is a Hindu festival. The Bhai Phota ritual begins at the moment when Amavasya ends. Protipod and Dwitiya are the tithes next to Amavasya. Similar to the Bhai Dooj festival of north India, it takes place during Diwali on the second or third day of the month of Kartik. The festival is centred on rituals where brothers and sisters honour each other.



BB. Buddha Purnima

Buddha Purnima or Buddha Jayanti is celebrated to mark the birth of Lord Buddha and falls on a full moon night usually in the month of April or May. In Kolkata, more than about 25,000 Buddhists offer prayer by visiting the nearby Buddhist Viharas and societies. Devotees of Buddha visit temples, light candles and incense sticks, pray and offer sweets and fruits before the statue of Lord Buddha. Sermons on the life and teachings of Buddha are held and attended by followers all over. People usually dress in white, do not consume non-vegetarian food and distribute kheer, as according to Buddhist lore, on this day a woman named Sujata had offered Buddha a bowl of milk porridge.



CC. Itu Puja

Itu Puja is the worship of Sun God in Agrahan month in Bengal. Itu Puja begins on the most recent day of Kartik month and is seen on all Sundays of the next month Agrahan. Sunday is viewed as propitious for satisfying Surya. The puja was initially implied or the conservation of seeds of the winter crops. The puja is performed by both hitched and unmarried ladies. Once embraced, a lady proceeds with its execution until her demise or until the point that she passes it on to her girl or little girl in law. A bowl loaded with earth and a pot loaded with water are kept alongside other family unit gods amid the puja.



DD. Basanti Puja

Markandeya Purana states that King Surath had lost his kingdom and during his exile, he wandered in the forests. During his period of abandonment, he met Samadhi Vaishya, who also had lost his kingdom. In the jungle, they met Medha Muni, who advised them to perform Basanti Durga Puja, to acquire their lost kingdom. Forthwith, the duo performed the ritual and regained their kingdom. Basanti Puja- as the name suggests- is observed in the season of Spring (Basant is the Hindi name of Spring). This puja is performed in the month of Chaitra in Bengali calendar which corresponds to March-April of English calendar. Basanti Puja is an ageold Bengali festival when Goddess Durga is worshiped by Bengali community in Kolkata as well as other parts of India where Bengali families live in large numbers. However, Basanti Durga Puja has lost its utmost importance since the time when Lord Rama is believed to have done untimely Durga Puja in Autumn – the famous Shardiya Durga Puja, celebrated in the Months of Ashwin or Kartik (September-October) at the same time when Navratri is celebrated in other parts of India.

EE. Rabindrajayanti - Rabindra Jayanti

It is an annually celebrated cultural festival, prevalent among Bengalis around the world, in the remembrance of Rabindranath Tagore's birthday anniversary. It is celebrated in early May, on the 25th day of the Bengali month of Boishakh, since Tagore was born on this day of the year 1268 (1861 AD) of the Bengali calendar. Every year, numerous cultural programmes & events, such as : Kabipranam – the songs (Rabindra Sangeet), poetries, dances and dramas, written and composed by Tagore, are organised in this

particular day, by various schools, colleges & universities of Bengal, and also celebrated by different groups abroad, as a tribute to Tagore and his works. Throughout the globe, Tagore's birth anniversary is largely celebrated at Jorasanko Thakurbari , Kabiguru Rabindranath Thakur's ancestral home where like a pilgrim many Bengalis offer their respect.



FF. Independence Day

The Indian Independence Day marks the birth of a Nation free from the rule of its colonial masters. The tricolour was first hoisted on the midnight of August 15, 1947 by the freedom fighters and the leaders of free India to celebrate the beginning of a new era. Freedom is a moment of pride and glory; it's a victory of several brave men & women who fought tirelessly to set their motherland free from the clutches of imposers. In August and September of 1947, away from the celebration of Independence, Gandhi chose to be in Kolkata with some of his followers to calm the rioters down when the city was gripped with communal violence. In 2009, when the then State governor Gopal Krishna Gandhi visited the place, he asked the samiti to put on display some of the objects used by the Mahatma. Since then, it has been run as a small 'museum' by the samiti and objects like the spinning wheel, cap, 'kharam', pillow and mattress used by the Mahatma during his stay are on display in one of the rooms, an official of the samiti said.



GG. Netaji Jayanti

Every year, on 23rd January, Netaji birthday is celebrated throughout the state. It is now declared as the 'National Patriotism Day'. Holding portraits of Netaji and singing patriotic songs, people in large numbers took part in "prabhat pheris" (morning processions) in different parts of the state. Floral tributes were paid to the freedom fighter throughout the city. People from all walks of life visited Netaji Bhawan in the city since early in the morning to pay their homage.



9. TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

A. The Hub of Spiritual and Religious Renaissance –

"All great movements of life in India have begun with a new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity"

In the 19th Century there came an awakening of thought opening up new horizons in Bengal and also in the whole of India. Beginning with the reform of certain aspects of religious and social life, this awakening, in course of time, affected every aspect of social, economic, cultural and political life of the country. From the late 18th century, a number of European and Indian scholars began the study of ancient India's philosophy, science, religions and literature. This growing knowledge of India's past gave to the Indian people a sense of pride in their civilization. It also helped the reformers in their work of religious and social reforms. In their struggle against social evils, superstitions and inhuman practices and customs, the reformers used the authority of the ancient texts. While doing so, most of them based themselves on reason rather than mere belief and faith. Thus, Indian religious and social reformers made use of their knowledge of western ideas as well as of ancient learning.

This revolution was brought by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first modern Man of India. Ram Mohan Roy was convinced that to purify Hindu religion of the evils that had crept into it, it was necessary to bring to the knowledge of the people the original texts of their religion. For this purpose, he took up the hard and patient job of publishing the Bengali translations of the Vedas and Upanishads. He advocated belief in a universal religion based on the principle of one supreme God. He condemned idol-worship and the rites and rituals. He introduced Brahma Samaj.

- a. **Brahma Samaj**-His greatest achievement in the field of religious reform was the setting up of the Brahma Sabha in 1828 and the Brahma Samaj was the first important organization of religious reforms. It forbade idol-worship and discarded meaningless rites and rituals. The Samaj also forbade its members from attacking any religion. The greatest achievement in the field of social reform was the abolition of Sati in 1829. He had seen how the wife of his elder brother was forced to commit Sati. His campaign against Sati aroused the opposition of the orthodox Hindus who bitterly attacked him. Ram Mohan Roy realized that the practice of sati was due to the extremely low position of Hindu women. He advocated the abolition of polygamy, and wanted women to be educated and given the right to inherit property. The influence of Brahma Samaj spread and branches of the Samaj were opened



Symbol of Brahma Samaj

in different parts of the country. The two most prominent leader of the Brahmo Samaj were Debendranath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. To spread the message of Brahmo Samaj Keshab Chandra Sen travelled throughout Madras and Bombay presidencies and, later, the northern India.

In 1866, there was a split in the Brahmo Samaj when Keshab Chandra Sen and his group held views which were more radical than those of the original Brahmo Samajists. They proclaimed freedom from the bondage of caste and customs, and from the authority of scriptures. They advocated and performed inter-caste marriages and widow remarriages, opposed the custom of purdah and condemned caste divisions. They attacked caste rigidity, started taking their food with the people of the so-called lower castes and other religions, opposed restrictions about food and drink, devoted their life to the spread of education and condemned the old Hindu opposition to sea voyages. This movement influenced similar movements of reforms in other parts of the country. While this group rose in prominence, the influence of the other group, which showed little interest in social reforms, declined.

- b. Ramkrishna Mission** -Ramakrishna mission (RKM) is a Hindu religious and spiritual organisation which forms the core of a worldwide spiritual movement known as the Ramakrishna Movement or the Vedanta Movement. The mission is named after and inspired by the Indian saint Ramakrishna Paramahansa and founded by Ramakrishna's chief disciple Swami Vivekananda on 1 May 1897. The organisation mainly propagates the Hindu philosophy of Vedanta—Advaita Vedanta and four yogic ideals—jnana, bhakti, karma, and Raja Yoga.



Apart from religious and spiritual teaching the organisation carries out extensive educational and philanthropic work in India. This aspect came to be a feature of many other Hindu movements. The mission bases its work on the principles of karma yoga, the principle of selfless work done with dedication to God. The Ramakrishna Mission has centres around the world and publishes many important Hindu texts. It is affiliated with the monastic organisation. Vivekananda was greatly influenced by his guru (teacher) Ramakrishna.

- c. **Rishi Aurobindo and Sri Aurobindo Society** -Sri Aurobindo (born Aurobindo Ghose; 15 August 1872 – 5 December 1950) was an Indian philosopher, yogi, guru, poet, and nationalist. He joined the Indian movement for independence from British rule, for a while was one of its influential leaders and then became a spiritual reformer, introducing his visions on human progress and spiritual evolution. Sri Aurobindo's close spiritual collaborator, Mirra Alfassa (b. Alfassa), came to be known as The Mother. She was a French national, born in Paris on 21 February 1878. In her 20s she studied occultism with Max Theon. Along with her husband, Paul Richard, she went to Pondicherry on 29 March 1914, and finally settled there in 1920. Sri Aurobindo considered her his spiritual equal and collaborator. After 24 November 1926, when Sri Aurobindo retired into seclusion, he left it to her to plan, build and run the ashram, the community of disciples which had gathered around them. Sometime later, when families with children joined the ashram, she established and supervised the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education with its experiments in the field of education. When he died in 1950, she continued their spiritual work, directed the ashram, and guided their disciples.

Sri Aurobindo's concept of the Integral Yoga system is described in his books, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *The Life Divine*. *The Life Divine* is a compilation of essays published serially in *Arya*. Sri Aurobindo argues that divine Brahman manifests as empirical reality through *līlā*, or divine play. Instead of positing that the world we experience is an illusion

(*māyā*), Aurobindo argues that world can evolve and become a new world with new species, far above the human species just as human species have evolved after the animal species. As such he argued that the end goal of spiritual practice could not merely be a liberation from the world into *Samadhi* but would also be that of descent of the Divine into the world in order to transform it into a Divine existence. Thus, this constituted the purpose of Integral Yoga.[54] Regarding the involution of consciousness in matter, he wrote that: "This descent, this sacrifice of the Purusha, the Divine Soul submitting itself to Force and Matter so that it may inform and illuminate them is the seed of redemption of this world of Inconscience and Ignorance."

Sri Aurobindo believed that Darwinism merely describes a phenomenon of the evolution of matter into life, but does not explain the reason behind it, while he finds life to be already present in matter, because all of existence is a manifestation of Brahman. He argues that nature (which he interpreted as divine) has evolved life out of matter and the mind out of life. All of existence, he argues, is attempting to manifest to the level of the supermind – that evolution had a purpose. He stated that he found the task of understanding the nature of reality arduous and difficult to justify by immediate tangible results.



- d. **Bharat Sevashram Sangha** -"Bharat Sevashram Sangha" is a spiritual organization of monks and selfless workers devoted to the service of the country, humanity and Hinduism. It was founded in 1917 by the illustrious patriot and saint **Acharya Srimat Swami Pranavanandaji Maharaj**. It is the most famous and most respected philanthropic and charitable organization with non-sectarian, non-communal and non-political character and outlook, the reputation of which has now spread all over the world for its humanitarian and spiritual services.

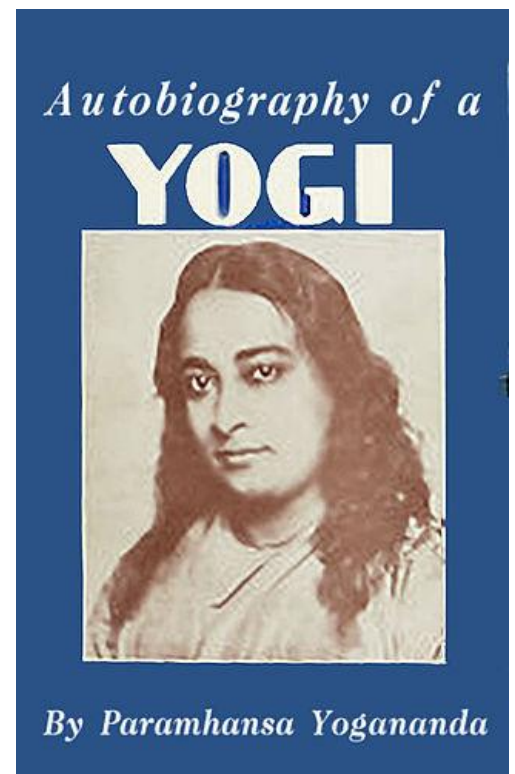


The Sangha has hundreds of Ashrams in India and other countries like UK, Canada, Bangladesh, Nepal, USA, Fiji, Guyana and the Caribbean islands. The Sangha has initiated several missions to African states, Malaysia, and Indonesia. In the recent past the Sangha monks went with the peace building delegations to Syria, Lebanon, Italy and Japan. The Sangha has gracefully gained affiliation with various UN departments.

The Bharat Sevashram Sangha is a traditional orthodox Hindu monastic organization, headquartered in Kolkata India. The social welfare activities of the Sangha's includes but not limited to the program of free education and health, disaster relief and indigenous people welfare. All projects are funded through individual public donation and driven by intense sacrifice and dedication of the monks and approved through sustainable development strategies.



- e. **Kriya Yoga - Paramahansa Yogananda** – Born as Mukunda Lal Ghosh; January 5, 1893 – March 7, 1952, he was an Indian monk, yogi and guru who introduced millions to the teachings of meditation and Kriya Yoga



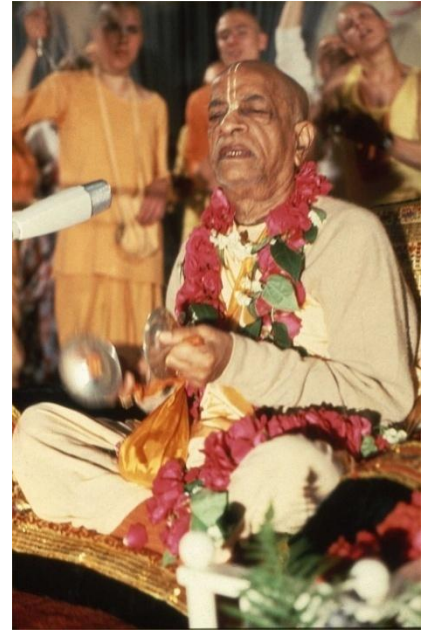
through his organization Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) / Yogoda Satsanga Society (YSS) of India, and who lived his last 32 years in America. A chief disciple of the Bengali yoga guru Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, he was sent by his lineage to spread the teachings of yoga to the West, to prove the unity between Eastern and Western religions and to preach a balance between Western material growth and Indian spirituality. His long-standing influence in the American yoga movement, and especially the yoga culture of Los Angeles, led him to be considered by yoga experts as the "Father of Yoga in the West."

Yogananda was the first major Indian teacher to settle in America, and the first prominent Indian to be hosted in the White House (by President Calvin Coolidge in 1927); his early acclaim led to him being dubbed "the 20th century's first superstar guru," by the Los Angeles Times. Arriving in Boston in 1920, he embarked on a successful transcontinental speaking tour before settling in Los Angeles in 1925. For the next two and a half decades, he gained local fame as well as expanded his influence worldwide: he created a monastic order and trained disciples, went on teaching-tours, bought properties for his organization in various California locales, and initiated thousands into Kriya Yoga. By 1952, SRF had over 100 centers in both India and the US; today, they have groups in nearly every major American city. His "plain living and high thinking" principles attracted people from all backgrounds among his followers.

He published his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* in 1946 to critical and commercial acclaim; since its first publishing, it has sold over four million copies, with HarperSan Francisco listing it as one of the "100 best spiritual books of the 20th Century". Former Apple CEO Steve Jobs had ordered 500 copies of the book for his own memorial, for each guest to be given a copy. The book has been regularly reprinted and is known as "the book that changed the lives of millions." A 2014 documentary, *Awake: The Life of Yogananda*, won multiple awards at film festivals around the world. His continued legacy around the world, remaining a leading figure in Western spirituality to the current day, led authors such as Philip Goldberg to consider him "the best known and most beloved of all Indian spiritual teachers who have come to the West....through the strength of his character and his skillful transmission of perennial wisdom, he showed the way for millions to transcend barriers to the liberation of the soul."

- f. **ISKON and Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami (IAST: Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhakti-vedānta Svāmī; 1 September 1896 – 14 November 1977)** or Srila Prabhupada, born Abhay Charan De, was an Indian spiritual teacher and the founder-preceptor of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), commonly known as the "Hare Krishna Movement". Members of the ISKCON movement view Bhaktivedānta Swāmi as a representative and messenger of Krishna Chaitanya.

Appearing in Kolkata (then called Calcutta), he was educated at the Scottish Church College there. Before adopting the life of a novice renunciate (vanaprastha) in 1950, he was married with children and owned a small pharmaceutical business. In 1959 he took a vow of renunciation (sannyasa) and started writing commentaries on Vaishnava scriptures. In his later years, as a travelling Vaishnava monk, he became an influential communicator of Gaudiya Vaishnava theology to India and specifically to the West through his leadership of ISKCON, founded in 1966. As the founder of ISKCON, he "emerged as a major figure of the Western counterculture, initiating thousands of young Americans." He was criticized by anti-cult groups, but was well regarded by religious scholars,



such as J. Stillson Judah, Harvey Cox, Larry Shinn and Thomas Hopkins, who praised Bhaktivedānta Swāmi's translations and defended the group against distorted media images and misinterpretations. Religious leaders from other Gaudiya Vaishnava institutions have also given him credit for his achievements.

He has been described as a charismatic leader who was successful in acquiring followers in many countries including the United States, Europe and India. His mission was to propagate throughout the world Gaudiya Vaishnavism, a school of Vaishnavite Hinduism that had been taught to him by his guru, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati. After his disappearance in 1977, ISKCON, the society he founded based on a form of Hindu Krishnaism using the Bhagavata Purana as a central scripture, continued to grow. In February 2014, ISKCON's news agency reported reaching a milestone of distributing over half a billion of his books since 1965. His translation of and commentary on the Bhagavad Gītā, titled Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, is considered by ISKCON adherents and many Vedic scholars as the finest translation into the English Language of Vaishnavism literary works.

- g. **The Gaudiya Mission** is a Gaudiya Vaishnava monastic and missionary organization has been registered since March 1940 in Calcutta, British India. Its founder Acharya is Brahmachari Ananta Vasudev Prabhu (Aug 25, 1895 — March 8, 1958 alias **Bhakti Prasad Puri Maharaja** after accepting sannyasa in 1939. The Gaudiya Mission is the government registered name of Sri Gaudiya Math, a famous organization that existed from 1920 to 1937. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati selected Ananta Vasudev Prabhu as his successor, but sadly after Prabhupad disappeared Kuñjabihari Vidyabusana (Kunja Babu), the



secretary and the president of the Sri Gaudiya Math did not agree with the decision and separated his own branch (the "Sri Chaitanya Math" branch in Mayapur). Thus, Ananta Vasudev Prabhu later gave up his post of successor and was forced to establish a new organization (de facto renamed the Gaudiya Math) became known as the Gaudiya Mission. The 64 Gaudiya Math centers were divided into two groups in 1948 and Gaudiya Mission kept the central temple "Sri Gaudiya Math" with museum at Bagbazar in Kolkata, the headquarter of Mission up to the present day.

Later Ananta Vasudev Prabhu started to criticize some of the teachings of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, married, settled in Vrindavan, joined the "Babajis" and translated into Bengali 62 paper of the six Goswamis of Vrindavana, classical Gaudiya Vaishnava works. After him, the mission was headed by Bhakti Keval Audulaumi (from 1953 to 1982). Next acharyas became Bhakti Srirup Bhagavat (1982—1993) and Bhakti Suhrid Paribrajak (1993—2018). The present acharya is Bhakti Sundar Sanyasi Maharaj.



h. Missionaries of Charity - The Missionaries of Charity (Latin: Missionariarum a Caritate) is



a Catholic (Latin Church) religious congregation established in 1950 by Mother Teresa, now known in the Catholic Church as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. In 2020 it consisted of 5,167 religious sisters. Members of the order designate their affiliation using the order's initials, "M.C." A member of the congregation must adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and the fourth vow, to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor." Today, the order consists of both

contemplative and active branches in several countries.

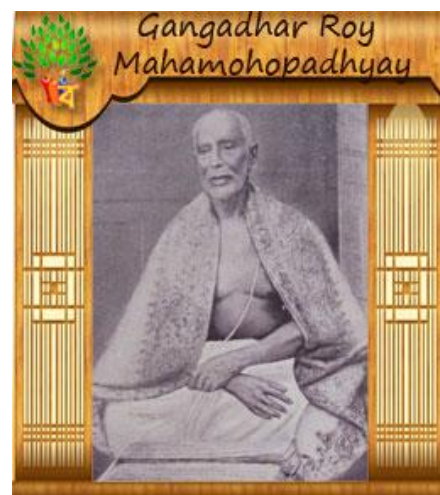
Missionaries care for those who include refugees, former prostitutes, the mentally ill, sick children, abandoned children, lepers, people with AIDS, the aged, and convalescent. They have schools that are run by volunteers to teach abandoned street children and run soup kitchens as well as other services according to the community needs. These services are provided, without charge, to people regardless of their religion or social status.

- i. **Mahabodhi Society-** The Maha Bodhi Society is a South Asian Buddhist society founded by the Sri Lankan Buddhist leader Anagarika Dharmapala and the British journalist and poet Sir Edwin Arnold. The organization's self-stated initial efforts were for the resuscitation of Buddhism in India, and restoring the ancient Buddhist shrines at Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinara. Although some Indians had remained culturally Buddhist for centuries after the decline of Buddhist philosophy, they did not self-identify as "Buddhist". The Maha Bodhi Society renewed interest in Buddhism, and spawned the Ladakh Buddhist Association, All Assam Buddhist Association, and Himalayan Buddhist Society, as well as laying the grounds for the Dalit Buddhist movement. The Mahabodhi Society at Colombo was founded in 1891 but its offices were moved to Calcutta the following year. One of its primary aims was the restoration of the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, the chief of the four ancient Holy sites to Buddhist control. To accomplish this Dharmapala initiated a lawsuit against the Brahmin priests who had held control of the site for centuries. After a protracted struggle this was successful with the partial restoration of the site to the management of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1949.



B. Kolkata - The hub of Ayurvedic Renaissance

The period of British rule from 1757 to 1900 is marked by major socio-political changes and scientific breakthroughs that impacted medical systems, institutions, and practitioners in India. Ayurveda or Unani, both the practices use nature as the centre of their healing process. The two medical practices rely on a holistic understanding of the human life and try to connect the body's constitution and life forces with nature. Ancient Indian medical tradition, Ayurveda is perhaps the longest unbroken health care tradition in the world. Though Unani or Greco-Arabic system



of medicine was patronized by the Muslim rulers of India from the 12th century CE, some of the Mughal rulers were sympathetic towards Ayurveda and so the practice of this Indian system of medicine was continued along with Unani during Mughal period. With the arrival of the British in the eighteenth century came the western medicine loaded with human anatomy and physiology and slowly Ayurveda felt the neglect by the British medical authorities in its continuation. However, notwithstanding the patronization of western medicine by colonial rulers Ayurveda survived and continued among the masses in Bengal. The Ayurvedic physicians of Bengal were popularly known as kavirāja: the two words – Vaidya and Kavirāja are synonymous to “Pundit “and ‘Physician’.

After the foundation of the Calcutta Medical College in 1835, Ayurvedic institutions faced difficulty due to loss of official patronage and paucity of resources. Eminent Ayurvedic practitioners like **Gangadhara Ray** (1789-1885) and **Gangaprasad Sen** (1824-1896) and their students upheld the prestige of indigenous medicine in Bengal.

Gangadhara Ray was born in 1789 at a village of Jessore and studied Ayurvedic medicine in the *tol* of Ramakanta Sen. After the completion of his studies he came to practice in Kolkata/ Calcutta because he wanted to publish the famous Sanskrit text *Charaka-Samhita* and had come to know that a wealthy resident of Calcutta owned a flawless copy of that text. He stayed in Calcutta from 1819 to 1835 and left the city because the climate had an adverse impact on his health. Gangadhara settled at Shaidabad (Berhampore) and became a Court physician of the Nawab of Murshidabad. He opened a *tol* in his house to train pupils. Gangadhara became famous for his skill in diagnosis by the reading of pulse and also in the therapeutic use of poison. He made immense contributions to Ayurvedic scholarship by writing commentaries in Sanskrit texts and the most famous was *Jalpakaalpataru*, a commentary on Charaka. He died in 1885, but his students continued his work.

A path breaking incident took place in the mid 19th century Kolkata after the formation of Calcutta Medical College. Pandit Madhusudan Gupta - (1800 – 15 November 1856) was a Bengali Brahmin translator and Ayurvedic practitioner who was also trained in Western medicine and is credited with having performed India's first human dissection at Calcutta Medical College (CMC) in 1836, almost 3,000 years after Susruta.

Born into a Vaidya family, he studied Ayurvedic medicine at the Sanskrit College and progressed to teacher. Here, he began translations of a number of English texts into Sanskrit, including Hooper's *Anatomists' Ved-mecum*. In addition, he attended anatomy and medicine lectures, becoming familiar with the developing clinical-anatomical medicine of Europe.

In 1835, he was transferred to the new CMC, where he was fundamental in gathering Indian support for practical anatomy and in breaking down Hindu taboos on touching the dead, consequently taking sole responsibility for the first human dissection, performed under the guidance of Professor Henry Goodeve and assisted by four other Hindu students. Controversies regarding the exact date of the first procedure, whether other students had performed it before

and whether a military salute was given, remain. Despite any discrepancies, this singular act of dissection has become symbolic of the move of western medicine into India.



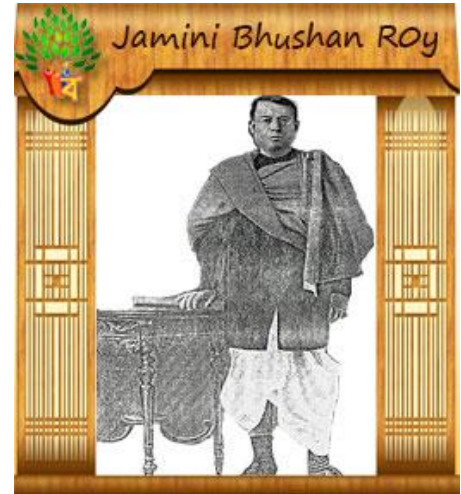
Amongst his student is the great **Kaviraja Ganga Prasad Sen**. The pioneer Kaviraja of Kolkata who spearheaded the Ayurvedic movement in Kolkata was **Kaviraja GangaPrasad Sen**. History remembers Gangaprasad Sen as the harbinger of the Ayurveda Renaissance in India. He began practice in Kolkata at the age of 19 as his father Kaviraj Nilambar Sen already practised Ayurveda from their house at Kumortuly, Baghbazaar. His tablet – Nilambar Bari or Batika was already very popular. Gangaprasad Sen maintained the same tradition and even extended it to Europe and America. He was probably was the first person to export Ayurvedic medicine to Europe

and America. He introduced the fixed consultation fee which equaled or surpassed the fee of the contemporary British physicians practicing in Calcutta. In the same way he introduced a fixed price list of ayurvedic medicines and advertised the same in newspapers as was the norm for western medicine. He was the first to publish a Ayurvedic journal in Bengali named Ayurveda Sanjivini for the purpose of upholding the stature of ayurvedic medicine. He established a tol in his home where students would be provided free room and boarding along with instructions in Ayurveda.

During their initial years, the European doctors had to take help from the local Kavirajas to understand the diagnoses and treatments for diseases that were not in the least familiar to them. This was the late eighteenth century, Calcutta was fast becoming a hub for settlements and trading activities. Open drains, marshy lands, mosquito-borne fevers and the general lack of initiatives in the field of public health issues soon gave rise to an exorbitant mortality rate. Herein, European doctors cashed in the fear of diseases and started treating the rich and the elite for an expensive fee of one gold coin per visit. Soon, western medicine started picking up in popularity among the elite and the Kavirajas were often held guilty for deaths caused by administering Ayurvedic potions. The colonial government held the opinion that western medicine was more 'scientific' and 'sophisticated'. The Ayurveda Renaissance changed the course of this school of thought. Gangaprasad Sen and his students elevated the Ayurvedic medicines to the same stature as the allopathic medicine and attracted public interest to it in a way that brought back faith to the age-old science of Ayurveda. Bijoyratna Sen, a student of Gangaprasad Sen continued the work of his teacher in popularizing Ayurveda and encouraged the cooperation of traditional and western medical system. He even helped start a college where both the systems of medicines were taught side by side.

A student of Gangaprasad Sen, **Bijoyratna Sen** translated one of the three classic texts of Ayurveda, Astangahrdaya into Bengali. He received his education in a tol but he learned English and acquired some knowledge of allopathy. He set a trend for co-operation between allopathy and Ayurveda which was carried on by his student **Jaminibhusan Ray**.

Jaminibhusan Ray founded the Astanga Ayurveda College and Hospital in 1916. His aim was to give parallel instructions in western anatomy, physiology, surgery and midwifery to the students of Ayurveda. The establishment of the **All India Ayurvedic Congress** in 1907 provided impetus to Ayurvedic medicine. The National University of **Bengal Gaudiya Sarvavidyayatna** was established in 1921 as part of the non co-operation movement. It included an Ayurvedic medical wing, known as the Vaidya Shastra Pitha. In 1922 the Gobinda Sundari Ayurvedic College was started by **Kaviraja Ramchandra Mallick** who was patronized by the Maharaja of Kasimbazar, Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy. It provided parallel instructions in western medicine and Ayurveda. Similar courses of study were introduced in the Vishwanatha Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya established in 1932 by Kaviraja Gananath Sen.



The Ayurvedic movement successfully established a parallel set of institutions devoted to indigenous and western learning. But the movement failed to rejuvenate indigenous medicine or give it an official status equal to that of western medicine. Moreover, internal conflicts which ensued between the protagonists of the Shuddha or pure system of traditional Ayurveda and the advocates for the integration of indigenous and western systems of medicine gradually weakened the movement and continued to exist even in the post 1947 period

Some of the important Ayurvedic Medicine Manufacturing Units-

1. **CK Sen and Co - Chandrakishore Sen**, a junior contemporary of Gangadhara, started a small dispensary in Calcutta in 1878 to sell medicines at cheap rates. Within 20 years, CK Sen and Co. became a large-scale manufacturing concern. Jabakusum Taila is most important product of C.K Sen & Co. The excellent oil is invaluable in curing headache, vertigo, insomnia and nervous exhaustion due to over much brain work. Besides keeping the head cool, it replenishes and increases concentration power and help to concentrate more in mind works continuously for hours without feeling fagged. Jabakusum taila restores the spirit and removes fatigue and languor. Beside that , Basanta Malati is another important product of CK Sen and Co.



2. In 1884 **N.N Sen and Co. Private Limited** was founded in Calcutta by Nagendra Nath Sen of Kalna , Burdwan which was famous for Kesharanjan Taila. Even after passing out from Camble Medical College ,Calcutta and getting educated from London and Paris he practised following Ayurvedic procedure and his pharmacy manufactured varieties types of medicine from 18/1 and 19 Lower Circular Road,Calcutta.

3. **Maha Mahopadhyaya Gana Nath Sen**, born in Varanasi, an M.A combined the allopathic and ayurvedic procedure for the purpose of manufacturing suitable medicine in India. In 1914, he established Kalpataru Ayurvedic Works in Calcutta. In 1932, he founded Viswanath Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya & Chikitsalaya.



4. Other similar pharmaceutical concerns were **Sakti Aushadhalaya** of Dhaka which was founded by **Mathuramohan Chakroborty** in 1901.

5. **Sadhana Ausadhalaya** by **Jogesh Chandra Ghosh** - Sadhana Aushadhalaya was founded



by the martyred Ayurveda physician and philanthropist **Jogesh Chandra Ghosh** in 1914. Ghosh was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and was also a member of the American Chemical Society. He was the student of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy . His aim in forming the herbal medical drugstore was to promote natural remedies and offer affordable, accessible medicine to the poor people of the country. During the East

Pakistan genocide in 1964, Ghosh had sheltered several Bengali Hindu families of his neighbourhood in Sadhana's factory in Gandaria. In 1971, when the Pakistani Army began a systematic murder of the intellectual population of the country, all the Hindu staff of the drugstore fled the country to seek refuge in India but Ghosh was adamant about his decision to stay back. On April 4, the Pakistani occupying forces stormed the factory premises and charged the 84-year old Ghosh with providing shelter to rebels before shooting him



dead. His son, Dr Naresh Chandra Ghosh, revived Shadhana Aushadhalaya after the end of the Liberation War. Currently, the factory is run by Jogesh Chandra Ghosh's

granddaughters who live in Kolkata but visit the factory from time to time to ensure its smooth operation.

Sadhana Ausadhalaya has about 30 centres (shops) in Kolkata about 68 in Bangladesh but because of lack of supply of medicines these stores are in deplorable conditions. At one point of time it used to sell about 400 Ayurvedic Items. The famous products are – Makardhaza, Swarna Sindur which was made from pure gold with other combination, Bisudya Chavan prayas, Sukra Sanjiban, Abala Bandhab jog.

Haran Chandra Mukhopadhyaya of Rajsahi (now in Bangladesh) established **Haran Ayurvediya Aushadhalaya** in 1856. Its Head Office was in 118, Chitpore Road and Branch Office at 227, Harrison Road, Calcutta. Its factory was situated at Gelegram, Bankura. It was one of the earliest Ayurvedic concern in Bengal.

- 6. Dabur India Limited- India's most important Ayurvedic House also owes its origin in Kolkata.** In 1884, an Ayurvedic practitioner Dr. S. K. Burman launched his mission to make health care products in Calcutta. He devised medicines for diseases like cholera and malaria. He went on to set up Dabur India Ltd in 1884 to mass-produce his Ayurvedic formulations. Standing by this thought the Burmans established one of the world's leading Ayurved company, Dabur India Ltd. Most of his patients from villages named as "Dakhtar Burmam" which originally came from "Da" from Dakhtar and "Bur" from Burmam. Dabur India Ltd. is one of the leading FMCG companies in India today. Building on a legacy of quality and experience of over 133 years, Dabur is India's most trusted name and the world's largest Ayurvedic and Natural Health Care Company. Dabur's FMCG portfolio includes five flagship brands with distinct brand identities – Dabur as the master brand for natural healthcare products, Vatika for premium personal care, Hajmola for digestives, Réal for fruit juices and beverages and Fem for fairness bleaches and skin care products.

With the growing popularity of Dabur products, Dr. Burman expanded his operations in 1896 by **setting up a manufacturing plant** for mass production of formulations. Dabur entered the specialized area of nature-based Ayurvedic medicines, for which standardized drugs are not available in the market. In the 1920s The need to develop scientific processes and quality checks for mass production of traditional Ayurvedic medicines led to **the establishment of research laboratories**. The seventies were a time for great change in the business environment; for Dabur, it was time to reconfigure the way it reached out to consumers. After nearly a century of Dabur's birth in the bylanes of Calcutta (now Kolkata), the Burman family decided to shift base to Delhi. The Burmans were among the first business families in India to separate ownership from management when they handed over the management of the company to professionals in 1998. With changing demands of business and to inculcate a spirit of corporate governance, the Burman family inducted professional to manage the company.

7. One of India's most respected Companies, Shree Baidyanath Ayurved Bhawan Pvt. Ltd. (Kolkata), popularly known as Baidyanath, is the acknowledged leader of Ayurvedic know-how. Established in 1917, the Company has played a pioneering role in re-establishing ancient knowledge with modern research and manufacturing techniques. Shree Baidyanath Ayurved Bhawan was founded in 1917 by late Pt. Ram Dayal Joshi with a vision of providing effective and readily available medicines to the population of India. The legacy is forever etched in the company in the form of its strive to achieve excellence and set new standards.

The oldest and pioneer of Ayurvedic Medicine, Baidyanath Ayurveda has also been evolving with changes of times while addressing the current needs of today's patients and focusing on wide spread availability of the quality medicines in affordable prices.

8. Branolia Chemical Works started operations in Calcutta in 1922 on the call of Swadeshi under the ambit of the National Independence movement. Inspired by the credo of Swadeshi, two brothers Shri Dharendra Chandra Majumdar and Shri Pran Kumar Majumdar founded the Branolia Chemical Works in 1922 along with another sister concern Jugabarta Press. A small herbal medicine manufacturing unit was set up at Sealdah, Calcutta. The flagship product of Branolia Chemical Works was the brahmi based Branolia, a tonic for improving mental function and general health. Branolia Chemical Works subsequently shifted to Maharaja Thakur Road, Dhakuria. In early 1990s it shifted to its present state of the art manufacturing and testing facility at Kasba Industrial Area, Kolkata. Over the years Branolia Chemicals has added to its portfolio a number of herbal products which have been well received. They include Bitocough (for cough and cold), Livonia (for better digestive outcomes) and Bellytone (to control constipation).

Beside this big names there are many small shops selling Ayurvedic products in a lane near **Purna Cinema in Bhowanipur** which hosts generations old Ayurvedic shops. Close to Kali Sports and Samur Sports on Bhowanipore, one can find several shops selling Ayurvedic and Unani herbs, medicines and products. Look out for the shops – **Adi Ambica, Ambica and great Ambica** – most of them are generations old and have been around since before Independence. Even today, you will find in-house Ayurveda doctors offering consultations for every kind of body state. Ayurvedic herbs have proved to be helpful in a lot of cases.

9. Emami Group- The inception of Emami Group took place in the mid 1970s when two childhood friends, R S Agarwal and R S Goenka, left their management jobs with the Birla Group to set up Kemco Chemicals, an Ayurvedic medicine and cosmetic manufacturing unit in Kolkata in 1974. At that time the Indian FMCG market was still dominated by multinationals. The company was established with modest capital of Rs. 20,000 and started manufacturing cosmetic products as well as Ayurvedic medicines under the brand name of Emami from a small factory in Kolkata, targeting sales at the Indian middle class. In the early days the founders personally sold their cosmetics from shop to shop, using

hand-pulled rickshaws. They soon established recurring consumer demand, and gradually hired additional staff. A chain of distributors was established and the sale of Emami products spread from West Bengal to rest of Eastern India and gradually to other states. Emami Talcum, Emami Vanishing Cream and Emami Cold Cream sold well. The company's marketing techniques were to sell dreams of beauty to Indian women using radio and TV advertising. In 1978, Agarwal acquired Himani Ltd, a privately owned cosmetics company with a factory in Kolkata. The business of Himani was almost 100 years old, although it had only been incorporated in 1949 as a Private Ltd. Company; it had a good brand equity in Eastern India, but was in financial trouble. Agarwal and Goenka managed to restore it to profit, at considerable risk considering the small capital base of their own company at the time; this later proved to be the turning point for their business. Agarwal decided to produce health care items and toiletries based on Ayurvedic preparation in the Himani factory. Ten years after commencement of the company, it launched Boroplus Antiseptic Cream under the Himani umbrella in 1984. This became a flagship brand and was extended to other products such as Boroplus Prickly Heat Powder. Emami brands started selling in all states of North, East and West India. Today Boroplus is not only the largest selling antiseptic cream in India but also in Russia, Ukraine, and Nepal. In the 1990s, Emami launches another flagship brand under the Himani Umbrella, Navratna Cool Oil, and expanded production by opening its second factory, at Pondicherry. The introduction of new brands continued and the company extended its distribution network to South India, with Navratna spearheading the process. In 1995, the partnership firm Kemco Chemicals was converted into a Public Limited Company under the name Emami Ltd. In 1998, Himani Ltd was merged into Emami Ltd. In 2006 the company decided to introduce a Health Care Division and a number of new brands of Ayurvedic OTC medicines. Among the brands created by the company, annual sales of Navratna are at Rs. 3 billion followed by Boroplus at Rs. 2.50 billion and Fairness at Rs. 1 billion. Sona Chandi Chyawanprash, Menthoplus and Fast Relief also among the top brands in their respective categories. Emami Limited acquired a major stake in Zandu Pharmaceuticals Works Ltd, a century-old household name in India, for Rs 7 billion. Emami added some of Zandu's prominent brands like Zandu Balm, Zandu Chyawanprash, Zandu Kesri Jeevan, Zandu Pancharishta, Sudarshan and Nityam Churna to its own range.

C. Traditional Akhadas of Kolkata

Malyudh or freestyle wrestling draws its motivation from the spiritual energy that each individual is encouraged to harness. It is a sport requiring much discipline and determination. The routine one has to maintain is all self-imposed, considering there are wrestlers who carry on this schedule not for any competition but for the workout and exercise which this sport brings into their lives. The history of Indian wrestling draws its origin mostly from 3 lineages. As Joseph Alter, the foremost historian of Indian wrestling points out, the indigenous form of art traced itself to Sanskrit epics, and two treatises

from the 12th and 16th centuries respectively, Manasollasa and the Malla Purana. The second impulse came from Persia via Mughals, and modern Indian wrestling emerged as a "complete synthesis of these two historical forms, one Hindu and the other Muslim..a single somatic ideology. To this may be added a third impulse which came in from the European tradition of body building from the mid 19th century. This synthetic nature of the form was the holistic ideology called pahalwani, in which mind and body were treated as a psychosomatic whole. Akhada or the gymnasium in which wrestlers were trained may be regarded as an elemental model of the nation, a pristine place where perfect natural balance is achieved. The idea of physical culture as a necessary part of the curriculum of incipient nationalism found ready acceptance in colonial Bengal. Along with the traditional akhadas new spaces for the practise and display of physical cultures began to open up like Hindoo Melas or gatherings instituted by the Tagore family of Jorasanko from 1867 and running for 14 years till 1880. As Indira Chowdhury

Ambika Charan Guha (1843–1900), popularly known as Ambu babu or Ambu Guha was an Indian wrestler who pioneered the growth of akhada culture in Bengal. Ambika Charan came from a family of wrestlers. His grandfather, Shiv Charan Guha, patronized Pehlwani and is credited with popularizing the sport in Bengal. Ambika Charan was born to Abhay Charan Guha in 1843 in Hogolkuria in Kolkata. The locality is near the Masjidbari Street near Hatibagan. Ambika Charan suffered a serious injury at the age of eight or nine. At the advice of the doctor he began to continue his studies at home. He also continued his physical exercises and took lessons in horse riding at home. He was trained in Pehlwani by Kalicharan Chaubey of Mathura. In 1857, at the age of sixteen, Ambika, founded the first akhara of Bengal, at the advice of his grandfather. Ambika then travelled throughout British India learning different wrestling and weight lifting tricks. He engaged in wrestling bouts with contemporary Indian wrestlers and became victorious in many of them. He came to be known as "Ambu babu" or "Raja babu".

His akhada became a pilgrimage to the budding wrestlers of India. Ambika Charan became a Pehlwani trainer and the budding wrestlers of Bengal used to train under him. Swami Vivekananda in his early years, learned wrestling in Ambu babu's akhada.

Some of his famous students are - Khetra Charan Guha or Khetu babu, Jatindra Charan Guho, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, Jatindranath Mukherjee or Bagha Jatin

Phanindra Krishna Gupta. His son, Khetra Charan Goho, (popularly known as Khetu babu) also became an accomplished wrestler. Khetu babu's nephew, Jatindra Charan Goho, went on to become an accomplished wrestler who became the first Asian to win the World Light Heavyweight Championship in the United States in 1921.

The akhada culture subsequently flourished in Bengal and the Bengali Hindu elite were drawn into it. Hundreds of akhadas began to proliferate in the nooks and crannies of

Bengal, some of which later became the breeding ground of revolutionary nationalist activities.

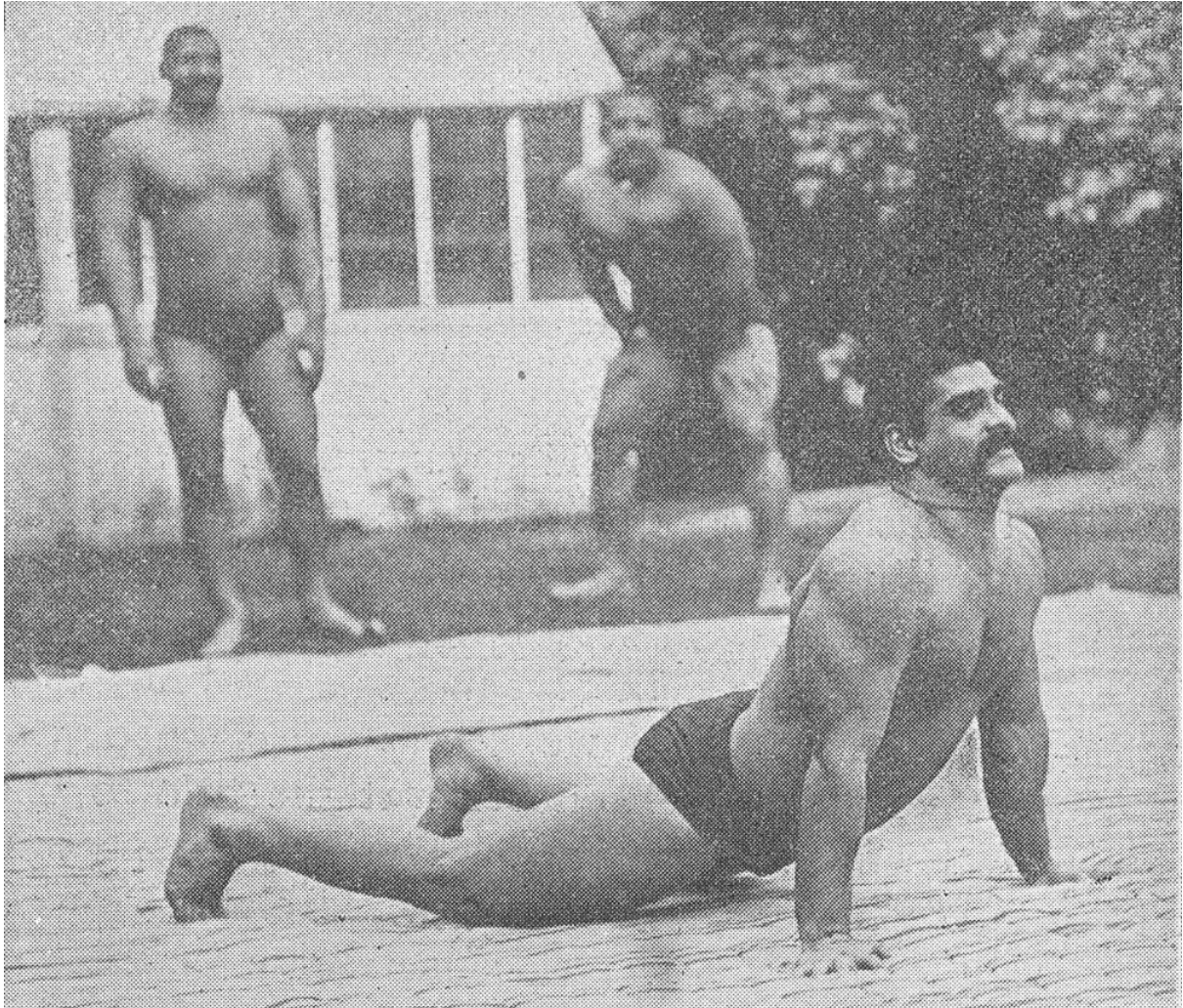
Jatindra Charan Guha (13 March 1892 – 2 January 1972), popularly known by his ring name **Gobar Guha** was a world-famous Indian wrestler and practitioner of Pehlwani. He was the first Asian to win the World Light Heavyweight Championship in the United States in 1921.

Gobar Goho developed his own style of wrestling which took Indian wrestling into newer heights. His style included his own wrestling holds like dhonka, tibbi, gadhanet, dhak, tang, pat, dhobiya pat and kulla which later became a part and parcel of Indian wrestling. He was famous for his vicious chops known as radda. His achievements and success inspired Bengali Hindus to take up wrestling as a career which was seen as the traditional bastion of Muslims. Not only wrestlers but the famous body builders like Manohar Aich and Monotosh Roy were inspired by his successes. His own disciples included his son Manik and his students Banamali Ghosh, Jyotish Charan Ghosh and Biswanath Dutta. His followers observed his birth centenary in 1992. Goabagan Street in North Kolkata has been named Gobar Goho Sarani in his honour. His statue was installed and unveiled at the Azad Hind Bagh in 1996 by the then Governor of West Bengal, Late Raghunath Reddy. On the current day his *akhara*



In the 19th Century Kolkata, a kind of muscular nationalism was beginning to gain ground in Bengal. Fed up of being stigmatised as a 'frail and effeminate' race, Bengalis – both men and women – began to participate in various kinds of physical cultures, ranging from martial arts to gymnastics, trapeze acts to hot-air ballooning. With the rise of the swadeshi movement in the first decade of the twentieth century, akharas or gymnasiums mushroomed all over north Calcutta. Nationalism got intertwined with the notion of masculinity in Bengal. Thus the writings of Bengali stalwarts like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo Ghosh reflected the urge to revive the physical prowess among the Bengalis. Extolling sporting activities like wrestling, an old tradition of physical culture that had been deemed fit only for menials, became common in the vernacular literature towards the close of the century. Physical culture found its greatest exponent in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, whose espousal of bahubol (physical prowess) and anushilan (practice) came at a time when the great Indian

rebellion of 1857 had been crushed and following the wars of annexation. Vivekananda's appropriation of the central themes of muscular Christianity was perhaps most apparent in one of his best-known maxims, expressed to a Madras audience upon his return to India in 1897, that "you will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita."



The wrestlers follow a strict regime of diet, exercise and workout every day with a spirit of persistence and focus.

The ancient sport of kushti held great importance in Indian societies of the past, but at present kushti is practised only in pockets of the country. Even in these places the future of the sport is uncertain. Calcutta the City of Joy has its own akhada, a place where wrestling is practised. Though the City is focused on football and cricket mostly but here, in the shadow of the mighty Howrah Bridge, the wrestling pit is a hub of activity every day in the wee hours of the morning. Interestingly, the soil at the akhada, or pit is a unique combination of the soft alluvial Gangetic soil, some also brought in from Uttar Pradesh, blended with turmeric, salt, mustard oil, rose water and neem leaves. This special soil has medicinal properties and is extremely beneficial for the sportsmen who

are lathered in it in the course of the game. The old places of the city adjoining Howrah Bridge in the Cotton Street, Mullick Ghat of Burrabazar area and Bhowanipore are quite famous around the city more than the others. The students in this *akhadas* are trained together and follow a very strict diet. They drink a lot of milk and have peanuts. They focus more on body weight, not body building. So you get to see huge well-built people who weigh about 120-130kgs yet have a lot of flexibility and strength. They aim to live a pure life, building strength and honing their wrestling skills. They refrain from drinking liquor or smoking.

The Akhada on **Cotton Street** is more 150 years old. They have carried on their traditional way of wrestling for years now. It has a soil pit like any other Akhada. Shri Vindeshwari Prasad Shukla was the very first Guru (teacher) of this renowned Akhada. Many Pahalwans were blessed to be trained under him. He became known for the Kushti against Dara Singh which ended in a tie after having many rounds. This was in the year 1957 in Howrah Maidan. After the demise of the Guru his son, Shri Narsingh Prasad Shukla took over. He kept the traditions and the legacy growing and glowing.

The **Mullick Ghat Akhada called Siyaram Akhara Bayam Samity** is all of 35 years old but here is where the toddlers seemingly come to learn the ropes of the sport and wrestlers or pehelwans beginning their day at 4.30am with a prayer to Hanuman (Bajrang Bali) followed by a series of physical exercises: the mace (gada), weights, ropes, bars and aerobics. Jwala Tewary, a man of positive vibes who lives and breathes his love and commitment for his sport, is the head of this akhada. He started his journey in the year 1961, and is a **national-level wrestler**. He teaches kushti to girls as well and all of them have won national tournaments. The various techniques of close combat kushti, such as dhak, nikas, dhobi pachad and kanpheri, are specially designed to defeat the opponent in freehand combat.

Simla Byam Samity- Late Atindra Nath Bosu, who on one hand established Simla Byayam Samity, in the year 1926, Atindra Nath Bosu thought that if the youth did not possess sound health then it would be very difficult for them to fight against the British. For that purpose on 2nd April, 1926, he founded Simla Byayam Samity so that the youth could acquire good health. Simla Byayam Samity grew up mainly as a body building centre. Here, at first, training for wrestling, exercise and training of fighting with Sticks were held. Later, training of the ways of military force was also given. Training was also given of football, volleyball and various other sports. Many famous wrestlers and Stick sportsmen of the country were student members of Simla Byayam Samity. Atindra Nath Bosu's eldest son, Late Amarendra Bosu and his other sons had special expertise in fighting with sticks and wrestling. The students of Simla Byayam Samity attained good reputation by participating in wrestling and stick fighting competitions held in different places of the country. They also participated in wrestling and stick fighting exhibitions of the Indian National Congress meetings in different parts of the country. In the compound of Simla

Byayam Samity at various times National level Stick fighting and wrestling competitions were organized where India's famous wrestlers and stick fighters participated. The female members of Simla Byayam Samity were equally expert in stick fighting and knife fighting. The main aim of the establishing Simla Byayam Samity was to build healthy and morally courageous Bengali youths so that, they could at any time plunge for the freedom movement of the motherland and they could extend their help to the weak and miserable people. Establishing Simla Byayam Samity and building it as an ideal institute of physical development, Atindra Nath Bosu also through this association at that time started his political and social organization. Inspired by Late Atindra Nath Bosu and on the call of Congress, many members of Simla Byayam Samity participated in the non-cooperation movement and accepted imprisonment. Even his own sons at different times participated in the freedom fight at various levels and were imprisoned many times. During the time of communal riots also, the members of Simla Byayam Samity came forward in helping people from both sides and played an important part in restoring peace. During various natural calamities like flood, draught, the members of the Samity engaged themselves in caring for the affected people.

On 20th April 1929, in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette it was published about that time's Simla Byayam Samity ---- **"We would like to take the opportunity of offering our sincerest congratulation to the authorities of the Simla Byayam Samity on the splendid work they are doing for the improvement of the physique of the boys and young men of North Calcutta Calcutta must be covered by gymnasium like the Simla Byayam Samity before we can hope to see our young men stand with their heads erect and walk with their chest forward"**.

At that period honorable political leaders like 'Deshpriyo' Jyotindra Mohon Sengupta, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bosu, Sarat Chandra Bosu, Suresh Chandra Majumdar, Makhan Lal Sen, Dr. Bhupendra Dutta, Bankim Mukherjee, Rajen Deb, Hemanta Bosu, Radha Raman Mitra, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Ray, Kiran Shankar Ray, Prabhu Dayal Himmatsingka, Madan Mohan Burman and many others regularly visited Simla Byayam Samity and the members of the Samity were directly involved in the work schedule of these leaders. During the struggle for freedom for political actions on 4th March 1916 Atindra Nath Bosu and his eldest son Amar Bosu were imprisoned together and were released in 1920. This extraordinary incident of father and son being imprisoned together created an immense stir in Bengal politics at that time.

As the prime leader of the Dalhousie Square Bomb Case, Samity member Dr. Narayan Chandra Ray was adjudged a guilty in the British Court and as punishment was exiled to far off Andaman Jail.

The female members of the Samity were on the first line in the struggle for freedom amongst which worth mention are Urmila Devi, Mohini Devi, Jyotirmayi Ganguly. Ila Sen, Shanti Das, Ashalata Das, Indira Devi, Bina Das, Kalpana Dutta (Joshi) and many others.

Due to various political reasons the British Government, on 4th January 1932 declared Simla Byayam Samity as illegal and the Samity was closed by them and all furniture along with sports equipments were confiscated. At that time the Samity was administered in the name of 'Byayam Samity'. On 7th October 1934, when the British Government withdrew the order it started operating in the name of 'Simla Byayam Samity' again. Our founder Atindra Bosu's eldest son Amar Bosu was the life-breath of the samity and was a mentionable personality in West Bengal politics. He was an eminent freedom fighter and by participating in the freedom struggle at various levels was imprisoned many a times. He was Netaji Subhash Chandra Bosu's foremost companion. He was seated in different posts of Bengal's Provincial Congress Committee at different times. Later following Netaji's ideals he joined the Forward Block Party. Subsequently, believing in Marxism he formed Marxist Forward Block and became the Chairman of the party. Post freedom, he participated in many people-friendly revolutions and was imprisoned many times. Amar Bosu was the elected member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly for a long time. Among the political leaders and workers he was acquainted as 'Amar-da' or 'Bor-da'. West Bengal's Chief Minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Ray and Prafulla Chandra Sen specially honoured him. Chief Minister Shri Jyoti Bosu and other leftist leaders specially respected 'Amar-da'. Under the leadership of father Atindra Nath Bosu and son Amarendra Nath Bosu, Simla Byayam Samity grew up as an organization of revolutionary movement and was considered as Bengal's as well as India's Holy Ground of revolutionary movement.



Kushti however, is not a dedicated occupation for the Pehlwans. It is not enough for sustaining themselves along with their family. But in addition to their day jobs they have made it a ritual of their mornings to practice Kushti before they head off for the day.

When things are modernizing so fast it is uncertain how long this tradition shall last in the city. But there is a dozen of kids who are determined to become pehlwans and carry forward this art in all its glory.

Asit Kumar Saha (born 1950) is a former National level wrestler. He is now a wrestling coach in the State of West Bengal, India and the General Secretary of West Bengal Wrestling Association. Asit was trained by his father Sudhir Saha, International coach, from a very young age at Panchanan Bayam Samity, Kolkata. Asit was a State Champion from (1965-1973) in both Freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling. He won the bronze medal in the Senior National Wrestling Championship, 1969. In 1978, he obtained his International FILA wrestling coaching license from Iran. Asit managed the Indian wrestling team for the 1982 Asian Games held in Delhi. India won 1 gold, 1 silver and 3 bronze medals. Asit also managed the Indian wrestling team at the 1987 South Asian Games held in Kolkata, India. India won 7 out of 9 gold medals in the Championship. Further to this, he has managed the Indian wrestling team in several International Championships including World Championship. In 1987, Asit obtained his FILA Judge-Referee license at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Mumbai.

